4.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

This section evaluates the aesthetics and visual resources impacts of the proposed Plan. The information presented was compiled from multiple sources.

4.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

REGIONAL CHARACTER

The San Diego region is a visually diverse region rich in natural open space, topographic resources, scenic highways, scenic vistas, and other distinct aesthetic resources. San Diego’s location bordering the Pacific Ocean also contributes to the natural setting of the region. The topography of the region contributes greatly to the overall character and quality of the existing visual setting. In general terms, the region is characterized by four physiographic regions: the low-lying coastal plain, foothills, mountains, and lowlands of the desert. The visual character of each is described briefly below.

The coastal plain ranges in elevation from sea level to approximately 600 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) and includes beaches; bays; shoreline; coastal canyons; and the many rivers, streams, and other watercourses that drain inland areas, eventually reaching the coastal environment and waters. The coastal plain provides expansive views of scenic resources in all directions, with the coastline visible from regional transportation facilities including the LOSSAN rail corridor and I-5. Much of the coastal plain is developed with urban land uses. Agricultural uses within the coastal area include row crops, field flowers, and greenhouses.

The foothills of the San Diego region range in elevation from 600 to 2,000 feet AMSL and are characterized by rolling to hilly uplands that contain frequent narrow, winding valleys. This area is traversed by several rivers, as well as a number of intermittent drainages. Several side canyons have incised the coastal plain and created major drainages that generally flow westward toward the coast. Major rivers within the San Diego region include the Santa Margarita River, the San Luis Rey River, San Dieguito River, San Diego River, Sweetwater River, Otay River, and the Tijuana River. Major coastal waterbodies include Buena Vista Lagoon, Agua Hedionda Lagoon, Batiquitos Lagoon, San Elijo Lagoon, San Dieguito Lagoon, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, Mission Bay, San Diego Bay, Tijuana River Estuary, and the Pacific Ocean. Playas/ inundation areas/washes include areas surrounding Lake Henshaw, Lake Cuyamaca, Moreno Reservoir, and Lake Hodges. The foothills are also developed with various urban and rural land uses. Agriculture consists of citrus and avocado orchards as well as row crops.

The mountain region features steep-sided mountains that are typically covered with granitic boulders. Lower slopes feature chaparral vegetation. Higher elevations are host to oak woodlands and coniferous forest. Elevations range from 2,000 to 6,000 feet AMSL. The mountain areas are generally undeveloped with rural communities scattered throughout such as Alpine, Pine Valley, Campo, Ramona, and Julian.

The eastern portion of the San Diego region is within the desert zone. Elevations range from sea level to 3,000 feet AMSL and the terrain includes mountains, alluvial fans, and desert floor. The majority of this region is part of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The desert region is generally undeveloped and sparsely populated in scattered towns such as the community of Borrego Springs. The desert region provides expansive views of the surrounding area, which is characterized by dramatic landforms and native desert habitats.
Throughout the coastal plain, foothills, mountains, and desert are vast amounts of publicly owned lands that provide open space and visual relief from the human-made environment. These include Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton on the coastal plain in northern San Diego region, the Cleveland National Forest in the Peninsular Range; and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in the desert region. In addition to these examples of large expanses of open space, state, county, and local parks; habitat preserves; reservoirs; farmland; and undeveloped land lend to San Diego region’s open space lands and overall aesthetic resource value.

**PANORAMIC VIEWS**

The varied topography and wide range of visual features found throughout the San Diego region provide for many areas containing panoramic views. Viewsheds within the region include views of mountains, beaches, the Pacific Ocean, bays, lagoons, canyons, and valleys, as well as human-made features such as city skylines, rural communities, parks, and golf courses, among other features.

**SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

The coastal plain, foothills, mountains, and desert regions each contain numerous scenic resources and significant landscape features that contribute to the San Diego region’s overall scenic quality. Major scenic resources within the coastal areas include views of the Pacific Ocean, beaches, bays, lagoons, and harbors. Notable features include San Diego Bay, Mission Bay Park, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, Batiquitos Lagoon, Agua Hedionda Lagoon, Buena Vista Lagoon, San Elijo Lagoon, and Oceanside Harbor. Coastal parks, including Border Field State Park, the Tijuana estuary, Silver Strand State Beach, and Torrey Pines State Reserve and Beach; and prominent land and water features, such as Cabrillo National Monument on Point Loma, Sunset Cliffs, La Jolla Cove, Soledad Mountain, and the offshore Coronado Islands, are also visual resources along the coast.

Within the foothills, the prominent visual resources include rivers, lakes, open bodies of water, and parks such as the Otay River, Sweetwater River, San Diego River, Upper and Lower Otay Lakes, Sweetwater Reservoir, Lake Hodges, San Vicente Reservoir, Mission Trails Regional Park, Santee Lakes Regional Park, Tecolote Canyon, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Old Town State Historic Park, and Presidio Park.

Within the mountain region, scenic resources include the large park areas such as the Cleveland National Forest, Agua Tibia Wilderness Area, San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Santa Rosa Mountains State Wilderness, Palomar Mountain State Park, and Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, as well as large water bodies such as El Capitan Reservoir, Barrett Lake, Lake Morena, and Lake Cuyamaca.

The desert region is primarily located within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, which is the largest of the California State Parks. The desert region includes expansive scenic views, dramatic landforms, desert valleys, and native desert habitat.

In addition to the visual resources described above, there are numerous golf courses, city and community parks, and large primarily undeveloped landholdings that contribute to the scenic quality of the San Diego region. The wide range of visual features in the region helps to define communities, provide visual relief from urban development, and offer recreational opportunities.
OPEN SPACE AND PROTECTED AREAS

A significant part of the San Diego region’s visual character can be attributed to the large amount of open space and protected areas. Approximately 45 percent of the lands in the San Diego region have been conserved as open space or parks (San Diego Foundation 2010). These lands include state and regional parks, habitat conservation areas, resource conservation areas, U.S. Forest Service lands, and rural open space. The San Diego region also contains large areas of undeveloped military land at MCB Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, which are not accessible to the general public but do contribute to the overall undeveloped nature of those portions of the San Diego region. The western third of the region contains the bulk of the region’s population and urban areas, although open spaces are interspersed within this area as well.

STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS

The San Diego region includes several officially designated scenic highways protected by the California Scenic Highway Program, administered by Caltrans. Designated scenic highways are located in areas of outstanding natural beauty and are provided with special conservation treatment to keep the natural views protected. The region also contains several highways identified by the program as eligible scenic highways, meaning that the highway is considered a scenic resource, but the local jurisdiction has not adopted a scenic corridor protection program or applied to Caltrans for official designation. The highways in the San Diego region officially designated or identified as eligible scenic highways by Caltrans are listed in Table 4.1-1 and shown in Figure 4.1-1.

OTHER SCENIC ROUTES

In addition to the state scenic highways, the San Diego County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element (County of San Diego 2011a) identifies other scenic roadways and highways worthy of protection in the unincorporated County. A list of these highway segments is found in Table 4.1-2.
### Table 4.1-1
**List of Caltrans Designated or Eligible Scenic Highways in the San Diego Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officially Designated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 75</td>
<td>San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge and the Silver Strand extending from Avenida del Sol in Coronado south to Imperial Beach city limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 78</td>
<td>from west to east boundary of Anza Borrego State Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 163</td>
<td>from north to south boundary of Balboa Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 125</td>
<td>from I-8 south to SR 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible for Scenic Designation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-5</td>
<td>from the international border near Tijuana to SR 75 (Palm Avenue) at the south end of San Diego Bay and from San Diego opposite Coronado to SR 74 near San Juan Capistrano (Orange County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-8</td>
<td>from Sunset Cliffs Boulevard to SR 98 near Coyote Wells (Imperial County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-15</td>
<td>from SR 76 near San Luis Rey to SR 91 near Corona (Riverside County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 52</td>
<td>from I-5 east of La Jolla to SR 67 near Santee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 75</td>
<td>from I-5 in Palm City/Nestor to 9th Street in Imperial Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 76</td>
<td>from I-5 near Oceanside to SR 79 near Lake Henshaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 78</td>
<td>from SR 79 near Santa Ysabel to SR 86 passing Julian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 79</td>
<td>from I-8 near Descanso to SR 78 near Julian and from SR 78 near Santa Ysabel to SR 371 near Aguanga (Riverside County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 94</td>
<td>from SR 125 near Spring Valley to I-8 west of Jacumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 163</td>
<td>from Ash Street to I-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 209</td>
<td>from Point Loma to I-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caltrans 2013a

### Table 4.1-2
**County Scenic Highway System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR 78</td>
<td>Wynola Road east to Imperial County line (excluding portion in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 125</td>
<td>SR 94 to I-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-5</td>
<td>Oceanside city limits north to Orange County line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-8</td>
<td>El Cajon city limits to SR 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-15</td>
<td>Escondido City limits north to Riverside County line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 67</td>
<td>Santee city limits to SR 78 (excluding portion in City of Poway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 76</td>
<td>Oceanside city limits east to I-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 76</td>
<td>I-15 east to SR 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Valley Parkway and SR 78</td>
<td>Escondido city limits southwest to Via Rancho Parkway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 78</td>
<td>Via Rancho Parkway to SR 79, except portions within City of San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 79</td>
<td>Riverside County line to SR 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 79</td>
<td>SR 78 (Wynona) south to Old Highway 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 79</td>
<td>I-8 north to Sunrise Highway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR 94</td>
<td>SR 125 to I-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 188 (Tecate Road)</td>
<td>U.S./ Mexican border north to SR 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise Highway (S1)</td>
<td>Old Highway 80 to State Route 79 through the Cleveland National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Overland Stage Route (S-2)</td>
<td>Imperial County line north to SR 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilac Road and Valley Center Road (S6)</td>
<td>SR 76 to SR 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Felipe Road, Montezuma Valley Road, Pal Canyon road, Peg Leg Road, and Borrego Salton Seaway (S-22)</td>
<td>SR 79 east to Imperial County line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado Boulevard</td>
<td>SR 94 to El Cajon city limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonita, San Miguel, Guajolote, and Sweetwater River Road</td>
<td>I 805 North to SR 94 (excluding portion within City of Chula Vista)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckman Springs Road</td>
<td>Lake Morena Drive to SR 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino del Rey west to Lilac Road</td>
<td>Oceanside city limits east to Vista Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehesa Road</td>
<td>El Cajon city limits to Tavern Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elfin Forest Road/Harmony Grove Road</td>
<td>San Marcos city limits to Escondido city limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Monte Road</td>
<td>El Capitan Reservoir to Lake Jennings Park Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuerte Drive</td>
<td>I-8 to Chase Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gird, Reche, Live Oak park, and Mission Roads</td>
<td>SR 76 north and east to I-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbison Canyon Road</td>
<td>Arnold Way to Dehesa Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Valley Road</td>
<td>San Diego city limits to SR 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey Springs Road</td>
<td>SR 94 north to Lyons Valley Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japatul Road</td>
<td>Lyons Valley Road to I-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cresta Road</td>
<td>Greenfield Drive to La Cresta Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Wohlford Road</td>
<td>Valley Center Road east (Escondido city limits) to Valley Center Road (excluding portion within City of Escondido)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Morena Drive</td>
<td>Buckman Springs Road north to Morena Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyons Valley Road</td>
<td>SR 94 to Cleveland National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission and Green Canyon Roads</td>
<td>SR 76 north and east to Reche Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View Road/Francis Drive</td>
<td>La Cresta Boulevard to Harbison Canyon Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Drive</td>
<td>Lake Morena Drive north to Buckman Springs Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Highway 80</td>
<td>SR 79 (Pine Valley) to I-8 (Jacumba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Hill Road</td>
<td>SR 76 to planning area boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otay Lakes Road</td>
<td>Chula Vista city limits to SR 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potrero Valley Road</td>
<td>SR 94 to Potrero County Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Vicente and Ramona Oaks Road</td>
<td>SR 78 to Cleveland National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripps Poway Parkway</td>
<td>Poway city limits to SR 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Grade Road, Canfield Rd/Highway to the Stars, Palomar Divide Road, and Oak Grove Truck Trail</td>
<td>SR 76 to SR 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Oaks Valley Road</td>
<td>Gopher Canyon Road to San Marcos city limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via de la Valle, Paseo Delicias, and Del Dios Highway</td>
<td>San Diego city limits east to Via Rancho Parkway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Rancho Parkway (San Pasqual Road)</td>
<td>Del Dios Highway to SR 78 (excluding portions in Cities of Escondido and San Diego)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow and El Monte Road</td>
<td>SR 67 to southern end of El Capitan Reservoir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Glen Drive</td>
<td>Jamacha Road to Dehesa Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista Way, Gopher Canyon, and Old Castle Roads</td>
<td>Vista city limits north and east to Lilac Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: County of San Diego 2011a
Sunrise Highway is a U.S. Forest Service Scenic Highway designated under the National Scenic Byway (NSB) Program. Sunrise Highway is located between the Cuyamaca Reservoir and Laguna Junction and provides views of mountain meadows, forests, and the Anza-Borrego Desert. It is the only nationally designated roadway located in the San Diego region.

The City of San Diego also maintains scenic routes throughout the city to afford scenic views of the community, as well as to link points of visitor interest. Some of the other local jurisdictions within the San Diego region have adopted scenic highway general plan elements or programs.

**DARK SKIES**

Rural areas of the San Diego region contain dark skies with little light pollution from urban areas, making it an ideal location for astronomical research. World-class observatories, Palomar Observatory and Mount Laguna Observatory, are located in the San Diego region and are considered two of the best such facilities in the United States. The type of research conducted at these facilities has contributed to a greater understanding of our solar system; supported advances in space travel; improved telecommunication systems, defense and surveillance systems, and advanced weather forecasting and atmospheric physics; and provided insight to energy production. Dark skies are an important aspect of the character of rural areas in the San Diego region.

**4.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING**

**FEDERAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, PLANS, AND POLICIES**

**National Scenic Byway Program**

The NSB Program was established by the Federal Highway Administration within the adoption of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. The NSB Program is a grassroots collaborative intended to recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. This voluntary program establishes All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. There are 150 designated roads, including the Sunrise Highway, located in 46 states (NSB 2014).

**U.S. Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)**

The U.S. Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) established the requirement for consideration of impacts on park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transportation project development. Section 4(f) properties include publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or any publicly or privately owned historic sites listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Section 4(f) evaluation is required to discuss a project’s impact on the Section 4(f) property, including visual intrusions.

**STATE LAWS, REGULATIONS, PLANS, AND POLICIES**

**California Energy Code**

The California Energy Code (24 CCR Part 6) creates standards to reduce energy consumption. The type of luminaries and the allowable wattage of certain outdoor lighting applications are regulated.
Scenic Highway Program

Recognizing the growing need to protect the state’s scenic beauty, the California State legislature established the Scenic Highway Program in 1963. This program was added to the California Streets and Highways Code (Sections 260 et seq.) with the intent to protect and enhance California’s beauty, amenity, and quality of life. The program is administered by Caltrans and consists of laws, incentives, and guidelines that are intended to protect the scenic, historic, and recreational resources within designated scenic highway corridors. A scenic highway corridor is defined by Caltrans as the area of land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway (Caltrans 1996). It is usually limited by topography and/or jurisdictional boundaries.

A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler’s enjoyment of the view. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. Because a scenic corridor is the land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway, it is identified using a motorist’s line of vision. A reasonable boundary is selected when the view extends to the distant horizon.

The corridor protection program does not preclude development but seeks to encourage quality development that does not degrade the scenic value of the corridor. Jurisdictional boundaries of the nominating agency are also considered. The agency must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances make up the scenic corridor protection program.

State goals for scenic highways include the following:

1. Preserve and enhance the unique visual, biological, and ecological resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
2. Prevent and eliminate (when reasonably possible) conditions that detract from or compromise the quality of the aesthetic resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
3. Encourage the development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
4. Encourage preservation of historical landmarks adjacent to the Scenic Highway Corridor; and
5. Encourage community civic groups to create programs that increase community interest in the visual assets of the Scenic Highway Corridor and facilitate the implementation of such programs.

California Coastal Act

Under the California Coastal Act of 1976 (Public Resources Code Sections 30000 et seq.), scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas are considered and protected as a visual resource. One of the primary objectives of the Coastal Act is the protection of scenic and visual resources, particularly as viewed from public places. Section 30251 requires that development be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas. New development must minimize the alteration of natural landforms. This policy also requires that development is sited and designed to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas. Where feasible, development shall include measures to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.
REGIONAL AND LOCAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, PLANS, AND POLICIES

County Scenic Highway System

The San Diego County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element identifies scenic roadways in
the unincorporated areas worthy of additional protection status but not covered by the State Scenic
Highway Program. A highway may be designated as “scenic” depending upon how much of the natural
landscape can be seen by travelers, the aesthetic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which
development intrudes upon the traveler’s enjoyment of the view (County of San Diego 2011a).

Dark Sky Ordinance

Sections 59.101 through 59.115 of the San Diego County Code, known as the Light Pollution Code or
Dark Sky Ordinance, were adopted “to minimize light pollution for the enjoyment and use of property
and the night environment by the citizens of San Diego County and to protect the Palomar and Mount
Laguna observatories from the impacts related to light pollution that have a detrimental effect on
astronomical research by restricting the permitted use of outdoor light fixtures on private property”
(Section 59.101). The Ordinance regulates permits for work involving outdoor light fixtures, unless
exempt. Under the Ordinance, all areas within 15 miles of either observatory are designated as Zone A,
and all other areas within the San Diego region are designated as Zone B. Areas within Zone A are
subject to more stringent outdoor lighting restrictions.

Local Design Review Programs

Local jurisdictions typically have design review programs in place, which include guidelines to maintain
and enhance the character and identity of local communities. Approved design guidelines address issues
such as architectural character, view corridor protection, landscaping, parking design, signage, and
lighting.

Local Visual Plans and Regulations

Table 4.1-3 details the visual plans and regulations in the San Diego region. Many local jurisdictions in
the San Diego region have included policies in their general plans to protect and enhance designated
scenic highway corridors. For example, the County’s Scenic Highway Program is included within the
Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan. The goals of the County’s program
are implemented via zoning, building, and grading ordinances. The Scenic Preservation Overlay Zone
regulates area, height, and design of signs; requires site plan approval by the Director of Planning; and
regulates grading within the overlay zone. The Scenic Area Regulations contained in the County Zoning
Ordinance (Part 5, Section 5200) are intended to ensure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures,
and to preserve and enhance the scenic resources present in adjacent areas. Another example is the City
of Coronado, which also has a Scenic Highway Element in its General Plan and provides implementing
measures via the Sign Ordinance and the Scenic Highway Overlay Zone, and has established the Scenic
Highway 75 Beautification and Restoration Project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Visual Plan or Regulation</th>
<th>Local Scenic Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Carlsbad     | Scenic Preservation Overlay Zone from the Municipal Code designates areas to preserve or enhance outstanding views, flora, and geology, or other unique natural attributes, and historical and cultural resources of Carlsbad. Currently, the overlay zone is applied to the El Camino Real corridor (City of Carlsbad Municipal Code (MC), Chapter 21.40) | • Coastal corridor/El Camino Real  
• Buena Vista Lagoon  
• Agua Hedionda  
• Batiquitos Lagoon  
• Agricultural fields (Flower Field/Strawberry Field) |
| Chula Vista  | Scenic Resources and Open Space Network in the General Plan designates Scenic Roadways and open space, including resources that make up most of the Chula Vista Greenbelt (City of Chula Vista MC, Chapter 17). | • Otay River  
• Sweetwater River  
• Upper + Lower Otay Lakes  
• Sweetwater Reservoir  
• San Miguel Mountains  
• San Diego Bay  
• Rice Canyon  
• Long Canyon |
| Coronado     | Scenic Highway Overlay Zone from the Municipal Code is designed to eliminate unsightly conditions, to protect views from scenic highways, and to retain unusual and attractive natural and human-made features within the scenic corridor (City of Coronado MC, Chapter 86.44). | • Coronado Bay Bridge  
• Silver Strand  
• San Diego Bay  
• Pacific Ocean  
• Coastal beaches |
| Del Mar      | Trees, Scenic Views, and Sunlight protection measures recognize that trees, scenic views, and plentiful sunlight contribute to the special character of Del Mar and to the overall quality of life enjoyed by residents, property owners, and visitors. Provides a process by which persons may seek to restore said resources (City of Del Mar MC, Chapter 30.52 ). | • Coastal beaches  
• Pacific Ocean  
• San Dieguito River/Floodplain  
• Crest Canyon  
• Peñasquitos Creek  
• Sandstone Bluffs  
• Beach Bluffs |
| El Cajon     | Hillside Overlay Zone from the Municipal Code is designed to minimize the disturbance of the natural terrain and thereby conserve the aesthetic qualities afforded by those areas (City of El Cajon Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 17.170). | • Valley floors  
• Hillsides |
| Encinitas    | Scenic/Visual Corridor Overlay designation identifies those areas of Encinitas where significant aesthetic and visual resources need to be considered before new development proceeds to ensure that significant viewsheds are retained (City of Encinitas MC, Section 30.34). | • San Elijo Lagoon  
• Pacific Ocean  
• Cardiff Beach/Coastal beaches  
• Coast Highway 101  
• Manchester Avenue |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Visual Plan or Regulation</th>
<th>Local Scenic Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Escondido      | Viewshed Protection is designed to preserve and protect existing internal and external view corridors in Escondido, with particular emphasis on ridgelines, unique landforms, and visual gateways and edges of the community (City of Escondido MC, Section 33-1067).                         | • Lake Wohlford  
• San Dieguito River  
• Elfin Forest Recreation Park  
• Bear Ridge                                                                 |
| Imperial Beach | Open Space Zone in the Municipal Code provides for land set aside for the protection of sensitive and fragile natural resources and is intended to limit and control access and intensity of uses in these areas, specifically relating to the Tijuana River Valley (City of Imperial Beach MC, Chapter 19.29). | • Tijuana River Estuary  
• Pacific Ocean  
• Ream Field  
• Salt Evaporation Ponds  
• San Diego Bay  
• Coastal/Beach area                                                                                   |
| La Mesa        | Scenic Preservation Overlay Zone in the Municipal Code establishes regulations for the recognized scenic areas within the city, the character of which could be permanently damaged by actions involving the development and use of land without special regulations to prevent or mitigate such damage (City of La Mesa MC Chapter 29). | • Mt. Helix  
• SR 124/SR 94/I-8 corridor                                                                                   |
| Lemon Grove    | The Open Space Zone in the Municipal Code establishes regulations for usable open space necessary to fulfill needs for outdoor leisure and recreation, to preserve valuable natural resources, and to improve the amenity of residential living (City of Lemon Grove MC, Chapter 17.24). | • Chollas Creek                                                                                                                                                      |
| National City  | Viewshed protection in the General Plan is designed to preserve scenic resources and significant viewsheds of San Diego Bay, open space, creeks, and other distinctive scenic resources (City of National City General Plan 2012).                                                                                      | • San Diego Bay  
• Hillsides                                                                                                      |
| Oceanside      | Scenic Park Overlay District of the Zoning Ordinance is implemented to conserve and protect valuable natural resources of recreational and scenic areas in and adjacent to the Guajome Regional Park and other public parks (City of Oceanside Zoning Ordinance, Article 15). | • Pacific Ocean  
• Coastal /Beach area  
• Guajome Regional Park  
• San Luis Rey River  
• Buena Vista Lagoon                                                                                     |
| Poway          | Open Space-Resource Management Zone in the Municipal Code preserves open space for the conservation of natural and cultural resources and maintains the natural character of the land (City of Poway MC, Chapter 17.24).                                                                 | • Twin Peaks  
• Kent Hill  
• Vandan Park  
• Tooth Rock  
• Goat Peak  
• Iron Mountain                                                                                         |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Visual Plan or Regulation</th>
<th>Local Scenic Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Coastal Overlay Zone from the Municipal Code protects and enhances the quality of public access and coastal resources (City of San Diego MC, Chapter 13). Height limits are restricted to 30 feet by the Coastal Zone.</td>
<td>• Pacific Ocean, beaches • San Diego Bay • Mission Bay Park • Los Peñasquitos Lagoon • Border Field State Park • Torrey Pines State Reserve • Cabrillo National Monument • Sunset Cliffs • La Jolla Cove • Soledad Mountain • San Diego River • Lake Hodges • San Vicente Reservoir • Mission Trails Regional Park • Santee Lakes Regional Park • Tecolote Canyon • Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve • Old Town State Historic Park • Presidio Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos</td>
<td>The City’s Zoning Code has a Ridgeline Protection and Management Overlay Zone to protect natural viewsheds and unique natural resources in San Marcos, especially hillsides and ridgelines. It also has restrictions on nighttime lighting in commercial areas to limit the amount of light that spills onto adjacent properties or reflects into the sky (City of San Marcos Zoning Code, Chapter 20.260).</td>
<td>• San Marcos Mountains • Merriam Mountains • Mount Whitney • Cerro de La Posas • Double Peak • Owens Peak • Franks Peak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santee</td>
<td>Park/Open Space Districts as defined in the Municipal Code promotes a balanced mix of open space uses with development throughout the city in order to provide the enhancement of visual resources, avoidance of hazards, and conservation of resources (City of Santee MC, Chapter 17.16).</td>
<td>• Mission Trails • Santee Lakes • San Diego River Park • Goodan Ranch • Sycamore Creek • Forester Creek • Rattlesnake Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solana Beach</td>
<td>View Assessment Ordinance in the Municipal Code preserves the existing character of established residential neighborhoods, and the desire to protect public and private views, and aesthetics (City of Solana Beach MC, Section 17.63). Scenic Area Overlay Zone regulates development in areas of high scenic value to preserve and enhance the scenic resources present within and adjacent to such areas (City of Solana Beach MC, Section 17.48).</td>
<td>• San Elijo Lagoon • Highway 101/Pacific Coast Highway • Lomas Santa Fe • Coastal/Beach area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista</td>
<td>No visual resource protection plans or specific regulations have been established at this time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Visual Plan or Regulation</td>
<td>Local Scenic Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| County of San Diego   | San Diego County’s Resource Protection Ordinance protects sensitive lands and prevents their degradation and loss by requiring the Resource Protection Study for certain discretionary projects. | • El Capital Reservoir and El Cajon Mountain  
• Viejas Mountain  
• Sweetwater River Canyon  
• Loveland Reservoir  
• Horsethief Creek/Pine Valley Creek Region  
• Gaskill Peak Region  
• Bells Mountain  
• Gopher Canyon  
• San Marcos Mountains  
• Boulder Creek Basin  
• Descanso Valley  
• Guatay Mountain  
• Lake Cuyamaca and Meadows  
• Crouch Valley  
• Buckman Springs Meadow  
• Pine Valley  
• McGinty/Dehesa/Seuan  
• Harbison Canyon  
• North Fork of the Sweetwater River  
• Landcaster Mountain  
• Lawson Peak  
• Mother Grundy  
• Tecate Peak/Cottonwood Creek  
• San Miguel/Jamul Mountains  
• El Cajon Mountain/El Capitan Reservoir  
• Jesmond Dene Oaks  
• Valley Center Ridge  
• Burnt Mountain  
• San Marcos Mountains  
• Mesa Grande  
• Palomar Mountain/Aqua Tibia Wilderness  
• Volcan Mountain  
• Otay Mountain/Lower Otay Lake  
• San Luis Rey River  
• Mount Olympus  
• Rainbow Oak Woodland Areas  
• Goose Valley Ridge  
• SR 78 Corridor  
• Mussey Grade Road  
• Mount Woodson  
• Batiquitos Lagoon Region  
• Oak Crest Park Site  
• San Elijo Lagoon/San Dieguito Park Area  
• Sweetwater Community Planning Area  
• Eucalyptus Groves 1, 2, and 3.  
• Mother Miguel Mountain.  
• Valley Center Ridge.  
• Chaparral Ridge. Keys Creek |

Source(s): City of Carlsbad 2014; City of Chula Vista 2005; City of Coronado 1999; City of Del Mar 1976; City of Encinitas 1989; City of Escondido 2012; City of Imperial Beach 2012; City of National City 2012; City of Oceanside 2002; City of Poway 1991; City of Santee 2003; City of Solana Beach 2013; City of San Diego 2008; City of San Marcos 2012; County of San Diego 2011b.
4.1.3 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines ("Appendix G") provides criteria for determining the significance of a project’s environmental impacts, in the form of Initial Study checklist questions. Unless otherwise noted, the significance criteria specifically developed for this EIR are based on the checklist questions that address the criteria in Appendix G. In some cases, SANDAG has combined checklist questions, edited their wording, or changed their location in the document in an effort to develop significance criteria that reflect the programmatic level of analysis in this EIR, the unique nature of the proposed Plan’s aesthetics impacts, and the unique characteristics of the proposed Plan.

Specifically, the separate criteria in CEQA Appendix G (l) criterion (a), addressing substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas is included as AES-1, while criterion (b) addressing substantially damaging scenic resources is included in AES-2. Additionally, separate criterion (c) addressing the degradation of existing visual character and criterion (d) addressing creation of a new source of substantial light or glare have been combined in this document (AES-3). For the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed Plan would have a significant aesthetic and visual resources impact if it would:

AES-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

AES-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rocks, outcroppings, and historic bridges within a state scenic highway.

AES-3 Substantially degrade the character of an area, including adding a visual element of urban character to an existing rural or open space area or by creating substantial new sources of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views.

4.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

AES-1 HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The following analysis evaluates impacts of regional growth and land use change as well as transportation network improvements and programs that may have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista by blocking panoramic views or impeding public views of major landscape features or landforms, such as the coast, bays, lagoons, canyons, mesas, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, water resources such as reservoirs, lakes, streams, and large open spaces including preserves and regional parks.

The analysis of transportation network improvements focuses on new infrastructure or facilities that would result in both short-term and long-term impacts by impeding or blocking views of scenic vistas from transportation facilities or from the surrounding area. Those improvements and programs involving only operational changes would not substantially affect scenic vistas.
2020

**Regional Growth and Land Use Change**

By 2020, the region is forecasted to increase by 292,284 people, 83,836 housing units, and 173,211 jobs. New development caused by regional growth and land use change would include new housing units, services, commercial areas, industrial centers, schools, and civic uses. While some growth would be in the form of new developments or communities, such as in the City of San Diego communities of Pacific Highlands Ranch, Black Mountain Ranch, and Mission Valley and in eastern Chula Vista, a substantial portion of new growth also would occur within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Downtown, Kearny Mesa, University City, Navajo, and University City, and in rural communities in the unincorporated County such as Lakeside, Otay, North County Metro, Pendleton-De Luz, Fallbrook, Spring Valley, Ramona, and Valley Center. Scenic vistas that would be affected by new development include the long-range views of the coastal mountain ranges, habitat preserves, and unobstructed views of the Pacific Ocean from the Pendleton-De Luz area and views of the highly scenic lagoons and waterways such as Batiquitos, Agua Hedionda, Buena Vista, San Elijo, and Los Peñasquitos Lagoons, and the San Dieguito and San Luis Rey Rivers along the I-5 corridor. Scenic vistas in the South Bay area include the Otay River, Sweetwater River Valley, upper and lower Otay Lakes, the Sweetwater Reservoir, and San Diego Bay. In the East County, scenic resources include large open space parks, preserves, mountain ranges, and reservoirs.

Density of new development would increase by 2020, and some currently developed areas, such as City of San Diego communities; inland areas such as Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido; communities in La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley, and El Cajon, would be infilled. New development would be located on hillsides, and along the ocean, bays, or rivers, which in some locations would impede or block panoramic views or views of major landscape features or landforms (coastlines, bays, lagoons, canyons, mesas, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, water resources such as reservoirs, lakes, streams, and large open spaces including preserves and regional parks) as seen from public viewing areas. Construction of new development in some areas would also result in short-term construction impacts related to scenic vistas, consisting of views of temporary earth-moving activities, denuded slopes, large construction equipment and vehicles, and staging areas.

Future development would be required to comply with adopted policies that regulate the design of new buildings as well as protect the existing visual quality of the local jurisdiction. For example, as listed in Table 4.1-3, local jurisdictions have adopted visual policies and development codes that require all development to adhere to standards that address bulk, mass, articulation, height, and transition issues such as the interface with surrounding or adjacent development and uses, and minimize negative impacts on the community. Visual policies also ensure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance the scenic resources present in adjacent areas. In addition, all development or redevelopment projects would undergo further environmental and design review on a project-by-project basis to ensure that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas are identified and avoided or reduced to the extent feasible. Development in the Coastal Zone would need to adhere to the California Coastal Act and local coastal plans. Typical measures in the local plans require development to be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas. These measures would reduce adverse effects to scenic vistas. However, even with implementation of such measures, it cannot be guaranteed that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas would be avoided or reduced for all projects. Some new development would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.
**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

Planned transportation network improvements by 2020 include the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension, LOSSAN rail corridor double-tracking, new Managed Lanes on I-5 and I-805, new SR 11 toll lanes, and new general purpose lanes on SR 76. The extension of the Mid-Coast Trolley was determined to not cause significant impacts because it would not substantially block coastal views or public view corridors (SANDAG 2014). Based on the LOSSAN Program EIR/EIS (FRA 2007), the coastal rail double-tracking along the I-5 corridor would occur in highly scenic areas along the corridor and the visual impact would be dependent on the sensitivity of the landscape and compatibility with existing visual features. Although the LOSSAN corridor extends through a highly scenic area, traversing several coastal lagoons, the addition of a second track to an existing single track would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. Short-term visual impacts would occur during construction.

As stated in the SR 11 and Otay Mesa POE FEIR/EIS (Caltrans 2012a), highway construction of SR 11 would introduce visual elements such as retaining walls and noise attenuation features that would impede views of the distance mountain ranges, a scenic resource in the Otay Mesa area. No significant impacts were identified with the proposed connectors between SR 905 and SR 11 since the additions would be similar in appearance to the proposed SR 905/SR 125/SR 11 interchange, and most of the modifications to accommodate SR 11 connections would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. Two new Managed Lanes along the I-5 corridor, as determined in the I-5 North Coast Corridor Project EIR/EIS (Caltrans 2013b), would obstruct views to scenic resources from some private residences located at an elevation higher than the freeway as a result of proposed soundwalls. Use of soundwalls along the I-5 corridor and between Via de La Valle and Lomas Santa Fe Drive would obstruct views of the Del Mar Fairgrounds and Pacific Ocean. Two new general purpose lanes along SR 76, as determined in the SR 76 Melrose to South Mission FEIS (Caltrans 2012b) would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista, such as views of the habitat corridor along the San Luis Rey River.

The planned transportation improvements in 2020 also include various improvements to regional arterials, including new travel lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, and new and replacement bridges. Such projects are located in the unincorporated community of Ramona, one is in Lakeside, one extends from the city limits of Vista, and others exist throughout unincorporated San Diego County. Most of these improvements would be minor and consist of improvements to existing facilities, and would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. However, construction activities in some locations would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista due to the presence of construction equipment, scaffolding, and earthmoving, and temporary removal of existing vegetation.

The proposed Plan includes active transportation investments, such as safe routes to transit at all new transit stations, and development of various types of bikeways throughout the region. Additionally, the proposed Plan anticipates transit service improvements in 2020, including an increase in COASTER and SPRINT service, COASTER double tracking, the Midcoast Trolley extension, new shuttle service in San Marcos, and the development of rapid transit service throughout the more densely populated areas of the San Diego region. Increases in transit service and the development of an active transportation network would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista.

New Managed Lanes on existing highway facilities, with the exception of the I-5 Managed Lanes as described above, would involve relatively minor impacts to scenic vistas because of their location in developed urban environments. However, visual impacts due to the obstruction, interruption, or detraction from a scenic vista would occur when proposed alignments or facilities require large cut-and-fill slopes or sound attenuation barriers that impede or block public views. Careful alignment and design, collaboration with local jurisdictions and conformance with local grading ordinances, would reduce scenic vista impacts. However, some transportation network improvements are located in areas where scenic vista impacts cannot be avoided.
Short-term effects on scenic vistas would occur during construction of transportation network improvements, resulting in blockage of scenic vistas by blocking panoramic views or impeding public views of major landscape features or landform by construction equipment, scaffolding, temporary signage, and construction staging areas. In some locations, long-term scenic vista impacts would also occur following construction. In some locations, construction of transportation network improvement projects in or within view of floodplains, wetlands, wooded areas, coastal bluffs, lagoons, reservoirs, regional parks, recreational areas, agricultural lands, or in areas that include steep slopes would have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas through blocking or impeding public views of scenic vistas. Transportation network improvements would have a significant impact.

**2020 Conclusion**

Implementation of regional growth and land use change as well as transportation network improvements would have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas. Therefore, this impact (AES-1) in the year 2020 is significant.

**2035**

**Regional Growth and Land Use Change**

By 2035, the population of the region is forecasted to increase by 710,269 people; housing by 228,870 units; and employment by 319,025 jobs over existing 2012 conditions. As shown in Figure 2.0-12 of this EIR, regional land use and development changes are evident by 2035. The increased density can be seen when comparing the existing housing density to the 2035 housing density, as shown in Figures 4.13-2 and 4.13-8, respectively, of Section 4.13 Population and Housing of this EIR. Areas of increased residential density by 2035 would be apparent within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Downtown, College Area, Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Mission Valley, Navajo, and Uptown. The SR 78 corridor, from Escondido to I-5, would also experience growth and resulting land use density increases of both residential and commercial/office by 2035. By 2035, some regional growth would be accommodated in the more eastern, rural areas of the region. Development in these areas would be located mostly along highway corridors, such as SR 67, I-8 east of El Cajon, and SR 94, and generally within San Diego County community planning areas.

Scenic vistas along the SR 78 corridor, between Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido, include views of the Buena Vista Lagoon, Pacific Ocean, and steep rugged terrain found farther inland near San Marcos and Escondido. The northern coastal cities also have views of scenic resources associated with views of the Pacific Ocean; Batiquitos, Agua Hedionda, Buena Vista, San Elijo, and Los Peñasquitos Lagoons; and the San Dieguito and San Luis Rey Rivers along the I-5 corridor. Scenic vistas in the South Bay area include the Otay River, Sweetwater River Valley, upper and lower Otay Lakes, the Sweetwater Reservoir, and San Diego Bay. In East County, scenic resources include County reserves and parks, as well as the large water bodies of El Capitan Reservoir, Barrett Lake, Lake Morena, Lake Cuyamaca, and Lake Henshaw.

By 2035, regional growth and land use change would have impacts on scenic vistas, including blocking or impeding panoramic views and views of major landscape features during development and redevelopment activities. Construction of new development in some areas would also result in short-term construction impacts related to scenic vistas, consisting of views of temporary earth-moving activities, denuded slopes, large construction equipment and vehicles, and staging areas.
As listed in Table 4.1-3, various jurisdictions have adopted visual policies and development codes that require all development to adhere to standards that address bulk, mass, articulation, height, and transition issues such as the interface with surrounding or adjacent development and uses, and reduce negative impacts on the community. Visual policies also ensure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance scenic resources present in adjacent areas. In addition, all development or redevelopment projects would undergo environmental and design review on a project-by-project basis to ensure that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas are identified and avoided or reduced to the extent feasible. Development in the Coastal Zone would need to adhere to the California Coastal Act and local coastal plans. Typical measures in the local plans require development to be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas. These measures would reduce adverse effects to scenic vistas. However, even with implementation of such measures, it cannot be guaranteed that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas would be avoided or reduced for all projects. Some new development would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.

Transportation Network Improvements and Programs

By 2035, additional transportation network improvements and programs would occur in the San Diego region as part of the proposed Plan. The proposed Plan includes the construction of new rail and transit facilities by 2035, such as the extension of the Trolley from UTC to Mira Mesa via Sorrento Mesa/Carroll Canyon with a connection to the COASTER service in Sorrento Valley (Trolley Route 561); an extension of the Trolley from San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa via Mission Valley, Mid-City, Southeast San Diego, National City, and Chula Vista via Highland and 4th Avenues; and three new streetcars along the Downtown, Little Italy, North Park, and Golden Hill communities. The proposed Plan also includes double-tracking and several grade separation projects in 2035 for the LOSSAN, SPRINTER, and Trolley. Rail grade separations include Phase 1 of the Blue Line Frequency Enhancements and rail grade separations through the South Bay communities, and the Blue/Orange Track connection at 12th and Imperial. The extension of Trolley and rail service into new areas, between the UTC area to Mira Mesa via Sorrento Mesa/Carroll Canyon, from San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa via Mission Valley, Mid-City, Southeast San Diego, National City, and Chula Vista via Highland and 4th Avenues, would impair or detract from scenic vistas with the introduction of a new infrastructure, including tracks, station platforms, overhead catenary wire, and other features such as above-grade guideways and overcrossings. The addition of a second track to an existing single track along the COASTER and SPRINTER corridors would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista.

The proposed Plan contains three transportation network improvements on the arterial roadway system in 2035. These projects include addition of new travel lanes and Class II bicycle lanes along Genesee Avenue in San Diego, new travel lanes and bicycle lanes and pedestrian pathways in the community of Ramona, and new interchange and roadway improvements at SR 78. Scenic views along these corridors are of the riparian habitat (Genesee Avenue), and rolling hills and valleys (Ramona and SR 78). Road widening and bikeway improvements would result in some change in the visual environment that would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista, during both construction and operation.

Active transportation improvements by 2035 include development of various bikeways throughout the region, including bikeway improvements to the Coastal Rail Trail and the Bayshore Bikeway. Transit service improvements to be constructed by 2035 include increases in service for the COASTER and SPRINTER, extensions and increases in service of the Trolley, two new streetcar routes in San Diego, two intermodal transit centers, and several new rapid transit routes. Increases in transit services and the development of an active transportation network would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista.
Improvement of existing highway facilities along the SR 15, I-15, I-805, and SR 52 corridors would involve relatively minor impacts to scenic vistas because of their location in urban environments. However, adverse scenic vista impacts would occur for alignments and facilities that require large cut-and-fill slopes or noise barriers, whether in previously undeveloped areas or developed urban areas. Careful alignment and design, collaboration with local jurisdictions and conformance with local grading ordinances to ensure compatibility with surrounding development would reduce impacts. Improvements to the I-5 corridor would obstruct views to scenic resources from private residences located at an elevation higher than the freeway as a result of soundwalls. Two new Managed Lanes on SR 78 would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista, such as views of the Batiquitos Lagoon, Pacific Ocean, and steep rugged terrain near the Twin Oaks to I-15 corridor. However, the locations of some transportation network improvements and certain design features (e.g., above-grade facilities, retaining walls, sound attenuation walls, cut-and-fill activities) cannot avoid physical changes that have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas, including blocking panoramic views or views of major landscape features or landforms. Transportation network improvements would cause a significant impact.

2035 Conclusion

Development associated with regional growth and land use change, as well as transportation network improvements, would have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas. Therefore, this impact (AES-1) in the year 2035 is significant.

2050

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

By 2050, the population of the region is forecasted to increase by 925,330 people; housing by 325,986 units; and employment by 460,492 jobs. As shown in Figure 2.0-12 of this EIR, regional land use and development changes are evident by 2050. The increased density can be seen when comparing the existing housing density to the 2050 housing density, as shown in Figures 4.13-2 and 4.13-8, respectively, of Section 4.13 Population and Housing of this EIR. Similar to buildout conditions in 2035, areas of increased residential density by 2050 would be apparent within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Downtown, College Area, Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Mission Valley, Navajo, and Uptown. New development is also evident in the north coastal corridor between Del Mar and MCB Camp Pendleton, the area between MCB Camp Pendleton and I-15; corridor along SR 78 between Vista and San Marcos; northeast of I-15 and Escondido; the SR 56 corridor and along Carmel Valley and Poway. In the South Bay, development occurs adjacent to SR 125 in the Otay Ranch area and along the SR 94 and I-8 corridors, and in the unincorporated communities of Alpine, Crest/Dehesa and Spring Valley. Development in coastal areas includes the City of Encinitas with the proposed buildout of the Downtown Encinitas Specific Plan and North 101 Specific Plan. Major development in the County of San Diego includes the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Village in San Dieguito, Montecito Ranch in Ramona, Pala Mesa in Fallbrook, and Otay Ranch in the South Bay.

Scenic vistas within these areas include Otay Mountain/Lower Otay Lakes in the Otay Mesa planning area; Santa Maria Valley and Mount Woodson in the Ramona community; Valley Center Ridge, Burnt Mountain, and San Marcos Mountain in the North County Metro region; and the Santa Margarita Open Space Preserve and Gopher Canyon near the Fallbrook/Bonsall area.
Landforms consisting of steep mountain ranges and rural valleys dominate the scenic vistas in these inland regions. As shown in Figure 4.11-4, these areas are located northeast of Escondido to SR 76, east of MCB Camp Pendleton, and north and south of the SR 78 corridor. Large pockets of land currently used for agricultural purposes would be developed with spaced rural residential uses.

New development would be located on hillsides, and along the ocean, bays, or rivers, which in some locations would impede or block panoramic views or views of major landscape features or landforms (coastlines; bays; lagoons; canyons; mesas; natural vegetation; historic or unique structures; water resources such as reservoirs, lakes, and streams; and large open spaces including preserves and regional parks) as seen from public viewing areas. Construction of new development in some areas would also result in short-term construction impacts related to scenic vistas consisting of views of temporary earth-moving activities, denuded slopes, large construction equipment and vehicles, and staging areas.

As described in Table 4.1-3, local jurisdictions have adopted visual policies and development codes that require new development to adhere to standards that address bulk, mass, articulation, height, and transition issues such as the interface with surrounding or adjacent development and uses, and minimize negative impacts on the community. Visual policies also ensure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance the scenic resources present in adjacent areas. In addition, all development or redevelopment projects would undergo further environmental and design review on a project-by-project basis to ensure that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas are identified and avoided or reduced to the extent feasible. Development in the Coastal Zone would need to adhere to the California Coastal Act and local coastal plans. Typical measures in local plans require development to be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas. These measures would reduce adverse effects to scenic vistas. However, even with implementation of such measures, it cannot be guaranteed that substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas would be avoided or reduced for all projects. Some new development would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.

**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

The proposed Plan includes the construction of new rail and transit facilities by 2050, such as the extension of service of the Sprinter from Escondido south to Westfield North County; new Trolley line from Downtown San Diego to SDSU, along the Park Boulevard and El Cajon Boulevard corridors via Balboa Park, North Park, and City Heights (transition of Mid-City Rapid Bus); a new Trolley line from Pacific Beach to Grossmont Center via Clairemont, Kearny Mesa, Mission Valley, and SDSU; and Trolley extension from Pacific Beach to Balboa to Kearney Mesa to Carmel Valley. The extension of the new Trolley lines would largely extend through highly urbanized corridors in the South Bay and Mid-City/Kearny Mesa communities; however, portions of the Trolley line would extend through communities that have scenic vistas of open space habitat such as the Otay River, Sweetwater River, and San Diego River, preserves, canyon lands, and parks. Portions of the new Trolley extensions would impair or detract from scenic vistas in these communities with the introduction of a new infrastructure, including tracks, station platforms, overhead catenary wire, and other features such as above-grade guideways and overcrossings.

Major transportation network improvements by 2050 include additional Managed Lanes along portions of I-5, SR 15 and I-15, I-805, SR 52, SR 54, SR 94, and SR 125; new general purpose lanes along portions of I-8, SR 15, SR 52, SR 56, SR 67, SR 76, SR 94, and SR 125; and highway operational improvements along portions of I-5, I-8, and SR 76. There would be new Managed Lane connectors along I-15 and I-805 at SR 52, and one new freeway connector at I-15 and SR 56. New toll lanes would be added along I-5 from Vandegrift Boulevard to the Orange County border and along I-15 from SR 78 to the Riverside County border.
By 2050, active transportation projects include buildout of the San Luis Rey River Trail, bikeway trails in the Encinitas – San Marcos corridor, Escondido Creek Bikeway, I-15 Bikeway, SR 56 Bikeway, SR 52 Bikeway, I-8 corridor Trail, I-805 corridor, SR 905 corridor, El Camino Real Bike Lanes, Carlsbad to San Marcos corridor, Mira Mesa corridor, Mid-County Bikeway, Central Coast corridor, and several enhanced bike lanes through Santee, El Cajon, La Mesa, and unincorporated San Diego County.

Improvement of existing highway facilities along SR 15, SR 52, SR 94, SR 54, and SR 125, which largely consists of new Managed Lanes, would involve relatively minor impacts to scenic vistas because of their location in urban environments. However, adverse impacts would occur for alignments and facilities that require large cut-and-fill slopes or noise barriers, whether in undeveloped areas or developed urban areas. Careful alignment and design, collaboration with local jurisdictions and conformance with local grading ordinances to ensure compatibility with surrounding development would reduce scenic vista impacts. Improvements to the I-5 corridor would obstruct views to scenic resources from private residences located at an elevation higher than the freeway as a result of soundwalls. However, the locations of some transportation network improvements and certain design features (e.g., above-grade facilities, retaining walls, sound attenuation walls, cut-and-fill activities) cannot avoid physical changes that have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas, including blocking panoramic views or views of major landscape features or landforms. Transportation network improvements and programs would cause a significant impact.

2050 Conclusion

Development associated with regional growth and land use change as well as transportation network improvements and programs would have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas. Therefore, this impact (AES-1) in the year 2050 is significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES

AES-1 Have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

2020, 2035, 2050

AES-1A Protect Public Views of Scenic Vistas. During planning, design, project-level CEQA review, and construction of transportation network improvements, SANDAG shall, and other transportation project sponsors can and should, ensure that projects protect public views of scenic vistas. Construction and operational measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Site construction staging areas away from scenic vistas. Where infeasible, reduce the visibility of construction staging areas. Fence and screen these areas with low contrast materials consistent with the surrounding environment.
- Avoid permanent obstruction of scenic vistas from public viewing areas when selecting alignments and the grade of new infrastructure (i.e., above, at, or below grade).
- Use see-through safety barrier designs (e.g., railings) rather than walls.
In addition, during planning, design, construction and project-level CEQA review of development projects, the County of San Diego, cities, and other local jurisdictions can and should incorporate scale and massing measures, including those listed under AES-1A, as well as measures specific to development projects. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ensure building siting, height, and mass protect views of scenic vistas.
- Implement design guidelines, local policies, and programs aimed at protecting views of scenic vistas and avoiding visual intrusions. Projects should be designed to minimize contrasts in scale and massing between the project and surrounding natural forms and developments. Avoid large cuts and fills when the visual environment (natural or urban) would be substantially disrupted. Site or design of projects should minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds and use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain.
- Screen development adjacent to natural features as appropriate so that development does not appear visually intrusive, or interfere with the experience within the scenic vista. The provision of enhanced landscaping adjacent to natural features could be used to soften the appearance of or buffer development from the natural features.
- Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:
  - Creative site planning
  - Integration of natural features into the project
  - Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape
  - Minimal disturbance of topography
  - Clustering of development to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character
  - Creation of contiguous open space networks

**SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

**2020, 2035, 2050**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1A would reduce significant impacts on scenic vistas caused by blocking panoramic views or impeding public views of major landscape features or landforms. However, some of the transportation network improvements and development associated with regional growth and land use change are located in areas where substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas cannot be avoided. It cannot be guaranteed that all future project-level impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level. Therefore, substantial adverse impacts on scenic vistas would remain significant and unavoidable.
AES-2 SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGE SCENIC RESOURCES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, TREES, ROCKS, OUTCROPPINGS, AND HISTORIC BRIDGES WITHIN A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This section analyzes how regional growth and land use change, as well as transportation network improvements and programs, would damage two types of scenic resources: (1) impacts on scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and (2) other scenic resources identified in local plans (local scenic routes, protected public viewsheds). Damage to scenic resources within a scenic highway would occur if development were to detract or diminish the elements that contribute to the scenic nature of the highway. For example, in some locations, a modern office building or retail center located along such a highway would be incongruous with the surrounding scenic nature if not properly shielded from view.

The Caltrans State Scenic Highway System Program was reviewed to determine whether any designated or eligible routes would be affected, along with local agency general plans to determine if any locally designated scenic routes would be affected. In addition, local agency general plans were reviewed to determine whether any other protected public viewshed designations (e.g., view corridors, unique geologic resources) would be affected.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

2020

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

The proposed Plan forecasts a general intensification of existing land uses within urban communities and along key transportation corridors. Large-scale development planned in the coastal cities includes Robertson Ranch, Poinsettia Ranch, and Carlsbad Airport Business Park in Carlsbad. In eastern Chula Vista, development includes residential uses in the San Miguel Ranch Specific Plan, Rolling Hills Specific Plan, Eastlake and Otay Ranch Specific Plan; and single-family units in Emerald Hills and Sager Ranch (Daley Ranch), Valley View and Hidden Trails in Escondido.

The proposed Plan would result in adverse aesthetic and visual resource impacts related to implementation of regional growth and land use change along eligible and designated scenic highways as well as local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. While some growth would be in the form of new developments or communities, such as in the City of San Diego communities of Pacific Highlands Ranch, Black Mountain Ranch, and Mission Valley, and in eastern Chula Vista, a substantial portion of new growth also would occur within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Downtown, Kearny Mesa, University City, Navajo, and University City, and in rural communities in the unincorporated County such as Lakeside, Otay, North County Metro, Pendleton-De Luz, Fallbrook, Spring Valley, Ramona, and Valley Center. New development associated with regional growth in the north coastal area between Del Mar and Oceanside would occur adjacent to and visible from vehicles traveling on state eligible scenic highways such as I-5 and SR 76. Scenic resources along the I-5 coastal corridor include views of local beaches and the ocean; various estuaries and lagoons such as Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, and Batiquitos Lagoon; the agricultural fields in Carlsbad; San Dieguito River; and Peñasquitos Lagoon.
4.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Along the SR 76 corridor, scenic resources include Guajome Regional Park, San Luis Rey River, and Buena Vista lagoon. Growth in the La Mesa and Lemon Grove communities would be adjacent to SR 94, an eligible scenic highway, and SR 125, a designated state highway. Scenic resources along these corridors include trees, rock outcroppings, canyon lands, and ridgelines. New growth in Santee would occur adjacent to SR 52, an eligible scenic highway, and includes scenic resources such as San Diego River, Mission Trails, Santee Lake, and Sycamore and Rattlesnake Creeks. Development would also occur adjacent to scenic resources identified in local plans (local scenic routes, and protected public viewsheds) such as the forecasted growth in Carlsbad and Encinitas. Scenic resources as described above include the coastal beaches, ocean, estuaries, and lagoons. New development would result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction from designated and eligible scenic highways and local scenic resources and public viewsheds. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.

Transportation Network Improvements and Programs

Planned transportation network improvements by 2020 include the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension, LOSSAN rail corridor double-tracking, new Managed Lanes on I-5 and I-805, new SR 11 toll lanes, and new general purpose lanes on SR 76. The planned transportation improvements in 2020 also include various improvements to regional arterials, including new travel lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, and new and replacement bridges. Such projects include street improvements along Discovery Road and the Via Vera Cruz Bridge improvements in San Marcos, improvements to San Vicente Road in the unincorporated community of Ramona, the Bradley Avenue Overpass in Lakeside, Santa Fe Avenue roadway improvements from the city limits of Vista, and others in the unincorporated County. Local scenic resources identified in local plans (local scenic routes, protected public viewsheds) are identified in Table 4.1-3. Potential impacts to scenic resources and public viewsheds could occur with planned transportation improvements in the northern coastal communities. Scenic resources include the coastal corridor with views of local beaches and the ocean; various estuaries and lagoons such as Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, and Batiquitos Lagoon; the agricultural fields in Carlsbad; San Dieguito River; and Peñasquitos Lagoon. No scenic resources or public viewsheds would be affected by the regional arterial projects identified in San Marcos, Ramona, unincorporated San Diego County lands east of Vista, and Lakeside due to the distance of these improvements from the local scenic resources and viewsheds.

Table 4.1-4 lists the scenic highways in the San Diego region that would be affected by implementation of the 2020 transportation network improvements in the proposed Plan, identifies the proposed improvements, and includes the impact that would occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenic Route</th>
<th>Proposed Improvement (2020)</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-5 (E)</td>
<td>Rail double-tracking, Mid-coast Trolley extension, additional Managed Lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, and outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 76 (E)</td>
<td>Two additional general purpose lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, and outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(E) = Eligible for designation as a scenic highway; (D) = Officially designated as a scenic highway
While there are no restrictions on modifications to scenic highways, local agencies and Caltrans must work together to coordinate projects and ensure the protection of the scenic value (Section 260 et seq.). For example, state law requires the undergrounding of all visible electricity distribution lines within 1,000 feet of a scenic highway. In some cases, local governments have their own land use and site planning regulations to protect scenic values along a given corridor.

The proposed Plan’s 2020 transportation network improvements would damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rocks, and outcroppings, within a state scenic highway and other local scenic resources and protected public viewsheds identified in local plans. This impact would be significant.

2020 Conclusion

Implementation of regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements and programs would substantially damage scenic resources and other local scenic resources and protected public viewsheds identified in local plans. Therefore, this impact (AES-2) in the year 2020 is significant.

2035

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

Areas of increased residential density by 2035 would be apparent within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Downtown, College Area, Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Mission Valley, Navajo, and Uptown. The SR 78 corridor, from Escondido to I-5, would also experience growth and resulting land use density increases of both residential and commercial/office by 2035. Local scenic resources and public viewsheds along this corridor consist of Buena Vista Lagoon, San Marcos Mountains, Merriam Mountains, Mount Whitney, Cerro de La Posas, Double Peak, Owens Peak, and Franks Peak. By 2035, some regional growth would be accommodated in the more eastern, rural areas of the region. Development in these areas would be located mostly along highway corridors, such as SR 67, I-8 east of El Cajon, SR 94, and generally within County of San Diego community planning areas. Several local scenic resources and public viewsheds identified in the County of San Diego community planning areas include features such as the eucalyptus groves in the Sweetwater community, oak woodland trees and rock outcroppings in the Crest/Dehesa communities, or oak trees on Desmond Drive in North County Metro.

Large-scale development in 2035 includes proposed industrial uses in Bressi Ranch, hotel and commercial development in the La Costa Resort and mixed commercial/hotel uses in Carlsbad Ranch; residential uses in Cielo del Norte and Hidden Meadows in the San Dieguito community; and mixed residential, commercial, and industrial uses in South Poway. Local scenic resources and public viewsheds in these areas include the coastal corridor and beaches; ocean; Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, and Batiquitos Lagoons in the City of Carlsbad; trees and rock formations in the North County Metro area/San Dieguito community; and steep mountain ranges in Poway including Twin Peaks, Kent Hill, Vandan Park, Tooth Rock, Goat Peak, and Iron Mountain.

New development associated with regional growth in the established north coastal communities, between Del Mar and Oceanside, would occur adjacent to and visible from vehicles traveling on state eligible scenic highways such as I-5 and SR 76. Scenic resources along the I-5 coastal corridor include views of local beaches and the ocean; various estuaries and lagoons such as Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, and Batiquitos Lagoons, the agricultural fields in Carlsbad; San Dieguito River; and Peñasquitos Lagoon.
Along the SR 76 corridor, scenic resources include Guajome Regional Park, San Luis Rey River, and Buena Vista Lagoon. Growth in the La Mesa and Lemon Grove communities would be adjacent to SR 94, an eligible scenic highway and SR 125, a designated state highway. Scenic resources along these corridors include trees, rock outcroppings, canyon lands, and ridgelines. Growth in the communities of Poway and Escondido and in northern unincorporated County would also occur along I-15, an eligible scenic highway. Scenic resources include Lake Wohlford, San Dieguito River, Elfin Forest Recreation Park, Bear Ridge, steep mountain ranges in Poway, and Gopher Canyon and mountainous ranges and steep slopes in unincorporated County of San Diego lands. In the eastern San Diego region, new growth would occur in proximity to several eligible scenic highways as listed in Table 4.1-1, including growth along the I-8 corridor in El Cajon and Crest/Dehesa communities, and along Avocado Boulevard in the Spring Valley/Rancho San Diego communities. Scenic features include eucalyptus groves in the Sweetwater community, and oak woodland trees and rock outcroppings in the Crest/Dehesa communities. In the South Bay, new growth east of Chula Vista would occur next to Bonita Road, San Miguel Road, and Sweetwater River Road, all County of San Diego eligible scenic highways. Scenic resources along these routes include rolling hills, open mesas and river valleys and canyons associated with Sweetwater River Canyon, Oneal Canyon, Johnson Canyon, Otay Mountain, Jamul Mountain, and San Ysidro Mountain.

Within these growth areas and others, there would be adverse scenic resources impacts related to development of land use projects along eligible and designated scenic highways and scenic resources identified in local plans and protected public viewsheds. Impacts would occur if development detracts or diminishes the elements that contribute to the scenic nature of the highway, including damage to trees, rocks, outcroppings, and historic bridges within a state scenic highway and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.

**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

By 2035, additional transportation network improvements and programs would occur in the San Diego region as part of the proposed Plan. The proposed Plan includes the construction of new rail and transit facilities by 2035, such as the extension of the Trolley from UTC to Mira Mesa via Sorrento Mesa/Carroll Canyon with a connection to the COASTER service in Sorrento Valley (Trolley Route 561); an extension of the Trolley from San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa via Mission Valley, Mid-City, Southeast San Diego, National City, and Chula Vista via Highland and 4th Avenues; and three new streetcars along the Downtown, Little Italy, North Park, and Golden Hill communities. The proposed Plan also includes double-tracking and several grade separation projects in 2035 for the LOSSAN, SPRINTER, and Trolley. Rail grade separations include Phase 1 of the Blue Line Frequency Enhancements and rail grade separations through the South Bay communities, and the Blue/Orange Track connection at 12th and Imperial. The extension of Trolley and rail service into new areas, between the UTC area to Mira Mesa via Sorrento Mesa/Carroll Canyon, from San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa via Mission Valley, Mid-City, Southeast San Diego, National City, and Chula Vista via Highland and 4th Avenues, would impair or detract from local scenic resources and public viewsheds, including the Otay River, Sweetwater River, San Diego River, open space areas associated with Chollas Creek, Tecolote Creek, and Carroll Canyon. The addition of a second track to an existing single track along the COASTER and SPRINTER corridors would not detract or impair views from I-5, a state eligible scenic highway.
The proposed Plan contains three transportation network improvements on the arterial roadway system in 2035. These projects include the addition of new travel lanes and Class II bicycle lanes along Genesee Avenue in San Diego, new travel lanes and bicycle lanes and pedestrian pathways in the community of Ramona, and new interchange and roadway improvements at SR 78. Local scenic resources and public viewsheds along these corridors are of the riparian habitat (Genesee Avenue), and rolling hills and valleys (Ramona and SR 78). Road widening and bikeway improvements would result in some change in the visual environment that would detract or impair views of the scenic resources and public viewsheds during both construction and operation.

Active transportation improvements by 2035 include development of various bikeways throughout the region, including bikeway improvements to the Coastal Rail Trail and the Bayshore Bikeway. Transit service improvements to be constructed by 2035 include increases in service for the COASTER and SPRINTER, extensions and increases in service of the Trolley, two new streetcar routes in San Diego, two intermodal transit centers, and several new rapid transit routes. Increases in transit services and the development of an active transportation network would not detract or impair views of scenic resources and public viewsheds.

Most of the Managed Lane and general purpose lane improvements planned by 2035 are Managed Lanes located in the more urbanized areas of the San Diego region such as I-5, I-15, SR 78, SR 94, SR 52, and I-805, with the exception of additional lanes planned on SR 67 from Mapleview to Goldbar Lane. Scenic resources in the Lakeside community planning area include rock outcroppings and oak trees that would be affected by the proposed roadway improvements. Arterial improvements in northern inland communities would impact scenic resources and public viewsheds along SR 78, a local scenic roadway designated by the City of San Marcos.

Table 4.1-5 lists the scenic highways in the San Diego region that would be affected by implementation of the 2035 transportation projects in the proposed Plan, identifies the proposed improvements, and includes the impact that would occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenic Route</th>
<th>Proposed Improvement (2035)</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-5 (E)</td>
<td>Rail double-tracking, additional Managed Lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, and outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 52 (E)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, and outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(E) = Eligible for designation as a Scenic Highway; (D) = Officially designated as a Scenic Highway

The potential for transportation network improvements and programs to impact trees, rocks, outcroppings, or other scenic elements such as historic resources also exists. As discussed above, many of the improvements are in areas with designated scenic resources, including historic structures and scenic rock outcroppings. Therefore, there is potential for transportation network improvements and programs to affect these scenic resources. Due to the location of these transportation network improvements and programs along scenic highways and among associated scenic resources, this would be a significant impact.
4.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

2035 Conclusion

Implementation of regional growth and land use change as well as transportation network improvements and programs would result in new development and infrastructure among scenic resources, including trees, rocks, outcroppings, and historic structures within a state scenic highway and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Therefore, this impact (AES-2) in the year 2035 is significant.

2050

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

By 2050, the population of the region is forecasted to increase by 925,330 people; housing by 325,986 units; and employment by 460,492 jobs. As shown in Figure 2.0-12 of this EIR, regional land use and development changes are evident by 2050. The increased density can be seen when comparing the existing housing density to the 2050 housing density, as shown in Figures 4.13-2 and 4.13-8, respectively, of Section 4.13 Population and Housing of this EIR. Similar to buildout conditions in 2035, areas of increased residential density by 2050 would be apparent within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Downtown, College Area, Miramar, Otay Mesa, Mission Valley, Navajo, and Uptown. New development is also evident in the north coastal corridor between Del Mar and MCB Camp Pendleton, the area between MCB Camp Pendleton and I-15; corridor along SR 78 between Vista and San Marcos; northeast of I-15 and Escondido; the SR 56 corridor and along Carmel Valley and Poway. In the South Bay, development occurs along SR 125 in the Otay Ranch area and along the SR 94 and I-8 corridors, and along the unincorporated communities of Alpine, Crest/Dehesa, and Spring Valley. Development in coastal areas includes the City of Encinitas with the proposed buildout of the Downtown Encinitas Specific Plan and North 101 Specific Plan. Major development in the County of San Diego includes the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Village in San Dieguito, Montecito Ranch in Ramona, Pala Mesa in Fallbrook, and Otay Ranch in the South Bay. Pockets of new growth are also forecasted to occur east of MCB Camp Pendleton; along the I-15 corridor north of Escondido; along the SR 78 and SR 76 corridors; along SR 67 in Santee, Lakeside, and Ramona; and along the I-8, SR 94, and SR 125 in the Cities of El Cajon, Lemon Grove, and La Mesa.

Local scenic resources and public viewsheds in the coastal areas include San Luis Rey River, Buena Vista Lagoon, Agua Hedionda, Batiquitos Lagoon, San Elijo Lagoon, the Pacific Ocean, coastal beach corridors, San Dieguito and Peñasquitos Rivers; Otay Mountain/Lower Otay Lakes in the Otay Mesa planning area; Santa Maria Valley and Mount Woodson in the Ramona community; Valley Center Ridge, Burnt Mountain, and San Marcos Mountain in the North County Metro region; and the Santa Margarita Open Space Preserve and Gopher Canyon near the Fallbrook/Bonsall community planning area. New development associated with regional growth in the established north coastal communities, between Del Mar and Oceanside, would occur adjacent to and visible from vehicles traveling on state-eligible scenic highways such as I-5, and SR 76. Scenic resources along the I-5 coastal corridor include views of local beaches and the ocean; various estuaries and lagoons such as Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, Batiquitos Lagoons; the agricultural fields in Carlsbad; San Dieguito River; and Peñasquitos Lagoon. Along the SR 76 corridor, scenic resources include Guajome Regional Park, San Luis Rey River, and Buena Vista Lagoon. Growth in the La Mesa and Lemon Grove communities would be adjacent to SR 94, an eligible scenic highway and SR 125, a designated state highway. Scenic resources along these corridors include trees, rock outcroppings, canyon lands, and ridgelines.
Growth in the communities of Poway, Escondido and in northern unincorporated County of San Diego would also occur along I-15, an eligible scenic highway. Scenic resources include Lake Wohlford, San Dieguito River, Elfin Forest Recreation Park, Bear Ridge, steep mountain ranges in Poway, and Gopher Canyon and mountainous ranges and steep slopes in unincorporated County of San Diego lands. In the eastern San Diego region, new growth would occur in proximity to several eligible scenic highways as listed in Table 4.1-1, including growth along the I-8 corridor in El Cajon and Crest/Dehesa communities, and along Avocado Boulevard in the Spring Valley/Rancho San Diego communities. Scenic features include eucalyptus groves in the Sweetwater community, and oak woodland trees and rock outcroppings in the Crest/Dehesa communities. In the South Bay, new growth east of Chula Vista would occur next to Bonita Road, San Miguel Road, and Sweetwater River Road, all County of San Diego eligible scenic highways. Scenic resources along these routes include rolling hills, open mesas, and river valleys and canyons associated with Sweetwater River Canyon, Oneal Canyon, Johnson Canyon, Otay Mountain, Jamul Mountain, and San Ysidro Mountain.

This regional growth and land use change would result in adverse visual impacts related to implementation of projects along eligible and designated scenic highways and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Impacts would occur where development detracts from or diminish the elements that contribute to the scenic nature of the highway, including trees, rocks, outcroppings, and historic bridges and structures within a state scenic highway corridor or local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Therefore, regional growth and land use change would cause a significant impact.

**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

The proposed Plan includes the construction of new rail and transit facilities by 2050, such as the extension of the SPRINTER from Escondido to Westfield North County, a new Trolley line from Downtown San Diego to SDSU, along the Park Boulevard and El Cajon Boulevard corridors, a new Trolley line from Pacific Beach to Grossmont Center, via Clairemont, Kearny Mesa, Mission Valley and SDSU, Trolley extension from Pacific Beach to Balboa to Kearny Mesa to Carmel Valley. By 2050, rail grade separations would occur along the LOSSAN and SPRINTER Corridors. On the Orange and Blue Line Trolley lines, 11 rail grade improvement would be completed by 2050. The extension of the new Trolley lines would largely extend through highly urbanized corridors in the South Bay and Mid-City/Kearny Mesa communities; however, portions of the Trolley line would extend through communities that have local scenic resources and public viewsheds such as the Otay River, Sweetwater River, and San Diego River, and open space associated with the Chollas, Tecolote, and Carroll Canyon Creeks. Portions of the new Trolley extensions would detract or impair views of the scenic resources and public viewsheds in these communities with the introduction of a new infrastructure, including tracks, station platforms, overhead catenary wire, and other features such as above-grade guideways and overcrossings.

New Managed Lanes or general purpose lanes would be completed by 2050 on the I-5, I-8, SR 15, I-15, SR 76, I-805, SR 52, SR 54, SR 56, SR 67, SR 94, and SR 125. Potential impacts to scenic resources and public viewsheds would occur with planned transportation improvements in the northern coastal communities. Scenic resources include the coastal corridor with views of local beaches and the ocean; various estuaries and lagoons such as Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, and Batiquitos Lagoons; the agricultural fields in Carlsbad; San Dieguito River; and Peñasquitos Lagoon. Highway improvements along SR 54, SR 67, SR 94 and SR 125 would occur in proximity to local scenic resources and public viewsheds consisting of trees and rock outcroppings.
Transportation improvements are planned on one designated and five eligible scenic highways. Table 4.1-6 lists the scenic highways in the San Diego region that would be affected by implementation of the 2050 transportation projects in the proposed Plan, identifies the proposed improvements, and includes the impact that would occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenic Route</th>
<th>Proposed Improvement (2035)</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-5 (E)</td>
<td>Rail double-tracking, additional Managed Lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 76 (E)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes/Operational improvements</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 125 (D)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 52 (E)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-8 (E)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 94 (E)</td>
<td>Additional general travel lanes</td>
<td>Cut-and-fill activities may cause substantial damage to scenic resources, such as trees, rocks, outcroppings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(E) = Eligible for designation as a Scenic Highway; (D) = Officially designated as a Scenic Highway

The proposed Plan’s 2050 transportation network improvements and programs would damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic sites within a state scenic highway and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Due to the location of these transportation network improvements and programs along scenic highways and among local scenic resources and public viewsheds, this would be a significant impact.

**2050 Conclusion**

Implementation of regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements would result in new development and infrastructure among scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic structures within a state scenic highway, and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. Therefore, this impact (AES-2) in the year 2050 is significant.
MITIGATION MEASURES

AES-2 Substantially Damage Scenic Resources

2020, 2035, and 2050

AES-2A Reduce Impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway, local scenic resources, and public viewsheds. During planning, design, and project-level CEQA review of transportation network improvements within eligible or designated state scenic highways and local scenic resources and public viewsheds, SANDAG shall, and other transportation project sponsors can and should, ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts. In addition, during planning, design and project-level CEQA review of development projects, the County of San Diego, cities, and other local jurisdictions can and should incorporate measures that ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts to scenic resources within eligible and designated state scenic highways, and local scenic resources and public viewsheds. Measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Avoid damaging, moving, or removing trees, rock outcroppings, historic bridges, and other scenic resources from eligible or designated state scenic highway corridors and local scenic resources and public viewsheds, where those scenic resources are relevant to the designation or eligibility for designation as a state scenic highway or are identified as a protected visual resource in local plans. For projects within or adjacent to designated or eligible state scenic highway corridors, and local scenic resources and public viewsheds identified in local approved plans, prior to project approval, complete design studies identifying site-specific mitigation measures and during project construction, implement such mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the quality of the views or visual experience that originally qualified the highway for scenic designation, and protected status of local resources in approved plans.

AES-2B Reduce Impacts to local scenic resources and public viewsheds. During planning, design, and project-level CEQA review of development projects within or adjacent to local scenic resources and public viewsheds, the County of San Diego, cities, and other local jurisdictions can and should, ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts. In addition, during planning, design, and project-level CEQA review of development projects, project sponsors can and should incorporate measures that ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts to local scenic resources and public viewsheds. Measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Apply development standards and guidelines to maintain compatibility with surrounding natural areas, including site coverage, building height and massing, building materials and color, landscaping, and site grading.
- Ensure vegetation used as screening and landscaping blends in and complements the natural landscape.
- Retain or replace trees within scenic resources and public viewsheds so that clear-cutting is not evident.
- Ensure grading blends with the adjacent landforms and topography.

In addition, Mitigation Measure AES 1-A Protect Public Views of Scenic Vistas would also help to reduce impacts to scenic resources, public viewsheds, and eligible and designated state scenic highways.
SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1A, AES-2A, and AES-2B would reduce significant impacts to scenic resources, including resources within a state scenic highway and local scenic routes and protected public viewsheds. However, some of the growth and land use change, and transportation network improvements are located in areas where damage, movement, or removal of trees, rocks, outcroppings, and other scenic resources cannot be avoided, such as improvements on state designated SR 125, and eligible scenic highways I-5, SR 76, SR 52, I-8, and SR 94. It cannot be guaranteed that all future project-level impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level. Therefore, this impact (AES-2) would remain significant and unavoidable.

AES-3 SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE CHARACTER OF AN AREA, INCLUDING ADDING A VISUAL ELEMENT OF URBAN CHARACTER TO AN EXISTING RURAL OR OPEN SPACE AREA OR BY CREATING SUBSTANTIAL NEW SOURCES OF LIGHT OR GLARE THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT DAY OR NIGHTTIME VIEWS.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This analysis provides a description of the existing visual character of areas affected by the proposed Plan’s regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements, and describes how the proposed Plan would change or impact the character of these areas. Visual changes are described for areas where substantial regional growth or transportation projects are proposed.

The section also analyzes impacts from light and glare. In regards to land use changes, additional sources of light and glare may come from development in outlying communities or conversion of undeveloped lands to more urban uses. Transportation projects (which include improvements or lane additions) may also result in additional vehicles on the roadways and result in an increased light source at night from roadway lighting and vehicles. Relevant policies and ordinances are analyzed for their ability to reduce visual character impacts.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

2020

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

By 2020, population within the region is forecasted to increase by 292,284 people; housing by 83,836 units; and employment by 173,211 jobs. New development caused by regional growth and land use change would include new housing units, services, commercial areas, industrial centers, schools, and civic uses. While some growth would be in the form of new developments or communities, such as in the City of San Diego communities of Pacific Highlands Ranch, Black Mountain Ranch, and Mission Valley and in eastern Chula Vista, a substantial portion of new growth also would occur within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Downtown, Kearny Mesa, University City, Navajo and University City and rural communities in the unincorporated County such as Lakeside, Otay, North County Metro, Pendleton-De Luz, Fallbrook, Spring Valley, Ramona and Valley Center. Development of these communities would change visual character throughout the region, both in beneficial and adverse ways.
Most of the new land development that would result from regional growth and land use change by 2020 would occur within and adjacent to areas that are currently urbanized. Infill development occurs in highly urbanized areas and affects the character of existing communities (e.g. increased densities, scale and bulk, and height of buildings), resulting in viewshed character changes or light and shadow impacts. Some intensification of development would occur in some of the more outlying communities, such as Vista, Escondido, Poway, Santee, Ramona, El Cajon, La Mesa, and Lemon Grove. In these areas, there would be some conversion of undeveloped lands, as well as infill in already developed areas of the communities. Visual character changes would occur because the infill developments are larger than those that currently exist in the communities and have the potential to transform the surrounding community from existing rural to more urban communities. Local jurisdictions have general plan policies, zoning ordinances, other ordinances, and additional regulations/policies such as design guidelines in place to protect visual character and quality within their jurisdictions. While some infill development projects would cause adverse visual character impacts in urban areas, these policies and regulations would assure there would be no substantial degradation of visual character.

New development would also result in additional sources of light and glare, which in some locations would result in adverse impacts to the region’s dark skies. Lighting requirements are guided by standards set by local jurisdictions. Typical measures include the use of downward-directed low-pressure sodium vapor lighting. These requirements aid in the preservation of dark-sky conditions, which are needed by the local observatories. New development would be required to comply with the applicable lighting standards, and the location, type, and direction of the lighting. A lighting plan is typically required to be submitted to planning departments during the development review process to show illumination levels and point of intersection between fixtures, as well as use of low-pressure sodium exterior lighting. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies.

While some of the land development projects associated with the proposed Plan are located in areas where they would not substantially change surrounding visual character, those in some outlying and less urbanized areas would substantially degrade the visual character of an area, including adding a visual element of urban character to an existing rural or open space area. Therefore, impacts of regional growth and land use change on visual character would be significant.

**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

From 2012 to 2020, major transportation network improvements and programs would include double-tracking at certain locations on the LOSSAN rail corridor, increases in COASTER frequencies including an extension of service to the Gaslamp District of Downtown San Diego, completion of the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension from Old Town to University City, the South Bay Rapid Bus from the Otay Mesa ITC to Downtown San Diego, Rapid Bus Route 905 from Iris to the Otay Mesa POE, increases in local bus service frequencies, express bus routes to SDIA and Tijuana International Airport, a San Marcos shuttle, and construction of two transit-only lanes on SR 15 between I-805 and I-8.

Additional major transportation network improvements would include new Managed Lanes along I-5 from Manchester Avenue to SR 78 and I-805 from Carroll Canyon Road to SR 52, new toll lanes on SR 11 to the Otay Mesa POE, new general purpose lanes along a portion of SR 76, and a new freeway connector at SR 11 and SR 905. Projects that include completion or extensions of freeways, toll roads, and the POE would likely add new lighting components that in some locations would adversely affect dark skies.
Nearly all of the planned transportation network improvements for located on regional arterials are planned to occur by 2020, and most of those are located within the incorporated cities of the San Diego region. These projects include new road extensions, travel lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, and new and replacement bridges. There are nine projects in the unincorporated County, including Ramona and Lakeside, along Pauma Heights Road, another extends from the city limits of Vista along South Santa Fe Avenue, along San Vicente Road near Wildcat Canyon Road, and along Tavern Road in Alpine. Most of these improvements would be minor and consist of improvements to existing facilities, so permanent visual changes would be limited. However, projects with lane additions and improvements that would result in increases in traffic on those roadways would experience additional light sources from vehicle headlights at night, which in some locations would adversely affect dark skies.

The proposed Plan includes active transportation projects. Improvements include safe routes to transit at all new transit stations, and development of various bikeways throughout the region. Additionally, the proposed Plan identifies transit service improvements in 2020, but these improvements do not require major infrastructure development, so they would not have a substantial effect on the visual character of the surrounding areas.

Managed lane improvements on existing highway facilities such as new Managed Lanes on I-5 and I-805 would involve relatively minor impacts to visual character because of their location in generally urban environments. However, adverse impacts would occur if proposed alignments or facilities require large cut-and-fill slopes or sound attenuation barriers, whether in previously undeveloped areas or already developed urban areas. Addition of new general purpose lanes to SR 76 would affect rural vistas or change the character of existing views. Careful alignment and design, collaboration with local jurisdictions and conformance with local grading ordinances to ensure compatibility with surrounding development would reduce visual character impacts.

In urbanized areas, roadways and ancillary improvements, such as sound walls, introduced by transportation network improvements and programs would result in adverse visual character impacts, depending on the scale of improvements and location of sensitive viewers, including the driving public, users of gathering places, rest areas and vista points, and a large number of residents who live around resources. Depending on location, new general purpose lanes and Managed Lanes and park-and-ride lots would result in some loss of existing freeway landscaping.

Although the above transportation network improvements generally occur in urbanized environments, they would substantially degrade the visual character of an area, depending upon the nature of the improvements and the location of sensitive viewers. Therefore, impacts of transportation network improvements and programs on visual character would be significant.

**2020 Conclusion**

Implementation of regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements and programs would substantially degrade visual character, including adding visual elements of urban character to existing rural or open space areas. Therefore, this impact (AES-3) in the year 2020 is significant.
2035

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

By 2035, the population of the region is forecasted to increase by 710,269 people; housing by 228,870 units; and employment by 319,025 jobs over existing 2012 conditions and this growth would result in degradation of visual character and new sources of light and glare. Areas of increased residential density by 2035 would be apparent within existing established communities such as the City of San Diego communities of Downtown, College Area, Mira Mesa, Otay Mesa, Mission Valley, Navajo, and Uptown. The SR 78 corridor, from Escondido to I-5, would also experience growth and resulting land use density increases of both residential and commercial/office by 2035. By 2035, some regional growth would be accommodated in the more eastern, rural areas of the region. Development in these areas would be centered mostly along highway corridors, such as SR 67, I-8 east of El Cajon, and SR 94, and generally within San Diego County community planning areas.

The communities along I-5 linking the northern portion of the region to the City of San Diego would experience intensified growth during this period. Regional growth and land use change would include some conversion of undeveloped lands, although there would be a focus on infill development within the existing communities, all of which would change visual character. Urban centers in the western third of the San Diego region would have most available land developed with single- and multi-family uses, commercial and office uses, and industrial uses. Consistent with the goals of the proposed Plan, the dense growth within existing urban centers with high accessibility to transit options allows for the creation of communities that are more sustainable, walkable, transit-oriented, and compact.

The regional growth and land use change described above would also result in additional sources of light and glare. Lighting requirements are guided by standards set by local jurisdictions. Typical measures include the use of downward-directed low-pressure sodium vapor lighting. These requirements aid in the preservation of dark-sky conditions, which are needed by the local observatories. New development would be required to comply with the applicable lighting standards, and the location, type, and direction of the lighting. A lighting plan is typically required to be submitted to planning departments during the development review process to show illumination levels and point of intersection between fixtures, as well as use of low-pressure sodium exterior lighting. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies.

In more urbanized areas, changes in visual character would occur as well, as remaining undeveloped properties are developed and infill occurs. Visual character changes would occur because the infill developments are larger than those that currently exist surrounding the communities and have the potential to transform the surrounding community from existing rural to more urban communities. Local jurisdictions have general plan policies, zoning ordinances, other ordinances, and additional regulations/policies such as design guidelines in place to protect visual character and quality within their jurisdictions. While some infill development projects would cause adverse visual character impacts in urban areas, these policies and regulations would assure there would be no substantial degradation of visual character.

While some of the regional growth and land use change associated with the proposed Plan is located in areas where it would not substantially affect the surrounding visual character, regional growth and land use change in outlying and less urbanized areas would substantially degrade the visual character of an area, including adding a visual element of urban character to an existing rural or open space area. Therefore, impacts related to the degradation of visual character would be significant.
4.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Transportation Network Improvements and Programs

The proposed Plan includes the construction of new rail and transit facilities by 2035, such as the extension of the Trolley from UTC to Mira Mesa via Sorrento Mesa/Carroll Canyon with a connection to the COASTER service in Sorrento Valley (Trolley Route 561); an extension of the Trolley from San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa via Mission Valley, Mid-City, Southeast San Diego, National City, and Chula Vista via Highland and 4th Avenues; and three new streetcars along the Downtown, Little Italy, North Park, and Golden Hill communities. The proposed Plan also includes double-tracking and several grade separation projects in 2035 for the LOSSAN, SPRINTER, and Trolley. Rail grade separations include Phase 1 of the Blue Line Frequency Enhancements and rail grade separations through the South Bay communities, and the Blue/Orange Track connection at 12th and Imperial.

Additional major transportation network improvements by 2035 would include additional Managed Lanes along certain portions of I-5 between SR 905 and SR 78, as well as portions of SR 15 and I-15, SR 78, SR 94, and I-805. General purpose lanes would be added along I-5 from SR 54 to SR 15, and portions of SR 52 and SR 67. Six Managed Lane connectors would be added along portions of I-5, SR 15, I-15, and I-805, and five freeway connectors would be added along portions of I-5, SR 94, and SR 11/SR 905. Intermodal improvements at SDIA and San Ysidro would also be completed by 2035. Due to the highly urbanized nature of the area surrounding these improvements, degradation of visual character and substantial sources of additional lighting and glare would not occur.

Two new general purpose lanes along SR 67 would be added from Mapleview to Gold Bar Lane, which would result in a change in visual character. Projects with lane additions and improvements that would result in increases in traffic on those roadways would experience additional light sources from vehicle headlights at night, which would adversely affect dark skies. Adherence to the lighting standards previously described would reduce impacts to dark skies.

The proposed Plan contains three transportation improvements on the arterial system by 2035. These projects include new vehicle lanes and addition of Class II bicycle lanes along Genesee Avenue in San Diego; new vehicle lanes and bicycle lanes and pedestrian pathways in the community of Ramona, and new interchange and roadway improvements at SR 78. The Genesee Avenue section in San Diego traverses portions of riparian habitat and large areas of open space, so impacts related to visual character and additional lighting would occur along this corridor. Additionally, transportation improvements in the community of Ramona and the more rural area near SR 78 would result in a noticeable increase in light sources at night, which would adversely affect dark skies. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies. Adverse visual character impacts would occur in these rural areas because roadway widening would introduce visual elements of urban character to an existing rural area such as Ramona and the inland communities along SR 78.

In urbanized areas, roadways and ancillary improvements, such as sound walls, introduced by transportation network improvements and programs may also result in adverse visual character impacts depending on the scale of improvements and location of sensitive viewers, including the driving public, users of gathering places, rest areas and vista points, and a large number of residents who live around resources. New general purpose lanes and new Managed Lanes and park-and-ride lots such as in the I-5 corridor may result in some loss of existing freeway landscaping.

Although the transportation network improvements and programs described above would generally occur in urbanized environments, they would substantially degrade the visual character of an area, depending upon nearby sensitive viewers. Transportation network improvements would cause a significant impact.
2035 Conclusion

By 2035, implementation of the proposed Plan would result in regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements and programs that would substantially degrade visual character, including adding visual elements of urban character to existing rural or open space areas. Therefore, this impact (AES-3) in the year 2035 is significant.

2050

Regional Growth and Land Use Change

From 2036 to 2050, regional population is forecasted to increase by 215,061 people (6 percent), 97,152 housing units (7 percent), and 141,467 jobs (8 percent). The 2050 regional land use pattern is shown in Figure 2.11-13.

approximately 75 percent of the forecasted regional population increase between 2036 and 2050 is in the City of San Diego (52 percent), County of San Diego (14 percent), and City of Chula Vista (9 percent). Similarly, these three jurisdictions accommodate approximately 78 percent of new housing units and 77 percent of new jobs, respectively, between 2036 and 2050.

In the City of San Diego, the communities with the highest proportion of the forecasted population and housing unit increases include the City Heights and Eastern Area of Mid-City, Greater North Park, Uptown, Linda Vista, Clairemont Mesa, and Downtown. The highest proportions of forecasted job increases are in the communities of Downtown, Otay Mesa, and University City.

In the unincorporated County, the communities with the highest proportion of the forecasted population and housing unit increases include Lakeside, North County Metro, and Spring Valley. The highest proportions of forecasted job increases are in the communities of Otay, Lakeside, and North County Metro.

As identified in local subregional planning efforts (Appendix H), development in coastal areas includes the City of Encinitas with the proposed buildout of the Downtown Encinitas Specific Plan and North 101 Specific Plan. Major development in the County planning area includes the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Village in San Dieguito, Montecito Ranch in Ramona, Pala Mesa in Fallbrook, and Otay Ranch in the South Bay.

Regional growth and land use change by 2050 would include some conversion of undeveloped lands, although there would be a focus on infill development within the existing communities, all of which would change visual character. This would also result in additional sources of light and glare, which would have significant impacts on the region’s dark skies. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies and no adverse light and glare impacts would occur. In more urbanized areas, changes in visual character would occur as well, as remaining undeveloped properties are developed and infill occurs. Local jurisdictions have general plan policies, zoning ordinances, other ordinances, and additional regulations/policies such as design guidelines in place to protect visual character and quality within their jurisdictions. While some infill development projects would cause adverse visual character impacts in urban areas, these policies and regulations would assure there would be no substantial degradation of visual character.
While some of the regional growth and land use change associated with the proposed Plan is located in areas where it would not substantially change the surrounding visual character, regional growth and land use change in outlying and less urbanized areas would substantially degrade the visual character of an area, including adding a visual element of urban character to an existing rural or open space area. Therefore, impacts related to the degradation of visual character would be significant.

**Transportation Network Improvements and Programs**

By 2050, major transportation network improvements and programs (in addition to those identified by 2020 and 2035) would include completion of double-tracking on the LOSSAN rail corridor, as well as the Del Mar Tunnel and grade separations; an extension of the SPRINTER to Westfield North County; the SPRINTER Express; Blue Line Trolley rail grade separations; transition of the Mid-City Rapid Bus from SDSU to Downtown San Diego to Trolley; Trolley extensions from Pacific Beach to Balboa, Balboa to Kearny Mesa, Kearny Mesa to El Cajon Transit Center, and Kearny Mesa to Carmel Valley; substantial increases in Rapid bus services; a streetcar from Mission Beach to La Jolla; and Phase II of the San Ysidro ITC.

Additional major transportation network improvements by 2050 include additional Managed Lanes along portions of I-5, SR 15 and I-15, I-805, SR 52, SR 54, SR 94, and SR 125; new general purpose lanes along portions of I-8, SR 15, SR 52, SR 56, SR 67, SR 76, SR 94, and SR 125; and highway operational improvements along portions of I-5, I-8, and SR 76. There would be new Managed Lane connectors along I-15 and I-805 at SR 52, and one new freeway connector at I-15 and SR 56. New toll lanes would be added along I-5 from Vandegrift Boulevard to the Orange County border and along I-15 from SR 78 to the Riverside County border. Increases in transit service on existing operating transit modes would not result in an adverse change in visual character to the communities as the facilities already exist and the community is adapted to the transit mode passing through the area.

Proposed improvements to existing facilities and construction of new highways, roadways, and other transit facilities would create adverse visual impacts by adding visual elements of urban character to existing rural or open spaces, as well as additional sources of light and glare. This would occur where new alignments or improvements to existing facilities would pass through primarily rural, agricultural, and/or open space areas and the contrast would result in substantial degradation of visual character. These generally would occur along the I-5 corridor, north of Oceanside, along SR 76, east of the I-15 to Couser Canyon, on I-15 between SR 78 and SR 76, along SR 56, along SR 67, on SR 94 east of SR 125, and along SR 125 south of SR 54. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies and no adverse light and glare impacts would occur. In urbanized areas, roadways and ancillary improvements such as sound walls introduced by transportation network improvements and programs may also result in adverse visual character impacts depending on the scale of improvements and location of sensitive viewers, including the driving public, users of gathering places, rest areas and vista points, and a large number of residents who live around such visual resources. Highway widening and the construction of Managed Lanes and park-and-ride lots may result in some loss of existing freeway landscaping.

Although the above transportation network improvements and programs generally occur in urbanized environments, they would substantially degrade the character of an area, depending upon nearby sensitive viewers. Additional lighting from these projects, as well as any additional traffic, would adversely affect dark skies. Adherence to the lighting standards would reduce impacts to dark skies and no adverse light and glare impacts would occur. Transportation network improvements would cause a significant impact.
2050 Conclusion

By 2050, implementation of the proposed Plan would result in regional growth and land use change and transportation network improvements that would substantially degrade the visual character, including adding visual elements of urban character to existing rural or open space areas. Therefore, this impact (AES-3) in the year 2050 is significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES

AES-3 Substantially Degrade the Character of an Area

2020, 2035, and 2050

AES-3A Reduce impacts to visual character. During planning, design, and project-level CEQA review of transportation network improvements, SANDAG shall, and other transportation project sponsors can and should, ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts. In addition, during planning, design and project-level CEQA review of development projects, the County of San Diego, cities, and other local jurisdictions can and should incorporate measures that ensure that projects are designed to reduce impacts. Measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Use contour grading to match surrounding terrain and existing natural, and man-made features of the area.
- Revegetate graded slopes and exposed earth surfaces prior to completion of construction.
- Construct permanent barriers (e.g., sound walls, safety barriers, retaining walls) of materials whose color and texture or treatment (e.g., landscaping cover) complements the surrounding landscape and development. Break up large barrier façades using techniques that include, but are not limited to, color, texture, landscaping, see-through safety barriers, and alternating façades.

In addition, Mitigation Measures AES-1A Protect Public Views of Scenic Vistas, AES-2A Reduce Impacts to Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway, and AES-2B Reduce Impacts to Local Scenic Resources and Public Viewsheds, would also help to reduce impacts to visual character.

SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

2020, 2035, 2050

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1A, AES-2A, AES-2B, and AES-3A would reduce significant impacts associated with the degradation of visual character. However, while these mitigation measures reduce changes in visual character, it would be infeasible to prevent all instances of substantial degradation of visual character caused by regional growth and land use change as well as transportation network improvements. It cannot be guaranteed that all future project-level impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level. Therefore, substantial degradation of visual character would remain significant and unavoidable.
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