

4.14 Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

4.14.1 Abstract

Monterey County's visual character and resources are inextricably linked to the natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region. Coastal views, agricultural fields, natural ridgelines, and oak woodlands are all prominent elements of the county's visual character. The county contains 95 miles of officially designated State Scenic Highways and 43 miles of highways eligible for the scenic highway designation. Urban development and vehicles account for most of the substantial sources of light and glare in the county.

Development and land use activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan in designated growth areas (Community Areas and Rural Centers) as well as on lots of record would result in the following significant impacts on aesthetics, light, and glare:

- **Visual Character:** Future development anticipated by the 2007 General Plan would irreversibly alter the visual character of portions of the county. No mitigation is available to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant, and therefore, this impact is significant and unavoidable.
- **Light and Glare:** Future development anticipated by the 2007 General Plan would introduce new sources of light and glare that could diminish the quality of daytime and nighttime views to portions of the county. No mitigation is available to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant, and therefore, this impact is significant and unavoidable.

All other impacts would be less than significant and would not require mitigation.

4.14.2 Introduction

This section identifies and evaluates issues related to visual resources in the General Plan action area.

The "Environmental Setting" discussion below describes the current setting of the action area. The purpose of this information is to establish the existing environmental context against which the reader can then understand the environmental changes caused by the action. The environmental setting information is intended to be directly or indirectly relevant to the subsequent discussion of impacts. For example, the setting identifies groups of people who have views of scenic resources because the action could change their views and experiences.

The environmental changes associated with the action are discussed under “Impact Analysis.” This section identifies impacts, describes how they would occur, and prescribes mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts, if necessary.

4.14.3 Concepts and Terminology

Aesthetics, as addressed in CEQA, refers to visual considerations. Aesthetics (or visual resource) analysis is a process to logically assess visible change and anticipated viewer response to that change. A common methodology for conducting visual analysis has been developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Some of these principles have been applied to this assessment. As an initial step, such analysis begins with the identification of existing conditions with regard to visual resources and entails the following steps:

- Objective identification of visual features of the landscape;
- Assessment of the character and quality of those resources relative to overall regional visual character; and
- Assessment of the potential significance of features in the landscape to the people who view them and their sensitivity or response to the proposed changes to those features.

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and quality, combined with the viewer response to the area (Federal Highway Administration 1988). Scenic quality can best be described as the overall impression that an individual viewer retains after driving through, walking through, or flying over an area (U.S. Bureau of Land Management 1980). Viewer response is a combination of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity. Viewer exposure is a function of the number of viewers, number of views seen, distance of the viewers, and viewing duration. Viewer sensitivity relates to the extent of the public’s concern for a particular viewshed. These terms and criteria are described in detail below.

4.14.3.1 Viewshed

Viewshed is an area of the landscape that is visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or series of points (e.g., a road or trail) (Federal Highway Administration 1988). To identify the importance of views of a resource, a viewshed may be broken into distance zones of foreground, middleground, and background. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant it is and the greater its importance to the viewer. Although distance zones in viewsheds may vary between different geographic regions or types of terrain, a commonly used set of criteria identifies the foreground zone as 0.25 to 0.5 miles from the viewer; the middleground zone as 3 to 5 miles from the viewer; and the background zone extend infinitely.

In the *foreground zone*, the observer is a direct participant, and the views include objects at close range that may tend to dominate the view. This zone is an important linkage because it sets a tone for the quality of a visual resource. Foreground views are valued at a maximum level.

In the *middleground zone*, the observer focuses on the center of the viewshed. Views tend to include objects that are the center of attention if they are sufficiently large or visually different from adjacent visual features. Details will not be as sharp as the foreground view, but land features will still be distinguishable.

In the *background zone*, the observer can see less detail and distinction in landform and surface features. The emphasis of background views is an outline or edge. Silhouettes and ridges of one landmass against another are the conspicuous visual parts of the background, with skyline serving as the strongest line. Objects in the background eventually fade to obscurity and increasing distance.

4.14.3.2 Visual Character

Natural and artificial landscape features contribute to the *visual character* of an area or view. Visual character is influenced by geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreational, and urban features. Urban features include those associated with landscape settlements and development, including roads, utilities, structures, earthworks, and the results of other human activities. The perception of visual character can vary significantly seasonally, even hourly, as weather, light, shadow, and elements that compose the viewshed change. The basic components used to describe visual character for most visual assessments are the elements of form, line, color, and texture of the landscape features (U.S. Forest Service 1995; Federal Highway Administration 1988). The appearance of the landscape is described in terms of the dominance of each of these components.

4.14.3.3 Visual Quality

Visual quality is evaluated using the well-established approach to visual analysis adopted by Federal Highway Administration, employing the concepts of vividness, intactness, and unity (Federal Highway Administration 1988; Jones et al. 1975), which are described below.

- Vividness is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
- Intactness is the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements; this factor can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, and in natural settings.

- Unity is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole; it frequently attests to the careful design of individual components in the landscape.

Visual quality is evaluated based on the relative degree of vividness, intactness, and unity, as modified by its visual sensitivity. High-quality views are highly vivid, relatively intact, and exhibit a high degree of visual unity. Low-quality views lack vividness, are not visually intact, and possess a low degree of visual unity.

4.14.3.4 Visual Exposure and Sensitivity

Viewer sensitivity is based on the visibility of resources in the landscape, the proximity of viewers to the visual resource, the relative elevation of viewers to the visual resource, and the types and expectations of individuals and viewer groups. The criteria for identifying the importance of views are related in part to the position of the viewer relative to the resource.

Visual sensitivity also depends on the number and type of viewers and the frequency and duration of views. Generally, visual sensitivity increases with an increase in *total number of viewers*, the *frequency of viewing* (e.g., daily or seasonally), and the *duration of views* (i.e., how long a scene is viewed). Also, visual sensitivity is higher for views seen by people who are driving for pleasure; people engaging in recreational activities such as hiking, biking, or camping; and homeowners. Sensitivity tends to be lower for views seen by people driving to and from work or as a part of their work (U.S. Forest Service 1995; Federal Highway Administration 1988; U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1978). Commuters and nonrecreational travelers have generally fleeting views and tend to focus on commute traffic, not on surrounding scenery; therefore, they are generally considered to have low visual sensitivity. Residential viewers typically have extended viewing periods and are concerned about changes in the views from their homes; therefore, they are generally considered to have high visual sensitivity. Views from recreation trails and areas, scenic highways, and scenic overlooks are generally assessed as having high visual sensitivity.

Judgments of visual quality and viewer response must be made based in a regional frame of reference (U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1978). The same landform or visual resource appearing in different geographic areas could have a different degree of visual quality and sensitivity in each setting. For example, a small hill may be a significant visual element on a flat landscape but have very little significance in mountainous terrain.

The discussion of visual character enables the analysis to compare and contrast features within the proposed project site with those of the surrounding area. The discussion of visual quality analyzes the significance of the proposed project site as a visual resource within the setting.

4.14.4 Environmental Setting

4.14.4.1 Action Area Character

Monterey County's visual character and aesthetic resources are inextricably linked to its geography and the natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region. Exhibit 4.14.1 depicts areas of visual sensitivity in Monterey County. Additionally, Exhibits 4.14.2 through 4.14.6 depict areas of visual sensitivity, critical viewsheds, and existing and proposed scenic highways and routes by Planning Area. Located mid-state along the Pacific Ocean, the county is part of the Coastal Ranges. The Salinas Valley separates the Gabilan Range and Cholame Hills, located along the eastern border of the county, from the San Lucia Range that mostly comprises the western half of the county. The planning area can be generally broken down into the following landscape components:

- Valleys,
- Ridgelines,
- Vegetation,
- Watercourses,
- Coastal Views, and
- Travel Routes.

Valleys

The Salinas, Carmel, and Jolon Valleys support the majority of the county's agricultural resources, lending to the familiar rural visual character within these areas. However, these large-scale farming operations have had a significant effect on the historical character, visually altering nearly one-third of the county from natural riparian floodplain forest and oak grasslands (City of Salinas 2003) to more highly manipulated landscapes brought on by more intensive forms of agriculture (irrigated row crops, irrigated pasture, orchards, vineyards) to more passive forms (grazing, apiary). The visual resource brought to the county by agricultural land uses is the character that the agricultural land gives the county. This resource is not dependent on the specific type of crop that is being grown.

Development in the valleys has grown from the agricultural industry and is located along major travel corridors such as Highway 101. Cities and towns within the valleys include Castroville, Salinas (the largest city in the County), Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, and Carmel Valley. Foreground, middleground, and background views of agriculture fields/pastures and the surrounding ranges and hills comprise the viewshed. Based upon the viewer's location within the landscape, views may be more expansive when unobstructed or more limited by things such as development, row crops, orchards, etc. Views of the ocean are not present from the valleys.

Ridgelines

Ridgelines are one of the most prominent features of the landscape, and they offer the greatest opportunity for panoramic vistas, sometimes with a 360-degree viewshed that extend far into the background. Views from ridgelines vary based

on available access to the ridgelines and public access is often limited to that provided by travel on public roadways and parks such as, Los Padres National Forest; Garapatta, Andrew Molera, Pfeiffer Big Sur, Julia Pfeiffer Burns, and Lime Kiln State Parks; and Jacks Peak County Park. Views of ridgelines vary based on viewers' position in the landscape and can range from full middleground and background views of multiple ridges to views that are limited to the middleground by ridgelines that are of a higher elevation and vegetation. Development on these prominently visible locations, even small structures, can have a significant impact as a structure's full mass may easily be visible from numerous points in the surrounding terrain that have views towards the ridgelines.

Vegetation

The natural vegetation that occupies much of the county is an essential component of the visual landscape. The mosaic pattern of natural vegetation is a direct response to natural conditions of topography, drainage patterns, soil characteristics, slope, exposure, elevation, and aspect and developed or altered landscapes. Boundaries between natural and developed or manipulated landscapes are often very distinct, creating greatly differing visual experiences that can be located within close proximity to one another. The county, as a whole, has retained large portions of its natural vegetation within the ranges and hills, yet has seen almost complete alteration of natural vegetation to agriculture in the valleys.

Watercourses

Natural drainage patterns and watercourses are integral to the visual environment as they shape the landscape, add visual interest, and influence the types and abundance of vegetation in nearby areas. In the project area, the major applicable watercourses are Salinas River, Carmel River, Arroyo Seco River and Pajaro River. More detail of these watercourses can be found in Section 4.3, Water Resources. Some of the natural drainage patterns and watercourse systems in the project area have been subject to various degrees of manipulation to accommodate human influence upon the landscape. While some systems, or portions of systems, have been left to more natural states, others have been drastically altered. The greatest changes can be seen in urban areas where development too close to natural drainage courses often necessitates flood control measures to protect infrastructure. These measures tend to significantly alter the natural channel geomorphology, leading to enclosed channels in an underground concrete box structure or routing them through an open concrete-lined channel.

In other instances, riparian vegetation is thinned or removed to allow for higher conveyance and capacity for specific flood intervals. For public safety reasons, chain-link fences are sometimes installed to enclose the channel and limit public access. The resulting combination of these modifications can greatly impact the visual character of the watercourse and adversely affect local visual resources.

Coastal Views

Seascapes and coastal views are deemed one of the most valued visual resources, for which the county is highly noted for, generating in-state, out-of-state, and international tourism. The extensive length of the Monterey County coastline provides an extraordinary range of coastal views. The dramatic cliffs and headlands of the Big Sur Coast, back-dropped by the Coastal Range, are a striking visual contrast to the coastal dunes and marshes that form the coastline around Monterey Bay.

The Del Monte Forest located in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area is section of unincorporated county land located directly on the coast. The site of the Seventeen Mile Drive, this area is a center that generates a great deal of tourism dollars, not only from its coastal locations but also from its unique natural landscape. This area offers a place where one can experience extended views of the coast line that surrounds it, while also offering a unique visual experience of the land itself.

Travel Routes

Travel routes provide the broadest range and greatest visual access to the various aesthetic resources within the county. Roadways and highways often wind through the region at changing elevations and serve to take travelers on a visual journey through the landscape, for which Monterey County is noted. There are many roadways that provide visual access; however, there are a number of scenic roadways and highways that exemplify such access.

Scenic Roadways and Highways

Panoramic views, ridgelines, vegetation, and coastline are common elements that influence the aesthetic quality of scenic roadways and highways in the county. These roadways are listed in Table 4.14-1.

Highway 1, between the Carmel River and the San Luis Obispo County line, has the esteem of being designated as the first Scenic Highway in California in June 1965 (California Department of Transportation 2008a). Other roads are identified in the Area Plans as scenic roads eligible for County Scenic Route designation. Official designation of these roads has not been implemented. The process of County Scenic Route designations follows similar procedures as State Scenic Highway designations. In addition to the existing County Designated Scenic Routes, there are a number of proposed routes included in the Area Plans. To be considered eligible for scenic status, the roadway must qualify under the

Federal Highway Administration’s National Scenic Byways Program or the California State Scenic Highway System. For details of the regulatory requirements for scenic designation, see the Federal and State Regulations discussion below. Corridor Mangement Plans, called Scenic Corridor Protection Programs under the state system, must be developed and implemented for designated roadways to provide for the conservation and enhancement of the road’s scenic values (Federal Highway Administration 1995; California Department of Transportation 2007). These plans and programs must be acknowledged and followed by local government when planning projects in the area.

Table 4.14-1. Monterey County Scenic Highways and Roadways

Highway/ Roadway	Segment	Post-miles	Length (miles)	Designation Status*
1	Big Sur Coast Highway: Carmel-by-the-Sea to Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line	0.0–72.3	72.3	All American Road
1	Highway 68 to Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line	72.3–78.1	78.1	OD
68	Highway 1 in City of Monterey to Salinas River	4.3–17.8	13.5	OD
156	1.0 mile east of Castroville to U.S. 101 near Prunedale	1.0–5.3	4.3	OD
San Benancio Road	Highway 68 to Corral de Tierra Road	–	–	County Scenic Highway
Corral de Tierra Road	Highway 68 to San Benancio Road	–	–	County Scenic Highway
County Highway G20	Laureles Grade Road from Highway 68 south to County Highway G16 (West Carmel Valley Road) in Carmel Valley	–	–	County Scenic Highway
Interlake Road	County Highway G14/18 (Jolon Road) to Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line	–	–	County Scenic Highway
Robinson Canyon Road	Carmel Valley Road to end	–	–	County Scenic Highway
25	Highway 198 to Monterey/San Benito County line	0.0– approx. 11.0	11.0	E
68	City of Monterey to U.S. 101 near Salinas	0.0–4.3 and 17.8–22.0	8.5	E
156	Highway 1 to 1.0 mile east of Castroville	0.0–0.7	0.7	E
198	U.S. 101 to Monterey/Fresno County line	–	22.7	E

Highway/ Roadway	Segment	Post-miles	Length (miles)	Designation Status*
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OD = Caltrans Officially Designated Scenic Highway.
 – = Information unavailable from references used.
 E = Caltrans Eligible Scenic Highway.

Sources: California Department of Transportation 2008b, 2008c; America’s Byways 2008a, 2008b; Monterey County General Plan 2007 Area Plans.

4.14.4.2 Designated Sensitive Visual Areas

Each of the eight Planning Areas in the General Plan contains designated visual resource areas identified through its Area Plan. There is a mix of Sensitive Areas, Highly Sensitive Areas, Critical Viewsheds, View Sheds, View Points and View Areas. Exhibit 4.14.1 is a digitized composite of visual resource designations from each of the Area Plans, Local Coastal Programs, and City General Plans.

Community Areas and Rural Centers

Five Community Areas are identified as areas where, with a more detailed plan for that area (Community Plan), additional growth could occur. These areas include Pajaro, Boronda, Castroville, Fort Ord Master Plan, and Chualar. As visible on Exhibit 4.14.1, sensitive visual areas occur in the Pajaro and Fort Ord areas, and highly sensitive visual areas occur in the Fort Ord area. In addition to Community Areas, a second tier called Rural Centers identifies seven smaller population areas. If provided with adequate facilities and infrastructure, these areas, could accommodate growth if Community Areas could not fulfill the need and would retain their village character. These areas include River Road, Lockwood, Pleyto, Bradley, San Ardo, San Lucas, and Pine Canyon (King City). As visible on Exhibit 4.14.1, highly sensitive visual areas occur in the River Road center.

4.14.4.3 Light and Glare

Existing sources of light and glare in Monterey County are primarily associated with cities and developed unincorporated areas. Sources of light in these areas include exterior and interior building lighting, illuminated signs, streetlights, and signals. Sources of glare in these areas include windows and reflective building materials such as metal roofs. Mobile sources of light and glare originate from vehicles, airplanes, trains, and farm equipment. When light is not sufficiently screened and spills over into areas outside of a particular development area the effect is called “light trespassing.”

While most features contributing to glare are man-made, a large source of glare can be natural in the form of water surfaces, such as the Pacific Ocean, and land cover. The Pacific Ocean serves as a large source of glare, which can vary in intensity based on weather/atmospheric conditions (e.g., a sunny versus a foggy day). The ocean can also cast glare during the nighttime in areas that are highly developed by reflecting the light coming from those areas. In both cases, glare from the ocean is not usually perceived as a negative aesthetic quality, and can often be associated with high-quality and memorable visual experiences.

Land cover can include exposed soil, seedlings, mature row crops, orchards, pasture, forest, and so on. The built environment is not included in “land cover.” These different cover types can produce different amounts of glare based on the amount of surface area and its roughness, reflectiveness, and coloring. For example, a glossier leaved, low-growing row crop that forms more of a continuous surface is likely to create more glare than a vineyard where the vines are duller, taller, and planted in wider spaced rows that allow for areas of shade and light absorption. Similarly, dry, bare soil or mown grain fields can be much lighter, hence more reflective, than wet, bare soil or a green grain field. Areas that tend to produce the least amount of glare are areas of natural vegetation. As with the ocean, glare is influenced by weather and atmospheric conditions.

Lastly, light and glare can be affected by the absence of vegetation, because vegetation acts to screen and filter light and soften the intensity of glare. For example, in areas of intense development that lack mature landscaping or where land has been denuded of natural vegetation for agriculture, there will be a notable increase in light and glare when compared to areas of development with mature landscaping or natural, vegetated areas.

4.14.5 Regulatory Framework

4.14.5.1 Federal and State

National Scenic Byways Program

Under the National Scenic Byways Program, implemented by the Federal Highway Administration, roadways are designated as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based upon their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural intrinsic qualities. A road must significantly meet criteria for at least one of the above six intrinsic qualities to be designated a National Scenic Byway. For the All-American Roads designation, criteria must be met for multiple intrinsic qualities. Additionally, there must be a local commitment “provided by communities along the scenic byway that they will undertake actions, such as zoning and other protective measures, to preserve the scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and natural integrity of the scenic byway and the adjacent area as identified in the corridor management plan.” In addition, new signs cannot be erected if they are not in conformance with 23 U.S.C. 131(c) along any highway that has been designated as a scenic

byway under the State's scenic byway program and includes highways that are designated scenic byways under the National Scenic Byways Program and All-American Roads Program, whether or not they are designated as State scenic byways. (Federal Highway Administration 1995.)

If these roadways no longer possess the intrinsic qualities that supported their designation, local commitment has failed to retain these intrinsic qualities, or if the roadways are not maintained in accordance with their corridor management plan, they can be de-designated.

While governed for their scenic qualities by the Federal Highway Administration as described above, these designated byways fall under jurisdiction of the local county, state (Caltrans), or U.S. Forest Service (if on Forest Service lands) and are, therefore, protected largely under those jurisdictions (Steele pers. comm.).

California Scenic Highway Program

In addition to the National Scenic Byways Program, scenic roadways are designated by the State of California under the Scenic Highway Program detailed in Street and Highway Code Section 260.

A highway may be designated as 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. (California Department of Transportation 2007.)

To become an officially designated scenic highway, the local jurisdiction must adopt a scenic corridor protection program for the eligible state scenic highway, applies to the California Department of Transportation for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway. The scenic corridor protection program is made up of adopted ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exists in various portions of local codes. State and county roads can be designated as scenic highways (California Department of Transportation 2007).

Table 4.14-1 lists roadways in the project area that are designated in federal or state plans as a scenic highway or route worthy of protection for maintaining and enhancing scenic viewsheds.

State Historic Preservation Programs

The State Office of Historic Preservation oversees four historic preservation programs:

- National Register of Historic Places
- California Register of Historic Places

- California Historical Landmarks
- California Points of Historic Interest

Each program has its own specific eligibility criteria, although historic resources often overlap on multiple lists.

Resources listed in the National Register, California Historical Landmarks #770 and above are automatically listed in the California Register. Points of Historic Interest designated after December 1997 and recommended by the State Historical Resources Commission are also listed in the California Register.

4.14.5.2 Local

Monterey County General Plan

Tree Protection

The county has an ordinance for the protection of trees within its jurisdiction. Tree protection within the county varies in accordance with different areas and master plans, which provide specific policies relative to the protection of specific types of trees. Each of the following tree removal scenarios require a tree removal permit (16.60.030):

- North County Area Plan or Toro Area Plan areas: oak or madrone tree six inches or more in diameter two feet above ground level.
- Carmel Valley Master Plan area: oak, madrone or redwood tree six inches or more in diameter two feet above ground level.
- Cachagua Area Plan area: native tree six inches or more in diameter two feet above ground level.

“Native trees,” for the purpose of this Section, are:

- Santa Lucia Fir;
 - Black Cottonwood;
 - Fremont Cottonwood;
 - Box Elder;
 - Willows;
 - California Laurel;
 - Sycamores;
 - Oaks; and
 - Madrones.
- Any oak tree in any other area of the County of Monterey designated in the applicable area plan as Resource Conservation, Residential, Commercial or Industrial (except Industrial, Mineral Extraction).

- Any landmark oak tree removed in any area except as may be approved by the Director of Planning and Building Inspection. Landmark oak trees are those trees which are twenty-four (24) inches or more in diameter when measured two feet above the ground, or trees which are visually significant, historically significant, or exemplary of their species.
- Any oak trees in any other area of the County of Monterey designated in the applicable area plan as Agricultural or Industrial, Mineral Extraction, except for a small number of uses specified in Section 16.60.050.
- Any oak trees removed in any area of the County of Monterey for commercial harvesting purposes.

As a condition of permit approval, any applicant seeking to remove a protected tree from a property within County jurisdiction is required to relocate or replace each removed protected tree at a one-to-one ratio. Removal of more than three protected trees from a single lot over a one-year period requires submission of a Forest Management Plan and approval of a Use Permit by the Monterey County Planning Commission. The Forest Management Plan is to be prepared at the applicant's expense by a qualified professional forester (16.60.040).

Several tree removal activities are exempted from the provisions of the County tree ordinance. These include certain commercial timber operations; any governmental or utilities-related tree removal that occurs within public rights-of-way; and any construction-related tree removal that is included in an approved subdivision, Use Permit, or similar discretionary permit (16.60.040).

Monterey County Grading Ordinance

The County grading ordinance generally regulates grading involving more than 100 cubic yards of excavation and filling. Minor fills and excavations (cuts) of less than 100 yards that are not intended to provide foundation for structures, or that are very shallow and nearly flat, are typically exempt from the ordinance, as are shallow footings for small structures. Submittal requirements for a County grading permit include site plans, existing and proposed contour changes, an estimate of the volume of earth to be moved, and geotechnical (soils) reports. Projects involving grading activities over 5,000 cubic yards must include detailed plans signed by a State-licensed civil engineer.

Grading is not allowed to obstruct storm drainage or cause siltation of a waterway. All grading requires that temporary and permanent erosion control measures be implemented. Grading within 50 feet of a watercourse, or within 200 feet of a river, is regulated in the Zoning Code Floodplain regulations. Work in the Salinas River and Arroyo Seco River channels is exempted if it is covered by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 5-year regional 404 permit, approved by the California Department of Fish and Game, and approved by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency.

In addition to grading ordinance provisions, the Zoning Code (Chapter 1.64.230) details specific regulations for development on slopes in excess of 30%, including conformance with the grading ordinance and erosion control requirements. Specific geotechnical or engineering geologic investigation requirements include the following:

- 1) Presentation of data regarding the nature, distribution, and strength of existing soils.
- 2) Recommended grading procedures and design criteria for corrective measures when necessary, including buttress fills.
- 3) Examination and recommendations to maintain slope stability.
- 4) Description of the site geology of the site and the effect of geologic conditions on the proposed development.
- 5) Incorporation of approved report recommendations in the grading plans and specifications. (Ord. 2535 110, 1979.).
- 6) Completion of a liquefaction study, where applicable and the potential for liquefaction, should there be:
 - a) Shallow ground water at 50 feet (15.24 meters) or less,
 - b) Unconsolidated sandy alluvium,
 - c) Site within Seismic Zone 4.

Design standards in the ordinance include requirements for fill slopes, cut slopes, and drainage controls.

4.14.6 Project Impacts

This section describes the CEQA impact analysis relating to visual resources for the Project and alternatives. It describes the methods used to determine the Project's impacts and lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact would be significant. Federal and professional standards of visual assessment methodology have been used to determine potential impacts on aesthetic values of the project area. Measures to mitigate (avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for) significant impacts accompany each impact discussion.

4.14.6.1 Methodology

In addition to using the concepts and terminology (described above) to categorize visual characteristics of the project area and the thresholds of significance (described below) to determine impacts to the visual characteristics, analysis of the visual effects of the project are based on:

- general familiarity with the region; and

- review of the project in regard to compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations and professional standards pertaining to visual quality.

4.14.6.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines was used to derive the significance thresholds which are used to determine whether the proposed project would have a significant environmental effect. The proposed project may have a significant effect on visual resources under CEQA if it would:

- result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- result in degradation of scenic resources along a scenic highway;
- substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- create substantial new sources of light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.14.6.3 Impact Analysis

Development under the 2007 General Plan up to the 2030 planning horizon and buildout in the year 2092 would affect scenic vistas, degrade scenic resources along scenic highways, degrade the visual character of Monterey County, and create substantial new sources of light and glare.

New development in the 2007 General Plan would alter topography, remove vegetation, and/or substantially change natural watercourses, resulting in significant adverse affects on scenic vistas and development could degrade scenic resources along scenic highways. The introduction of permanent urban uses on undeveloped land would substantially alter the visual character of the 2007 General Plan growth areas and result in the loss of natural aesthetic features. In addition, new sources of night time lighting resulting from new urban development in designated growth areas allowed by the implementation of the 2007 General Plan could result in light trespass, light pollution, and glare.

Scenic Vistas

Impact AES-1: Implementation of the 2007 General Plan would result in a substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas. (Less-Than-Significant Impact.)

2030 Planning Horizon

Impact of Development with Policies

Development under the 2007 General Plan up to the 2030 planning horizon would result in new urban development in undeveloped areas. See Exhibit 3.1 for an illustration of the types of land use that would be allowed in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. Depending on the particular projects pursued in the county, new development allowed by the 2007 General Plan could alter topography, remove vegetation, or substantially change natural watercourses that may impact scenic vistas. Scenic vistas of particular concern include the Gabilan Mountains near Pajaro, Castroville and Prunedale; Junipero Serra Peak near Chualar, San Lucas and Pine Canyon (King City); Carmel Valley near Lower Carmel Valley; and Mt. Toro near River Road/Las Palmas, San Benancio/Corral de Tierra, and Toro Park/Serra Village.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies summarized below set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas.

Land Use Element

Land Use Element Policies LU-1.1 through LU-1.9 and LU-2.2 help to limit development of greenfields and natural areas which might be a part of scenic vistas and help to direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most impacted by urban development. Policies LU-1.1 (requires that the type, location, timing, and intensity of growth in the unincorporated area be managed), LU-1.2 (discourages premature and scattered development), LU-1.3 (stipulates that balanced development of the county be assured through designating adequate land for a range of future land uses), LU-1.4 (limits growth to areas where an adequate level of services and facilities exists or can be assured concurrent with growth and development), LU-1.5 (requires that land uses be designated to achieve compatibility with adjacent uses), LU-1.6 (development of review process for development siting, design, and landscaping), LU-1.7 (allows for clustering of residential development to those portions of the property most suitable for development), LU-1.8 (encourages voluntary reduction or limitation of development potential in the rural and agricultural areas through dedication of

scenic or conservation easements, transfer of development rights, and other appropriate techniques), LU-1.9 (prioritizes infill of vacant non-agricultural lands in existing developed areas and new development within designated urban service areas), and LU-2.2 (restriction of residential development in areas that are unsuited for more intensive development due to the need to protect natural resources) are intended to ensure that growth in the unincorporated county would occur in a planned fashion and would be compatible with existing land uses. These policies discourage urban development outside of the incorporated cities, except within identified Community Areas and Rural Centers. As many of the scenic vistas in the county occur in unincorporated areas, these policies serve to limit development in visually valuable areas and conserve scenic lands thereby reducing the potential for impacts to scenic vistas in these areas. Policy LU 1.10 (off-site advertising) would help to avoid visual clutter with future development and protect scenic vistas.

Open Space and Conservation Element

Open Space and Conservation Element Policies OS-1.1 through OS-1.12 contain measures designed to preserve and protect the county's scenic resources and help direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most impacted by urban development. Policies OS-1.1 (encourage restriction of development in visually sensitive areas), OS-1.2 (development in visually sensitive areas is subordinate to area's natural features), OS-1.3 (in order to preserve county's scenic resources, ridgeline development not allowed), OS-1.4 (criteria to be developed to guide design and construction on ridgelines where exceptions are made in accordance with policy OS-1.3), OS-1.5 (new subdivisions must avoid ridgelines), OS-1.6 (ridgelines in specific plan areas must follow guidelines set out by specific plans), OS-1.7 (establishment of voluntary, transfer of development rights program to direct development away from areas with unique visual or natural features), OS-1.8 (establish development clustering programs to reduce impacts to visually sensitive areas), OS-1.9 (encourage development that protects and enhances county's scenic qualities), OS-1.10 (establishment of trails program), OS-1.11 (maintain GIS mapping for all lands with visually sensitive resources and corridors) and OS-1.12 (mitigation of significant disruption of views from scenic routes) reduce the potential for impacts to scenic vistas by protecting the county's scenic areas from development and encouraging preservation of these visually valuable areas. Policy OS-3.5 (development on slopes over 30% is prohibited) ensures that development on ridgelines of a certain grade does not occur, thereby protected scenic vistas of and from those ridgelines.

Agricultural Element

Agricultural Element Policies AG-1.1 through AG-1.12 establish land use guidelines designed to preserve existing agricultural operations. Policies AG-1.1 (prohibits land uses that would interfere with routine and ongoing agricultural operations on viable farmlands), AG-1.2 (establishes a regulatory framework allowing for the use of agricultural buffers to protect existing agricultural operations), AG-1.3 (limits the subdivision of Important Farmland and land designated as Farmlands, Permanent Grazing, or Rural Grazing), AG-1.4 (requires that viable agricultural land uses on Important Farmland be conserved, enhanced, and expanded through agricultural land use designations and encouragement of large-lot agricultural zoning), AG-1.5 (encourages the use of tax and economic incentives for farms and ranches), AG-1.6 (allows farm worker housing in areas designated for agricultural land use, under certain conditions), AG-1.7 (encourages the clustering of residential uses accessory to the agricultural use of the land in locations that will have minimal impact on the most productive land), AG-1.8 (requires that discretionary development projects on agricultural lands be reviewed by the County's Agricultural Advisory Committee), AG-1.9 (allows agricultural operations to be protected from nuisance claims), AG-1.11 (stipulates that permits for agricultural activities be integrated with applicable Resource Conservation District permit coordination (streamlining) programs), AG-1.12 (requires the County to establish a program to mitigate the loss of Important Farmland when a proposed change of land use designation would result in the loss of Important Farmland (as mapped by the California Department of Conservation), including annexation of agricultural land to an incorporated area) set forth general measures to promote the long-term protection and conservation of existing productive agricultural lands. Further, the policies ensure that surrounding uses are compatible with agricultural land uses. Implementation of these policies would promote protection scenic vistas associated with agricultural production.

Agricultural Element Policies AG-2.1 through AG-2.4, and AG-2.8 and AG-2.9 identify measures to promote the viability and financial feasibility of agricultural business in the county. These policies define appropriate and compatible uses of agricultural lands. Policies AG-2.1 (allows agricultural support facilities serving onsite and offsite farming and ranching activities to be established in the Farmlands, Permanent Grazing, and Rural Grazing land use designations), AG-2.2 (encourages the establishment and retention of a broad range of agricultural support businesses and services to enhance the full development potential of the agricultural industry in the county), AG-2.3 (allows agricultural processing facilities to be developed in the Farmlands, Permanent Grazing, and Rural Grazing land use designations, where compatible and appropriate), AG-2.4

(requires agriculture-related enterprises and agricultural support uses to be sited and designed to minimize the loss of productive agricultural lands and to minimize impacts on surrounding land uses), AG-2.8 (restricts compatible recreational uses to those that do not adversely impact long-term productivity of onsite or adjacent agricultural uses), and AG-2.9 (allows onsite farm equipment storage facilities within agricultural land use designations) reduce the potential for impacts to agricultural land by maintaining the viability of agricultural activities, and thereby help to preserve the scenic vistas in the county that are associated with agricultural land uses.

Agricultural Element Policies AG-3.1 through AG-3.3 are designed to prevent inappropriate limitations on routine and ongoing agricultural activities. Policies AG-3.1 (permits routine and ongoing agricultural activities, and stipulates that activities with the potential for significant impacts are subject to a greater level of review), AG-3.2 (encourages cooperation between the County, the agricultural industry, and state and federal agencies to streamline permit procedures for routine and ongoing agricultural activities), and AG-3.3 (identifies a non-exclusive list of routine and ongoing agricultural activities that the County may consider for exemption from selected General Plan policies based on development of an ordinance in order to provide flexibility for agricultural operations to continue in the county and to meet the changing demands of both regional and global competition) support typical, routine agricultural activities in a manner that would reduce the potential for agricultural land conversion by allowing for their continuation and economic viability and reduce the potential for impacts to scenic vistas associated with agricultural land uses.

Area Plan Policies

The North County Area Plan

North County Area Plan Policies NC-1.2 (mushroom operations/scenic quality), NC-1.3 (steep slopes/elevations and preservation), NC-3.1 (Scenic Highways and Visual Sensitivity Map and public views), NC-3.2 (Carpenteria Road) and NC-3.3 (native vegetation and conservation) require new development to avoid adverse aesthetic impacts in areas of high visual sensitivity.

Greater Salinas Area Plan

Greater Salinas Area Plan Policies GS-1.1 (Butterfly Village and design requirements), GS-1.4 (Spreckels/harmonious development), GS-1.5 (Highway 68/Salinas River and screening), (Harrison Road/Highway 101 and screening), GS-3.1 (vegetation and slopes of 25%), GS-3.2 (native plants and screening), and GS-3.3 (trees and Speckels Blvd) require new development to avoid adverse aesthetic

impacts by being harmonious with existing developments and design requirements, utilize plants and trees to soften visual impacts of new development and protect vegetation on slopes of more than 25%.

Central Salinas Valley Area Plan

Central Salinas Valley Area Plan Policies CSV-3.1 (Scenic Highways and Visual Sensitivity Map and public views) and CSV-5.3 (Spencer/Potter Road and viewsheds) require that new development not disrupt public views in areas designated as sensitive or highly sensitive.

Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan

Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan Policy GMP-1.1 (overlay district) regulates location, height, and design of development which will help preserve the scenic corridor along Highway 68 and west of Laureles Grade. Policy GMP-1.4 (open space buffers) requires buffers in order to protect scenic resources. Policy GMP-1.5 (low density uses) encourages open space/low intensity uses in order to maintain areas of high visual sensitivity. Policy GMP-3.1 (public/private efforts) promotes efforts to restore the scenic beauty of visually impacted areas which will help expand the possibilities of successfully protecting these areas. Policy GMP-3.2 (site design) requires site design for development that will reduce the impact on scenic vistas. Policy GMP-3.3 (Visual Sensitivity Map) protects scenic vistas by stipulating that new development not disrupt public views in certain areas and promotes open space of highly sensitive areas on the map. Policy GMP-3.4 (screening) stipulates that plant materials be used to screen or soften the visual impact of new development. Policy GMP-4.1 (steep slopes) preserves land with certain vegetation/trees exceeding 25% slope which helps to avoid the loss of visual amenities.

Carmel Valley Master Plan

Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-1.8 (clustered development) requires development to be clustered which helps to protect visible open space in sensitive visual areas. CV-1.19 (screening of mines) requires that mines or quarries be screened from public view which will help preserve scenic vistas. CV-1.20 (overlay districts) ensures visual compatibility with the character of Carmel Valley and immediate surrounding areas. CV-1.21 (commercial developments) stipulates height limits and large trees for commercial developments which will help screen these developments from scenic vistas. CV-2.9 (roads and scarring) prohibits roads that cross slopes steeper than 30% unless visible scarring can be mitigated. CV-3.2 requires that public vista areas be provided and improved. Policy CV-3.3 (Carmel Valley viewshed and distant hills) prohibits new development from

blocking views of the Carmel River or the distant hills. CV-3.4 (alteration of hillsides/natural landforms) requires that the alteration of hillsides and landforms be minimized which will help preserve the natural setting. CV-3.5 (signage restrictions) requires that signs not block views, cause visual clutter, or detract from the natural beauty. CV-3.18 requires that new aboveground transmission facilities be and follow the least visible route which will help to preserve scenic vistas.

Toro Area Plan

Toro Area Plan Policies T-1.5 (subdivisions designed outside of viewshed), Policy T-1.6 (transfer development rights), Policy 3.1 (Visual Sensitivity Map), Policy T-3.2 (site design), Policy T-3.3 (County and State scenic routes), and Policy T-3.6 (preservation of higher elevations/steep slopes) require new development to avoid adverse aesthetic impacts by maintaining viewsheds, offering mechanisms such as transfer development rights, encouraging site design and location sensitive to scenic vistas, and the preservation of areas that could be included in scenic vistas.

Cachagua Area Plan

Cachagua Area Plan Policies CACH-3.1 (Cachagua Visual Sensitivity and Scenic Routes Map), CACH-3.3 (hillsides and natural landforms), CACH-3.5 (resource production operations and mitigation), CACH-3.7 (Carmel and Arroyo Seco Rivers) require new development to avoid adverse aesthetic impacts by not allowing development to disrupt public views, limiting the alteration of hillsides and natural landforms, requiring mitigation of visual impacts from resource production operations, and preserving the visual aspects of the Carmel/Arroyo Seco Rivers.

South County Area Plan

South County Area Plan Policy SC-1.2 encourages clustered development in all areas where development is permitted in order to make the most efficient use of land and to preserve agricultural land and open space.

Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan

Included in the 2007 General Plan is an AWCP that is designed to promote the development of an integrated wine industry in Monterey County. The plan designates three winery corridors in the Salinas Valley. Prominent ridgelines and topographical features are visible from all three corridors. Highway 68, which serves as the northern terminus of the River Road/Arroyo Seco Road/Central Avenue Corridor is the only State Scenic Highway within the AWCP

boundaries. The AWCP overlays the Toro, Central Salinas Valley, and South County Area Plans, and policies relating to visual resources are applicable to the AWCP under this plan.

Community Area Policies

Fort Ord Master Plan

Fort Ord Master Plan Recreation Policy B-1 and Program E-2.3 (landfill design review), Policy D-1 (park facilities and scenic vistas), Program B-1.3 (design guidelines and bluffs), and Program B-1.4 (design guidelines for areas surrounding Fort Ord in County jurisdiction) require development to avoid adverse aesthetic impacts by reviewing the design of the landfill so that it becomes a visual asset for Fort Ord, locating and designing park facilities to provide scenic vistas, implement design guidelines for development on bluffs and Fort Ord.

County of Monterey Grading Ordinance

The County grading ordinance (Chapter 16.08 of the Monterey County Code) generally regulates grading activities greater than 100 cubic yards and over 2 feet in height. Submittal requirements for a grading permit issued by the County building official include site plans, existing and proposed contour changes, an estimate of the volume of earth to be moved, and soils or geotechnical reports (or both). Projects involving grading activities over 5,000 cubic yards must be prepared by a civil engineer, and geotechnical reports may be required also. Grading is not allowed to cause degradation of a waterway, and erosion control measures are required. Grading within 50 feet of a watercourse or within 200 feet of a river is regulated in the Zoning Code Floodplain regulations. The Zoning Code, Chapter 21.64.230, details specific regulations for development on slopes in excess of 30%. The County building official has regulatory authority over grading activities, although the MCWRA also enforces drainage regulations.

CEQA Review

In addition, future discretionary development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to undergo environmental review pursuant to CEQA. This review would include assessment of potential impacts on scenic vistas.

Significance Determination

New development by itself could potentially result in adverse impacts to scenic vistas. Monterey County contains a variety of scenic vistas including views of valleys, ridgelines, vegetation, watercourses and the coast. The

location of these scenic resources throughout the county is illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1. New development is proposed to be allowed in the areas illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1 with implementation of the 2007 General Plan. However, the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies described above set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas.

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies summarized above identify visually sensitive locations in a general sense, place restrictions on future development in those areas, and explain how impacts would be minimized. Moreover, the 2007 General Plan employs land use concepts such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic vistas as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. T

The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the scenic vistas, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic vistas are not significantly impacted. Therefore, with incorporation of the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies, impacts to scenic vistas as a result of the implementation of the 2007 General Plan up to the planning horizon of 2030 would be reduced to less than significant levels. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary.

Significance Conclusion

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas, as described above in the discussion of policies. Therefore, implementation of the policies would ensure that scenic vistas would not be significantly impacted by the 2007 General Plan development up to the 2030 planning horizon. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Buildout

Impact of Development with Policies

Buildout of the 2007 General Plan in the year 2092 would result in new urban development in undeveloped areas beyond 2030 levels. See Exhibit 3.1 for an illustration of the types of land use that would be allowed

in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. Depending on the particular projects pursued in the county, new development allowed by the 2007 General Plan could alter topography, remove vegetation, or substantially change natural watercourses that may impact scenic vistas. Scenic vistas of particular concern include the Gabilan Mountains near Pajaro, Castroville and Prunedale; Junipero Serra Peak near Chualar, San Lucas and Pine Canyon (King City); Carmel Valley near Lower Carmel Valley; and Mt. Toro near River Road/Las Palmas, San Benancio/Corral de Tierra, and Toro Park/Serra Village.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies summarized above identify visually sensitive locations and place restrictions on future development in those areas.

Significance Determination

New development could result in adverse impacts to scenic vistas. Monterey County contains a variety of scenic vistas including views of valleys, ridgelines, vegetation, watercourses and the coast. The location of these scenic resources throughout the county is illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1. New development is proposed to be allowed in the areas illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1 with implementation of the 2007 General Plan, however, the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas to the maximum extent practicable. The preceding General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion explains how impacts would be reduced. The 2007 General Plan employs land use concepts such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. At the time of buildout, it is estimated that most of the remaining land to be developed in the county would be contained in lots of record, which are generally located in what are currently less developed areas of the county. However, development of the lots of record would still be required to follow the 2007 General Plan policies which protect scenic areas in the county, therefore, the development of the lots of record would not present a significant impact to scenic vistas

The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. No site-specific development projects are proposed as part of the 2007 General Plan. As a result, specific impacts to particular scenic vistas are unknown and would be speculative to analyze. Those impacts will depend on the character of the specific development projects pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the scenic vistas, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the

policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic vistas are not significantly impacted. With implementation of the 2007 General Plan policies, all future development in the county would be required to avoid scenic vistas, as explained in the General Plan and Area Plan policy section above. Therefore, scenic vistas would not be significantly impacted by buildout of the 2007 General Plan. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary.

Significance Conclusion

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas. Therefore, scenic vistas would not be significantly impacted by buildout of the 2007 General Plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Scenic Highways

Impact AES-2: Implementation of the 2007 General Plan could result in the degradation of scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. (Less-Than-Significant Impact.)

2030 Planning Horizon

Impact of Development with Policies

The area within the 2007 General Plan contains scenic highways and eligible scenic highways, as described in Section 4.14.4, above. Designated or eligible scenic highways within the planning area that area of particular concern include Highway 156 near Castroville, Highway 1 near Lower Carmel Valley, and Highway 68 near River Road/Las Palmas, San Benancio/Corral de Tierra, and Toro Park/Serra Village. See Exhibits 4.14.2 through 4.14-6 for an illustration of the scenic highways within the county. Depending on the particular projects pursued in the county, new development allowed by the 2007 General Plan could occur along scenic highways where scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings are located. Impacts to these roadways would be potentially significant.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies summarized below set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic highways.

Land Use Element

Land Use Element Policies LU-1.1 through LU-1.10 and LU-2.2 establish general land use concepts that emphasize city-centered growth, compatibility between adjacent land uses, and the conservation of natural areas. These policies are summarized under Impact AES-1. Collectively, these policies promote compact-urban growth in existing developed areas and discourage growth in natural areas where views from scenic highways would be most adversely impacted. Additionally, the 2007 General Plan Land Use Element emphasizes compact city-centered growth and discourages the encroachment of urban uses into undeveloped areas which will reduce the numbers of protected trees ultimately removed for development.

Open Space and Conservation Element

Open Space and Conservation Element Policies OS-1.1 through OS-1.12 set forth measures designed to preserve and protect the county's scenic resources. These policies are also summarized in detail under Impact AES-1. These measures include requirements prohibiting ridgeline development, encouraging the preservation of significant natural areas through the use of economic tools such as development credits and conservation easements, and a requirement that the disruption of views from designated scenic routes be mitigated through use of appropriate materials, scale, lighting and siting of development.

Policy OS-5.9 establishes that each Area Plan set forth tree removal permit requirements.

Policy OS-5.10 requires the establishment of regulations for tree removal, including Timberland Conversion, to be maintained by ordinance implementing Area Plan policies that address the following:

- a. Criteria when a permit is required including:
 1. number of trees,
 2. minimum size of tree,
 3. Post Timberland conversion land-use
- b. How size is measured for each protected species of tree, and what constitutes a landmark tree depending on the rate of growth for that species.
- c. Hazardous trees
- d. Pest and disease abatement
- e. Replacement criteria.

f. Ensure minimal removal

Policy OS-5.11 promotes conservation of large, continuous expanses of native trees and vegetation as the most suitable habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife.

Public Safety Element

Public Safety policies PS 12.1–12.17 support the protection and preservation of historic properties and buildings located within the county. These policies establish processes and implementation measures to assist in the identification, designation, and preservation of historic properties. In addition, the policies provide for tax incentives and other financial mechanisms to aid in the protection and management of historic structures. Please see Section 4.12, Cultural Resources, Impact: Historic Preservation for a more in-depth discussion of these policies.

Area Plan Policies

The Area Plans contain a number of policies designed to protect scenic resources, including views from scenic highways. In addition to the scenic resource policies summarized under Impact AES-1, the Area Plans contain specific policies for scenic highways.

The North County Area Plan

Policy NC-2.2 (protection of Old Stage Road) calls for the preservation of the historical value of Old Stage Road, which will ensure that the road maintains its historic integrity in spite of new development. Policy NC-3.1 (public views and Scenic Highways and Visual Sensitivity Map) and Policy NC-3.2 (protection of slopes) help to protect scenic resources on the on the Scenic Highways and Visual Sensitivity Map and along the southern approach to Aromas. Policy NC-3.4 discourages removal of healthy, native oak and madrone trees and requires a permit for the removal of any of these trees with a trunk diameter in excess of six inches at breast height. Trees removed must be replaced at a 1:1 ratio using nursery-grown trees of the same species that are a minimum of one gallon in size. Policy NC-3.6 (North County Historic Sites) lists sites to be considered for inclusion in a historical resources zoning district, which will encourage protection of such sites from destruction caused by future development.

Greater Salinas Area Plan

Policy 1.4 (restricted development of town of Spreckles) stipulates that future development projects in Spreckels be harmonious with the surrounding historic character and be reviewed by the Historic

Resource Review Board. Policy GS-2.3 (Highway 101 bypass) will incorporate sound deflection berms with appropriate landscaping which will help maintain scenic resources the highway. Policy GS-2.4 (Old Stage Road) will maintain scenic resources by requiring all new developments along Old Stage Road in the Greater Salinas Area Plan to be subject to design approval. Policy GS-3.3 (historic walnut tree maintenance and preservation) promotes preservation of the walnut trees along Spreckels Boulevard and encourages the use of private fund-raising efforts for tree maintenance. Implementation of these policies will help protect the town of Spreckels from possible destruction caused by future development. Policy GS-3.4 (support efforts to preserve historic resources) identifies the Boronda Adobe and Darrington Adobe as significant historical resources and promotes efforts of the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) to maintain and preserve these sites. This will contribute to the protection and preservation of Monterey County's historic resources

Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan

Policy GMP-1.1 (overlays and other appropriate zoning designations), Policy GMP-2.6 (State Scenic Highway/County Scenic Route designations), and Policy GMP-3.3 (visually "sensitive" and "highly sensitive" areas generally visible from designated Scenic Highways), provide a variety of methods including zoning designations, easement dedications and restrictions of developments that help to protect scenic resources along scenic highways. GMP-3.5 requires development to be designed to prevent, to the maximum extent feasible, the destruction of native oak, pine, and redwood forest habitat.

Carmel Valley Master Plan

Policy CV-1.9 (clustered development), Policy CV-2.17 (undergrounding utility lines), and Policy CV-3.1 (setbacks along Carmel Valley Road) help to improve scenic vistas through less clutter of utility lines and increased open space. Policy CV-3.11 discourages removal of healthy, native oak and madrone trees and requires a permit for the removal of any of these trees with a trunk diameter in excess of six inches at breast height. Trees removed must be replaced at a 1:1 ratio using nursery-grown trees of the same species that are a minimum of one gallon in size. The policy includes penalties for tree removal that occurs without a permit. Policy CV-3.13 (designation and protection of historic resources) stipulates that future development in Carmel Valley preserve the integrity of historical sites. Implementation of this policy will aid in preventing the damage or destruction of historic resources potentially caused by future development.

Toro Area Plan

Policy T-2.8 (County Scenic Route designations), Policy T-3.3 (scenic routes designated as critical viewshed), and Policy T-3.4 (undergrounding utility lines) improve scenic vistas by pursuing County Scenic Route designations, increasing the number of scenic routes as critical viewsheds and through less clutter of utility lines. Policy T-3.7 discourages the removal of healthy trees with diameters in excess of eight inches.

Cachagua Area Plan

Policy CACH-2.2 (County Scenic Route designations) encourages the County to pursue additional designations. CACH-3.4 discourages the removal of native trees and specified the conditions under which they are allowed to be removed. Policy CACH-3.6 promotes cooperation with the United States Forest Service and private property owners to ensure that Santa Lucia fir are protected.

South County Area Plan

Policy SC-2.1 states that additional scenic routes shall not be designated in the South County Planning Area.

Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan

Highway 68 is the only officially designated state scenic highway that could potentially be affected by the AWCP. The intersection of Highway 68 and River Road in the Las Palmas area is at the very northern end of the AWCP boundaries and is contemplated to be enhanced with a treatment identifying it as a gateway to the River Road winery corridor. This treatment would consist of a sign that identifies entry into the corridor and may be coordinated with a visitor center to provide other amenities such as kiosks. The treatment would be designed to be visually appealing and would be consistent with Highway 68's designation as an officially designated state scenic highway in this area.

The AWCP recognized that "important visual elements such as native trees, ridgelines, frontal slopes, and scenic road corridors are especially critical to give the Corridor its identity." In addition, to maintain the current rural character, road improvements should be limited to enhancing the scenic corridor and promoting safe circulation. Also, the AWCP has established design criteria that have been established with the intent to design the wineries to achieve continuity and establish a larger visual context that creates a sense of place and seeks to encourage creativity while creating an overall vision for the AWCP that is in keeping with the existing rural character.

The AWCP is a component of the 2007 General Plan and is consistent with its proposed goals and policies including those that pertain to scenic highways. These policies are summarized under Impact AES-2. Furthermore, all wineries and tasting rooms that would be developed in accordance with the AWCP would be required to comply with the County's applicable design requirements, policies, and ordinances that protect views from scenic highways (i.e., Highway 68). Therefore, views from Highway 68 would not be degraded by implementation of the AWCP. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed AWCP boundaries contain existing agricultural areas of the Salinas Valley. No scenic vistas exist within these boundaries. Moreover, the AWCP is intended to facilitate the development of limited wineries and tasting rooms. These land uses are inherently agricultural supporting and would be consistent with the existing land uses of the Salinas Valley. The AWCP is a component of the 2007 General Plan and is consistent with its proposed goals and policies including those that pertain to protection of scenic vistas. These policies are summarized under Impact AES-1. All wineries and tasting rooms that would be developed in accordance with the AWCP would be required to comply with the applicable design policies and ordinances. Therefore, views from scenic vistas of the Salinas Valley would not be compromised by implementation of the AWCP.

Precise locations of future AWCP facilities are unknown at the time of this writing, and therefore, it is speculative to engage in further analysis of impacts on scenic vistas. Further analysis of potential scenic vista impacts will be done at the project level.

Community Area Plans

Fort Ord Master Plan

Commercial Land Use Policy F-1 and Institutional Land Use Policy D-1 (regional urban design guidelines) protect scenic resources along scenic highways through requiring the County of Monterey to support FORA in the preparation of regional urban design guidelines, including a scenic corridor design overlay area. Policy C-2 requires the County to encourage the preservation and enhancement of native oak woodland elements in the natural and built environments.

Federal and State Scenic Highway Preservation Programs

All future development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to comply with all applicable federal and state statutes that concern the preservation of scenic roadways

(e.g., the National Scenic Byways Program and the California Scenic Highway Program).

Federal and State Historic Preservation Requirements

All future development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to comply with all applicable federal and state statutes that concern the preservation of historical resources (e.g., the National Historic Preservation Act).

CEQA Review

In addition, future discretionary development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to undergo environmental review pursuant to CEQA. This review would include assessment of potential impacts on scenic highways.

Significance Determination

New development could potentially result in adverse impacts to scenic highways. Monterey County contains many scenic highways, which can be seen in Exhibits 4.14.2 through 4.14.6. The location of specific scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings along the highways is not known at this time, however, a general depiction of the scenic resources in the county is illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1. New development is proposed to be allowed in the areas illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1 with implementation of the 2007 General Plan, however, the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic resources within scenic highways. The General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced. The existing federal and state historic preservation requirements protects historic buildings that may be located along scenic highways. The County's existing tree preservation ordinance also sets forth criteria for removal of certain types of significant trees, including those located along scenic highways. Moreover, the 2007 General Plan employs land use concepts such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic resources along scenic highways as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the scenic resources along scenic highways, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic resources are not significantly impacted. Therefore, with incorporation of the 2007 General

Plan and Area Plan policies, impacts to scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, as a result of the implementation of the 2007 General Plan up to the planning horizon of 2030 would be reduced to less than significant levels. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary.

Significance Conclusion

Scenic highways would not be significantly impacted by the 2007 General Plan development up to the planning horizon of 2030. No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary. Impacts would be less than significant.

Buildout

Impact of Development with Policies

Future development envisioned by the 2007 General Plan could occur in areas within the viewshed of a scenic highway or eligible scenic highway beyond 2030 levels.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies summarized above identify set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic highways to the maximum extent practicable.

Significance Determination

New development could potentially result in adverse impacts to scenic highways. Monterey County contains many scenic highways, which can be seen in Exhibits 4.14.2 through 4.14.6. The location of specific scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings along the highways is not known at this time; however, a general depiction of the scenic resources in the county is illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1. New development is proposed to be allowed in the areas illustrated in Exhibit 4.14.1 with implementation of the 2007 General Plan, however, the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic resources within scenic highways.

The preceding General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion explains how impacts would be reduced by 2007 General Plan policies. The existing federal and state historic preservation requirements protects historic buildings that may be located along scenic highways. The County's existing tree preservation ordinance also sets forth criteria for removal of certain

types of significant trees, including those located along scenic highways. Moreover, the 2007 General Plan employs land use concepts such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. At the time of buildout, it is estimated that most of the remaining land to be developed in the county would be contained in lots of record, which are generally located in what are currently less developed areas of the county. However, development of the lots of record would still be required to follow the 2007 General Plan policies which protect scenic areas in the county, therefore, the development of the lots of record would not present a significant impact to scenic vistas.

The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. As discussed above, the analysis of specific impacts to particular scenic resources along scenic highways would be speculative because those impacts will depend on the specific development projects pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the scenic resources along scenic highways, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic resources are not significantly impacted. Therefore, with incorporation of the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies, impacts to scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, as a result of the buildout of the 2007 General Plan. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary.

Significance Conclusion

With implementation of the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies, scenic highways would not be significantly impacted by buildout of the 2007 General Plan through 2092. No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is necessary. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Visual Character

Impact AES-3: Implementation of the 2007 General Plan would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Monterey County. (Significant and Unavoidable Impact.)

2030 Planning Horizon

Impact of Development with Policies

New urban development in the proposed 2007 General Plan growth areas during the 2030 planning horizon would result in the permanent conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses. See Exhibit 3.1 for an illustration of the types of land use that would be allowed in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. Development actually occurring with the county would depend on the particular projects pursued in the county and cannot be determined at this time, but may include roads, utilities, structures, earthworks, and the results of other human activities. The introduction of permanent urban uses on undeveloped land as allowed by the 2007 General Plan could alter topography, remove vegetation, or substantially change natural watercourses that may substantially alter the visual character of the 2007 General Plan growth areas (Community Areas, Rural Centers, Affordable Housing Overlay Districts [AHOs] and lots of record) and result in the loss of natural aesthetic features. Below is a summary of the Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs and lots of record that would experience significant visual character impacts.

Chualar: The 2007 General Plan would allow urban-level development to this small rural agricultural community subject to further planning. Future growth would permanently convert agricultural land to urban uses, thereby irreversibly altering the visual appearance of the community and surrounding area.

San Lucas: The 2007 General Plan would allow additional urban development on agricultural land at the edge of the existing community. While San Lucas already contains urban development, the intensity of this new development could fundamentally alter the visual character of this area.

Rural Centers: While the 2007 General Plan contemplates only limited additional development in Rural Centers, certain ones—particularly those in rural parts of the county—would experience a greater visual change than others. Notable examples include Bradley, Lockwood, Pleyto, and San Ardo. Due to their distance from other communities as well as the low intensity of existing development, any new development in these Rural Centers would cause a fundamental change in the community's appearance.

Affordable Housing Overlay Districts (AHOs): In the AHOs, landowners would be encouraged to build affordable housing at high density. A property owner within an AHO may voluntarily propose an affordable housing project

rather than a use otherwise allowed by the underlying land use designation. There are three AHOs identified in the 2007 General Plan: Mid-Carmel Valley; Highway 68/Monterey Peninsula Airport; and Reservation Road/Highway 68. Although the AHOs are located in urban areas within the county, the increased density allowed in AHO may affect the visual character of the surrounding land.

Lots of Record: In addition to the nodes of urban development including Community Areas, Rural Centers and AHOs, there will be individual lots of record developing. Lots of records are individual lots with single family homes when developed. They would have a less intense affect on the environment than development in the urbanized nodes where higher densities would be allowed, however they would still pose a potential for affecting visual character due to their generally rural locations.

Generally, the visual character in Monterey County is associated with non-urban features such as agriculture, ocean views, and rugged natural areas. Additional urban growth in the Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs, and lots of record would alter the visual ambiance towards a more urban character. Accordingly, future development contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be a significant impact.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan contains goals and policies that address adverse impacts on the county's visual character from the 2007 General Plan development.

Land Use Element

Land Use Element Policies LU-1.1 through LU-1.10 and LU-2.2 establish general land use concepts that emphasize city-centered growth, compatibility between adjacent land uses, and the conservation of natural areas. These policies are summarized in detail under Impact AES-1. Collectively, these policies promote compact-urban growth in existing developed areas and therefore discourage growth in natural areas where urban development would have the most deleterious impact on visual character.

Open Space and Conservation Element

Open Space and Conservation Element Policies OS-1.1 through OS-1.12 set forth measures designed to preserve and protect the county's scenic resources. These policies are also summarized in detail under Impact AES-1. These measures help to reduce impacts on Monterey's visual character by including requirements that prohibit ridgeline development, encourage the preservation of significant natural areas through the use of economic tools such as development credits and conservation easements, and require that the disruption of

views from designated scenic routes be mitigated through use of appropriate materials, scale, lighting, and siting of development.

Area Plan Policies

The Area Plan contains a number of policies designed to protect scenic resources, including views from scenic highways and therefore help to reduce impacts on Monterey's visual character. These scenic resource policies are summarized under Impact AES-1 and Impact AES-2.

Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan

The AWCP would allow the development of a maximum of 40 artisan wineries, 10 full-scale wineries, and 10 stand-alone tasting rooms along the three corridors specified in the plan. In addition, the AWCP identifies the maximum number of each type of facility that can be developed on each corridor to balance development and avoid over concentration of facilities in one area. These limitations would largely maintain the existing visual character along the three corridors and prevent a substantial degradation of the agricultural character of the AWCP area. Moreover, all facilities developed in accordance with the AWCP would be agricultural-supporting and would complement the agricultural character of the area.

The AWCP recognized that "important visual elements such as native trees, ridgelines, frontal slopes, and scenic road corridors are especially critical to give the Corridor its identity." The AWCP has established design criteria have been established with the intent to design the wineries to achieve continuity and establish a larger visual context that creates a sense of place and seeks to encourage creativity while creating an overall vision for the AWCP that is in keeping with the existing rural character.

The AWCP is a component of the 2007 General Plan and is consistent with its proposed goals and policies including those that pertain to visual character. These policies are summarized under Impact AES-3. Furthermore, all wineries and tasting rooms that would be developed in accordance with the AWCP would be required to comply with the County's applicable design policies and ordinances, including those contained in the AWCP.

Precise locations of future AWCP facilities are unknown at the time of this writing, and therefore, it is speculative to engage in further analysis of visual character impacts. Further analysis of potential visual character impacts will be done at the project level.

CEQA Review

In addition, future discretionary development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to undergo environmental review pursuant to CEQA. This review would include assessment of potential impacts on visual character.

Significance Determination

Development and land use activities contemplated by the proposed 2007 General Plan would result in substantial changes to the county's visual character in the Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs and lots of record in the county. These areas would experience more intense urban development that would fundamentally change their visual appearance. Depending on the particular projects pursued in the county, new development allowed by the 2007 General Plan would vary and is not knowable at this time, although changes to valleys, vegetation, and watercourses could occur. While urban uses would primarily be sited in locations that already support urban development, the introduction of additional urban development in these areas would irreversibly alter the localized visual character of these portions of the unincorporated county.

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. The General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced. These policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to visual character in the Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs and lots of record as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the visual character of the county, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic resources avoided the greatest extent practicable. Furthermore, future development would be required to comply with all applicable zoning restrictions including those that pertain to setbacks, height restrictions, landscaping, and other aesthetic considerations.

Nonetheless, the 2007 General Plan would substantially and irreversibly degrade the existing visual character and quality of Monterey County in Community Areas, Rural Centers, AHOs and lots of record. State planning law, housing element provisions requires the County to provide sufficient development sites to meet its regional housing share. The growth centers

demonstrate that the County is meeting this state requirement. The County cannot prohibit new development, which would be the only way to reduce impacts to visual character to less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a significant and unavoidable impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is available.

Significance Conclusion

In summary, the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. However, the alteration of Monterey County's localized visual character in designated growth areas would be an irreversible consequence of 2007 General Plan development up to the planning horizon of 2030. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a significant and unavoidable impact.

Buildout

Impact of Development with Policies

New urban development under the proposed 2007 General Plan would result in the permanent conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses and alter the visual character of the 2007 General Plan growth areas beyond 2030 levels. After 2030, it is expected that the remaining land to be developed in the county would be the generally rurally located lots of record. Impacts to specific visual characteristics would be determined during the CEQA review process for each project proposed within the county and are not identifiable at this time because proposed future development cannot be projected. However, in a general sense it is possible to say that implementation of the 2007 General Plan would alter the visual character of the county.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan contains goals and policies that address adverse impacts on the county's visual character from buildout of the 2007 General Plan and are discussed above.

Significance Determination

Buildout of the General Plan to 2092 would result in substantial changes to the county's visual character in the lots of record by substantially increasing the amount development in the county and the alteration of land use activities, primarily from agricultural to residential and commercial. These areas would experience more intense urban development that would fundamentally change their visual appearance. Depending on the particular

projects pursued in the county, new development allowed by the 2007 General Plan would vary and is not knowable at this time, although changes to valleys, ridgelines, vegetation and watercourses could occur. While urban uses would primarily be sited in locations that already support urban development, the introduction of additional urban development in these areas would irreversibly alter the localized visual character of these portions of the unincorporated county.

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. The General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced. These policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. At the time of buildout, it is estimated that most of the remaining land to be developed in the county would be contained in lots of record, which are generally located in what are currently less developed areas of the county. However, development of the lots of record would still be required to follow the 2007 General Plan policies which protect scenic areas in the county.

The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to visual character in the lots of record as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would protect the visual character of the county, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that scenic resources are avoided the greatest extent practicable. Furthermore, future development would be required to comply with all applicable zoning restrictions including those that pertain to setbacks, height restrictions, landscaping, and other aesthetic considerations.

Nonetheless, the 2007 General Plan would substantially and irreversibly degrade the existing visual character and quality of Monterey County in lots of record. State planning law, housing element provisions requires the County to provide sufficient development sites to meet its regional housing share. The growth centers demonstrate that the County is meeting this state requirement. The County cannot prohibit new development, which would be the only way to reduce impacts to visual character to less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a significant and unavoidable impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is available.

Significance Conclusion

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. However, the alteration of Monterey County's localized visual character in lots of record would be an irreversible consequence of 2007 General Plan buildout through 2092. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a significant and unavoidable impact.

Light and Glare

Impact AES-4: Implementation of the 2007 General Plan could create substantial new sources of light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. (Significant Unavoidable Impact.)

2030 Planning Horizon

Impact of Development with Policies

New urban development in the proposed 2007 General Plan growth areas during the planning horizon would result in the permanent conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses. See Exhibit 3.1 for an illustration of the types of land use that would be allowed in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. Development actually occurring with the county would depend on the particular projects pursued in the county and cannot be determined at this time, but may include roads, utilities, structures, earthworks, and the results of other human activities. New sources of night time lighting resulting from new urban development in designated growth areas allowed by the implementation of the 2007 General Plan could result in light trespass, light pollution, and glare. Light trespass is unwanted light from a neighboring property or roadway and can be both a nuisance and a health and safety risk if it adversely affects visibility for tasks like driving. Light pollution has a broader and more cumulative impact than light trespass to county residents. Excessive nighttime lighting could result in sky glow, the haze of light that surrounds highly populated areas and reduces the ability to see the stars. This could change the appearance of the nighttime sky over the long term. New sources of light and glare in Community Areas and Rural Centers adjacent to agricultural areas would alter the visual appearance of these landscapes. Specific impacts to surrounding land uses from future development cannot be determined at this time due to the dependence of the impacts on the developments' design characteristics, orientation, location, and other project specific information. However, it is possible to say that collectively, these new sources of light and glare could degrade and diminish daytime and nighttime views of visual resources such as valleys, ridgelines, vegetation, watercourses, and coastlines. This would be a significant impact.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan contains goals and policies that help reduce light and glare impacts.

Land Use Element

Land Use Element Policies LU-1.1 through LU-1.10 and LU-2.2 establish general land use concepts that emphasize city-centered growth, compatibility between adjacent land uses, and the conservation of natural areas. These policies are summarized in detail under Impact AES-1. Collectively, these policies promote compact-urban growth in existing developed areas and therefore discourage growth in natural areas where light and glare impacts would be most deleterious to nighttime views.

Land Use Element Policy LU-1.13 specifically addresses light and glare impacts. The policy requires that all exterior lighting shall be unobtrusive and constructed or located so that only the intended area is illuminated, long-range visibility is reduced, and offsite glare is fully controlled. The policy also stipulates that new criteria to guide the review and approval of exterior lighting be developed.

Open Space and Conservation Element

Open Space and Conservation Element Policies OS-1.1 through OS-1.12 set forth measures designed to preserve and protect the county's scenic resources. These policies are also summarized in detail under Impact AES-1. These measures help reduce light and glare impacts by prohibiting ridgeline development, encouraging the preservation of significant natural areas through the use of economic tools such as development credits and conservation easements, and a requirement that the disruption of views from designated scenic routes be mitigated through use of appropriate materials, scale, lighting, and siting of development.

Area Plan Policies

Area Plans contain a number of policies designed to protect scenic resources from light and glare. In addition to the Area Plan policies summarized under Impact AES-1, the following area plans include additional policies that specifically pertain to light and glare.

Central Salinas Valley Area Plan

There are no additional policies related to light and glare in the area plan.

Carmel Valley Master Plan

Policy CV-3.16 (outdoor sports) prohibits lighting for outdoor sports where it would be visible from offsite locations. Policy CV-3.17 (street lighting) stipulates that street lighting be unobtrusive and harmonious with the local character, constructed and located to illuminate only the intended area, and prevent offsite glare.

Toro Area Plan

Policy T-3.5 (minimize light sources) requires that exterior and outdoor lighting be located, designed, and enforced to minimize light sources and preserve the quality of darkness. The policy also requires that street lighting be as unobtrusive as practicable.

Cachagua Area Plan

Policy CACH-1.6 (night sky) reduces light and glare by not allowing exterior lighting to exceed the minimum required to assure safety.

Agricultural Winery Corridor Plan

New wine making and tasting facilities contemplated by the AWCP would emit new sources of light and glare from outdoor lighting and reflective building materials. However, as noted above, the AWCP prescribes a maximum number of wine-related facilities on each corridor to avoid over concentrating these facilities in one area. This would disperse new sources of light and glare in a manner that would substantially reduce adverse impacts to a level of less than significant.

The AWCP requires that parking areas that are generally visible from a public road landscaping shall be integrated to soften the appearance and to buffer headlights from shining onto the roadway. Lighting poles and fixtures will be designed, located and operated in a manner to focus light on the subject property and limit off-site glare. Also, entry signs will have no internal illumination or neon tubing and limited back lighting for visibility in fog and dim lighting.

The AWCP is a component of the 2007 General Plan and is consistent with its proposed goals and policies including those that pertain to light and glare. These policies are summarized under Impact AES-4. Furthermore, all wineries and tasting rooms that would be developed in accordance with the AWCP would be required to comply with the county's applicable light and glare policies and ordinances, including those contained in the AWCP.

Precise locations of future AWCP facilities are unknown at the time of this writing, and therefore, it is speculative to engage in further

analysis of light and glare impacts. Further analysis of potential light and glare impacts will be done at the project level.

Community Area Policies

Fort Ord Master Plan

Program A-4.3 (direction of lighting) reduces light and glare impacts by requiring that the County shall direct all lighting in the Community Park and in the residential areas west of the RV parcel away from the natural lands in the habitat corridor. Biological Resources Policy C-3 (lighting and wildlife) reduces light and glare impacts by requiring that lighting of outdoor areas shall be minimized and carefully controlled to maintain habitat quality for wildlife in undeveloped natural lands. Street lighting shall be as unobtrusive as practicable and shall be consistent in intensity throughout development areas adjacent to undeveloped natural lands. Program C-3.1 (development review) helps to reduce impacts by requiring that the County review lighting and landscape plans for all development applications to ensure consistency with Policy C-3.

CEQA Review

In addition, future discretionary development activities contemplated by the 2007 General Plan would be required to undergo environmental review pursuant to CEQA. This review would include assessment of potential impacts on light and glare.

Significance Determination

New urban development permitted by the 2007 General Plan would result in localized adverse light and glare impacts on nighttime views in designated growth areas. The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable. The General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced. These policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development.

The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic resources along scenic highways as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would reduce impacts from light and glare, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project

specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that impacts from light and glare are avoided the greatest extent practicable. These mitigation measures are best implemented on a project specific basis as they will then be tailored to the specific needs of the site, development, and surrounding land uses.

While the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable (see General Plan and Area Plan policies discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced), it would still create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day and nighttime public views. As this is a programmatic document, it is not feasible to develop mitigation that would apply effectively to all future development in the county due to the differences of each development in their location, orientation, design, and proposed land uses. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a Significant Unavoidable Impact of the 2007 General Plan.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies is available.

Significance Conclusion

The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a Significant Unavoidable Impact of the 2007 General Plan.

Buildout

Impact of Development with Policies

Buildout of the 2007 General Plan in 2092 would result in localized adverse light and glare impacts on nighttime views in lots of record from new urban development permitted by the General Plan. See Exhibit 3.1 for an illustration of the types of land use that would be allowed in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. Development actually occurring within the county would depend on the particular projects pursued in the county and cannot be determined at this time, but may include roads, utilities, structures, earthworks, and the results of other human activities. New sources of night time lighting resulting from new urban development in and around lots of development allowed by the implementation of the 2007 General Plan could result in light trespass, light pollution, and glare. Light trespass is unwanted light from a neighboring property or roadway and can be both a nuisance and a health and safety risk if it adversely affects visibility for tasks like driving. Light pollution has a broader and more cumulative impact than light trespass

to county residents. Excessive nighttime lighting could result in sky glow, the haze of light that surrounds highly populated areas and reduces the ability to see the stars. This could change the appearance of the nighttime sky over the long term. New sources of light and glare in and around lots of record adjacent to agricultural areas would alter the visual appearance of these landscapes. Specific impacts to surrounding land uses from future development cannot be determined at this time due to the dependence of the impacts on the developments' design characteristics, orientation, location, and other project specific information. However, it is possible to say that collectively, these new sources of light and glare could degrade and diminish daytime and nighttime views of visual resources such as valleys, ridgelines, vegetation, watercourses, and coastlines. This would be a significant impact.

2007 General Plan Policies

The 2007 General Plan contains goals and policies that address light and glare impacts from buildout of the 2007 General Plan are discussed above.

Significance Determination

Buildout of the 2007 General Plan to 2092 would result in localized adverse light and glare impacts on nighttime views in designated growth areas. The 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable. The General Plan and Area Plan policy discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced. These policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as city-centered growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development. At the time of buildout, it is estimated that most of the remaining land to be developed in the county would be contained in lots of record, which are generally located in what are currently less developed areas of the county. However, development of the lots of record would still be required to follow the 2007 General Plan policies which reduce impacts from light and glare.

The 2007 General Plan is a programmatic document intended to provide a framework for development in the county. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic resources along scenic highways as those impacts will depend on the development pursued in the county in the coming years. The plans and policies set into place as a result of the 2007 General Plan would reduce impacts from light and glare, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth in the 2007 General Plan are followed and that impacts from light and glare are avoided the greatest extent practicable. These mitigation measures are best

implemented on a project specific basis as they will then be tailored to the specific needs of the site, development, and surrounding land uses.

While the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable (see General Plan and Area Plan policies discussion on the previous pages explains how impacts would be reduced), it would still create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day and nighttime public views. As this is a programmatic document, it is not feasible to develop mitigation that would apply effectively to all future development in the county due to the differences of each development in their location, orientation, design, and proposed land uses. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a Significant Unavoidable Impact of the 2007 General Plan.

Mitigation Measures

No additional mitigation beyond the 2007 General Plan policies are available.

Significance Conclusion

Buildout of the General Plan in the year 2092 would create new sources of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day and nighttime public views from urban development in lots of record. While the 2007 General Plan and Area Plan policies set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts from light and glare to the maximum extent practicable, this would still remain an irreversible consequence of buildout of the General Plan in the year 2092. No mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this is a Significant Unavoidable Impact of the 2007 General Plan.

4.14.7 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Alteration of the localized visual character (Impact AES-3) and the introduction of new sources of light and glare in designated growth areas (Impact AES-4) would be Significant and Unavoidable Impacts resulting from the implementation of the 2007 General Plan at the planning horizon in the year 2030 and at buildout in the year 2092. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors will be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for these impacts if the proposed project is adopted. All other impacts would be less than significant and would not require mitigation.