

4.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

IN THIS SECTION:

- Regulatory Setting
- Existing Visual Setting
- Natural and Open Space Features
- Scenic Views and Resources
- Community Aesthetic Character
- Existing Design Guidelines

The following sections draw from information contained in the “Community Design Background Report” that was prepared for the City as part of the draft *General Plan 2030* update process by Design, Community and Environment (November 16, 2006).

REGULATORY SETTING

Several City area and design plans include design guidelines, which are described later in this chapter. In addition, the City’s Zoning Ordinance requires a “design permit” for most new construction in the City of Santa Cruz. This requires review of architectural and site development proposals to ensure the application of recognized principles of design, planning and aesthetics and qualities typifying the Santa Cruz community. Pursuant to the Design Permit requirements (Zoning Ordinance Section 24.08.430), findings must be made that address 17 identified criteria before the City issues a design permit. Chapter 24.12 of the Zoning Ordinance provides “Community Design Standards” that address general site design standards, parking, advertising and signs, underground utilities, historic preservation and other provisions for specific uses.

EXISTING VISUAL SETTING

The visual character of the City of Santa Cruz is influenced by a blend of natural features and historic neighborhoods. Key natural and open space features include the coastline and beaches, the San Lorenzo River and other watercourses, parks and open space, and the background view of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The community of Santa Cruz is strongly characterized by its coastal location along Monterey Bay, which defines the city’s entire southern boundary. Open space areas, including those that make up the City’s greenbelt, also are significant contributors to Santa Cruz’s natural setting. The Santa Cruz Mountains and its foothills on the north provide a backdrop of open space views, and offer panoramic views of the City and ocean.

The developed portion of Santa Cruz is a mix of historic buildings and newer buildings. From its early origins as a Spanish settlement in 1866, Santa Cruz's community and visual character was shaped by its role as a port city and seaside resort. The City has retained a distinctive look and feel, with a mix of small-scale residential neighborhoods, a more intensely-developed downtown with high-quality, distinctive buildings, and automobile-oriented commercial corridors.

NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE FEATURES

The beauty of Santa Cruz's natural setting contributes significantly to the City's aesthetic and visual character. Key natural and open space features include:

- ❑ The coastline and beaches;
- ❑ The San Lorenzo River and other creeks;
- ❑ The Santa Cruz Mountains; and
- ❑ Open space lands that make up the City's greenbelt.

Santa Cruz has nearly four miles of coastline on the Monterey Bay, and much of the city sits above coastal cliffs, with beaches and a rocky shoreline below. A multi-use pathway extends along most of this distance along West Cliff Drive and portions of East Cliff Drive. City and state-owned beaches are prominent along the coastline, including from west to east: Natural Bridges State Beach, Lighthouse Field State Beach, the city's Main Beach, and Seabright Beach. Lighthouse Field State Beach also includes upland open space adjacent to West Cliff Drive, known as Lighthouse Field.



The San Lorenzo River is another important defining feature, serving as the dividing line between the City's Eastside and Westside areas. Most of the City's other creeks are not prominently visible, except for Branciforte Creek, which runs in a deep, narrow concrete channel (Design, Community & Environment, November 16, 2006).

The foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains provide a backdrop of protected open space and afford panoramic views of the City and Monterey Bay. Santa Cruz's topography is influenced by the City's arroyos and steep coastal cliffs. Elevations increase from the coastal terraces north to the UCSC campus and Santa Cruz Mountains, and the City's varied topography creates striking views from many different locations. The City also has pronounced hills, most notably at Pogonip with smaller hills, such as Beach Hill and Mission Hill. Escalona Drive also marks a noticeable change in elevation, with steep hills to the north of the street.

The City's largest open spaces are those that make up its greenbelt, and generally include from west to east: Moore Creek Preserve, Pogonip, Delaveaga Park, and Arana Gulch (see Figure 1-2). Smaller neighborhood parks are distributed throughout the City. Additional open space

surrounds some of the creeks and ravines that cut through the foothills on their way to the coast. Prominent open space areas within the City that contribute to the visual character include:

- ❑ *University of California Santa Cruz.* The large expanses of open space provide a backdrop from certain viewpoints within the City, along the coastline, and from Highway 1. These views include some campus structural development.
- ❑ *Pogonip.* This hilly and wooded 614-acre area abuts UCSC, and forms part of the City's greenbelt. It also provides a visual backdrop from certain viewpoints in the City.
- ❑ *Moore Creek Preserve.* This 246-acre City-owned property forms part of the City's Greenbelt, defining Santa Cruz's western edge. The area has been preserved largely in its natural state, with wooded areas and creeks that run through steeply-sloped arroyos.
- ❑ *Arana Gulch.* Located in the far eastern edge of the City, this 67-acre, City-owned open space property, along with the adjacent Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor, defines the City's southeastern border. However, Arana Gulch's visual prominence is limited to the immediately adjacent neighborhoods and the upper harbor area.
- ❑ *DeLaveaga Park.* This hilly and wooded City-owned park is on the northeast edge of Santa Cruz. The approximate 525-acre upper area provides a nearly uninterrupted forested backdrop from viewpoints on the eastern edge of the City, most notably from Morrissey Boulevard.
- ❑ *Neary Lagoon* is a City-owned 44-acre wetland and natural area situated in the central part of the City (see Figure 4.3-1). The 14-acre lagoon is adjacent to the City's wastewater treatment plant. The site provides a central open space area nearly within the center of the developed City, and views across the property. The wooded property is visible along Bay Street with panoramic background mountain and City views.
- ❑ *Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor.* The Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor, which was completed in 1964 and subsequently expanded in 1972, is a defining visual element along the City's southeastern border. The harbor, a major topographic and visitor-serving facility, encompasses approximately 38 acres of land and 52 acres of water, and functions as a gateway to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

SCENIC VIEWS AND RESOURCES

Prominent scenic views mostly are those that are oriented toward Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean or toward the Santa Cruz Mountains that frame the northern boundary of Santa Cruz. Some prominent public views are shown on the next page. There are no designated scenic highways or roads within the City. The draft *General Plan 2030* defines a scenic highway or scenic route as "a highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and man-made scenic resources and access or direct views to areas or scenes of exceptional beauty or historic or cultural interest." Until the mid-1980s, general plans in California were required to include a Scenic Highways element.

West Cliff Drive is a popular scenic route along the coast, and is a primary location that offers prominent and panoramic views of the Monterey Bay. In addition to West Cliff Drive, other coastal viewpoints with prominent ocean views include: the Municipal Wharf, East Cliff Drive and the Santa Cruz Harbor jetties. Prominent public ocean views from upper elevations are most predominant at locations on the UCSC campus, Moore Creek Preserve and segments of City roads, including the Arroyo Seco and Miramar/Alta Vista areas in the western portion of the City and limited areas along Delaveaga Road.

Varied topography shapes the City's character and creates many striking public views throughout the community. Some of these views are focused on particular places within the City, such as Holy Cross Church. Other views provide a sweeping panorama of the entire City or of the Monterey Bay. The UCSC campus and greenbelt lands at the City's northern edge and the Santa Cruz Mountains to the east provide a scenic backdrop from certain viewpoints in the City, most notably from the Municipal Wharf and segments along West Cliff Drive. The Wharf and West Cliff Drive offer panoramic views of the bay with the Santa Cruz Mountains as a backdrop overlooking the City. The northbound descent of East Cliff Drive towards downtown offers a sweeping view of the San Lorenzo River, Boardwalk area and the developed City with UCSC as a backdrop. From eastbound Highway 1 toward Highway 17, the forested UCSC campus offers another scenic background view, while segments of southbound Highway 1 near River Street (Highway 9) offer scenic background views of the forested open space of Pogonip.

On the eastside, northbound Morrissey looks onto background views of the urban forest at DeLaveaga and surrounding area. Murray Street Bridge over the Santa Cruz Harbor offers views of the coast to the south and upland views of Arana Gulch to the north. Additionally, there are views of the Arana greenbelt site from Seventh Avenue, most notably from the intersection with Brommer Street at the northern entrance to the Harbor.

Landmarks are distinctive built and natural features that are highly visible or that help to define the identity of a particular place. In addition, to historical landmarks as discussed in the CULTURAL RESOURCES (Chapter 4.9) section of this EIR, the *General Plan 2030* defines "landmark" as a visually prominent or outstanding structure or natural feature that functions as a point of orientation or identification. The City has approximately 35 City-listed historic landmarks and approximately 600 listed historic structures, some of which may also be considered scenic resources depending on the visual prominence and the character of the building.

Because of the City's varied topography, Santa Cruz has few built landmarks that are visible from many different parts of town. The Holy Cross Church on Mission Hill is a notable exception; its tall, white steeple can be seen all over the City, even in low-lying areas such as the Harvey West District. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's brightly-painted roller coasters are even more distinctive, but since the Boardwalk is just a few feet above sea level, the roller coasters are not as widely visible. Other notable landmarks include the Santa Cruz Harbor, and the lighthouses at both Lighthouse Field and the Harbor.



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COMMUNITY AESTHETIC CHARACTER

The City has retained a distinctive community character as a result of various historical periods, with a mix of small-scale residential neighborhoods of varied scales, styles and ages; widely-visited beaches; a more intensely-developed downtown with high-quality, distinctive buildings; and automobile-oriented commercial corridors, many of which provide connections to the highway (Design, Community & Environment, November 16, 2006).

Gateways are visual or physical elements that mark a transition from one place to another. Some of Santa Cruz's gateways are located at transitions between highways and City streets. For example, on both River Street and Ocean Street, special signs welcome visitors to the City as they leave the highway. Other gateways are created by pronounced changes in character from one area to another. For example, the Clock Tower acts as a gateway from North Pacific Avenue, which has relatively little character, to Pacific Avenue, which has a carefully designed streetscape and tall, distinctive buildings. The main entrance to the UCSC campus, at High Street and Bay Drive, is another notable gateway. On the Eastside, the entrance to Santa Cruz on Soquel Avenue is marked by a small sign that acts as a minor gateway. Gateways can also mark the entrance to a neighborhood, such as the sign at Riverside Avenue and Leibrandt Avenue welcoming people to Beach Flats (Design, Community & Environment, November 16, 2006).

Generally, the visual features of the developed City vary from area and neighborhood. Mixed use areas include the Westside industrial area, the Harvey West area, downtown and River Street, and the Beach/Boardwalk area. Four primary corridors contribute to the urban form and character of Santa Cruz: Mission Street Corridor, Ocean Street Corridor, Water Street Corridor, and Soquel Avenue Corridor. Mixed commercial and residential buildings are found in some of these areas, as well as in the downtown, where ground-floor retail and upper floor residential are the primary uses. There are also several SRO (single-room occupancy) buildings along Soquel Avenue and Water Street.

Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas that include few, if any, commercial or job-generating uses. A number of neighborhoods within the City are characterized by older, smaller

bungalow and historic structures, which contribute positively to the visual character in those areas. Neighborhoods are shown on Figure 2-3. Historic homes and older neighborhoods with visual interest include the following neighborhoods.

- ❑ *King Street Neighborhood.* The King Street neighborhood runs parallel to Mission Street to the north. The area's topography rises slowly and steadily toward Escalona Drive to the northwest.
- ❑ *California Street / Mission Hill Neighborhood.* The California Street/Mission Hill Neighborhood includes Mission Hill, Santa Cruz Mission and the current site of Holy Cross Church. While most parts of this area are relatively flat, Mission Hill is a prominent exception; its steep slopes set it apart from its surroundings. The Mission Hill Historic District is in this area. Holy Cross Church, with its tall steeple, white exterior and prominent hilltop location, is the most widely-visible landmark in Santa Cruz.
- ❑ *Downtown Neighborhoods.* The Downtown Neighborhoods include Downtown Santa Cruz's historic residential areas as well as more recently-built neighborhoods just west of Downtown. The City's Downtown Neighborhood Historic District is also part of a larger historic district designated in the National Register of Historic Places.
- ❑ *Beach Hill.* Beach Hill's buildings are a mixture of Victorian single-family homes and Mission Revival apartments, as well as an eclectic mix of more modern styles.
- ❑ *Seabright Neighborhood.* Most of the upper Seabright neighborhood was part of the town of Seabright until 1904, when Santa Cruz annexed the area. Buildings are a mixture of pre-WWII single-family, one- and two-story homes; post-WWII duplexes and multi-family dwellings; and newer, larger single-family homes. Structures built as summer homes are predominant in the lower Seabright neighborhoods. Notable features of these neighborhoods include the Santa Cruz City Museum, located in a 1915 Carnegie Library building, and the surrounding lawns and trees of Tyrrell Park.

Other areas of the City are mostly characterized by post-World War II ranch houses built on parcels that are generally larger than those in the City's older neighborhoods and newer development. The Lighthouse/The Circles Neighborhoods in the southernmost part of Santa Cruz are notable due to their proximity to West Cliff Drive and beaches. Paths and stairways link these neighborhoods with the beaches along West Cliff Drive. Notable buildings in these neighborhoods include a 1915 Carnegie public library in the Circles, designed by architect William Weeks, and the Shrine of St. Joseph on West Cliff Drive.

EXISTING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Mission Street Urban Design Plan

The Mission Street Urban Design Plan identifies redevelopment opportunities and creates design policies for the Mission Street commercial corridor, which is both a local street and a major

regional thoroughfare. Although most of the Plan's requirements are focused on issues related to community design, it recommends that the corridor retain its commercial mixed-use character and emphasize existing clusters of professional office, retail and service uses.

Beach / South of Laurel Design Guidelines

The "Design Guidelines", adopted by the City in October 1998, is both an appendix to the Beach/South of Laurel Area Plan (B/SOL Plan) and General Plan. The Plan includes a wide range of recommendations that are intended to define neighborhood character through distinctive structures and streetscapes (Design, Community & Environment, November 2006). The intent of the Design Guidelines is to assist the City and development community to achieve a "high quality of aesthetic and functional design." Design guidelines are presented for treatments for streetscapes and entries, landscaping, amenities and lighting, as well as for site layout, pedestrian, parking and circulation improvements, and architectural compatibility.

Downtown Recovery Plan

The Downtown Recovery Plan provides a framework for the public and private rebuilding of downtown Santa Cruz after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Recommendations are included to strengthen the pedestrian orientation of the area. Detailed design guidelines are included that address height, building mass and scale, materials and finishes, signage, awnings and lighting (Design, Community & Environment, November 2006).

Eastside Business Area Improvement Plan

The purpose of the Eastside Business Improvement Plan, which includes the Soquel Avenue and Water Street commercial corridors, is to bring beneficial change to the area through economic development and the creation of a distinctive physical environment. The plan includes urban design and architectural design guidelines. The urban design guidelines include development, street and landscaping guidelines for specific areas along Soquel Avenue and Water Street. The architectural guidelines provide additional recommendations for building facades and signage.

San Lorenzo Urban River Plan

The plan serves as a guide for restoring and managing natural resources, riverfront development, and public access improvements for the lower San Lorenzo River, Jessie Street Marsh, and Branciforte Creek. It includes conceptual ideas to promote river-oriented development, site specific recommendations for public areas along the river, and restoration recommendations. In particular, the Plan recommends a series of gateway plazas leading to improved multi-use nature trails and pedestrian bridges crossing the river. The Plan includes conceptual site plans for new development at several key locations near the river, but does not provide detailed design guidelines for private development.

Western Drive Master Plan

The Western Drive Master Plan, prepared in 1979, includes lands along Western Drive, generally between Arroyo Seco Creek on the east and Moore Creek on the west from Highway 1 to High Street. The Plan seeks to improve the Western Drive right-of-way; retain the rural character of the area, protect Moore Creek and Arroyo Seco Canyons; and provide public access to them. The Plan was adopted in concept. The Plan seeks to protect identified view corridors and the wooded character of the area, and establishes road, access, land use, design, landscaping and drainage recommendations for both publicly- and privately-owned lands to achieve these objectives.

4.2.2 RELEVANT PROJECT ELEMENTS

PROPOSED GOALS, POLICIES & ACTIONS

The proposed *General Plan 2030* includes goals, policies and actions that address community design, scenic views, and aesthetics. The **COMMUNITY DESIGN** chapter of the *General Plan 2030* addresses natural features, the built environment and linkages between the two, including neighborhood integrity. The chapter includes five goals and associated policies and actions that address: 1) preservation of natural features that visually define areas with a built environment in harmony with its natural setting; 2) diverse neighborhoods and business districts with well-defined character; 3) design and linkages between key areas; 4) attractive gateways, roadways and landscaping; and 5) walkable neighborhoods and districts with compatible uses and buildings.

The **COMMUNITY DESIGN** chapter sets forth the following four goals with 19 associated policies and accompanying actions that address scenic views, scenic resources, and visual qualities of the built environment. Goal CD5 seeks to achieve walkable neighborhoods and districts of compatible uses and buildings with associated policies and actions that mostly address providing pedestrian facilities and amenities, and achieving a pedestrian scale with new development.

- GOAL CD1** *A built environmental in harmony with its natural setting.*
- GOAL CD2** *Diverse neighborhoods and business districts with well-defined character.*
- GOAL CD3** *High quality design that reinforces the community's unique characters.*
- GOAL CD4** *Attractive gateways, roadways, and landscaping.*

Taken together, these policies and actions support preservation of natural features that visually define areas within the City (CD1.1), development that preserves important public scenic views and vistas (CD1.2) and sensitive design in accordance with natural features and open space (CD1.3, CD1.4). Specific policies and actions identify preparation of design guidelines, providing visual linkages throughout the City and providing attractive gateways and roadways. Additionally, some policies and actions in the **LAND USE** chapter seek to protect open spaces

that provide scenic benefits (LU3.1.1) and prohibit land divisions that would degrade natural features (LU2.3.5).

Policy CD2.1 seeks to protect and enhance the “distinctive physical and design characteristics” of neighborhoods and districts throughout the City. CD2.1.3 and CD2.1.4 call for development of design guidelines and development standards to address the visual transition between areas of higher density and/or intensified development. A number of policies and actions also seek to ensure that development is sensitively designed in relation to open space and scenic resources, as well as existing development. In particular, LU4.1.2 seeks to ensure that intensified development is sensitive to existing neighborhoods.

POTENTIAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The *General Plan 2030* Land Use Map and land use designations are largely unchanged from the 1990-2005 General Plan / Local Coastal Program, except for three new mixed use land designations have been developed and applied to the following major transportation corridors: Mission Street, Ocean Street, Soquel, Avenue, and Water Street. Additionally, some policies and actions also support other mixed use districts and/or intensified redevelopment, such as a Mixed Use River District (LU3.6), expansion of the High Density Overlay on Front and lower Pacific (LU3.6.1), continued mixed uses in the downtown area (LU4.1.1) and support of live-work units (LU4.1.4). Higher and maximum density residential development is encouraged (LU3.7) with allowance of maximum densities to be exceeded for specified residential uses, such as single-room occupancy and accessory dwelling units (LU3.8). Revitalization of the lower Pacific Avenue area also is encouraged (ED5.5.7).

Land Use actions LU1.1.4 and LU1.1.5 address development and land use for specific sites: the Swenson property and the Golf Club Drive property, respectively. LU2.2.3 also includes addition of a 5.5-acre parcel adjacent to the Dimeo Lane landfill and Resource Recovery Center, but specific uses haven't been identified, although the site will not be used as part of expansion of the landfill disposal area. In addition, several specific types of development are supported in the draft Plan, including: development of a desalination plant as part of the actions outlined to implement the City's adopted *Integrated Water Plan* (Policy CC3.1.3), although a specific site is not identified; a transit center along the rail corridor (LU4.5); including a potential location in the Golf Club Drive area (LU1.1.5), a downtown performing arts center or expansion of the Civic Center (HA2.2.5); and multi-story parking lots (ED5.4.1).

4.2.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State CEQA Guidelines (including Appendix G), City of Santa Cruz plans, policies and/or guidelines, and agency and professional standards, a project impact would be considered significant if the project would:

- 3a Eliminate or substantially adversely affect, modify or obstruct a visually prominent or significant public scenic vista, viewing area or view corridor, including views of the ocean, to and along the shoreline, and panoramic background mountain views;
- 3b Eliminate or substantially adversely effect significant scenic resources along a scenic highway or designated scenic roadway, including, but not limited to, visually prominent trees, rock outcrops or historic buildings, or visually prominent trees or historic-landmark buildings in other locations within the City;
- 3c Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area, i.e., be incompatible with the scale or visual character of the surrounding area or substantially detract from the integrity, character and/or aesthetic character of the neighborhood; or
- 3d Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views or activities in the area or pose a nuisance. This includes ambient nighttime illumination levels that would be increased beyond the property line or use of highly reflective building materials.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on the significance criteria identified above, the following impact analyses address scenic views (3a); scenic resources (3b); potential degradation of visual character of areas surrounding development (3c); and creation of a new source of substantial light or glare (3d).

Potential Future Development & Buildout

Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would not directly result in increased new development. However, the draft General Plan includes policies and a land use map that support additional development as summarized in subsection 4.3.2 above. Buildout projections indicate that potential new development accommodated by the draft general plan to the year 2030 could total 3,350 residential units, 3,140,000 square feet of commercial, office and industrial development and new hotel rooms, primarily on infill and underutilized lots, as described in the PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Chapter 3.0) and LAND USE (Chapter 4.2) sections of this EIR.

Development under the proposed General Plan would primarily occur on vacant infill sites, on underutilized properties that could redeveloped at higher densities and/or land use intensities, and in the new mixed-use districts along the City's four major street corridors: Mission Street, Ocean Street, Soquel Avenue, and Water Street. Based on the estimated development occurring under the proposed plan,¹ approximately 55% of all new housing, 45% of new commercial development and 52% of new office development would located along these corridors.

¹ See Table 3-3 in the PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Chapter 3.0) section of this EIR and Figure 2-3 for estimated distribution of new development in specific areas in the City.

Impact 4.3-1: Scenic Public Views

Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would accommodate future development that could adversely affect scenic public views. However, such development would be limited to infill sites and with implementation of the proposed policies and actions for protection of scenic public views, this is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

The proposed *General Plan 2030* would accommodate future development pursuant to planned land use designations contained in the Plan. Future development accommodated by the draft plan would primarily occur on vacant infill sites, on underutilized properties that could be redeveloped at higher densities and/or land use intensities, and in the new mixed-use districts along the City's four major street corridors: Mission Street, Ocean Street, Soquel Avenue, and Water Street. Based on the estimated development occurring under the proposed plan, more than half of the estimated new development would be along major transportation corridors. These areas are within the City's existing developed area and are not part of prominent scenic views (see Figure 4.3-1), but are part of urban views along streets.

The City of Santa Cruz is primarily developed, except for a few remaining vacant lots located within developed areas. The following three areas that would be subject to potential future development within the planning area are primarily undeveloped or underdeveloped: the Swenson Site adjacent to Antonelli Pond; the Golf Club Drive area adjacent to Pogonip Creek; and the area along Seventh Avenue that is within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), but outside City limits. The Golf Club Drive site is not highly visible from surrounding areas and is not a part of any scenic public views.

The 11-acre Swenson site located adjacent to the east of the UCSC Marine Science Campus and Shaffer Road. Future development on this site would be partially within scenic views of the Monterey Bay as seen from the lower portions of the Moore Creek Preserve and Wilder Ranch State Park, although existing tree cover partially screens the property from these public views. Future development would not be expected to be of the height or mass that would obstruct or block ocean views from these vantage points. Nonetheless, proposed Action LU1.1.4 sets forth specific development guidelines/parameters for the Swenson parcel, which indicates the height, scale, and bulk of development shall take into consideration the rural transition at the City's edge. The small addition to the landfill property is not highly visible from Highway 1.

At the corner of Seventh Avenue and Brommer Street in the existing SOI area along Seventh Avenue, views of the Arana Gulch greenbelt and wooded areas, as well as distant UCSC lands, are a prominent public view. This area is currently within the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County and subject to County land use and zoning regulations. Future development could partially block scenic views in this location. However, the entrance to the Harbor and adjacent Port District property on the north would continue to provide a view corridor in this area. The draft *General Plan 2030* calls for working with the County to ensure that lands within the City's planning area are developed with appropriate uses (LU1.2.2)

Most of the future development accommodated by the *General Plan 2030* would not be in areas that are part of a scenic public view. For limited areas where new infill or intensified development may be proposed in the vicinity of scenic public views, the proposed *General Plan*

2030 policies and actions outlined in Table 4.3-1 will serve to protect scenic public views. The proposed plan seeks to preserve natural features that visually define areas within the City (CD1.1), including public views to and along the ocean (CD1.1.2), as well as to protect natural areas (CD1.1.3) and emphasize distinguishing natural features that strengthen the City's visual image (CD1.1.4). The plan also seeks to ensure that the scale, bulk, and setbacks of new development preserve important public scenic views and vistas and is compatible with the character of the area (CD1.2, CD1.2.1). Property along Seventh Avenue is currently within the unincorporated County jurisdiction and would be subject to County policies and regulations for future development unless annexed to the City.

Conclusion. Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would not directly result in new development, but new development accommodated by the Plan could result in adverse impacts to scenic public views. However, these impacts would be limited in geographic scope, as most of the anticipated new development would be infill development that would not be located within panoramic scenic public viewsheds. Implementation of policies and actions to protect scenic views and require sensitive building designs would serve to mitigate potential impacts to scenic views with potential future development of the Swenson site and properties along Seventh Avenue. Additionally, implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* goals, policies and actions regarding scenic views and development siting and design would avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic public views as summarized on Table 4.3-1. Thus, the proposed *General Plan 2030*'s indirect impact on scenic views would be considered less-than-significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

Impact 4.3-2: Scenic Resources

Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would accommodate future development that could adversely impact scenic resources. However, with implementation of the proposed policies and actions for protection of scenic resources, this is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

As indicated above in the Impact 4.3-1 discussion, most of the future development that would be accommodated by the *General Plan 2030* would be along the City's major transportation corridors or would be infill and intensified development on existing developed sites. There are no state-designated highways within City limits nor are there locally designated scenic roads. Thus, there would be no impacts to scenic resources along designated state or local roads.

In limited areas where new infill or intensified development may be proposed in the future, there may be significant trees or historic buildings or landmarks that may be considered scenic resources and potentially directly or indirectly affected by future development. However, the proposed *General Plan 2030* policies and actions would minimize these impacts and protect

scenic resources, particularly heritage trees and landmark buildings as summarized on Table 4.3-1.

TABLE 4.3-1
Proposed General Plan 2030 Policies & Actions that
Avoid or Reduce Aesthetics Impacts

Type of Measure / Action	Policies / Actions
PROTECT SCENIC VIEWS	♦ Protect Scenic Views • Protect views to and along ocean: CD1.1.2 • Develop siting & scale design guidelines to preserve important public scenic views: CD1.2.1 ♦ Emphasize distinguishing natural features – visual image: CD1.1.4 ♦ Minimize grading on coastal terraces: CD1.1.1 ♦ Encourage UCSC to blend with natural landscape: CD1.3.1
PROTECT SCENIC RESOURCES	♦ Preserve natural features & open space that visually define areas and provide scenic benefits: CD1.1, LU3.1.1, CD1.1.3 ♦ Protect significant vegetation and landscaping that provide scenic value: CD 4.3.3 ♦ Maintain heritage tree ordinance & protect heritage trees: CD4.3.4, NRC5.1 ♦ San Lorenzo River – develop designs to relate to river & enhance prominence: CD1.5m CD1.5.1, 1.5.2 ♦ Physical & visual linkages in key area: CD 3.1 ♦ Preserve public views of City landmarks: CD3.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2 & maintain visual prominence of landmarks from major roads and public viewpoints: CD4.1.5 • Protect, restore, rehab historic or architecturally significant buildings, sites (HA1.8, HA1.8.1, HA1.8.2, HA1.8.3) • Identify/preserve landmarks: CD2.3.2, HA1.8.5 ♦ Prohibit land divisions that degrade natural features: LU2.3.5
AVOID-REDUCE SUBSTANTIAL DEGRADATION OF EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER OF NEIGHBORHOODS	♦ Development Design • Design guidelines: CD1.2.1, CD1.2.2 • Protect distinctive design characteristics & landmarks of neighborhoods: CD2.1, CD2.3 • Design principles and new guidelines for transition between higher density mixed-use corridors and adjacent development: CD2.1.2, CD 2.1.3, 2.1.4 • Design guidelines for landmarks: CD3.2.2 • Superior design for buildings at visually significant locations-gateways and major corridor intersections: CD3.5 and landmarks: CD3.5.1 • Pedestrian scale development, building orientation & amenities: CD3.3 (along transit corridors-assembly of small parcels), C5.2, CD5.2.1, CD5.2.4 • Encourage innovate commercial & industrial designs: ED6.5.1 • Development design to blend with natural topo/veg: CD1.3, CD1.3.2-3 (development on slopes) ♦ Visual connection between development and open space: CD1.4, 1.4.1, 1.4.2

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TABLE 4.3-1
Proposed General Plan 2030 Policies & Actions that
Avoid or Reduce Aesthetics Impacts

Type of Measure / Action	Policies / Actions
	♦ Specific Areas: • Ocean Street – new development to contribute positively to aesthetic character of Ocean Street: CD2.1.9, CD 4.4, CD4.4.1 • Develop plans for Harvey West & Westside industrial areas to define appropriate character: CD2.18 • Update the Seabright Area Plan to address historic development patterns and future infill and intensification impacts: CD2.1.6 ♦ Reuse “architecturally significant” buildings: CD4.1.6 ♦ Ensure compatible development within historic districts: HA1.9 ♦ Protect and enhance historic street patterns, rail lines, walls, and pedestrian walkways to emphasize historic routes and help define districts and neighborhoods: CD4.1.4 ♦ Improve neighborhood quality with housing rehab: CD2.4 ♦ Attractive gateways & visitor routes CD4.1, CD4.1.1, CD4.1.3, ED1.8.2 ♦ Development to enhance visual quality of streetscapes: CD4.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.3.4 ♦ Parking lot landscaping and lighting: M1.6.2 ♦ Attractive landscaping & street tree plans: CD4.3, CD4.CD3.1, CD4.3.2, CD4.3.5, CD4.3.6, CD4.3.7, CD4.3.8 ♦ Prepare/update area plans: CD 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.3.1 ♦ Signage plans: CD2.3.1, CD2.4.1 ♦ Underground utilities: CD4.2.3, M3.29 (along streets) ♦ Other features (sound walls, fences): CD4.2.4; reduce visual clutter of wires, antennas : CC11.3
AVOID INTRODUCTION OF SUBSTANTIAL NEW SOURCES OF LIGHT OR GLARE	♦ Develop Street Lighting Plan CD 3.6 ♦ Lighting standards and guidelines: HZ5.1, HZ5.1.2

The draft Plan seeks to preserve natural features that visually define areas and provide scenic benefits (CD1.1), as well as to protect significant vegetation that provides scenic value (CD 4.3.3). Other policies and actions call for maintaining the City’s heritage tree ordinance and protecting heritage trees (CD4.3.4, NRC5.1). Additionally, the Plan seeks to ensure that the scale, bulk and setbacks of new development will be designed to preserve public views of City landmarks, where possible (CD3.2), with maintenance of the visual prominence of landmarks from major roads and public viewpoints (CD4.1.5). The plan also supports development that relates to and enhances the prominence of the San Lorenzo River (CD1.5, CD1.5.1), as well as overall physical visual linkages in key areas such as between Downtown, the Beach Area and San Lorenzo River (CD3.1, CD3.1.1).

Conclusion. Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would not directly result in new development, but new development accommodated by the plan could result in adverse impacts to scenic resources. However, these areas are somewhat limited as most of the new development would be infill development that

would not be located within panoramic scenic views. Additionally, implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* goals, policies and actions would avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic resources as summarized on Table 4.3-1. Thus, the proposed *General Plan 2030*'s indirect impact on scenic resources would be considered less-than-significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

Impact 4.3-3: Degradation of Visual Quality of Surrounding Areas

Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would accommodate future development that would result in intensified structural development in some areas that could result in substantial degradation of the visual quality of surrounding neighborhoods. However, with implementation of the proposed policies and actions for siting of development to be sensitive to existing uses in concert with street landscaping, this is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

As indicated above in the Impact 4.3-1 discussion, future development accommodated by the draft Plan would primarily occur on vacant infill sites, on underutilized properties that could be redeveloped at higher densities and/or land use intensities, and in the new mixed-use districts along the City's four major street corridors: Mission Street, Ocean Street, Soquel Avenue, and Water Street. Based on the estimated development that could occur under the proposed plan, more than half of the estimated new development would be along major transportation corridors. The new mixed use designations would not substantially change potential development characteristics, as current commercial zoning regulations allow residential uses in addition to specific commercial uses in buildings up to three stories in height (35-40 feet). Under existing regulations, building heights also can be increased with a Planned Development Permit. Future development within proposed mixed-use designations could result in more massive structures than adjacent residential areas along all of the identified road corridors proposed for new mixed use designations. The proposed floor area ratio (FAR) for the mixed-use designations is intended to help limit building mass. However, a FAR of 2.75 is proposed along Ocean Street and Soquel Avenue, which could lead to development of buildings taller than three stories, although as indicated above, variations to building height can also be considered and granted under current Planned Development regulations. Other areas in the City with identified mixed use potential, such as the Downtown and River areas, already have mixed use buildings, especially in the Downtown area, and/or are not located directly adjacent to residential areas.

In areas where new mixed-use, infill or intensified development may be proposed in the future, new buildings may result in substantial degradation of the visual character of the surrounding area if new buildings are overly massive, substantially taller or out of scale with adjacent areas, especially residential areas next to mixed-use areas. However, the implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* policies and actions would ensure that new buildings do not

adversely impact the visual character of adjacent areas as summarized on Table 4.3-1. Policy CD2.1 seeks to protect and enhance the “distinctive physical and design characteristics” of neighborhoods and districts throughout the City. The plan calls for development of design guidelines to address the visual transition between areas of higher density and/or intensified development (i.e., along corridors, such as Water Street and Soquel Avenue) and adjacent existing developed neighborhood with less intense development (CD2.1.3). The plan also calls for including development standards as part of Zoning Ordinance amendments to establish mixed use districts to ensure that “siting, massing and scale of infill and intensified development are sensitive to existing neighborhood and business districts” (CD2.1.4). Policy LU4.1.2 requires that the Zoning Ordinance be amended to ensure that infill and intensified development is sensitive to existing neighborhoods. Building height could be addressed as part of the massing and scale considerations, but the policy would be more explicit if height were also added. “Attractive” commercial development (including more intensive and higher quality ground floor retail) is encouraged along commercial corridors, provided the uses are compatible with, or transition easily to, adjacent residential areas (ED5.3.1). Policy CD3.3 encourages the assembly of small parcels along transit corridors to achieve pedestrian-oriented development that is compatible with neighborhood characteristics.

The proposed *General Plan 2030* references several specific areas. Redevelopment of the light industrial properties on Murray Street in Seabright is encouraged, including more land intensive commercial and/or mixed use development, provided that the uses are compatible with existing residential (ED5.3.2). The proposed Plan also calls for an update of the Seabright Area Plan, which would address historic development patterns and future infill and intensification impacts (CD2.2.6). Additionally, the draft Plan also seeks to improve the aesthetic character along Ocean Street (CD2.1.9) and to implement appropriate designs in the Harvey West and Westside industrial areas (CD2.1.8).

The limited specific types of facilities that are supported in the draft General Plan would also be subject to these guidelines, including a new rail transit center, performing arts center and multi-story parking lots. Potential aesthetic impacts associated with construction of a desalination plant are addressed in the WATER SUPPLY (Chapter 4.5) section of this EIR.

Numerous other policies and actions seek superior designs for buildings in visually sensitive areas (CD3.5), including landmark buildings (CD3.5.1), attractive gateways and landscaped streetscapes, and visual connections between development and open space. Policy CD1.4 seeks to ensure that development is sensitively designed in relation to open space and scenic resources, as well as existing development. Goal CD5 seeks walkable neighborhoods and districts of compatible uses and buildings, and some of its supporting policies and actions require pedestrian scale elements and amenities in the design of new development (CD5.2, CD5.2.2, CD5.2.4).

In addition to proposed *General Plan 2030* policies and actions, existing and proposed plans and design guidelines would continue to provide design guidance in specified areas, including the Beach and Downtown areas, and proposed guidelines along the River corridor and lower Pacific area. Furthermore, the City’s Zoning Ordinance requires a “design permit” for most new construction in the City of Santa Cruz. This requires review of architectural and site development proposals to ensure the application of recognized principles of design, planning and aesthetics and qualities typifying the Santa Cruz community. Pursuant to the Design Permit requirements

(Zoning Ordinance Section 24.08.430), findings must be made that address 17 identified criteria before the City issues a design permit.

Conclusion. Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would not directly result in new development, but new development accommodated by the plan could result in adverse impacts to the visual character of surrounding areas due to the introduction of mixed or intensified use structures that are more massive than, or out of scale with, adjacent residential neighborhoods. However, with implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* goals, policies and actions that require the development of design guidelines and development standards for transitional areas as summarized on Table 4.3-1, in combination with continued application of existing and proposed design guidelines for specified areas and design review as part of Design Permit approvals, this would be considered a less-than-significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified. However, revision of the following *General Plan 2030* action is recommended to strengthen standards developed for new mixed use districts.

Recommended Revisions to the Draft General Plan 2030

Revise or add policies/actions as indicated below. Deleted text is shown in ~~strikeout~~ typeface, and new text is shown in underlined typeface.

CD2.1.4 As part of the Zoning Ordinance amendment to establish mixed use districts, establish development standards to ensure that siting, massing, height, and scale of infill and intensified development are sensitive to existing neighborhood and business districts.

Impact 4.3-4: Introduction of Light and Glare

Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would accommodate future development that could introduce new sources of light or glare. However, given the infill nature of future development, it is not expected that new sources of substantial light or glare would be introduced. Implementation of the proposed policies and actions for minimizing lighting impacts would further reduce potential effects. Thus, this is considered a less-than-significant impact.

As indicated above in the Impact 4.3-1 discussion, most of the future development that would be accommodated by the *General Plan 2030* would be along the City's major transportation corridors or would be infill and intensified development. Infill buildings would have standard window and exterior lighting treatments, but would not be expected to result in new sources of substantial light or glare as future development projects would largely replace or redevelop

existing urban uses. Exterior lighting would be included as part of future development, but would be typical of residential and commercial lighting, and would not result in nighttime illumination levels beyond the property line. The proposed *General Plan 2030* policies and actions serve to minimize light and glare. Policy CD3.6 calls for development of a Street Lighting Plan. Policy HZ5.1 calls for reduction in “light pollution”, and calls for development of lighting design guidelines to reduced light being generated upward or on to adjacent properties (HZ5.1.2). Additionally, section 24.14.266 of the City’s Municipal Code prohibits direct or sky-reflected glare, whether from floodlights or from other processes, such as combustion or welding, so as to be visible at the points of measurement specified in the regulations for different land use zones.

Conclusion. Adoption and implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* would not directly result in new development, but new development accommodated by the plan could result in potential sources of light and glare. However, given the type of infill development that would be expected, “substantial” new sources of light and glare would not be expected. Additionally, implementation of the proposed *General Plan 2030* goals, policies and actions would serve to avoid and minimize adverse impacts related to new sources of light and glare as summarized on Table 4.3-1 as would the Design Permit review that is required for most larger development projects. Thus, the proposed *General Plan 2030*’s indirect impact related to the introduction of new sources of light and glare would be considered less-than-significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

REFERENCES

Design, Community & Environment. November 16, 2007. “Community Design Background Report.”