

4.1 AESTHETICS

This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions in San Leandro related to aesthetics, and evaluates the potential impacts to aesthetics associated with the proposed project. The following evaluation assesses visual character, scenic vistas, scenic highways, and light and glare.

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes key State and City regulations and programs related to aesthetics. There are no specific federal regulations applicable to aesthetics.

State Regulations

California Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program, maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), protects State scenic highway corridors from changes which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to the highways. Caltrans has not designated any highway within San Leandro as a State scenic highway. The closest scenic highway is located within a portion of Interstate 580, starting at the northern border of San Leandro and extending north to State Route 24 in Oakland.¹

California Building Standards Code

Title 24 in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) is the California Building Standards Code and Part 6 of Title 24 is the California Energy Code (CEC), which includes standards for lighting to improve energy efficiency, and to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power, brightness, and sensor controls.

Part 11 of Title 24 is the California Green Building Standards Code known as CALGreen. CALGreen establishes building standards aimed at enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts that have a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact. CALGreen encourages sustainable construction practices and includes standards for planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resource efficiency, and environmental quality. Section 5.106.8, Light Pollution Reduction, specifically establishes Backlight, Uplight, and Glare (BUG) ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for non-residential development.

¹ California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highways Program, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed on December 16, 2015.

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Local Regulations

City of San Leandro Municipal Code

The City of San Leandro Municipal Code is the primary tool that shapes the form and character of physical development in San Leandro. The Municipal Code contains all ordinances for the City and identifies zoning districts, site development regulations, and other regulatory provisions that ensure consistency between the General Plan and proposed development projects. The Municipal Code is organized by Title, Chapter, Article, and Section. The following provisions from the Municipal Code help minimize visual impacts associated with new development projects:

- **Chapter 3-19, Green Building Requirements for City Building Projects**, establishes regulations regarding the design, construction, operation, and deconstruction of City facilities and facilities it funds by incorporating green building practices and requiring the integration of green building strategies in City buildings.
- **Chapter 3-22, Bay-Friendly Landscaping Requirements for City Projects**, aims to promote economic and environmental health in the city. The City will provide leadership to both the private and public sectors by incorporating Bay-friendly landscaping design, construction, and maintenance of City and City-funded landscapes.
- **Chapter 5-2, Street Trees**, regulates the planting, replacement, and removal of street trees throughout the city. This Chapter regulates which species of street trees are acceptable for use as street trees, the location of street trees, as well as the protection of street trees during construction related activities.
- **Chapter 7-5, Building Code**, is based on and incorporates the 2013 California Building Standards Code and sets forth provisions for building standards for development within the city. The Municipal Code establishes building standards for construction of things such as pedestrian walkways, seismic reinforcing, and soils and foundations.

City of San Leandro Zoning Code

The San Leandro Zoning Code contains a variety of development standards and required review processes that are applicable to development within the city and pertain to aesthetics. These standards are intended to preserve the overall character throughout the city, protect scenic resources, and prevent adverse impacts related to light and glare.

- **Article 5** establishes the zoning regulations for residential districts. Section 2-582 contains the regulations for the View Preservation Sub-District (RS-VP), which are intended to restrict new construction that would impair residents' enjoyment of distant scenic views. The maximum allowable building height in the RS-VP district is 18 feet or one (1) story. In addition, all new houses and additions are evaluated through a discretionary procedure, the "View Preservation/Site Plan Review," to prevent the unreasonable blockage of views, minimize potential adverse impacts to neighbors, and ensure that single-family homes are designed to be visually compatible with their surroundings. The RS-VP district applies to the Bay-O-Vista neighborhood.
- **Article 16** establishes development regulations other than parking, loading, and sign regulations that are applicable to development in all or several districts. Section 4-1670 establishes that glare from glass shall not cover more than twenty percent (20%) of a building surface visible from a street unless

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an applicant submits information demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Zoning Enforcement Official that use of such glass would not significantly increase glare visible from adjacent streets or pose a hazard for moving vehicles. From outdoor lighting sources, parking lot lighting shall comply with Article 17 and security lighting in any district may be indirect or diffused, or shall be shielded or directed away from an R district within five hundred (500) feet. Lighting for outdoor court or field games within three hundred (300) feet of an R district shall require approval of a use permit.

- **Article 18** establishes sign regulations throughout the city in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the City’s appearance by avoiding clutter and requiring certain signs to comply with design review and by regulating the number and size of signs according to standards consistent with the types of establishments in each zoning district in order to protect residential districts adjoining nonresidential districts from adverse impacts of nearby signs. Section 4-1802 establishes that all signs regulated under this Article are subject to the review and approval of the Community Development Director or person designated by the Director, to ensure the objectives of the General Plan to maintain quality and attractive business areas.
- **Article 19** regulates the design, installation, maintenance and management, of landscape throughout the city. This Article applies to large landscape projects and projects for which “Site Plan Approval” is required. Large landscape projects are defined as projects that include new or rehabilitated commercial, industrial and developer-installed residential landscapes over 2,500 square feet and all new or rehabilitated residential landscapes over 5,000 square feet. For projects subject to Site Plan review, landscape plans are subject to review and approval as well. In addition to requiring landscape plan review and approval, this Article contains provisions regarding the removal, installation, and preservation of trees, as well as establishes design standards for landscapes throughout the city. For example, the landscape design standards require that landscape materials demonstrate a recognizable pattern or theme for the overall development, regulate the spacing of street trees, and establish standards for tree installations within parking lots, such as screening and the minimum number of trees to be planted.
- **Article 25** of the Zoning Code contains the regulations which apply to the City’s review of development proposals. This Article requires that Site Plan review be conducted for certain new non-residential development greater than 2,500 square feet, and for certain two-, multi-, and single-family development projects located in RD, RM, C, NA, SA, and I Districts to ensure that development complies with the applicable site development standards prescribed by the Zoning Code.² The associated Site Plan review regulations are found in Section 5-2512 of the Zoning Code. This review evaluates adherence to the applicable development standards prescribed by the Zoning Code for a particular site. Additionally, this review confirms that buildings have adequate articulation with appropriate window placement, use of detailing, or changes in building planes which provide visual interest. A public hearing before the Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and/or City Council may also be required in accordance with the regulations set forth in Section 5-2506 of the Zoning Code.

² City of San Leandro, Municipal Code Part V – Administration, Article 25 – Site Plan Approval.

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East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy

The East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy (Development Strategy), adopted in April 2004, is intended to provide City staff, elected officials, property and business owners, prospective developers, and the community with a policy and design document to guide the South Area (East 14th Street between Maud/Thornton and 150th Avenue) revitalization effort and implementation.³ The Development Strategy includes goals and policies; assets, needs, and opportunities; corridor concept plan and illustrative opportunity site development studies; design guidelines for development of private properties; streetscape improvements plan; and implementation strategies. The primary intent of the Development Strategy is to revitalize the southern portion of the East 14th Street Corridor by attracting desirable uses, providing streetscape improvements and by ensuring that new developments are of the highest quality design.⁴ Key goals include the transformation of the unbroken commercial “strip” into a series of mixed-use districts, the creation of more pedestrian- and transit-friendly environment on East 14th Street, and the accommodation of high quality, multi-family housing along the Corridor.⁵

Downtown San Leandro Transit-Oriented Development Strategy

The Downtown San Leandro Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TOD Strategy), adopted in September 2007, is intended to encourage housing, retail, jobs, and more attractive and pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks in downtown San Leandro.⁶ The TOD Strategy’s study area is defined by a half-mile radius circle around the intersection of East 14th and Davis Streets. The TOD Strategy includes design guidelines that give direction to new development that most affect the streets, including streetscape design and building placement to improve the pedestrian environment.⁷ Chapter 4, Development and Implementation Guidelines of the TOD Strategy, establishes regulations for public street design, lighting, street furnishings (i.e. trash receptacles, bicycle racks, and transit shelters), and signage and wayfinding. Further, this chapter of the TOD Strategy includes guidelines regulating building massing and height; the use and placement of windows and doors; building design; building materials; signage; and landscape and streetscape design. These guidelines are focused on the character and quality of the public environment, with particular emphases on streets and public spaces and the relationship between the sidewalk and ground level building frontages.⁸

Downtown San Leandro Design Guidelines

The Downtown San Leandro Design Guidelines (October 2007) apply to new development, renovations, additions, new signage, and storefront remodels (including awnings, new window frames, and certain finishes) in the Downtown. The document establishes development guidelines for building corners, entrances, storefronts, display windows, facades, rooflines, awnings, canopies, materials, lighting, color, arcades, outdoor spaces, parking and service areas, and landscaping. The document also establishes signage guidelines.

³ City of San Leandro, 2004, East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy, Executive Summary, page v.

⁴ City of San Leandro, 2004, East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy, Executive Summary, page vi.

⁵ City of San Leandro, 2004, East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy, Executive Summary, page vii.

⁶ City of San Leandro, 2007, Downtown San Leandro Transit-Oriented Development Strategy, page 1.

⁷ City of San Leandro, 2007, Downtown San Leandro Transit-Oriented Development Strategy, page 24.

⁸ City of San Leandro, Downtown San Leandro Transit-Oriented Development Strategy, September 2007, page 81.

4.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the existing visual character of San Leandro and its vicinity.

Visual Character

San Leandro's visual character can be described by its natural setting and physical development pattern. The city's location on the East Bay Plain, bordered to the west by the San Francisco Bay and to the east by the coastal foothills, has shaped its development pattern and defines a portion of its visual profile. Natural features such as the Bay and its shoreline mark the edges of the city and frame most long-range views, while the overall terrain is mostly flat. The flat terrain and lack of a dense, continuous tree cover provides San Leandro with an open and expansive visual quality. Given the natural barriers to growth on the east and west and the proximity to cities, including Oakland to the north and Hayward to the south, much of the city has developed in a linear pattern that is guided by major transportation routes. North-south rail and freeway routes bisect the city, defining neighborhood edges.

Within the city itself, the predominant land use consists of established suburban neighborhoods with tree-lined streets and well-kept homes. There are distinct neighborhoods throughout the city, which are shown on Figure 4.1-1. Residential, recreational, and open space uses are located adjacent to the shoreline in the western portion of the city. Residential uses surround two industrial areas located south of Marina Boulevard and west of Interstate 880. In residential, commercial and industrial areas, most buildings are one to two stories in height, surrounded by yards and relatively wide streets. Within industrial and commercial areas, parking and storage occupy most of the visual field and visual landmarks include industrial buildings, such as Kraft/General Foods and Ghirardelli Chocolate. Activity centers, including Downtown, San Leandro Hospital, and Bayfair Center are characterized by buildings up to five stories in height.

Figure 4.1-2, identifies gateways in the city. These gateways include Davis Street east of Interstate 880; North Area Gateway Streets (San Leandro Boulevard, East 14th Street, Bancroft, and MacArthur Boulevard); Marina Boulevard east of Interstate 880; Joaquin Avenue at Grand; Doolittle Drive from Oakland to Davis Street; East 14th Street at Bayfair; Washington Manor area gateways; Downtown Area gateways; and gateways in major residential areas such as Halcyon-Foothill, Davis West, and Broadmoor.

Scenic Vistas

The existing and proposed General Plans do not designate official scenic vistas. However, there are a number of significant views that the City of San Leandro has identified as aesthetic priorities to build a sense of place. These views are shown on Figure 4.1-2. Scenic views in San Leandro include those looking west to the San Francisco Bay from the Shoreline and hills above Interstate 580, and views looking east to the foothills from hills near Interstate 580.

Light and Glare

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky around and above developed urban areas, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky are an important part of the natural environment. Excessive light and glare can also be visually disruptive to humans and



Source: City of San Leandro, General Plan 2002.

 Residential Neighborhoods

Figure 4.1-1
Residential Neighborhoods



Source: City of San Leandro, General Plan 2002.

-  Significant Views
-  Major Gateways
-  Key Gateway Streets
-  Well-defined edges
-  Major Activity Areas

Figure 4.1-2
Community Design Features

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nocturnal animal species, and often reflects an unnecessarily high level of energy consumption. Light pollution has the potential to become an issue of increasing concern as new development contributes additional outdoor lighting installed for safety and other reasons. Nighttime lighting in San Leandro is restricted primarily to street lighting along local streets, and to night-time illumination of industrial and commercial buildings in areas designated for those land uses.

4.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed Plan would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. Expose people on- or off-site to substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

AES-1	The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
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Proposed General Plan Update

The proposed Plan would have a significant impact if it would allow development that would block or degrade a scenic view. As discussed in Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, the existing and proposed General Plans do not designate official scenic vistas, but designate significant views, including views looking west to the San Francisco Bay from the Shoreline and hills above Interstate 580, and views looking east to the foothills from hills near Interstate 580. These views are considered scenic vistas in this analysis.

In the areas of the city with scenic views, development patterns are substantially built out, and the proposed General Plan land use designations are generally consistent with existing development patterns. Therefore, new development would not be expected to significantly alter scenic viewsheds in these areas. Many portions of the city that currently consist of garden residential, commercial, and open space uses would remain designated for these uses under the proposed General Plan. New development in these areas would similarly not be expected to significantly affect scenic viewsheds, and would be developed under similar standards, resulting in low-profile buildings.

However, some future development allowed by the proposed General Plan would have the potential to partially or fully block scenic vistas. In the foothills and ridgeline areas in the eastern portion of the city, including existing vacant lots in Bay-O-Vista, development or redevelopment could occur in areas that are visible from other portions of the city. In addition, within the View Preservation Sub-District (RS-VP), which applies to the Bay-O-Vista neighborhood, new construction would be reviewed to ensure that it would not impair residents' enjoyment of distant scenic views. As shown on Figure 4.1-2, views in San Leandro

include the San Francisco Bay to the west and foothills to the east. In addition, adjacent to the Shoreline area in the western portion of the city, including along Neptune Drive and Marina Boulevard, development or redevelopment could occur in areas that are visible from other portions of the city. As shown on Figure 4.1-2, the view includes the San Francisco Bay and shoreline areas to the west. As shown on Figure 4.1-2, the Downtown area does not afford significant scenic views. Far-field views in this area are generally blocked by existing buildings and trees. Therefore, proposed taller buildings developed in the Downtown are not expected to affect any scenic vistas.

The proposed General Plan includes the following policies that would protect scenic views:

- **Policy LU-2.6: Preservation of Low Density Character.** Preserve the low-density character of San Leandro’s predominantly single family neighborhoods.
- **Policy LU-2.8: Alterations, Additions, and Infill.** Ensure that alterations, additions and infill development are compatible with existing homes and maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.
- **Policy LU-2.9: Density Transitions.** Avoid abrupt transitions from high density to low density housing. Where high-density development occurs, encourage such projects to step down in height and mass as they approach nearby lower density areas.
- **Policy LU-2.10: Teardowns.** Discourage “teardowns” (the replacement of smaller dwellings with larger and more expensive homes) where the existing home is in good physical condition and the proposed home would be substantially larger than the prevailing scale of the neighborhood.
- **Policy LU-2.11: Privacy and Views.** Encourage residential alterations, additions, and new homes to be designed in a manner that respects the privacy of nearby homes and preserves access to sunlight and views. Wherever feasible, new or altered structures should avoid the disruption of panoramic or scenic views.
- **Policy LU-2.16: Harmony With Nature.** Require new development to be harmonious with its natural setting and to preserve natural features such as creeks, large trees, ridgelines, and rock outcroppings.
- **Policy LU-2.17: Constrained Sites.** Focus new housing development on underutilized or infill sites on the city’s flatter lands, rather than on previously undeveloped sites in the hills. Development on sites with significant geologic, hydrologic, or land stability constraints should be strongly discouraged.
- **Policy LU-7.8: Sense of Place.** Create a stronger sense of place and a more positive regional image in the industrial districts through improved site planning, landscaping, architecture, façade improvements, fencing and screening, and design, as well as investments in streetscape improvements.
- **Policy LU-8.2: Aesthetics.** Upgrade the City’s commercial corridors by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, control excessive signage, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along the corridors.
- **Policy LU-9.1: Waterfront Enhancement.** Enhance the San Leandro waterfront as a distinguished recreational shoreline and conservation area, with complementary activities that boost its appeal as a destination for San Leandro residents and visitors. Future development at the Shoreline should be compatible with the area's scenic and recreational qualities.

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The proposed Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the visual character in San Leandro, which includes the scenic vistas identified as significant views in the proposed Plan. As listed above, there are several policies in the proposed Plan that would preserve existing views in residential areas. Proposed Policy LU-2.6 would prevent new development from blocking existing views within and from residential neighborhoods by maintaining the low-density character of San Leandro's residential neighborhoods, Policy LU-2.8 would aim to maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods that are located within a scenic viewshed, and Policy LU-2.17 would strongly discourage new housing development on undeveloped sites in the hills. Proposed Policies LU-2.10 and LU-2.11 would discourage "tear-downs" in residential neighborhoods when the replacement home would be substantially larger than the prevailing scale of the neighborhood, and would encourage residential alterations, additions, and new homes to be designed in a manner that preserves access to sunlight and views, and avoid the disruption of panoramic or scenic views wherever feasible.

Proposed policies that would preserve existing views in all other areas of the city include Policy LU-2.9 regarding transitions between residential and non-residential areas. Policy LU-2.16 would protect scenic vistas by requiring new development to preserve natural features such as creeks, large trees, ridgelines, and rock outcroppings. Policy LU-9.1 would protect the existing westerly views toward the shoreline and San Francisco Bay from the shoreline through encouraging future development to be compatible with the area's scenic and recreational qualities. Proposed Policy LU-8.2 and Policy LU-7.8 focus on enhancing aesthetic quality within commercial corridors and industrial districts.

New development proposed in San Leandro would be designed consistent with proposed policies and existing regulations, and would therefore have *less-than-significant* impacts on scenic vistas.

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Applicable Regulations:

- City of San Leandro Zoning Code

Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code would bring the Zoning Code into conformance with the proposed Plan. The proposed Zoning Code would implement the proposed Plan and would guide development in key areas of the city. Proposed Zoning Code amendments that would allow future development that could block or degrade scenic views in San Leandro include increased building density intensity (Floor Area Ratio, or FAR), and setbacks in mixed use "Downtown Area" (DA) districts. These zoning amendments would be made in areas of the city that are already substantially built out and zoning amendments are generally consistent with existing development patterns. In addition, new development allowed under the Zoning Code amendments would be required to be consistent with proposed Plan policies described above that would protect scenic views. In particular, Policy LU-2.9 would encourage high-density projects to step down in height and mass as they approach nearby lower-density areas, which would help to prevent taller buildings allowed under the proposed zoning amendments from impacting views from lower-density adjacent development. Therefore, new development under the proposed Zoning Code amendments would not be expected to significantly alter scenic viewsheds in scenic areas of the city and the proposed Zoning Code amendments would result in a *less-than-significant* impact on scenic vistas.

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-2 **The proposed project would not substantially degrade the view from a scenic highway, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.**

Proposed General Plan Update

The proposed Plan would result in a significant impact if it would allow development that would degrade a view from a State-designated scenic highway. As discussed in Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, Caltrans has not designated any highway within San Leandro as a State scenic highway. The closest scenic highway is located within a portion of Interstate 580, starting at the northern border of San Leandro and extending north to State Route 24 in Oakland. Interstate 580 is landscaped with mature trees at the location where the San Leandro northern border abuts the scenic portion of the highway and there are no views of the city available from the scenic highway. Therefore, the proposed Plan would have *no impact* on views from a State scenic highway.

Significance before Mitigation: No impact.

Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

As described above, there are no areas of the city that are visible from a State-designated scenic highway. Therefore, the proposed Zoning Code amendments would have *no impact* on views from a State scenic highway.

Significance before Mitigation: No impact.

AES-3 **The proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

Proposed General Plan Update

The proposed Plan would result in a significant impact if it would allow development that would negatively affect the existing visual quality of any of San Leandro’s neighborhoods. As discussed in Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, the existing visual character or quality of the city and its surroundings can be described by its natural features. These natural features include an expansive quality with key gateways and scenic views such as the shoreline and foothills as shown on Figure 4.1-2. The San Francisco Bay and its shoreline mark the western edge of the city, and the coastal foothills mark the eastern edge of the city, framing most long-range views, while the overall terrain is mostly flat. The flat terrain and lack of a dense, continuous tree cover provides San Leandro with an open and expansive visual quality.

San Leandro has identified a number of gateways as aesthetic priorities that contribute to San Leandro’s sense of place. These gateways are positive aspects of San Leandro’s physical appearance and their preservation is an important priority. The proposed Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the visual quality of the shoreline, including through park and promenade enhancements. Proposed Historic Preservation

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and Community Design policies that seek to enhance the visual quality of the shoreline include Policy CD-5.3, which would implement urban design improvements to improve aesthetics, create a stronger sense of place, and facilitate walking, bicycling, and transit use in the shoreline area. Within the foothills area, proposed Policy OSC-1.9 would ensure that any new development be designed in a way that is compatible with the natural setting, including visual character.

The visual quality of San Leandro would also be preserved and enhanced through policies and the land use map of the proposed Plan. Any new development that includes increases in height would be focused in the high-activity areas of the city, such as downtown, commercial corridors, and employment areas. In existing residential and open space areas, no density or height increases are proposed that would change the expansive quality of the city. Further, proposed policies included in the Historic Preservation and Community Design and Land Use Elements seek to preserve and enhance the expansive visual quality of the city. For example, proposed Policy LU-6.15 would avoid changes that may adversely affect the visual character of the downtown area. Proposed Policy LU-10.3 would encourage buffering measures to promote land use compatibility. In addition, the City's zoning regulations would continue to contain development and design criteria consistent with these policies.

The visual character of key gateway areas would be preserved and enhanced through numerous proposed Historic Preservation and Community Design and Land Use policies that seek to create a distinct identity in San Leandro. For example, proposed Policy CD-5.1 and CD-5.3 encourage urban design elements to establish a unique neighborhood identity. Proposed Policies CD-7.1 and CD-7.5 through 7.6 encourage beautification measures such as public art and greening to enhance the visual character of these areas.

In addition, the proposed General Plan includes the following policies and actions that would protect San Leandro's visual resources as redevelopment occurs under the proposed Plan:

- **Policy CD-5.1: Gateways.** Develop landscaped gateway features to identify neighborhoods, business districts, and major city entryways. Gateways should incorporate design and graphic themes that help define a unique identity for each neighborhood and district.
- **Policy CD-5.3: Urban Design Improvements.** Use urban design elements such as bollards, pavers, fountains, signage, tree lighting, and street furniture (newspaper racks, benches, bus stops, planters, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.) to establish a stronger design identity for San Leandro's commercial areas and make the street environment more inviting for pedestrians.
- **Policy CD-5.4: Architectural Consistency.** In established neighborhoods, protect architectural integrity by requiring infill housing, replacement housing, and major additions or remodels to be sensitive to and compatible with the prevailing scale and appearance of adjacent development.
- **Policy CD-5.9: Visual Landmarks.** Promote the development of "signature" buildings and monuments that provide visual landmarks and create a more distinctive and positive impression of San Leandro within the greater Bay Area. Local design guidelines should ensure that such buildings and monuments respect the character, scale, and context of the surrounding area.
- **Policy CD-6.1: Promoting Quality Design.** Use the development review, zoning, and permitting processes to promote high quality architecture and site design. Design review guidelines and zoning standards should ensure that the mass and scale of new structures are compatible with adjacent structures.

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- **Policy CD-6.2: Recognizing Architectural Context.** In areas without a well-established architectural aesthetic or consistent design palette, encourage contemporary and cutting edge design. In areas which have an established or more traditional design theme or rhythm, encourage infill development that increases architectural cohesion and reinforces the prevalent style or styles.
- **Policy CD-6.3: Multi-Family Design.** Establish high standards of architectural and landscape design for multi-family housing development. Boxy or massive building designs should be avoided, ample open space and landscaping should be provided, and high quality construction materials should be used.
- **Policy CD-6.5: Craftsmanship.** Encourage a high level of craftsmanship in new construction, and the use of exterior materials and façade designs that enhance the appearance of the City.
- **Policy CD-6.6: Garage Door Visibility.** Minimize the visibility of garage doors in new single family and multi-family residential construction.
- **Policy CD-6.7: Architectural Interest.** Encourage new structures to incorporate architectural elements that create visual interest such as trellises, awnings, overhangs, patios, and window bays. Avoid solid or blank street-facing walls.
- **Policy CD-6.8: Commercial and Industrial Standards.** Improve the visual appearance of the City’s commercial and industrial areas by applying high standards of architectural design and landscaping for new commercial and industrial development and the re-use or remodeling of existing commercial and industrial buildings.
- **Policy CD-7.1: Greening San Leandro.** Promote drought-tolerant landscaping, tree planting, and tree preservation along San Leandro streets as a means of improving aesthetics, making neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly, providing environmental benefits, and creating or maintaining a park-like setting.
- **Policy CD-7.4: Urban Open Space.** Encourage the incorporation of drought-tolerant landscaped open spaces, such as plazas, courtyards and pocket parks, within new development and redevelopment projects.
- **Policy CD-7.5: Street Beautification.** Upgrade the City’s commercial thoroughfares by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve facades, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, prohibit excessive or out-of-scale signage, remove billboards, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along these thoroughfares.
- **Policy CD-7.6: Public Art.** Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should be recognized as an economic development tool and should reflect and express the diversity of the City.
- **Policy LU-6.9: Urban Design.** Promote quality Downtown architecture that is well articulated, enhances the pedestrian setting, preserves the City’s architectural heritage, and fits in with the scale and texture of existing historic structures. Discourage “franchise architecture” that will distract from creating a unique and distinctive Downtown setting.
- **Policy LU-6.14: Downtown Open Space.** Develop a network of Downtown open spaces to serve the growing population and workforce. This network should include civic plazas, parks, a linear greenway along the former Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way (part of the East Bay Greenway), and a San Leandro Creek greenway along the northern edge of Downtown. In addition, streetscape

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improvements should include street trees and sidewalks which connect these spaces and increase the presence of greenery in the downtown area.

- **Policy LU-6.15: Conservation of Lower Density Downtown Areas.** Recognize certain areas within Downtown and avoid changes that would adversely affect these areas, particularly well-established and stable clusters of single-family homes, public and institutional uses, and historic buildings.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Commercial Uses With An Industrial Character.** Maintain areas in the City that are appropriate for lumberyards, construction suppliers, automotive repair shops, and other commercial uses that are industrial in character or that typically locate in industrial areas. While development standards in these areas should respect the operational characteristics of these uses, they should still promote aesthetic improvements, adequate buffering for nearby uses, traffic safety, and a more positive visual image.
- **Policy LU-8.9: East 14th Street.** Facilitate the transformation of East 14th Street from an unbroken commercial “strip” into a series of distinct mixed use neighborhood centers, each with a unique design identity and mix of uses. The land use pattern should emphasize a more attractive and human scale of development throughout the corridor, with pedestrian-oriented buildings, streetscape and transit improvements, and a lively mix of higher density residential, commercial, and civic uses.
- **Policy LU-8.11: MacArthur and Bancroft Corridors.** Encourage continued improvement and investment in the MacArthur and Bancroft corridor commercial districts. Mixed-use development should be encouraged along MacArthur Boulevard, with an emphasis on local-serving commercial, residential, office retail, and civic uses between Durant and Estudillo Avenues. Zoning for the corridor should be flexible enough to allow a full spectrum of residential and commercial uses. Along Bancroft Avenue, the focus should be on improving the Bancroft/Dutton commercial district as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood shopping district. Continued efforts should be made to improve the streetscape, sidewalks, landscaping, and building facades on both Bancroft and MacArthur, making this area an attractive destination for residents of nearby neighborhoods.
- **Policy LU-8.12: Marina Boulevard.** Improve the Marina Boulevard corridor as an east-west connector between Downtown San Leandro and the waterfront. This should include continued investment in regional retail and Auto Mall development between I-880 and San Leandro Boulevard. It should also include the gradual transformation of the area between Merced and Doolittle from industrial to higher value retail, service, and other commercial uses, with accompanying changes to make the street more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Marina Boulevard should be viewed as the “front door” into San Leandro--a major gateway that communicates a positive impression of the city.
- **Policy LU-9.5: Gateway Improvements.** Encourage “gateway” improvements which enhance the approach routes to the Shoreline while minimizing the impacts of increased traffic on area neighborhoods. Improvements could include new signage, streetscape enhancement along Marina Boulevard and Fairway Drive, entry monuments and landscaping at the Shoreline itself, and longer-term circulation changes.
- **Policy LU-9.6: Urban Design.** Encourage cohesive urban design and high-quality architecture at the Shoreline. Buildings should be oriented to maximize water views and shoreline access. Architecture, signage, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and other amenities, should be coordinated to achieve an integrated design theme.

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- **Policy LU-10.3: Buffering.** When new development or adaptive reuse takes place in industrial areas, use a variety of buffering measures, including land use restrictions, landscaping and screening, sound walls and insulation, and limits on hours of operations and activities to promote land use compatibility. The City’s zoning regulations should continue to contain development and design standards that minimize the potential for conflicts between industrial and residential uses, and between commercial and residential uses.
- **Policy OSC-1.9: Siting of New Buildings.** Require that new recreational buildings and other structures within parks are sited in a manner that minimizes their impacts on useable open space, maximizes energy efficiency and the use of green building and low impact development methods, avoids conflicts with existing park activities and nearby residential neighborhoods, and is compatible with the natural setting.
- **Policy OSC-5.3: Orientation of New Structures.** Encourage all new structures on creekside sites to be designed so that the creek is treated as an amenity and focal point.

Future new development in the city would be subject to Article 25 of the Zoning Code, which contains the City’s site plan review requirements. Through this procedure, the City reviews proposed development to ensure high-quality architectural design, including articulation, window placement, use of detailing, and changes in building planes. For some projects, a public hearing is required before the Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and/or City Council. This Article requires that Site Plan review be conducted for certain new non-residential development greater than 2,500 square feet, and for certain two-, multi- and single-family development projects located in RD, RM, C, NA, SA, and I Districts to ensure that development complies with the applicable site development standards prescribed by the Zoning Code.⁹ Within the Downtown, new development, renovations, additions, new signage, and storefront remodels would be subject to the Downtown San Leandro Design Guidelines, which would guide such projects to adhere to standards of high-quality design.

Through the City’s site plan review process and compliance with proposed Plan policies, new development would be designed to minimize impacts on existing visual character. The review process and proposed policies would use design, landscaping, and gateway treatments to enhance the expansive plains, and enhance the framing shoreline to the west and foothills to the east. Impacts would be *less than significant*.

Applicable Regulations:

- City of San Leandro Zoning Code
- Downtown San Leandro Design Guidelines

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code would bring the Zoning Code into conformance with the proposed Plan. The proposed Zoning Code would implement the proposed Plan and would guide development in key areas of the city. Some proposed Zoning Code amendments could potentially allow

⁹ City of San Leandro, Municipal Code Part V – Administration, Article 25 – Site Plan Approval.

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future development that could substantially change or degrade the visual character in San Leandro. Specifically:

- Corner side yard setback requirements would be decreased to zero feet in the DA-1, DA-2, DA-3, DA-4 and DA-6 districts.
- Allowable residential density on lots greater than 10,000 square feet in the DA-1 district would increase from 70 to 100 dwelling units per acre.
- Maximum non-residential FAR would increase from 2.0 to 3.5 in the DA-1 district.
- Maximum non-residential FAR would increase from 4.0 to 5.0 in the DA-6 district, for parcels adjacent to the BART station.

As described above, the City's site plan review process and compliance with proposed Plan policies would ensure that future development would be designed to enhance existing visual character. Therefore, new development under the proposed Zoning Code amendments would not be expected to degrade visual character and the proposed Zoning Code amendments would result in a *less-than-significant* impact.

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-4	The proposed project would not expose people on- or off-site to substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
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Proposed General Plan Update

The proposed Plan would have a significant impact if it would allow new development or activities that would introduce substantial new sources of light or glare. Substantial light and glare comes mainly from commercial areas, lights kept on at night, traffic on major arterials and freeways, and from street lights. Increased light and glare as a result of the proposed Plan would occur primarily in areas of the city designated for commercial and business/industrial uses. In these areas, lighting associated with redevelopment and new development would have the potential to substantially increase lighting and glare levels.

New non-residential development and additions over 1,000 square feet would be subject to CALGreen building requirements. CALGreen Section 5.106.8 regulates light pollution by establishing maximum Backlight, Uplight and Glare (BUG) ratings for light fixtures. Additionally, the San Leandro Municipal Code includes regulations for all proposed development pertaining to the abatement of unreasonable light and glare. These regulations include development regulations that would prevent significant glare from glass or outdoor lighting sources. Further, the proposed General Plan includes the following policies that would prevent the creation of sources of light and glare sufficient to adversely affect views:

- **Policy CD-6.8: Commercial and Industrial Standards.** Improve the visual appearance of the City's commercial and industrial areas by applying high standards of architectural design and landscaping for new commercial and industrial development and the re-use or remodeling of existing commercial and industrial buildings.

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- **Policy CD-7.7: Lighting.** Encourage street and parking lot lighting that creates a sense of security, complements building and landscape design, is energy-efficient, considers night sky visibility impacts (e.g., “dark skies”), and avoids conflicts with nearby residential uses.
- **Policy LU-9.6: Urban Design.** Encourage cohesive urban design and high-quality architecture at the Shoreline. Buildings should be oriented to maximize water views and shoreline access. Architecture, signage, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and other amenities, should be coordinated to achieve an integrated design theme.
- **Policy LU-10.3: Buffering.** When new development or adaptive reuse takes place in industrial areas, use a variety of buffering measures including land use restrictions, landscaping and screening, sound walls and insulation, and limits on hours of operations and activities to promote land use compatibility. The City’s zoning regulations should continue to contain development and design standards that minimize the potential for conflicts between industrial and residential uses, and between commercial and residential uses.

New development designed consistent with these goals, policies, and actions would prevent the creation of sources of light and glare that would adversely affect views. Therefore, impacts associated with light and glare would be *less than significant*.

Applicable Regulations:

- CALGreen
- San Leandro Municipal Code

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code would bring the Zoning Code into conformance with the proposed Plan. The proposed Zoning Code would implement the proposed Plan and would guide development in key areas of the city. New development allowed by the Zoning Code amendments could create new sources of light or glare. As described above, through compliance with the City’s Municipal Code, CALGreen building standards, and proposed Plan policies, new development would be designed to prevent the creation of substantial light and glare. Therefore, the proposed Zoning Code amendments would result in a *less-than-significant* impact.

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

AES-5	The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in less-than-significant cumulative impacts with respect to aesthetics.
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As discussed in Chapter 4, Environmental Evaluation, this EIR takes into account potential future development under the proposed project, combined with effects of development on lands within the City’s Sphere of Influence (SOI) and lands adjacent to Oakland to the north, Castro Valley to the east, and

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the unincorporated Alameda County communities of San Lorenzo and Ashland to the south. As described in the discussion of Impacts AES-1 through AES-4, the proposed project focuses development in areas that are currently developed, and does not propose substantial changes to the existing land use pattern. However, new development could potentially impact a City-designated scenic view, degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, or create a new source of substantial light or glare.

Interstate 580 (the MacArthur Freeway) is a State-designated scenic highway located within the cumulative setting from the San Leandro city limit to State Route 24 in Oakland. Interstate 580 is landscaped with mature trees at the location where lands adjacent to San Leandro abut the scenic portion of the highway and there are no views of developed adjacent areas available from the scenic highway. In addition, the Oakland Municipal Code provides specific provisions to protect views in the MacArthur Freeway Scenic Corridor.¹⁰ Therefore, development on lands adjacent to San Leandro would not have the potential to affect scenic highways or contribute to cumulative impacts to scenic highways.

Development on adjacent lands and areas within the SOI would have the potential to introduce urban land uses that would block currently uninterrupted scenic views or adversely affect the existing visual character. Within San Leandro, the proposed Plan includes policies and actions to protect scenic views and visual character. All surrounding communities have design review procedures in place to avoid potential significant or substantial aesthetic impacts on a project-by-project basis.^{11,12,13}

Future development allowed by the proposed project along with cumulative development would have the potential to generate new sources of light and glare. The design of future projects in San Leandro would be subject to the City's development review process and standards, CALGreen, and proposed Plan policies, which would ensure that lighting is designed to avoid glare, light spillage, and excessive lighting. Alameda County, Hayward, and Oakland also administer design review requirements and CALGreen standards to avoid potential light and glare impacts from development projects.^{14,15,16} Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to potential cumulative impacts from lighting and glare.

Development allowed by the proposed plan would not contribute to cumulative impacts to scenic vistas, scenic highways, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, the cumulative impact would be *less than significant*.

Applicable Regulations:

- City of San Leandro Municipal Code
- City of San Leandro Zoning Code
- Alameda County Code

¹⁰ City of Oakland, Municipal Code Chapter 17.90 – S-10 Scenic Route Combining Zone Regulations.

¹¹ Alameda County, County Code Chapter 17.30 – Scenic Corridor Districts.

¹² City of Oakland, Municipal Code Chapter 17.13 – RH Hillside Residential Zones Regulations.

¹³ City of Hayward, Municipal Code Chapter 10-1.300 – Site Plan Review.

¹⁴ City of Oakland, Municipal Code Chapter 17.80 – Design Review Combining Zone Regulations.

¹⁵ Alameda County, County Code Chapter 17.30 – Scenic Corridor Districts.

¹⁶ City of Hayward, Municipal Code Chapter 10-1.150 Nuisance.

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- Oakland Municipal Code
- City of Hayward Municipal Code

Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

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