

# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## 5.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the draft program environmental impact report (PEIR) describes the existing landforms and aesthetic character of San Bernardino County and describes scenic vistas and corridors within the County. It also analyzes the potential aesthetic and visual impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed San Bernardino Countywide Plan (proposed Project or Countywide Plan).

### 5.1.1 Environmental Setting

#### 5.1.1.1 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

##### State

##### *California Building Code: Building Energy Efficiency Standards*

Energy conservation standards for new residential and non-residential buildings were adopted by the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (now the California Energy Commission [CEC]) in June 1977 and most recently revised in 2016 (Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations [CCR]). Title 24 requires the design of building shells and building components to conserve energy. The standards are updated periodically to allow for consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. On June 10, 2015, the CEC adopted the 2016 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which went into effect on January 1, 2017. Title 24 requires outdoor lighting controls to reduce energy usage; in effect, this reduces outdoor lighting.

##### *State Scenic Highways*

California's Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 with a purpose to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors, through special conservation treatment. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been officially designated. The status of a proposed state scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local governing body applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, adopts a Corridor Protection Program, and receives notification that the highway has been officially designated a Scenic Highway.

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When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. Scenic corridors consist of land that is visible from the highway right of way, and is comprised primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the corridor boundaries. The city or county must also adopt ordinances, zoning and/or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances and/or policies make up the Corridor Protection Program.

In San Bernardino County, State Route (SR) 38 from east of South Fork Campground to State Lane in the San Bernardino Mountains is classified by Caltrans as an “Officially Designated State Scenic Highway” and is part of the Rim of the World Scenic Byway (Caltrans 2011). It is also considered a US Forest Service (USFS) Scenic Byway. Several other highways in the County are classified as “Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated.”

### Regional

#### *San Bernardino County Development Code*

The following provisions from the San Bernardino County Development Code help minimize aesthetic and light and glare impacts associated with new development projects and are relevant to the proposed Project.

- **Chapter 83.02 (General Development and Use Standards).** This chapter provides development standards that ensure an environment of stable and desirable character that is harmonious and compatible between existing and future development. Sections within this chapter detail requirements pertaining to maximum building heights, screening and buffering, setbacks, and allowed projections/structures within setbacks.
- **Chapter 83.06 (Fences, Hedges, and Walls).** This chapter establishes requirements for fences, hedges, and walls to ensure that these elements do not unnecessarily block views and sunlight; provide adequate buffering between different land uses, provide screening of outdoor uses and equipment; and provide for noise mitigation. Overall, the requirements are designed to provide aesthetic enhancement of the County. This chapter of the code discusses requirements for fences, hedges, and walls, including maximum height limit, walls required between different land uses, special wall/fencing for different uses, and prohibited fence materials.
- **Chapter 83.07 (Glare and Outdoor Lighting).** This chapter encourages outdoor lighting practices and systems that minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass; conserve energy and resources while maintaining nighttime safety, visibility, utility and productivity; and curtail the degradation of the nighttime visual environment. Section 83.07.030 provides standards for outdoor lighting in the Valley Region and Section 83.07.040 provides stricter standards for the Mountain and Desert Regions.
- **Chapter 83.10 (Landscaping Standards).** The purpose of this chapter is to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the County by providing standards related to the quality and functional aspects of landscaping. In addition to enhancing the aesthetic quality of the County, the landscaping standards are

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intended to benefit air and water quality, help prevent and manage erosion, offer fire protection, and replace valuable ecosystems that may be lost during development. These standards also encourage water conservation, efficient water management, natural vegetation preservation, and more.

- **Chapter 83.13 (Sign Regulation).** This chapter establishes regulations for signs and other exterior advertising formats helping to improve the appearance of the County and protect public and private investment in structures and open spaces.

### 5.1.1.2 VISUAL SETTING

#### Visual Character and Landforms

Given the vast size of the County, this section divides it into four distinct geographical planning regions that vary by terrain and visual character: the Valley, Mountain, North Desert, and East Desert Regions. Photographs showing the visual context of each region are shown in Figures 4-3, 4-6, 4-9, and 4-12 in Chapter 4, *Environmental Setting*, of this Draft PEIR.

#### *Valley Region*

The Valley Region encompasses the southwesternmost corner of the County west of the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forest boundaries. The northern limits of the region are bounded by the San Bernardino Mountain ranges and the Yucaipa and Crafton Hills. The southern limits of the region are bounded by the Laloma, Jurupa Hills, and Chino Hills. Elevations within the Valley Region range from 500 feet above mean sea level (amsl) on the Valley floor to 1,700 feet amsl in Live Oak Canyon, and to about 5,400 feet amsl in the Yucaipa Hills (San Bernardino 2007a).

The majority of the Valley Region is developed with significant open space areas, including the Prado Basin to the southwest of the region and the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forests to the north of the region. Preserved areas occur at the southwest end of the region, including the Chino Preserve and Chino Hills Open Space; at the eastern end is the Crafton Hills Open Space; and to the north is Cajon Pass. The dominant aquatic feature in the Valley Region is the Santa Ana River Watershed. The upstream reaches are in San Bernardino County. Key tributaries in the area are City Creek, Day Creek, Etiwanda Creek, Plunge Creek, San Sevaine Creek, Lytle Creek, Cajon Wash, San Timoteo Wash, and Mill Creek.

The majority of the County's residents live in the Valley Region as it is most urbanized and closest to other major cities in Los Angeles, Riverside, and Orange counties. The visual character of the Valley Region is primarily urban but becomes less and less dense closer to the foothills of the mountain ranges and low-lying hills to the north and east, which provide scenic vistas from various areas within the region. Undeveloped areas in the Valley Region include chaparral scrub, alluvial fan sage scrub, deciduous woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands.

#### *Mountain Region*

The Mountain Region consists mainly of the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountain ranges, which are part of the Transverse Ranges of the Southern California mountain chain. Topography consists of steep

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mountainous terrain with multiple peaks exceeding 10,000 feet amsl. Elevations range from 2,000 feet amsl along the foothills to the 11,502-foot amsl summit of Mount San Gorgonio, the highest peak in southern California. The region is composed of steep canyons with unstable hillside, rock, and debris.

The Mountain Region is within the Santa Ana and Mojave Watershed, and the region features several large scenic lakes (Big Bear Lake, Silverwood Lake, Lake Arrowhead, and Lake Gregory) and many smaller lakes. The Santa Ana River and four other major creeks (Mill Creek, Lytle Creek, Deep Creek, Mojave River, and Whitewater River) flow within the mountains. Major plant communities in the Mountain Region include chaparral, various scrubs (e.g., sage, riparian, desert), deciduous woodlands, conifer forests, and wetlands.

Generally, the visual character of the Mountain Region includes forested landscape, prominent ridgelines, and steep canyons interspersed with small communities, valleys, and lakes.

#### *North and East Desert Regions*

The North and East Desert Regions are bounded to the south primarily by the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountain ranges. The foothills on the northern side of the mountain ranges level off abruptly, with the southern part of the desert lying primarily flat with elevations hovering around 1,000 feet amsl and scattered low-elevation mountains ranging between 2,000 and 4,000 feet amsl. The North and East Desert Regions are primarily characterized by shorter remote mountain ranges surrounded by desert plains, with extensive open space and expansive vistas. These mountain ranges often have associated alluvial fans. Other significant landforms include playas, basin, plateaus, and dunes. Many of these features (alluvial fans, basins, playas, and slope debris in the form of rockslides and rock falls) result from the erosive power of running water; however, significant surface flow is both unpredictable and scarce in the arid desert environment.

The Mojave Desert covers a large portion of San Bernardino County in the central, northern, and eastern portions of the County. The Mojave River is perhaps the most prominent feature in the North and East Desert Regions and supports extensive riparian, wetland, and wind-blown sands habitat. Major plant communities in the regions include desert bedrock cliff, woodlands, dunes, various scrubs (e.g., chaparral, desert, riparian, and sage), and playas.

#### **Natural Resources**

Natural land resources are community assets that occur naturally in the environment or are derived from the environment with little disturbance. The County's natural land resources include mountains, vast open space, desert lands, and hillsides. These areas provide visual relief, preserve unique flora and fauna, and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation.

#### *Valley Region*

Natural resources such as protected and wilderness areas within the Valley Region include the North Etiwanda Preserve, Day Canyon Preserve, Colton Dunes Conservation Bank, Vulcan Materials Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub Mitigation Bank, Lytle Creek Conservation Bank, Chino Hills State Park, Prado Basin Mitigation Area, Woolly Star Preserve Area, Crafton Hills Conservancy, Wildwood Canyon State Park, and the Oak Glen Preserves-Wildlands. These protected natural resources are further described in Section 5.4, *Biological Resources*.

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### *Mountain Region*

Public/government lands in the Mountain Region provide aesthetic and natural resource conservation value to the County including the Sand to Snow National Monument and the San Bernardino National Forest. The Sand to Snow National Monument is 154,000 acres and extends from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands on the desert floor up to the San Gorgonio Wilderness in the San Bernardino National Forest. This monument features riparian forests, freshwater marshes, meadows, chaparral, and alpine conifer forests.

The San Bernardino National Forest is managed by USFS and has four designated Wilderness Areas:

- Bighorn Mountain Wilderness (11,800 acres), located northeast of Big Bear Lake
- Cucamonga Wilderness (8,581 acres), located east of Mount Baldy
- San Gorgonio Wilderness (56,722 acres), located east of Redlands
- Sheep Mountain Wilderness (2,401 acres), located south of Wrightwood

### *North and East Desert Regions*

There are a number of large blocks of public/government-owned lands in the North and East Desert regions of the County that provide aesthetic and conservation value. These include the Sand to Snow National Monument, Mojave Trails National Monument, Castle Mountains National Monument, Joshua Tree National Park, Death Valley National Park, Mojave National Preserve, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, California Desert National Conservation Area, Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, East Mojave National Scenic Area, Kelso Peak and Old Dad Mountains Wildlife Area, Pioneertown Mountains Preserve–Wildlands, Fremont Valley Ecological Reserve, and the West Mojave Desert Ecological Reserve. These protected natural resources are further described in Section 5.4, *Biological Resources*.

### **Light and Glare**

Existing sources of light and glare throughout the County vary drastically across the four geographical regions.

### *Valley Region*

The Valley Region is most urbanized and built out, and thus has many sources of lighting and glare from existing development, including building (interior and exterior), security, sign illumination, and parking-area lighting. Other sources of nighttime light and glare include streetlights and vehicular traffic along major roadways and freeways. A significant amount of ambient lighting comes from surrounding cities and roadways in Orange, Riverside, and Los Angeles counties.

On the outskirts of the Valley Region to the north and east, some areas are primarily undeveloped, rural residential and open space, which have very few sources of light and glare, allowing for clear day and nighttime views.

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#### *Mountain Region*

Given that most of the Mountain Region is dominated by the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forests, sources of light and glare in the mountains are much less intense than in the Valley Region. Most sources of light and glare exist closer to the more established communities of the region, such as Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead. The remaining areas of the region are dark and provide clear views of the nighttime sky.

#### *North and East Desert Regions*

The North and East Desert Regions provide extensive open space areas and expansive vistas with little development. Similar to the Mountain Region, most sources of light and glare are generated in the communities and incorporated areas of the region, including Barstow, Victorville, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Twentynine Palms, and Needles. Sources of light and glare are generally typical urban uses, such as building (interior and exterior), roadway, vehicular traffic, security, sign illumination, and parking-area lighting. However, most of the desert land is undeveloped and dark.

### Scenic Highways

#### *Caltrans Designated Scenic Highways*

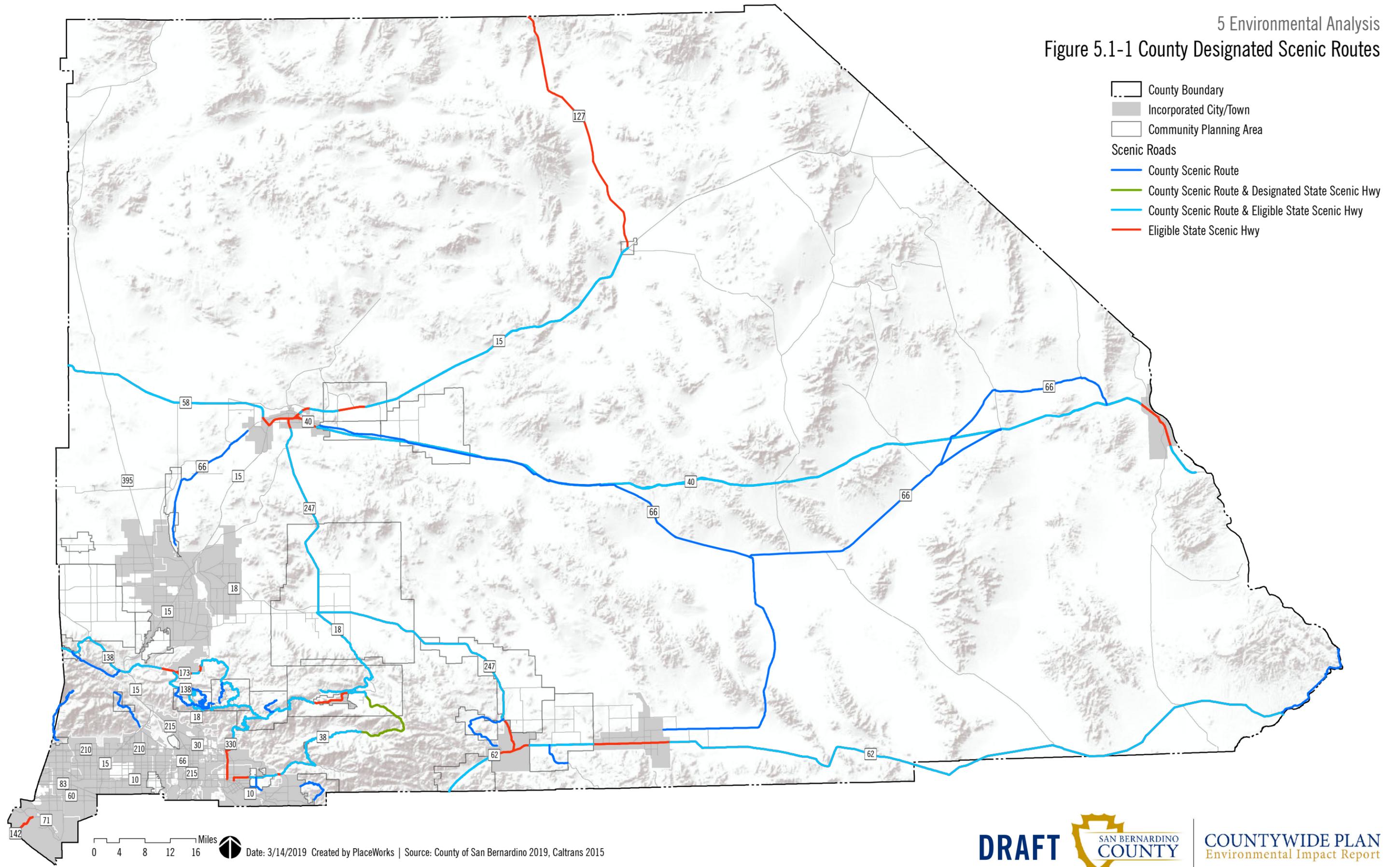
Caltrans's California Scenic Highway Mapping System identifies SR-38 from east of South Fork Campground to State Lane in the San Bernardino Mountains as an "Officially Designated State Scenic Highway." This segment of Route 38 is part of the Rim of the World Scenic Byway, which has been designated by the USFS and includes portions of SR-18, SR-38, and SR-138. SR-38 offers a leisurely drive through the San Bernardino Mountains with forested mountain sides. It rises 2,000 feet on the south end and 1,600 feet on the north. Several other highways in the County are classified as "Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated," though some highways (or portions of) are within the jurisdictional boundaries of incorporated cities. These state routes (SR), highways, and interstates (I) include the following in each planning region (Caltrans 2011):

- Valley Region: SR- 38 and 142; I-10 (between I-210 and SR-38) and I-210
- Mountain Region: SR-2, 18, 138, 173, 189, and 330
- North and East Desert Regions: SR-18, 58, 62, 127, 138, 173, and 247; I-40 and I-15

#### *County Designated Scenic Highways*

In addition to Caltrans's designated scenic highways, the County designates numerous scenic routes in each planning region. These routes are shown in Figure 5.1-1, *County Designated Scenic Routes*.

Figure 5.1-1 County Designated Scenic Routes



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### 5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

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

### 5.1.3 Regulatory Requirements and General Plan Policies

#### 5.1.3.1 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- RR AE-2 The County shall enforce adherence with the California Building Code, including provisions of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards related to lighting.

#### 5.1.3.2 POLICY PLAN

The Countywide Plan sets forth the following policies pertaining to visual resources and aesthetics:

- Policy LU-2.1**      **Compatibility with existing uses.** We require that new development is located, scaled, buffered, and designed to minimize negative impacts on existing conforming uses and adjacent neighborhoods. We also require that new residential developments are located, scaled, buffered, and designed so as to not hinder the viability and continuity of existing conforming nonresidential development.
- Policy LU-2.2**      **Compatibility with planned uses.** We require that new residential development is located, scaled, buffered, and designed to minimize negative impacts both on and from adjacent areas designated for nonresidential land uses.
- Policy LU-2.3**      **Compatibility with natural environment.** We require that new development is located, scaled, buffered, and designed for compatibility with the surrounding natural environment and biodiversity.
- Policy LU-2.4**      **Land use map consistency.** We consider proposed development that is consistent with the Land Use Map (i.e., it does not require a change in Land Use Category), to be generally compatible and consistent with surrounding land uses and a community's identity. Additional site, building, and landscape design treatment, per other policies in the Policy Plan and development standards in the Development Code, may be

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required to maximize compatibility with surrounding land uses and community identity.

- Policy LU-2.5** **Hillside preservation.** We require that new development in sloping hillside areas preserve the natural character of the surrounding environment and does not further exacerbate natural hazards or erosion.
- Policy LU-4.1** **Context-sensitive design in the Mountain/Desert regions.** We require new development to employ site and building design techniques and use building materials that reflect the natural mountain or desert environment and preserve scenic resources.
- Policy LU-4.3** **Native or drought-tolerant landscaping.** We require new development, when outside of high and very high fire hazard severity zones, to install and maintain drought-tolerant landscaping and encourage the use of native species.
- Policy LU-4.4** **Natural topography in the Mountain Region.** We require new development in the Mountain Region to retain natural topography and minimize grading unless it is necessary to reduce exposure to natural hazards.
- Policy LU-4.5** **Community Identity.** We require that new development be consistent with and reinforce the physical and historical character and identity of our unincorporated communities, as described in Table LU-3 [of the Policy Plan] and in the values section of Community Action Guides. In addition, we consider the aspirations section of Community Action Guides in our review of new development.
- Policy LU-4.6** **Adaptive reuse.** We encourage the rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and revitalization of existing structures to preserve and celebrate the unique sense of place, identity, and history of our communities.
- Policy LU-4.7** **Dark skies.** We minimize light pollution and glare to preserve views of the night sky, particularly in the Mountain and Desert regions where dark skies are fundamentally connected to community identities and local economies. We also promote the preservation of dark skies to assist the military in testing, training, and operations.
- Policy LU-4.10** **Entry monumentation, signage, and public art.** We encourage the installation of durable signage, entry monumentation, and/or works of public art in commercial areas of unincorporated Community Planning Areas as a means of reinforcing a community's character, culture, heritage, or other unique features.
- Policy V/H-1.1** **Housing compatibility.** We encourage housing types and designs that are compatible with established land use patterns and the environment of the region, including single-family dwellings, mobile home parks/manufactured home land-leased communities, and apartments.

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- Policy M/H-1.1**      **Site design.** We regulate the density, mass, and height of residential development in hillside areas in order to reduce fire hazards, prevent erosion, preserve natural viewsheds, and maintain the forest character of the Mountain Region.
- Policy M/H-1.2**      **Building design.** We require architecture and outside facades of residential development that are in keeping with the mountain character; use natural woods, wood composite materials, and masonry as much as practicable.
- Policy M/H-1.3**      **Single family building size.** We ensure that development standards for single family homes result in building sizes that are limited to size and scale that are compatible with existing development and the character of the Mountain Region.
- Policy M/H-1.4**      **Protection of scenic qualities.** We use the planned development permit or other discretionary reviews to regulate the density and configuration of residential development along the shores of all mountain lakes or on slopes to protect their scenic qualities.
- Policy M/H-1.5**      **Grouping or clustering.** We encourage the grouping or clustering of residential buildings where this will maximize the opportunity to preserve significant natural resources, natural beauty, or open space within the density limits of the underlying zone.
- Policy NR-4.1**      **Preservation of scenic resources.** We consider the location and scale of development to preserve regionally significant scenic vistas and natural features, including prominent hillsides, ridgelines, dominant landforms, and reservoirs.
- Policy NR-4.2**      **Coordination with agencies.** We coordinate with adjacent federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to protect scenic resources that extend beyond the County's land use authority and are important to countywide residents, businesses, and tourists.
- Policy NR-4.3**      **Off-site signage.** We prohibit new off-site signage and encourage the removal of existing off-site signage along or within view of County Scenic Routes and State Scenic Highways.

### 5.1.4 Environmental Impacts

#### 5.1.4.1 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of aesthetics and aesthetic impacts is highly subjective, yet it must objectively identify the visual features of the existing environment and their importance. The characterization of aesthetics involves establishing existing visual character, including resources and scenic vistas unique to the project area. Visual resources are determined by identifying existing landforms, views (e.g., scenic resources such as natural features or urban characteristics), viewing points/locations, and existing light and glare (e.g., nighttime illumination). Changes to the existing aesthetic environment that would result due to the implementation of the proposed Project are identified and qualitatively evaluated based on the proposed modifications to the existing setting

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and the viewer's sensitivity. It should be noted, however, that there are no locally designated or defined standards or methodologies for the assessment of aesthetic impacts. Project-related impacts are compared to the context of the existing setting.

#### 5.1.4.2 IMPACT ANALYSIS

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

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#### **Impact 5.1-1: Implementation of the Countywide Plan could alter existing scenic vistas. [Threshold AE-1]**

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As discussed above in Section 5.1.1.2, *Visual Setting*, and shown in Figures 4-3 through 4-12 (see Chapter 4 of this Draft PEIR), the Project area contains a variety of unique and important visual resources, including numerous expansive vistas of forests, hillsides, mountains, and desert landscapes. The discussion provided herein focuses on scenic vistas and corridors, excluding the Countywide Plan's impacts on state and county scenic highways, which are addressed under Impact 5.1-2.

Buildout of the Countywide Plan would involve the construction of approximately 15,355 new dwelling units and 19.4 million square feet of nonresidential (e.g., commercial and industrial) land uses. New land use designations and new zoning would, in some areas, result in development with greater intensities than previously permitted. In areas with no proposed land use changes, previously unutilized building intensity could be developed, resulting in development more intense than under existing conditions. In both cases, construction of new buildings and land uses could obstruct or partially obstruct scenic vistas. Although this growth would result in adverse impacts to existing scenic views, potential impacts would be minimized by a number of factors. These factors include:

- The Countywide Plan's concentration of future growth within existing urban areas.
- The fact that much of the unincorporated County is owned and/or managed by federal or state agencies (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service, and U.S. Department of Defense) and therefore, in most cases, accommodates little (if any) new development.
- Implementation of proposed goals and policies, which prioritize conservation of existing natural landscapes.
- The programmatic nature of the Countywide Plan, including the requirements that subsequent, individual projects are subject to environmental review under CEQA.
- Continued implementation of the San Bernardino County Development Code.

These factors and their ability to minimize impacts on scenic vistas are described below. Analysis of potential adverse impacts concentrates on buildout of the proposed land use map. Although the Countywide Plan contains other components (e.g., the County Business Plan, the Regional Issues Forum, and numerous goals

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and policies related to provision of County services), these project components would have little to no impact on the physical environment and therefore no impacts on scenic vistas.

#### Valley Region

As discussed above under Section 5.1.1.2, *Visual Setting*, the Valley Region contains most of the County's urban development and population. Because it is largely flat and is surrounded by mountain ranges, it features extensive scenic views of the surrounding topography. The most dramatic of these vistas are those looking north toward the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, which contain some of Southern California's highest peaks. Notable mountains visible from the valley include Cucamonga Peak, Mount San Antonio (Mount Baldy), and Mount San Gorgonio. Eastward views in the region include scenic vistas of the San Jacinto Mountains. Southward vistas in some areas of the region include vistas of the Chino Hills, Santa Ana Mountains, Jurupa Hills, South Hills, and other ridgelines.

Much of the Valley Region is within incorporated cities or unincorporated portions of the County that are not anticipated to grow. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not affect existing scenic vistas from these areas. However, the region does contain three areas targeted for growth under the proposed Project: (1) the Fontana Sphere of Influence (SOI), (2) the unincorporated community of Bloomington, and (3) the East Valley Area Plan (surrounded by the City of Redlands).

- **Fontana SOI.** As shown in Table 3-3 in Chapter 3 of this DEIR, growth in the Fontana SOI would generally be nonresidential, with substantial growth planned for industrial and commercial uses. Individual development or redevelopment projects could affect highly localized views. However, this area is sufficiently south of the San Gabriel Mountains and north of the Jurupa Hills to have a low potential to affect long-distance views of these ranges. Individual development or redevelopment projects would be subject to project-level review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.
- **Bloomington.** As shown in Table 3-3, buildout of Bloomington would involve growth of both residential and nonresidential uses. However, this area already features a mix of land uses (i.e., buildings, utility poles, trees, and other elements of the built environment) and therefore distant views of surrounding mountain ranges and ridgelines are already fragmented. Because proposed land uses near the Jurupa Hills (at the southern edge of the community) are largely low-density residential uses that reflect existing uses, existing close-range scenic vistas of the hills would be expected to remain intact. Lastly, individual development or redevelopment projects would be subject to project-level review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.
- **East Valley Area Plan Area.** This area, which is surrounded by the City of Redlands, is planned to experience growth in both residential and nonresidential development. Like the Fontana SOI and Bloomington, this area is at the center of the valley away from scenic topography (the San Bernardino Mountains to the northeast and the South Hills to the south). Therefore, further development would not obscure long-range views of these landforms across the valley. It also contains a substantial amount of existing land uses, including large logistics centers. Therefore, any local views of surrounding landforms are already fragmented under existing conditions. Therefore, buildout of the East Valley Area Plan area

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would not be expected to cause substantial losses of scenic views. Individual development or redevelopment projects would be subject to project-level review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.

#### Mountain Region

As discussed above under Section 5.1.1.2, *Visual Setting*, the Mountain Region offers scenic views of mountains, prominent ridgelines, forested landscapes, and lakes. However, there are no growth areas planned for the Mountain Region under the proposed Project and, as shown in Table 3-3, there would be very little growth in the region overall. For example, at buildout, the region would only be expected to experience a population increase of approximately 2,355 residents. Growth would largely consist of individual single-family homes or other small developments that would not be expected to combine and block or otherwise adversely affect notable scenic views or vistas. In many cases, such development would occur in the region's forested areas, where scenic vistas are already fragmented by trees and topography.

#### North Desert Region

As discussed above, the North Desert Region contains vast stretches of undeveloped desert landscapes that, due to a general lack of development, trees, and other visual obstructions, feature countless panoramic long-range views. While a substantial amount of growth is anticipated for the North Desert Region in the long-term under the proposed Project, most of this growth is within the region's incorporated cities (which is not within the project area of the proposed Project). In the unincorporated areas of the region, there is little developable land that is within the County's jurisdiction (see Figure 4-7) and/or planned for rural residential uses. Land designated for rural living uses would not allow the type or density of growth that would affect scenic views. For this reason, buildout of the proposed Project would have little to no effect on scenic vistas over a vast percentage of the North Desert Region. However, the region does contain two areas targeted for growth under the proposed Project. These are discussed below.

- **Apple Valley Potential Annexation Area.** This area along I-15 northwest of Apple Valley (see Figure 3-5b) contains scenic views of numerous landforms, including Black Mountain and Fairview Mountain to the east, Bell Mountain and Catholic Hill to the south, and Quartzite Mountain and Silver Mountain to the west. Views of these landforms are clear, unbroken, and in most cases panoramic due to the area's scrub-like desert landscape, which is largely devoid of trees, tall vegetation, structures, or other elements of the built environment. Buildout of the annexation area would involve construction of a variety of new land uses, including industrial, commercial, office, and residential uses. These new land uses would be visible from long distances and would partially obstruct existing panoramic views of surrounding topography from I-15. However, the area is largely vacant, so scenic views from existing residences or other sensitive uses would be minimal.
- **Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan Area.** This specific plan area is in a relatively remote corner of the high desert that is surrounded by mountains, ridgelines, and other landforms, including Fairview Mountain to the northwest and the Granite Mountains to the south. Although the proposed Project does not propose land use changes for this area, residential uses allowed in the specific plan area would affect

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scenic views across the small valley once constructed.<sup>1</sup> However, there are few existing land uses in the specific plan area for which existing views would be compromised, and proposed land uses are generally low-density residential uses that would block short-range, site-specific views but not substantially obstruct larger, panoramic views of distant landforms.

### East Desert Region

Like the Mountain Region, the East Desert Region is not targeted for growth under the proposed Project. As shown in Table 3-3, land use designations in the region are projected to accommodate approximately 394 additional housing units and 65,050 square feet of nonresidential building space. The region does have numerous scenic vistas, including views across desert landscapes, toward mountains and ridgelines, and toward rock formations and outcroppings. However, the region is not planned for substantial changes in development patterns, level of urbanization, or the types of development previously allowed. Therefore, existing views across desert landscapes and toward topographic features will largely be unaffected; small, sparsely distributed development projects consistent with the proposed Project are not expected to result in significant adverse impacts on scenic views in the region.

### Conclusion

Throughout the four regions of the unincorporated County, some growth would occur in smaller areas planned for land use changes (outside those listed above) and would also occur in areas not planned for land use changes under the proposed Project. For example, many parcels in the unincorporated County contain unbuilt development capacity under existing conditions. Over the planning period of the proposed Project, this unbuilt capacity could be utilized, resulting in new projects, new buildings, and new infrastructure that could block localized short-range or mid-range views. However, due to economic, geographic, and other constraints, this growth would be expected to be sporadic and developed gradually over a long period of time. While individual projects could partially obstruct localized scenic views, there are no areas of the County where growth is anticipated to result in substantial aggregate obstruction of scenic views. The Countywide Plan would not introduce the kinds of growth that would broadly obstruct existing panoramic views: skyscrapers, assemblages of tall buildings, freeway flyovers, or large hillside developments.

In all regions of the unincorporated County, implementation of Policy NR-4.1 and other policies related to aesthetics included in the proposed Project (see Section 5.1.3.2, above) would ensure that individual projects would minimize or avoid impacts to scenic views as much as feasible (*italics added for emphasis*):

**Policy NR-4.1**      **Preservation of scenic resources.** We consider the location and scale of development to preserve regionally significant *scenic vistas and natural features*, including prominent hillsides, ridgelines, dominant landforms, and reservoirs.

Projects would also be required to comply with components of the San Bernardino County Development Code that relate to land use compatibility and visual character (see Section 5.1.1.1). Upon implementation of these regulations and the proposed Countywide Plan policies identified in Section 5.1.3.2, growth would affect scenic

<sup>1</sup> Nonresidential uses are allowed but make up a minor portion of the specific plan area's overall acreage.

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views, but only minor localized scenic views that are generally obstructed or partially obstructed under existing conditions. Implementation of the Countywide Plan is not expected to result in substantial obstruction of existing panoramic views of mountains, lakes, or other landforms. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

*Level of Significance Without Mitigation:* Impact 5.1-1 would be less than significant.

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#### **Impact 5.1-2: The Countywide Plan would not alter scenic resources within a state scenic highway. [Threshold AE-2]**

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State scenic highways are shown in Figure 5.1-1. Buildout of the proposed land use plan would involve construction of new land uses on thousands of parcels that feature unutilized development capacity. However, most of this growth is already allowed in the unincorporated County under existing land use regulations and would not be introduced by the proposed Project. Under the Countywide Plan, population growth is generally focused in a handful of “growth areas” identified in this section. Employment growth is focused in the Valley Region, particularly in the Fontana SOI, East Valley Area Plan, and Bloomington. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this PEIR, little to no growth is projected for other unincorporated areas. Accordingly, while the County contains numerous state and County-designated scenic highways, most would not be affected by land use changes contained in the Countywide Plan. The analysis below focuses on the areas of the unincorporated County where most changes to the visual environment would be expected to occur.

#### **Valley Region**

As shown in Figure 5.1-1, the Valley Region is largely devoid of County scenic routes and state scenic highways. County-designated scenic routes include Mountain Avenue in San Antonio Heights, and Crafton Avenue and 5th Avenue/Sand Canyon Road in Mentone. Several additional roads are eligible as state scenic highways—e.g., Carbon Canyon Road/SR-142 in Chino Hills; SR-330/SR-210 in Highland and Redlands; and SR-38/Mentone Boulevard in Mentone. These areas are generally within incorporated cities or are unincorporated areas not planned for growth under the Countywide Plan. A small number of parcels along SR-38/Mentone Boulevard are proposed for land use designation changes. However, these parcels are within the more urbanized portion of Mentone and do not feature scenic qualities that would be adversely affected by future development or redevelopment projects under the proposed Plan.

#### **Mountain Region**

As shown in Figure 5.1-1, numerous County-designated scenic highways traverse the San Bernardino Mountains and eastern San Gabriel Mountains. As shown in the figure, many of these are eligible to be state scenic highways. A large portion of SR-38 southeast of Big Bear that traverses the San Bernardino Mountains is also designated as a state scenic highway (see description under Section 5.1.1.2). However none of the areas containing scenic highways are targeted for growth under the Countywide Plan. In particular, the portion of SR-38 that is a state-designated scenic highway is almost entirely in mountainous terrain within the San Bernardino National Forest. Therefore, the County does not have jurisdiction over development along the corridor, and little to no development of new land uses would occur. Small development projects in the region’s more developed communities—e.g., Big Bear City, Running Springs, Lake Arrowhead, Crestline, and

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Wrightwood—could be located adjacent to or visible from County-designated scenic routes. However, small individual projects would generally be isolated from each other and would not be expected to adversely affect the character and quality of a highway corridor's scenic value, and the Countywide Plan does not allow substantial concentrations or growth or substantial intensification of existing communities in the Mountain Region. In general, the existing County-designated scenic routes and one state-designated scenic highway in the region would continue to travel through areas of the Mountain Region that are dominated by forests, mountains, hillsides, and other undeveloped scenic landscapes.

#### North Desert Region

As shown in Figure 5.1-1, the North Desert Region features a number of County-designated scenic routes and highways eligible as state scenic highways. However, there are no state-designated scenic highways. County-designated scenic routes traverse hundreds of miles in the region, generally through undeveloped desert landscapes with panoramic views of ridgelines, mountains, rock formations, and desert plant life including Joshua trees. Most of the unincorporated areas along these routes are not under the County's jurisdiction, including areas managed by the State of California, BLM, and U.S. Department of Defense. For this reason, implementation of the proposed Project would not adversely affect aesthetic resources along scenic corridors. Furthermore, the two areas of the region planned as growth areas (the Apple Valley SOI and Hacienda at Fairview Valley Specific Plan Area) are not located along designated scenic corridors.

The Helendale and Oro Grande unincorporated community plan areas are located along SR-66, and new land uses consistent with proposed land use changes could affect scenic resources along this route. However, the Countywide Plan does not involve approval of specific land uses or projects. Individual development or redevelopment projects would be subject to project-level review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable. Two County-designated scenic routes traverse the Lucerne Valley Community Plan Area, but existing land use designations would be largely unchanged by the proposed Project.

#### East Desert Region

As in the North Desert Region, a vast majority of the East Desert Region is outside the jurisdiction of the County and is managed by state and federal agencies. Therefore, the numerous County-designated scenic routes in the region (see Figure 5.1-1) will largely be unaffected by implementation of the Countywide Plan. There are no officially designated state-designated scenic highways in the region.

The proposed Project does change land use designations of some parcels along County-designated scenic routes. These include areas along SR-62 in Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree and areas along SR-247 in Homestead Valley. However, these areas are not targeted for growth, and in most cases, proposed land use changes would allow less intense development than under existing land use designations, changes initiated due to lack of public infrastructure and/or lack of community desire for growth in the affected areas.

#### Conclusion

Throughout the four regions of unincorporated County, some growth would occur in smaller areas planned for land use changes (outside those listed above) and would also occur in areas not planned for land use changes

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under the Countywide Plan. For example, many parcels in the unincorporated County contain unbuilt development capacity under existing conditions. Over the planning period of the proposed Project, this unbuilt capacity could be utilized, resulting in new projects, new buildings, and new infrastructure along designated scenic corridors. However, due to economic, geographic, and other constraints, this growth would be expected to be sporadic and developed gradually over a long period of time. While individual projects could be located adjacent to or visible from scenic roadways, there are no areas of the County where substantial growth or high density urban land uses are planned along such a roadway.

In all regions of the unincorporated County, implementation of policies in the Countywide Plan (see Section 5.1.3.2) would ensure that individual projects would minimize or avoid impacts to scenic resources along scenic corridors. Projects would also be required to comply with components of the San Bernardino County Development Code that relate to land use compatibility and visual character, such as Policy NR-4.1 (see Section 5.1.1.1) and Policy NR-4.3. Upon implementation of existing regulations and the proposed Countywide policies, impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would be less than significant.

**Policy NR-4.3**            **Off-site signage.** We prohibit new off-site signage and encourage the removal of existing off-site signage along or within view of County Scenic Routes and State Scenic Highways.

*Level of Significance Without Mitigation:* Impact 5.1-2 would be less than significant.

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**Impact 5.1-3:    The proposed Project would alter the visual appearance and character of some communities in the County. [Threshold AE-3]**

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As discussed in Section 5.1.1.2, *Visual Setting*, the visual character in San Bernardino County is greatly varied. The County's mountain ranges, foothills, valleys, basins, deserts, lakes, as well as the built environment—and the variety within that built environment—all contribute to the visual character of the County.

Growth anticipated during the planning period of the Countywide Plan would have the potential to affect the visual character and quality of the unincorporated County. As shown in Table 3-3, *Projected Growth in San Bernardino County, 2016 to 2040*, buildout of the proposed Project is anticipated to increase the number of residential units in the unincorporated County by 15,355 and the amount of nonresidential building space by 19.4 million square feet. This development would be largely concentrated in a small number of growth areas (see Chapter 3 of this Draft PEIR) but would also occur in other areas planned for land use changes or parcels with unutilized development intensity.

In general, the Countywide Plan is not a growth-oriented plan. It focuses on revising goals, policies, and land use designations to reflect the scale and character of existing neighborhoods and communities, while identifying a limited number of areas that are appropriate for future growth based on geographic, economic, and other factors. Of the County's four regions, two would see very minimal growth: the Mountain and East Desert regions. While the visual appearance of specific parcels could change due to new land uses, structures, or other improvements, the character and visual appearance of communities are not expected to change substantially. The aesthetic impacts of the proposed Project on the County's four regions are discussed below.

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#### Valley Region

As shown in Table 3-3, the Valley Region would experience the most growth under the proposed Project. However, the region is also the most urbanized. The character of the region is largely suburban, with pockets of urban character within incorporated cities (e.g., downtown San Bernardino, downtown Redlands) and pockets of rural or vacant land. Growth in most unincorporated areas of the region would consist of infill development that—per proposed land use designations and provisions of the San Bernardino County Development Code—would generally reflect surrounding land uses. For this reason, impacts to existing community character and visual appearance would be minor and highly location specific. However, three growth areas are identified in the Valley Region, and these areas could experience a larger degree of aesthetic change over the lifespan of the Countywide Plan.

- **Fontana SOI.** The Fontana SOI has a mixed community character that varies widely from heavy industrial uses to low-density residential neighborhoods. As shown in Table 3-3, growth in the Fontana SOI would generally be nonresidential, with substantial growth planned for industrial and commercial uses. However, this area contains existing intensive uses and large-scale structures, including a steel manufacturing plant, the Auto Club Raceway, logistics centers, and other industrial uses. For this reason, new commercial and industrial uses and projects would not drastically change the character of the Fontana SOI area. While the area does contain large residential areas (generally north of Arrow Boulevard and east of Redwood Avenue), these are planned for residential uses under the proposed Project. Redevelopment or infill projects in residential portions of the Fontana SOI would be expected to reflect the size, character, and scale of surrounding uses.

Since there are long, continuous boundaries where nonresidential uses and residential uses are located across from each other (e.g., Redwood Avenue), individual projects involving industrial and commercial development could adversely impact the visual quality of adjacent neighborhoods. However, such projects would be subject to project-level review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.

- **Bloomington.** Bloomington is a community that is largely urbanized with commercial, industrial, and residential uses but also features vacant parcels. This gives the community a transitional character and appearance. As shown in Table 3-3, buildout of Bloomington would involve growth of both residential and nonresidential uses. However, this community already features a mix of land uses and building types. Most of Bloomington is not planned for land use changes, and most of those consist of residential areas that would remain designated for residential uses under the Countywide Plan. Two land use changes proposed by the proposed Project would notably affect the appearance and character of existing neighborhoods if the affected parcels were built out. The first is an assemblage of mostly-vacant RS-1 designated parcels at the southeast corner of Jurupa Avenue and Cactus Avenue that would be designated for Limited Industrial (LI) uses. The second is a large parcel currently designated RS-1 at the southeast corner of Santa Ana Avenue and Cedar Avenue that would be designated for Commercial (C) uses. However, this parcel is located across from other parcels designated for commercial uses, so at buildout, its development would visually contribute to a corridor of similar uses. Furthermore, the Countywide Plan does not involve approval of any specific development project. Individual projects would be subject to project-level design review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.

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- **East Valley Area Plan Area.** This area, which is surrounded by the City of Redlands, is planned for substantial growth in nonresidential (commercial and industrial) development, with a projected increase of 4.1 million square feet of building space. However, the existing visual appearance of the area is dominated by large industrial buildings—in most cases, warehouses and logistics centers. Therefore, the construction and operation of additional large-scale buildings and structures would not result in substantial adverse impacts to existing community character.

#### Mountain Region

The Mountain Region is not targeted for growth, and future growth of unutilized development capacity in the region would continue to be severely limited by topographic, economic, and environmental constraints in addition to a general lack of area designated for urbanized land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional). No area of the Mountain Region is expected to experience a major change in community character or visual appearance under the Countywide Plan since individual developments would generally be small (e.g., individual single-family homes) and in areas already containing such land uses. The rugged terrain and wild atmosphere that dominate much of the Mountain Region would not be adversely affected by implementation of the Countywide Plan since no growth is planned for those areas. Moreover, any individual development project would be subject to project-level design review, including review of aesthetic impacts under CEQA, as applicable.

#### North Desert Region

As discussed above, despite the North Desert Region's vast size, most of the region is not within the jurisdiction of the County (see Figure 3-5b) and would not be affected by implementation of the proposed Project. Geographically, most growth allowed in the region is in areas designated for Rural Living (RL) uses. Elsewhere, allowed development capacity generally follows existing development patterns. Therefore, with the exceptions described below, the character and appearance of the region would largely be unaffected by the proposed Project. For example, most of the region's large expanses of desert would remain dominated by natural resources and desert landscapes, as these are generally open spaces maintained by the BLM, National Park Service, and Department of Defense.

- **Apple Valley Potential Annexation Area.** Despite this area being crisscrossed by roads and featuring scattered homes and ranches, it is largely vacant desert. Buildout of the area would drastically change the visual appearance and rural character of the area, including its appearance as viewed from I-15. However, the Countywide Plan does not involve approval of specific land uses or projects. It is speculative to anticipate how new land uses would look or fit within the area's context of rural, ranch-oriented desert.
- **Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan Area.** As with the Apple Valley Potential Annexation Area, this area would experience a substantial change in visual appearance and character. At buildout of the specific plan, rural residential uses and vacant land would be replaced with suburban-scaled neighborhoods. These new uses would look markedly different from the surrounding open landscapes. However, the Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan contains detailed development standards and design guidelines that are aimed at creating a cohesive and context-sensitive community. For example, guidelines for site grading are

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intended to ensure that grading is “responsive to the natural land forms on- and off-site” and preserves natural topographic features (FORMA 2009). The plan encourages yard areas to feature desert landscapes, including Joshua trees.

### **East Desert Region**

The East Desert Region is not targeted for future growth. No area of the region is expected to experience a major change in community character or visual appearance under the Countywide Plan since most development capacity is in areas allowing very low-density residential uses (i.e., areas designated Rural Living (RL)). Nonresidential uses would generally be limited to areas that already feature nonresidential uses, such as parcels along SR-62 in the communities of Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree. For this reason, implementation of the proposed Project would not drastically change the visual appearance or character of East Desert communities.

### **Shade and Shadow Analysis**

The issue of shade and shadow pertains to whether onsite buildings or structures block direct sunlight from adjacent properties. Shading is an important environmental issue because the users or occupants of certain land uses have expectations for direct sunlight and warmth from the sun for function, physical comfort, or conduct of commerce. Factors that influence the extent or range of shading include: season; time of day; weather (i.e., sunny vs. cloudy day); building height, bulk, and scale; topography; spacing between buildings; sensitivity of adjacent land uses; and tree cover. Shadows cast by buildings and structures vary in length and direction throughout the day and from season to season. The longest shadows are cast during the winter months, when the sun is lowest on the horizon, and the shortest shadows are cast during the summer months. Shadows are longer in the early morning and late afternoon. Consequences of shadows upon land uses may be positive, including cooling effects during warm weather, or negative, such as the loss of natural light necessary for solar energy purposes or the loss of warming influences during cool weather. The relative effects of shading from structures are site specific.

### *Mountain, North Desert, and East Desert Regions*

Shadows that would be cast as a result of future development under the proposed Project would be relatively minimal in these regions due to the low density and low-rise nature of development that would occur in most areas, including most of the County that features desert and mountain landscapes. Therefore, impacts regarding shade and shadow are not anticipated to be significant.

### *Valley Region*

Exceptions to the low-scale development allowed in the unincorporated County include areas of the Valley Region where commercial, industrial, and medium density residential uses would be allowed. In some areas, new buildings would be located adjacent to or near existing homes or other uses sensitive to shade and shadows. However, the Countywide Plan has policies aimed at the visual compatibility of new development and redevelopment projects with existing land uses (see Policies LU-2.1 through LU-2.3). Furthermore, many of the Valley Region areas planned for urbanized land uses are within the plan areas of specific plans and community plans that provide additional guidance related to building scale, including policies, development

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standards, and design guidelines. Adherence to these regulations would ensure that individual development projects would be designed and constructed in a manner that would not create significant shade and shadow impacts on the areas surrounding the individual development sites.

Furthermore, CEQA requires that development projects and other projects requiring discretionary approval (e.g., specific plans) that would be accommodated by the Countywide Plan be required to undergo separate project-level environmental review, and the individual project's contribution to shade and shadow would be assessed at the time formal development plans/applications are submitted to the County for review and approval. Therefore, impacts regarding shade and shadow are not anticipated to be significant.

#### **CWP Policy Plan and Development Code**

In addition to the land use plan proposed by the Countywide Plan—which would affect the visual environment as described above—the Countywide Plan also has goals and policies that advocate for context-appropriate development (e.g., Policies LU-2.1 through LU-2.6; and Policies LU-4.1 through LU-4.7) and growth that focuses on growing existing communities rather than urban sprawl (e.g., Policies LU-1.1 and LU-1.2). Implementation of these policies would ensure that growth has minimal impacts on each community's visual appearance and character. The plan is also sensitive to topography, fire hazards, seismic hazards, steep slopes, water availability and other constraints. These sensitivities are reflected in the proposed land use plan and the proposed goals and policies. Consistency with the Policy Plan would ensure that growth is generally sited to complement existing land use patterns and avoids haphazard development that mars natural landscapes.

Furthermore, existing regulations, including provisions of the San Bernardino County Development Code (see Section 5.1.1.1, above) related to the regulation of building form, massing, signs, lighting, and architectural features would serve to lessen the impact of the proposed Project on the visual character of the unincorporated County. Compliance with these provisions would be ensured through the County's development review and building permit process. Development and redevelopment projects in portions of the unincorporated County with an applicable community plan or specific plan (e.g., the Valley Corridor Specific Plan in Bloomington) are also subject to regulations that address community compatibility and visual impact, only with a more area-specific approach.

#### **Conclusion**

Changes in land use in the Countywide Plan are generally limited to portions of the unincorporated County that feature existing urban development (with notable exceptions in the North Desert, as described above). The introduction of higher density development and/or modified land use patterns would result in small adjustments to the community character and visual appearance of the Valley Region, where most growth would occur. In the growth areas of the North Desert Region, buildout of new land use designations would replace desert landscapes with elements of the built environment. These areas would likely experience the most substantial changes in visual character and appearance during implementation of the proposed Project. However, applicable portions of the San Bernardino County Development Code and relevant goals and policies of the Countywide Plan—as discussed above—would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level. Note that while substantial growth would occur in the County's incorporated cities, these areas are outside the

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jurisdiction of the County and would not be affected by the Countywide Plan. Therefore, impacts related to changes in visual character and appearance would be less than significant.

*Level of Significance Without Mitigation:* Impact 5.1-3 would be less than significant.

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**Impact 5.1-4: Implementation of the proposed Project would generate additional light and glare in portions of the County. [Threshold AE-4]**

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Because it is a component of one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the country, much of San Bernardino County is in an urbanized context, including the Valley Region and portions of the North Desert Region (i.e., the Victor Valley). This means that the existing levels of lighting and light pollution are already relatively high, especially in highly urbanized areas.

The County also includes extensive expanses of rural, undeveloped areas such as those in the Mojave Desert and San Bernardino Mountains. These areas generally do not have existing high levels of light or light pollution. However, with a few exceptions (see analysis below), these areas are not planned for growth under the Countywide Plan. Implementation of the proposed Project would allow for additional development throughout the unincorporated County, which would introduce new sources of light into the Project area and its surroundings, with the potential to affect day and nighttime views. Below is a summary of how Project implementation could affect the County's four regions related to light and glare.

Development and redevelopment projects in all areas of the unincorporated County would be required to comply with California Building Energy Efficiency Standards and Chapter 83.07 of the San Bernardino County Development Code (see Section 5.1.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*), which provide regulations and standards aimed at implementing outdoor lighting practices and systems that minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass; conserve energy and resources while maintaining nighttime safety, visibility, utility, and productivity; and curtail the degradation of the nighttime visual environment. Sections 83.07.030 and 83.07.040 of the San Bernardino County Development Code provides standards for outdoor lighting in the Valley Region and standards for the Mountain and Desert regions, respectively.

### Valley Region

The Valley Region is the most urbanized area of San Bernardino County; accordingly, it experiences the highest levels of ambient light and light pollution. Even relatively undeveloped portions of the County in this region are generally surrounded by incorporated cities and traversed by streets, highways, railways, and utility infrastructure, all of which produce nighttime illumination. As shown in Chapter 3, the Valley Region would experience a substantial amount of growth under the proposed Project. However, this growth would largely be infill development that would occur in areas with high levels of ambient nighttime illumination under existing conditions. Therefore, the aggregate impacts of development under the Countywide Plan would be less than significant.

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#### Mountain Region

The Mountain Region contains substantial areas providing “dark skies” with minimal ambient nighttime illumination under existing conditions, especially in remote, forested, mountainous areas. However, there is very little growth allowed in the region under the Countywide Plan, and growth that would occur would be generally be within areas featuring existing development (e.g., Bear Valley, Lake Arrowhead, etc.). The Countywide Plan does not target this region for significant growth or plan for the creation of completely new neighborhoods or communities that would produce large amounts of new nighttime illumination or glare where there are existing dark skies. Therefore, impacts in this region would be less than significant.

#### North Desert Region

The North Desert Region is over 15,000 square miles and contains large swaths of undeveloped desert landscape, so it has many areas that feature dark skies and nighttime views of stars. However, most of these areas are not within the jurisdiction of the County (see Figure 3-3). Most developable parcels in the region are near existing communities or rural residential areas, including the Victor Valley, Lucerne Valley, and areas surrounding Barstow. These areas have existing light pollutions from existing land uses, streets, highways, and other elements of the built environment. However, with two exceptions (discussed below), the unincorporated areas of the North Desert Region are not targeted for growth under the proposed Project. The effect of this minimal growth on the overall ambient light environment is expected to be negligible.

- **Apple Valley Potential Annexation Area.** This area along I-15 northwest of Apple Valley (see Figure 3-5b) is far from the more urbanized areas of the Victor Valley. For this reason, buildout of the area with new land uses, buildings, and infrastructure would create a substantial new source of nighttime light in the Mojave Desert. However, the area does feature some existing sources of illumination: I-15, which borders the area on the west, and a large Walmart Distribution Center to the immediate southeast. Development projects in the area would be required to adhere to RR AE-2, which would minimize light pollution to the extent feasible.
- **Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan Area.** As described above, this specific plan area would be developed generally with residential uses under the Countywide Plan and the applicable specific plan. While this would generally be lower-density residential development, it would be substantially more intense than under existing conditions, which consist of vacant land with a few scattered homes and ranches. Accordingly, buildout of the area would substantially increase the amount of nighttime illumination in the area, which is surrounded by hills and ridges. However, development projects in the area would be required to adhere to RR AE-2, which would minimize light pollution to the extent feasible.

#### East Desert Region

Like the Mountain Region, the East Desert Region is not targeted for growth under the proposed Project. Individual development projects could increase nighttime illumination or glare on a localized level. But the minimal amount of growth anticipated in the region would be expected to have a negligible impact on the region’s overall light environment. The region is expected to continue to be a haven for dark skies and viewing

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of stars, since the region's BLM lands, military-owned land, and designated open space (e.g., Joshua Tree National Park) would not experience growth or development due to implementation of the Countywide Plan.

*Level of Significance Without Mitigation:* Impact 5.1-4 would be less than significant.

### 5.1.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative projects in San Bernardino County cities would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to aesthetic resources if, in combination, they would result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, state scenic highway, or localized area, such as a designated landmark, historic resource, trees, or rock outcropping. During the planning period of the Countywide Plan, cities in San Bernardino County are anticipated to grow by approximately 218,000 housing units, 581,000 residents, 663 million square feet of nonresidential building space, and 304,000 employees compared to existing conditions (see Table 3-3 in Chapter 3, *Project Description*). This growth is in addition to development that would occur in the Countywide Plan area.

#### Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources

During the planning period of the Countywide Plan, growth in San Bernardino County would be substantial, as mentioned above (and shown in Table 3-3). This growth could affect scenic vistas and specific scenic resources. However, because growth allowed under the proposed Plan would be subject to goals, policies, and regulations that reduce impacts of the Countywide Plan on scenic resources to a less than significant level, the proposed Project's contribution to countywide impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts of the Countywide Plan related to scenic vistas and scenic resources are therefore considered less than significant.

#### Visual Character and Quality

Growth anticipated for cities in San Bernardino County would fundamentally alter visual character and quality in some areas of San Bernardino County, including the Valley Region (e.g., areas of Chino, Ontario) and North Desert Region (e.g., the Victor Valley). However, because development allowed under the Countywide Plan would be subject to goals, policies, and regulations that reduce impacts of the Countywide Plan on visual resources and character to a less than significant level, the Countywide Plan's contribution to countywide impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts of the proposed Project related to visual character and quality are therefore considered less than significant.

#### Light and Glare

The construction and operation of cumulative projects located in San Bernardino County cities would have the potential to result in new sources of light and glare from new development and redevelopment that requires night lighting—such as security lighting in commercial areas—or is constructed with materials that would result in glare, such as expanses of glass on office buildings. Impacts from glare are generally localized and not cumulative in nature; therefore, a significant cumulative impact related to glare would not occur.

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#### 5.1.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

With implementation of RR AE-1 and RR AE-2, impacts of the Countywide Plan related to aesthetics would be less than significant.

#### 5.1.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

#### 5.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

#### 5.1.9 References

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