

## 3.1 AESTHETICS

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This section of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) describes the aesthetics and scenic resources in the SCAG region, discusses the potential impacts of the proposed 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (“2016 RTP/SCS,” “Plan,” or “Project”) on aesthetics, identifies mitigation measures for the impacts, and evaluates the residual impacts. Aesthetics were evaluated in accordance with Appendix G the 2015 State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Aesthetics within the SCAG region were evaluated at a programmatic level of detail in relation to the General Plans of the six counties and the 191 cities within the SCAG region, a query of Caltrans scenic highways and vista points for the SCAG region, a review of related literature germane to the SCAG region, as well as a review of SCAG’s 2012 RTP/SCS PEIR.<sup>1</sup>

The visual quality and character of the SCAG region is a function of the dramatic physical environment, ringed by two mountain ranges, the peninsular and transverse ranges; two deserts, the Mojave and Colorado; sandy beaches and marine terraces along the approximately 150-mile western margin of the SCAG region where the land meets the Pacific Ocean; and the Channel Islands that parallel the coastline. The SCAG region hosts 11 of the 25 most popular destinations in California, including Los Angeles (first), Palm Springs (eighth); Anaheim (ninth); Long Beach (10th); Santa Monica (13th), Newport Beach (16th), Pasadena (19th), Riverside (21st), Santa Ana (22nd), Irvine (23rd), and Huntington Beach (25th) to growing popularity of revitalized urban core areas.<sup>2</sup> The highway and transportation system in the SCAG region provides a wide variety of opportunities for enjoying the Southern California scenery and travelling to some of the state’s most popular destinations.

### Definitions

Definitions of terms used in the regulatory framework, characterization of baseline conditions, and impact analysis for aesthetics are provided.

**Degree of visibility:** The extent to which transportation improvements and/or anticipated development can be seen. This refers to a large extent on route alignment and configuration (i.e., elevated, at grade, depressed, or underground) of the transportation improvement and location, height/bulk, construction materials (reflectivity, color) of development. Generally, elevated grade transportation investments have a more substantial impact on aesthetics and views. The taller a development, in general, the greater the potential for impact.

**Glare:** Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person looking directly into the light source (e.g., the sun, the sun’s reflection, automobile headlights, or other light fixtures). Reflective surfaces on existing buildings, car windshields, etc., can expose people and property to varying levels of glare. Glare is typically a daytime condition where the sun reflects off a

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<sup>1</sup> Southern California Association of Governments. April 2012. *Final Program Environmental Report: 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Available at: <http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/Pages/Final-2012-PEIR.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> TripAdvisor. Accessed 20 October 2015. Popular Destinations in California. Available at: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g28926-California-Vacations.html>

particular building, while lighting effects often occur when new nighttime sources of lighting are introduced into an area.

**Scale:** The size and proportion, and of transportation improvements and development in relation to the massing of the structures and buildings in surrounding area.

**Scenic Resources:** Significant visual resources identified by local planning documents that can be maintained and enhanced to promote a positive image in the community, such as natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes that contribute to a high level of visual quality. Natural landforms and landscapes are often established as scenic resources, such as lakes, rivers and streams, mountain meadows, and oak woodlands. However, scenic resources can also include man-made open spaces and the built environment, such as parks, trails, nature preserves, sculpture gardens, and similar features.

**Shadow Sensitive Uses:** Shadow sensitive uses are land uses that are considered sensitive to the effects of new light-blocking structures casting shadows because sunlight is important to the function, physical comfort, or commerce of the land use. Facilities and operations that are considered sensitive to the effects of shadows include: routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residential, recreational, or institutional (e.g., schools, convalescent homes) land uses; commercial uses such as pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces or restaurants with outdoor eating areas; nurseries; and existing solar collectors.<sup>3</sup>

**State-designated Scenic Highway:** The State Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 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.<sup>4</sup>

**Viewshed:** A viewshed is the landscape (a geographic area composed of land, water, biotic and/or cultural elements) that may be seen from one or more viewpoints or along a transportation corridor under favorable atmospheric conditions and has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic value as determined by those who view it. The extent of a viewshed can be limited by a number of intervening elements, including trees and other vegetation, built structures, or topography such as hills and mountains.

**Visual Quality:** Visual quality refers to the character of the landscape which generally gives visual value to a setting.<sup>5,6</sup> Various jurisdictions within the SCAG region, such as cities, counties, state, federal, or regional agencies, provide guidelines regarding the preservation and enhancement of visual quality in

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<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles. 2006. *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide. Chapter A, Aesthetics and Visual Resources*. Available at: <http://environmentla.com/programs/Thresholds/A-Aesthetics%20and%20Visual%20Resources.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. 29 July 1965. *Regional Recreation Areas Plan*. Available at: [http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp\\_web80-regional-recreation-areas-plan.pdf](http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_web80-regional-recreation-areas-plan.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration. Accessed 12 May 2015. *Visual impact assessments for highway projects*. Available at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/downloads/visual/FHWAVisualImpactAssmt.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The term "visual quality" is used synonymously with "scenic quality" in this document.

their plans or regulations.<sup>7</sup> An example of such guidance is the Caltrans Scenic Highway Visual Quality Program Intrusion Examples, presented in **Table 3.1-1, Caltrans Scenic Highways Program: Examples of Visual Quality Intrusions**. A given visual element may be considered desirable or undesirable, depending on design, location, use, and other considerations. Because of the size and diversity of the SCAG region, it is not possible or appropriate to apply uniform standards to all areas within the region.

**TABLE 3.1-1  
CALTRANS SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM: EXAMPLES OF VISUAL QUALITY INTRUSIONS**

Land Use Type	Minor Intrusion	Moderate Intrusion	Major Intrusion
Buildings: Residential, Commercial, Industrial Development	Widely dispersed buildings. Natural landscape dominates. Wide setbacks and buildings screened from roadway. Exterior colors and materials are compatible with environment. Buildings have cultural or historical significance.	Increased number of buildings, but are complimentary to the landscape. Smaller setbacks and lack of roadway screening. Buildings do not degrade or obstruct scenic view.	Dense and continuous development. Highly reflective surfaces. Buildings poorly maintained. Visible blight. Development along ridge lines. Buildings degrade or obstruct scenic view.
Unightly Land Uses: Dumps, Quarries, Concrete Plants, Tank Farms, Auto Dismantling	Screened from view so that facility is not visible from the highway.	Not screened from view and visible but programmed/funded for removal and site restoration.	Not screened from view and visible by motorists. Will not be removed or modified. Scenic view is degraded.
Strip Malls		Neat and well landscaped. Blend with surroundings.	Not harmonious with surroundings. Poorly maintained or vacant. Blighted, Development degrades or obstructs scenic view.
Parking Lots	Screened from view so that vehicles and pavement are not visible from the highway	Neat and well landscaped. Blend with surroundings.	Not screened or landscaped. Scenic view is degraded.
Off-Site Advertising Structures			Billboards degrade or obstruct scenic view.
Noise Barriers		Noise barriers are well landscaped and complement the natural landscape. Noise barriers do not degrade or obstruct views.	Noise barriers obstruct scenic view.
Power Lines	Not easily visible from road.	Visible, but compatible with surroundings.	Poles and lines dominate view. Scenic view is degraded.

<sup>7</sup> California cities and counties are not required to include visual quality elements in their general plans, although many do. However, general plans are required to include a conservation element, which includes resources such as waterways and forests that frequently are also scenic resources.

**TABLE 3.1-1  
CALTRANS SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM: EXAMPLES OF VISUAL QUALITY INTRUSIONS**

Land Use Type	Minor Intrusion	Moderate Intrusion	Major Intrusion
Agriculture: Structures, Equipment, Crops	Blends in and complements scenic view. Indicative of regional culture.	Not in harmony with surroundings. Competes with natural landscape for visual dominance.	Incompatible with and dominates natural landscape. Structures equipment or crops degrade scenic view.
Exotic Vegetation	Used as screening and landscaping. Blends in and complements scenic view.	Competes with native vegetation for visual dominance.	Incompatible with and dominates natural landscape. Structures equipment or crops degrade scenic view.
Clearcutting		Tress bordering highway remains so that clearcutting is not evident.	Clearcutting or deforestation is evident. Scenic view is degraded.
Erosion	Minor soil erosion.	Slopes beginning to erode. Not stabilized.	Large slope failures and no vegetation. Scenic view is degraded.
Grading	Grading blends with adjacent landforms and topography.	Some changes, but restoration is taking place.	Extensive cut and fill. Scarred hillsides and landscape. Canyons filled in. Scenic view is degraded.
Road Design	Blends in and complements scenic view. Roadway structures are suitable for location and compatible with surroundings.	Cut and fill is visible but has vegetative cover.	

**SOURCE:**

California Department of Transportation. 2012. *Scenic Highways Guidelines, 2012. Appendix E: Examples of Visual Intrusions along Scenic Corridors*. Available at:  
[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/guidelines/scenic\\_hwy\\_guidelines\\_04-12-2012.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/guidelines/scenic_hwy_guidelines_04-12-2012.pdf)

### 3.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### Federal

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

Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 that provided for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development. The law, now codified in 49 U.S. Code (USC) §303 and 23 USC §138, applies only to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and is implemented by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 774. Section 4(f) only applies if the project has a federal nexus (i.e., requires a federal permit or receives federal funds).

### ***Section 6009(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users***

In August 2005, Section 6009(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU; 23 CFR 774) amended existing Section 4(f) at both Title 49 USC Section 303 and Title 23 USC Section 138 to simplify the process and approval of projects that have only *de minimis* impacts on lands impacted by Section 4(f).<sup>8</sup> Under the revised provisions, once the U.S. DOT determines that a transportation use of Section 4(f) property results in a *de minimis* impact, analysis of avoidance alternatives are not required and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete. Section 6009 also required the U.S. DOT to issue regulations that clarify the factors to be considered and the standards to be applied when determining if an alternative for avoiding the use of a Section 4(f) property is feasible and prudent. On March 12, 2008, the FHWA issued a Final Rule on Section 4(f), which clarified the 4(f) approval process, simplified its regulatory requirements, and moved the Section 4(f) regulation to 23 CFR 774.

### ***Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Scenic Byways Program***

The FHWA National Scenic Byways Program, which was established in Title 23, Section 162 of the USC under the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, is a grassroots collaborative effort that designates selected highways as “All American Road” (a roadway that is a destination unto itself), America’s Byways or “National Scenic Byway” is a roadway that possesses outstanding qualities that exemplify regional characteristics.<sup>9</sup>

### ***United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Scenic Areas and Back Country Byways***

The BLM designates some of its holdings as Scenic Areas and some roadways in remote areas as Back Country Byways. The BLM Back Country Byways Program was established in 1989 and is a component of the National Scenic Byways Program.<sup>10</sup> The counties of Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino in the SCAG region include land with such BLM designations.

### ***United States Forest Service (USFS) National Scenic Byways Program***

The USFS also has a National Scenic Byways Program, independent from the BLM program, which was established in 1995 under the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to indicate roadways of scenic importance that pass through national forests.<sup>11</sup> The SCAG region includes Forest Service Scenic Byways in the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Accessed 25 June 2015. *Environmental review toolkit: Section 4(f) – program overview*. Available at: [http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/\(S\(1vyep545s3wmhuubnvexkmm2\)\)/4f/index.asp](http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/(S(1vyep545s3wmhuubnvexkmm2))/4f/index.asp)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Accessed 11 May 2015. *National scenic byways legislation*. Available at: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic\\_byways/us\\_code.cfm#program](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways/us_code.cfm#program)

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. Updated 30 January 2015. *BLM Byways Program*. Available at: [http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/Recreation/recreation\\_national/byways.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/Recreation/recreation_national/byways.html)

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Forest Service. Accessed 11 May 2015. *National forest scenic byways*. Available at:

## *National Trails System Act*

The National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543) was established by Congress in 1968 to establish a network of scenic, historic, and recreational trails.<sup>12</sup> The Act defined four categories of national trails: recreation trails, scenic trails, historic trails, and connecting or side trails. Trails within park, forest, and other recreation areas administered by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture or in other federally administered areas may be established and designated as “National Recreation Trails” by the appropriate Secretary. Since the National Trails System Act was enacted, the list of qualifying national scenic trails and national historic trails has grown from the initial two trails (the Application National Scenic Trail and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail) to the current list, which includes 11 national scenic trails and 19 historic trails. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through Los Angeles County, Riverside County, and San Bernardino County in the SCAG region.

## *National Forests Land Management Plans*

Each of the four Southern California national forests (Cleveland National Forest, Los Angeles National Forest, San Bernardino National Forest, and Los Padres National Forest) is included in the Southern California National Forests Vision. The Southern California National Forests Vision (forest plans) has created individual land management plans for each of the four Southern California national forests. The plans include a section for design criteria and a map of scenic integrity objectives for each national forest to guide the management of the land and its resources for the next 10 to 15 years.

## **State**

### *California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highways Program*

The California Scenic Highways Program was created in 1963 under Senate Bill 1467, which added Sections 260 through 263 to the Streets and Highways Code, to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would reduce the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways.<sup>13,14</sup> According to Caltrans’ Scenic Highway Guidelines, scenic highway corridors consist of land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside the highway right-of-way, and is composed primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the corridor boundaries.<sup>15</sup> To be included in the state program, the highways proposed for designation must meet Caltrans’ eligibility requirements and have visual merit. County highways and roads that meet the Caltrans Scenic Highways Program standards may also be officially designated.

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/TourUS.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> National Park Service. Modified 12 July 2012. *The National Trails System Act*. Also found in United States Code, Volume 16, Sections 1241-1251. Available online at: <http://www.nps.gov/nts/legislation.html>

<sup>13</sup> California Department of Transportation. Accessed 20 October 2015. *Frequently asked questions*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/faq.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/faq.htm)

<sup>14</sup> California Department of Transportation. October 2008. *Scenic Highway Guidelines*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/guidelines/scenic\\_hwy\\_guidelines\\_04-12-2012.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/guidelines/scenic_hwy_guidelines_04-12-2012.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> California Department of Transportation. October 2008. *Scenic Highway Guidelines*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/guidelines/scenic\\_hwy\\_guidelines\\_04-12-2012.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/guidelines/scenic_hwy_guidelines_04-12-2012.pdf)

The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are provided in the California Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that have been designated by Caltrans as scenic highways or are eligible for designation as scenic highways. These highways are designated in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. Scenic highway designation can offer the following benefits:

- Protection of the scenic values of an area;
- Enhancement of community identity and pride, encouraging citizen commitment to preserving community values;
- Preservation of scenic resources to enhance land values and make the area more attractive; and
- Promotion of local tourism that is consistent with the community's scenic values.

A scenic corridor is the land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway and is identified by using a motorist's line of vision. A reasonable boundary is selected when the view extends to the distant horizon. Caltrans outlines the following minimum requirements for scenic corridor protection (Section 261 of the Streets and Highways Code): (1) regulation of land use and intensity (density) of development, (2) detailed land and site planning, (3) control of outdoor advertising, (4) careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping, and (5) the design and appearance of structures and equipment. Caltrans defines non-compliance for a Corridor Protection Program as a program that: (1) no longer complies with the five legislatively required elements under Section 261 of the Street and Highways Code, (2) no longer affords protection because required elements have been amended or changed, or (3) no longer is being enforced by the local governing body.

### *California Building Energy Efficiency Standards: 2013 Title 24, Part 6 (California Energy Code)*

The California Energy Code (Title 24, Section 6) was created as part of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) by the California Building Standards Commission in 1978 to establish statewide building energy efficiency standards to reduce California's energy consumption.<sup>16</sup> California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards are updated on an approximately three-year cycle; the 2013 Standards went into effect July 1, 2014, and the 2016 Standards will go into effect on January 1, 2017. These standards include mandatory requirements for efficiency and design of lighting control devices and mandatory requirements for indoor and outdoor lighting systems in residential and non-residential buildings, and hotel or motel buildings.

## **Local**

The SCAG region spans six counties and 191 cities, all of which have general plans containing policies related to scenic resources (**Table 3.1.1-1, Summary of County and City General Plan Policies and Ordinances in the SCAG Region**). Additional plans and ordinances at the master plan level, city level, and specific plan level may also apply within the SCAG region.

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<sup>16</sup> California Building Standards Commission. Accessed 26 June 2015. *History*. Available at: [http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt\\_bsc/history.aspx](http://www.bsc.ca.gov/abt_bsc/history.aspx)

**TABLE 3.1.1-1  
SUMMARY OF COUNTY AND CITY POLICIES AND ORDINANCES IN THE SCAG REGION**

County	County and City Policies and Ordinances
Imperial	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> None designated in County or cities</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Circulation and Scenic Highways Element in the Imperial County General Plan<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> Conservation/Open Space Element of the Imperial County General Plan and City General Plans, Imperial County Code of Ordinances Chapters 12.44 Wildlife Protection and 12.48 Wild Flowers and Trees</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> No County-level ordinances, some cities have General Plan policies or Ordinances<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> No County-adopted standards</p>
Los Angeles	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> Designated Public Viewing Areas within Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program,<sup>3</sup> some cities have designated scenic views within City General Plans</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Conservation and Open Space Element of the Los Angeles County General Plan, some cities have designated scenic highways in Conservation and Open Space Elements and Transportation Elements of City General Plans</p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> Conservation and Open Space Element of the Los Angeles County General Plan and City General Plans; County and City Tree and Landscaping Ordinances</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> 2012 Los Angeles County Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance and some City dark sky ordinances</p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> The City of Los Angeles has established shade and shadow effect guidelines that are referenced by other cities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties in evaluation of impacts<sup>4</sup></p>
Orange	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> None designated</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Transportation Element of the Orange County General Plan, some cities have designated scenic highways identified in General Plans</p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> Resources Element of the Orange County General Plan and City General Plans</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> County-level ordinances under review,<sup>5</sup> some cities have General Plan policies or ordinances</p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> No County-adopted standards. The City of Los Angeles has established shade and shadow effect guidelines that are referenced by other cities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties in evaluation of impacts.<sup>6</sup></p>
Riverside	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> None designated</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Multipurpose Open Space Element of the County of Riverside General Plan, some cities have designated scenic highways identified in General Plans</p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> Riverside County Ordinance No. 559 Regulating the Removal of Trees, Multipurpose Open Space Element of the County of Riverside General Plan,<sup>7</sup> and City General Plans</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> 1988 Riverside County Ordinance No. 655, some cities have General Plan policies or Ordinances<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> No County-adopted standards</p>
San Bernardino	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> None designated</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Circulation and Infrastructure Element of the San Bernardino County General Plan, some cities have designated scenic highways identified in General Plans</p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> San Bernardino County Development Code Chapter 88.01, Plant Protection and Management, Circulation and Infrastructure Element and Conservation Element of the County of San Bernardino General Plan,<sup>8</sup> and City General Plans</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> San Bernardino County Night Sky Protection Ordinance; some cities have General Plan policies or Ordinances<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> No County-adopted standards</p>



**TABLE 3.1.1-1  
SUMMARY OF COUNTY AND CITY POLICIES AND ORDINANCES IN THE SCAG REGION**

County	County and City Policies and Ordinances
Ventura	<p><b>Scenic Vistas:</b> None designated</p> <p><b>Scenic Highways:</b> Resources Appendix of the Ventura County General Plan, some cities have designated scenic highways identified in General Plans</p> <p><b>Visual Character/Quality:</b> Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance, Resources Element of the Ventura County General Plan, and City General Plans</p> <p><b>Light and Glare:</b> Some cities have General Plan policies or Ordinances (no County-level ordinances)<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>Shade and Shadow:</b> No County-adopted standards</p>

**SOURCE:**

<sup>1</sup> Imperial County Public Works Department. Approved 29 January 2008. *Circulation and Scenic Highways Element*. Available at: [http://www.icpds.com/CMS/Media/Circulation-Scenic-Highway-Element-\(2008\).pdf](http://www.icpds.com/CMS/Media/Circulation-Scenic-Highway-Element-(2008).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Skykeepers. Accessed 22 June 2015. *Outdoor Lighting Regulations in California*. Available at: <http://www.skykeepers.org/ordsregs/califord.html>

<sup>3</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. November 2013. *Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program*. Available at: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/coastal/smm> Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program map with public viewing areas available at: [http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal\\_adopted-map3.pdf](http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal_adopted-map3.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> City of Los Angeles. 2006. *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide. Chapter A, Aesthetics and Visual Resources*. Available at: <http://environmentla.com/programs/Thresholds/A-Aesthetics%20and%20Visual%20Resources.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Skykeepers. Accessed 22 June 2015. *Outdoor Lighting Regulations in California*. Available at: <http://www.skykeepers.org/ordsregs/califord.html>

<sup>6</sup> City of Los Angeles. 2006. *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide. Chapter A, Aesthetics and Visual Resources*. Available at: <http://environmentla.com/programs/Thresholds/A-Aesthetics%20and%20Visual%20Resources.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Riverside County. March 2014. *County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 960: Public Review Draft. Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element*. Available at: [http://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/0/genplan/general\\_plan\\_2014/GPA960/GPAVolume1/MultipurposeOpenSpaceElement-%20GPA%20No%20960%20Volume%201%202014-02-20.pdf](http://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/0/genplan/general_plan_2014/GPA960/GPAVolume1/MultipurposeOpenSpaceElement-%20GPA%20No%20960%20Volume%201%202014-02-20.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> San Bernardino County, Land Use Services Division. [Adopted 13 March 2007] Amended 24 April 2014. *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan*. Available at: <http://www.sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/GeneralPlan/FINALGP.pdf>

For the most part, local planning guidelines have been developed in general plans to preserve and enhance the visual quality and aesthetic resources of urban and natural areas. Zoning codes implement the goals and objectives of general plans. The value attributed to a visual resource generally is based on the characteristics and distinctiveness of the resource and the number of persons who view it. Vistas of undisturbed natural areas, unique or unusual features forming an important or dominant portion of a viewshed, and distant vistas offering relief from less attractive nearby features are frequently considered to be scenic resources. In some instances, a case-by-case determination of scenic value may be needed, but often there is agreement within the relevant community about which features are valued as scenic resources.

In addition to state designations, cities and counties have their own scenic highway designations, which are intended to preserve and enhance existing scenic resources. Criteria for designation are commonly included in the conservation/open space element of the city or county general plan. Cities and counties can use open space easements as a mechanism to preserve scenic resources, if they have adopted open-space plans, as provided by the Open Space Easement Act of 1974 and codified in California Government Code, Section 51070 et seq. According to the Act, a city or county may acquire or approve an open-space easement through a variety of means, including using public money.

### 3.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The six-county SCAG region is characterized by diverse topography that ranges from coastal plains to steep mountains and includes six of California’s 11 geomorphic provinces, or naturally defined geologic regions: the Coast Ranges, the Transverse Ranges, the Peninsular Ranges, the Mojave Desert, the Basin and Range province, and the Colorado Desert province.<sup>17</sup> The SCAG region encompasses two mountain ranges, the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges; two deserts, the Mojave and the Colorado Deserts; and approximately 150 miles of coastline where the western margin of California meets the Pacific Ocean. Elevation ranges from 0 feet above mean sea level (MSL) to 11,503 feet above MSL. This section characterizes the baseline conditions for scenic vistas, scenic resources within scenic highway corridors, visual character and quality, sources of light and glare and shade/shadow, and other scenic resources afforded protection pursuant to county and city general plans. The SCAG region ranges in character from urban centers, to rural agricultural lands, to natural woodlands, to mountains and canyons, to lakes and waterways, to beaches and the Pacific Ocean.

#### Scenic Vistas

There are nine Caltrans-designated vista points in the SCAG region (**Table 3.1.2-1, Caltrans Designated Vista Points**).

**TABLE 3.1.2-1  
CALTRANS DESIGNATED VISTA POINTS**

County	Name	Route	Post Mile
Los Angeles	Lamont Odett	14	57.8
Riverside	Coachella Valley	74	87.6
Riverside	Indian Hill Road	243	13.8
San Bernardino	Bear Valley Dam	18	44.2
San Bernardino	Donald S. Wieman	18	21.4
San Bernardino	Eyes of the World	38	14.2
San Bernardino	Mill Creek	38	10.7
San Bernardino	Silverwood Lake	138	3.6
San Bernardino	Silverwood Lake 2	138	3.6

**SOURCE:**

Male, Laura, Sapphos Environmental, Inc. Pasadena, CA. 3 July 2015. Communication with Daniel Kitowski, Transportation Manager (GIS), California Department of Transportation.

There are no county-designated Vista Points within the county general plans for Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, or Ventura Counties; however, these general plans emphasize protection of scenic vistas from scenic routes/drives/highways and identify scenic resources and landmarks for which the scenic background and natural resources of the area should be preserved. Los Angeles County has designated scenic vistas within the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey. 2002. *Note 36: California geomorphic provinces*. Available at: [http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/information/publications/cgs\\_notes/note\\_36/Documents/note\\_36.pdf](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/information/publications/cgs_notes/note_36/Documents/note_36.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. November 2013. *Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program*. Available at: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/coastal/smm> Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program map with public viewing areas available at: [http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal\\_adopted-map3.pdf](http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal_adopted-map3.pdf)

## Scenic Resources within Scenic Highway Corridors

There are two National Scenic Byways, two BLM Back Country Byways, and three National Forest Scenic Byways in the SCAG region:

- National Scenic Byways
  - Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – Route 110, a 9.5-mile segment of Route 110 in Los Angeles County that connects Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles through the historic Arts and Crafts landscape of the Arroyo Seco<sup>19</sup>
  - Parker Dam Road (11 miles, San Bernardino County)<sup>20</sup>
- BLM Scenic Areas and Back Country Byways
  - Bradshaw Trail Back Country Byway (65 miles) (Riverside County, Imperial County)<sup>21</sup>
  - Wild Horse Canyon Scenic Backcountry Byway (12 miles) (San Bernardino County)<sup>22</sup>
- National Forest Scenic Byways
  - Angeles Crest Scenic Byway (Route 2)<sup>23</sup>
  - Rim of the World Scenic Byway<sup>24</sup>
  - Palms to Pines Scenic Byway<sup>25</sup>

Portions of seven State Routes in the SCAG region have been designated as State Scenic Highways (**Table 3.1.2-2, Officially Designated State Scenic Highways**, and **Figure 3.1.2-1, State Designated and Eligible Scenic Highways and Vista Points**).

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – Route 110*. Available at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways/byways/10246>

<sup>20</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Parker Dam Road*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/68951.html>

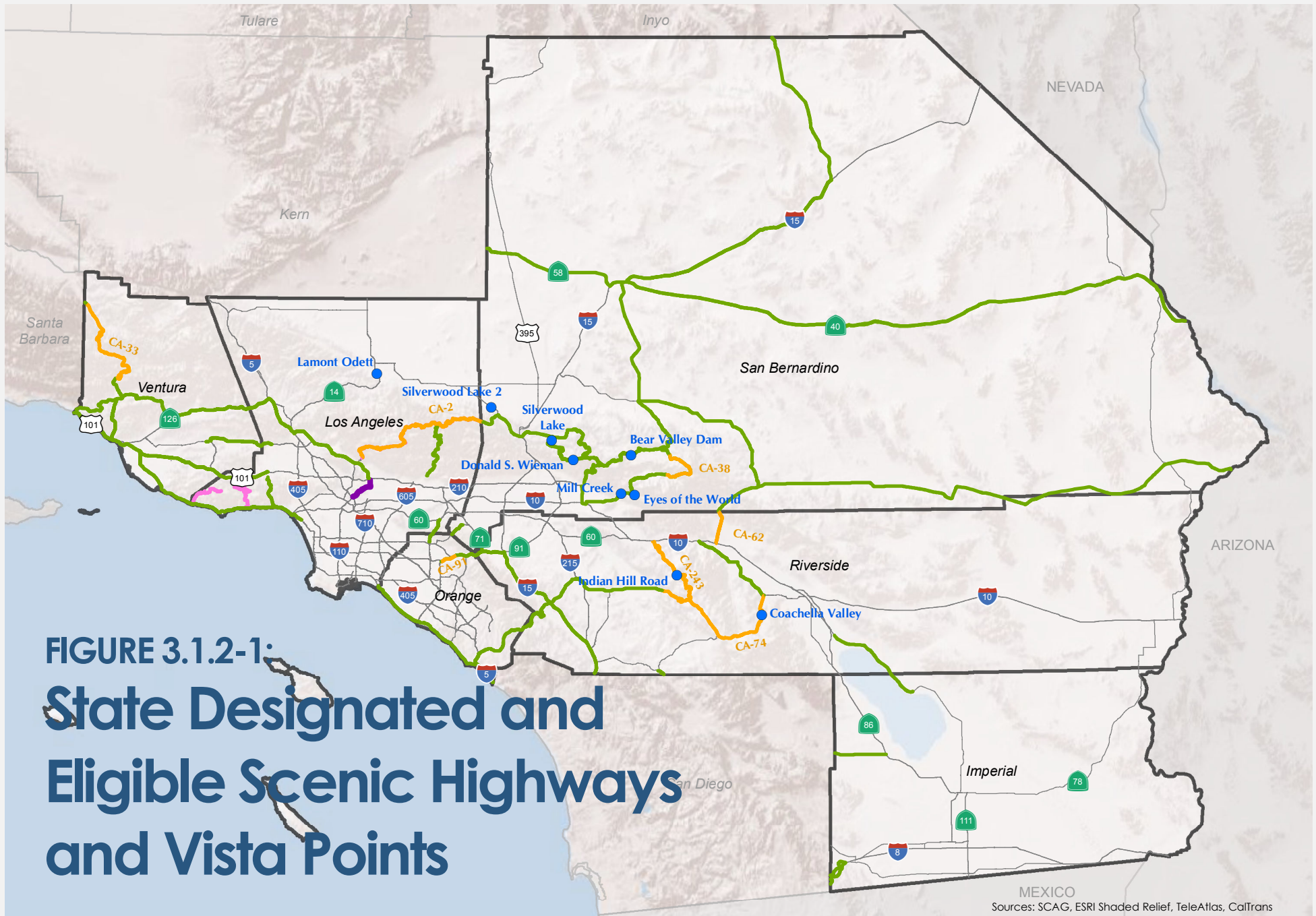
<sup>21</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Bradshaw Trail*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/2172.html>

<sup>22</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Wild Horse Canyon Scenic Backcountry Byway*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/2175.html>

<sup>23</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Angeles Crest Scenic Byway*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/10245.html>

<sup>24</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Rim of the World Scenic Byway*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/2595.html>

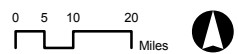
<sup>25</sup> Code42day. Accessed 26 June 2015. *America's Scenic Byways: Palms to Pines Scenic Byway*. Available at: <http://scenicbyways.info/byway/2326.html>



**FIGURE 3.1.2-1:  
State Designated and  
Eligible Scenic Highways  
and Vista Points**

Sources: SCAG, ESRI Shaded Relief, TeleAtlas, CalTrans

- CalTrans Designated Vista Points
- Officially Designated State Scenic Highway
- Eligible State Scenic Highway
- Historic Parkway
- Adopted Los Angeles County Scenic Highways



**TABLE 3.1.2-2  
OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS**

Route	County	Location	Miles
2	Los Angeles	From 2.7 miles north of State Route 210 (at La Canada) to San Bernardino County Line	55.1
33	Ventura	From 6.4 miles north of SR-150 to Santa Barbara County Line	39.8
38	San Bernardino	From 0.1 mile east of South Fork Campground to 2.9 miles south of SR-18 at State Line	15.8
62	Riverside	From SR-10 north to the San Bernardino County Line	9.2
74	Riverside	From western boundary of the San Bernardino National Forest to SR-111 in Palm Desert	47.7
91	Orange	From SR-55 to eastern city limit of Anaheim	4.2
243	Riverside	From SR-74 to the Banning City limit	28.2

**SOURCE:**

California Department of Transportation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Officially Designated State Scenic Highways*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/schwy.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/schwy.htm)

Additional roadways in the SCAG region have been designated as County Scenic Highways (**Table 3.1.2-3, Officially Designated County Scenic Highways**).

**TABLE 3.1.2-3  
OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED COUNTY SCENIC HIGHWAYS**

Route	County	Location	Miles
Mulholland Highway	Los Angeles	From SR-1 to Kanan Dume Road, and from west of Cornell Road to east of Las Virgenes Road	19.0
Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Highway	Los Angeles	From SR-1 to Lost Hills Road	7.4

**SOURCE:**

California Department of Transportation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Officially Designated State Scenic Highways*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/schwy.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/schwy.htm)

There are 40 additional portions of roadways in the SCAG region that have been identified by Caltrans as being *eligible* for designation as a State Scenic Highways (**Table 3.1.2-4, Roadways Eligible for State Scenic Highway Designation**).

**TABLE 3.1.2-4  
ROADWAYS ELIGIBLE FOR STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY DESIGNATION**

Route	County	Location	Post Miles	Miles
1	Orange/Los Angeles	I-5 SO San Juan Cap./SR-19 Nr Long Beach	0.0–3.6	3.6
1	Los Angeles/Ventura	SR-187 Nr Santa Monica/SR-101 Nr El Rio	32.2–21.1	11.1
2	Los Angeles/San Bernardino	SR-210 in La Cañada. Flintridge/SR-138 Via Wrtwd	22.9–6.36	16.54
5	San Diego/Orange	Opposite Coronado/SR-74 Nr San Juan Cap	R14.0–9.6	4.4
5	Los Angeles	I-210 Nr Tunnel Station/SR-126 Nr Castaic	R44.0–R55.5	11.5
8	San Diego/Imperial	Sunset Cliffs/SR-98 Nr Coyote Wells	T0.0–R10.0	10

**TABLE 3.1.2-4  
ROADWAYS ELIGIBLE FOR STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY DESIGNATION**

Route	County	Location	Post Miles	Miles
15	San Diego/Riverside	SR-76 Nr San Luis Rey River/SR-91 Nr Corona	R 46.5–41.5	5.0
15	San Bernardino	SR-58 Nr Barstow/SR-127 Nr Baker	76.9–R136.6	59.7
18	San Bernardino	SR-138 Nr Mt Anderson/SR-247 Nr Lucerne Valley	R17.7–73.8	56.1
27	Los Angeles	SR-1/Mulholland Dr.	0.0–11.1	11.1
30	San Bernardino	SR-330 Nr Highlands/SR-10 Nr Redlands	T29.5–33.3	3.8
33	Ventura	SR-101 Nr Ventura/SR150	0.0–11.2	11.2
33	Ventura/Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo	SR-150/SR-166 in Cuyama Valley	11.2–11.5	0.3
38	San Bernardino	SR-10 Nr Redlands/SR-18 Nr Fawnskin (All)	0.0–49.5	49.5
39	Los Angeles	SR-210 Nr Azusa/SR-2	14.1–44.4	30.3
40	San Bernardino	Barstow/Needles	0.0–154.6	154.6
57	Orange/Los Angeles	SR-90/SR-60 Nr City of Industry	19.9–R4.5	15.4
58	Kern/San Bernardino	SR-14 Nr Mojave/I-15 Nr Barstow	112.0–R4.5	107.5
62	Riverside/San Bernardino	I-10 Nr Whitewater/Arizona SL (All)	0.0–142.7	142.7
71	Riverside	SR-91 Nr Corona/SR-83 NO Corona	0.0–G3.0	3.0
74	Orange/Riverside	I-5 Nr San Juan Capistrano/I-111 (All)	0.0–R96.0	96.0
78	San Diego/Imperial	SR-79 Nr Santa Ysabel/SR-86 Passing Nr Julian	51.1–13.2	37.9
79	San Diego/Riverside	SR-78 Nr Santa Ysabel/SR-371 Nr Aguanga	20.2–2.3	17.9
91	Orange/Riverside	SR-55 Nr Santa Ana Canyon/I-15 Nr Corona	R9.2–7.5	1.7
91	Orange	SR-55/E Cil Anaheim	R9.2–13.4	4.2
101	Los Angeles/Ventura/ Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo	SR-27 (Topanga Canyon Blvd) SR-46 Nr Paso Robles	25.3–57.9	27.6
111	Imperial/Riverside	Bombay Beach-Salton Sea SP/SR-195 Nr	57.6–18.4	39.2
111	Riverside	SR-74 Nr Palm Desert/I-210 Nr Whitewater	39.6–R63.4	23.8
118	Ventura/Los Angeles	SR-23/Desoto Ave. Nr Browns Canyon	17.4–R2.7	14.7
126	Ventura/Los Angeles	SR-150 Nr Santa Paula/I-5 Nr Castaic	R12.0–OR5.8	6.2
127	San Bernardino/Inyo	I-15 Nr Baker/Nevada SI (All)	L0.0–49.4	49.4
138	San Bernardino	SR-2 Nr Wrightwood/SR-18 Nr Mt Anderson	6.6–R37.9	31.3
142	San Bernardino	Orange CL/Peyton Dr.	0.0–4.4	4.4
150	Santa Barbara/Ventura	SR-101 Nr Ventura/SB CL/SR-126 Nr Santa	0.0–34.4	34.4
173	San Bernardino	SR-138 Nr Slvrwd Lk/SR-18 SO lk Arwhd (All)	0.0–23.0	23.0
210	Los Angeles	I-5 Nr Tunnel Station/SR-134	R0.0–R25.0	25.0
215	Riverside	SR-74 Nr Romoland/SR-74 Nr Perris	23.5–26.3	2.8
243	Riverside	SR-74 Nr Mountain Cntr/I-210 Nr Banning (All)	0.0–29.7	29.7
247	San Bernardino	SR-62 Nr Yucca Valley/I-15 Nr Barstow (All)	0.0–78.1	78.1
330	San Bernardino	SR-30 Nr Highland/SR-18 Nr Running Springs (All)	29.5–44.1	14.6

**SOURCE:**

California Department of Transportation. Accessed 11 May 2015. *Eligible (E) and Officially Designated (OD) Routes*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/cahisys.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/cahisys.htm)

There are 5,045 state agency bridges on the California State Highway system and 3,699 local agency bridges that are located within the SCAG region, eight of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), 80 of which are eligible for NRHP, five of which are potentially eligible for NRHP, 286 for which the historical significance has not been determined as of July 2015, and 8,365 of which are not eligible for NRHP (Table 3.1.2-5, *Historical Significance of State and Local Agency Bridges*).<sup>26</sup>

**TABLE 3.1.2-5  
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF STATE AND LOCAL AGENCY BRIDGES**

County	Listed on National Register of Historic Places	Eligible for NRHP	Potentially Eligible for NRHP	Historic Significance Not Determined as of August 2015	Not Eligible for NRHP	Total
<b>Imperial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>430</b>
State agency	0	0	0	8	283	291
Local agency	0	0	0	8	131	139
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>3,824</b>	<b>3,985</b>
State agency	0	42	0	70	2,099	2,211
Local agency	7	27	4	11	1,725	1,774
<b>Orange</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>1,215</b>
State agency	0	2	0	6	652	660
Local agency	0	0	0	3	552	555
<b>Riverside</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>1,153</b>
State agency	0	1	0	23	627	651
Local agency	1	4	0	6	491	502
<b>San Bernardino</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>1,450</b>
State agency	0	1	1	25	886	913
Local agency	0	2	0	113	422	537
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>511</b>
State agency	0	0	0	13	306	319
Local agency	0	1	0	0	191	192
<b>SCAG region</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>8,365</b>	<b>8,744</b>
State agency	0	46	1	145	4,853	5,045
Local agency	8	34	4	141	3,512	3,699

**SOURCE:**

California Department of Transportation. Accessed 8 September 2015. *Historical Significance—State Bridges*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs\\_state.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs_state.pdf)

California Department of Transportation. Accessed 8 September 2015. *Historical Significance—Local Agency Bridges*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs\\_local.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs_local.pdf)

## Visual Character and Quality

Aesthetically distinctive resources can be found throughout the SCAG region, ranging in character from urban centers, to rural agricultural lands, to natural woodlands, to mountains and canyons, to lakes and waterways, to beaches and the Pacific Ocean. The extraordinary range of visual features in the region is afforded by the mixture of climate, topography, and flora and fauna found in the natural environment as well as the diversity of style, composition, and distribution of the built environment. The SCAG region

<sup>26</sup> California Department of Transportation. July 2015. *Structure Maintenance & Investigations: Historical Significance – State Agency Bridges*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs\\_state.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/hs_state.pdf)

encompasses approximately 150 miles of California coastline, with an elevation range of 0 feet above MSL at the coastline to 11,503 feet above MSL at the peak of San Gorgonio Mountain in San Bernardino County. The six-county region includes six of California's eleven geomorphic provinces:<sup>27</sup>

1. **Coast Ranges** (Los Angeles and Ventura counties): the SCAG region includes the granitic southern portion of this northwest-trending series of mountain ranges and valleys subparallel to the San Andreas Fault.
2. **Transverse Ranges** (Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties): an east-west trending series of steep mountain ranges and valleys that extends from the San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz islands to the west to the San Bernardino Mountains to the east. The transverse ranges also include the San Gabriel Mountains, Tehachapi Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Susana Mountains. Three national forests have been established to protect and manage natural resources, wildlife, recreational opportunities, and the quality of the environment within portions of the Transverse Ranges: Los Padres National Forest, Angeles National Forest, and San Bernardino National Forest.<sup>28</sup> These ranges are characterized by petroleum-rich sedimentary rocks, which has led to a large amount of oil production in the area; oil rigs are present in non-protected areas throughout the landscape.
3. **Peninsular Ranges** (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties): a series of ranges separated by northwest trending valleys, subparallel to faults branching from the San Andreas Fault, characterized by granitic rock and metamorphic rock. The Peninsular Ranges include the San Jacinto Mountains. The Cleveland National Forest has been established to protect and manage natural resources, wildlife, recreational opportunities, and the quality of the environment within portions of the Peninsular Ranges.
4. **Mojave Desert** (Imperial, Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties): a broad interior region of isolated mountain ranges separated by expanses of desert plains with an interior enclosed drainage and many playas, located between the Garlock Fault and the San Andreas Fault.
5. **Basin and Range** (San Bernardino County): the SCAG region includes the southernmost portion of this province characterized by interior drainage with lakes and playas. This province includes Death Valley, the lowest area in the United States, which is located to the north of the SCAG region in Inyo County.
6. **Colorado Desert** (Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties): a low-lying barren desert basin (the Imperial Valley), approximately 245 feet below sea level in part that is dominated by the Salton Sea. The province, which is comprised of a depressed block between active branches of alluvium-covered San Andreas Fault located to the southwest of the Mojave Desert province, is characterized by the ancient beach lines and silt deposits of extinct Lake Cahuilla.

Natural features include land and water resources such as parks and open areas, wilderness areas, beaches, and natural water resources. Man-made lakes are included as elements of the visual environment that have been constructed to resemble natural features. The loss of natural aesthetic

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<sup>27</sup> California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey. 2002. *Note 36: California Geomorphic Provinces*. Available at: [http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/information/publications/cgs\\_notes/note\\_36/Documents/note\\_36.pdf](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/information/publications/cgs_notes/note_36/Documents/note_36.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 2009. *A Guide to Your National Forests and Grasslands*. Available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/maps/products/guide-national-forests09.pdf>



features, reduction of vistas, or the introduction of contrasting urban features may diminish the value of natural resources in the region. Views of the coast from locations in Ventura, Los Angeles and Orange Counties are considered valuable visual resources.<sup>29,30,31</sup> Views of various mountain ranges are also widely prevalent throughout the region. Rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, and reservoirs located in the region may also be visually significant. Features of the built environment that may also have visual significance include individual or groups of structures that are distinctive due to their aesthetic, historical, social, or cultural significance or characteristics. Examples of the built environment that may be visually significant include bridges or overpasses, architecturally appealing buildings or groups of buildings, landscaped freeways, and a location where a historic event occurred.

The SCAG region is characterized by an approximately 92.9 percent rural land use pattern, with approximately 3.4 percent of the land use pattern characterized as urban and approximately 3.3 percent characterized as suburban (**Table 3.1.2-6, Urban, Suburban, and Rural Land Use Patterns by County; Figure 3.1.2-2, Land Use Pattern in SCAG Region**). The counties of Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura are comprised of over 90 percent rural land uses, with approximately 71.7 percent of land in Los Angeles County characterized by rural land uses and approximately 54.7 percent of land in Orange County characterized by rural land uses. There are approximately 13,300 square miles of protected natural lands in the approximately 38,000-square-mile SCAG region.<sup>32</sup> Approximately 6,772 square miles (17.8 percent) of the SCAG region have been set aside for open space and recreation.

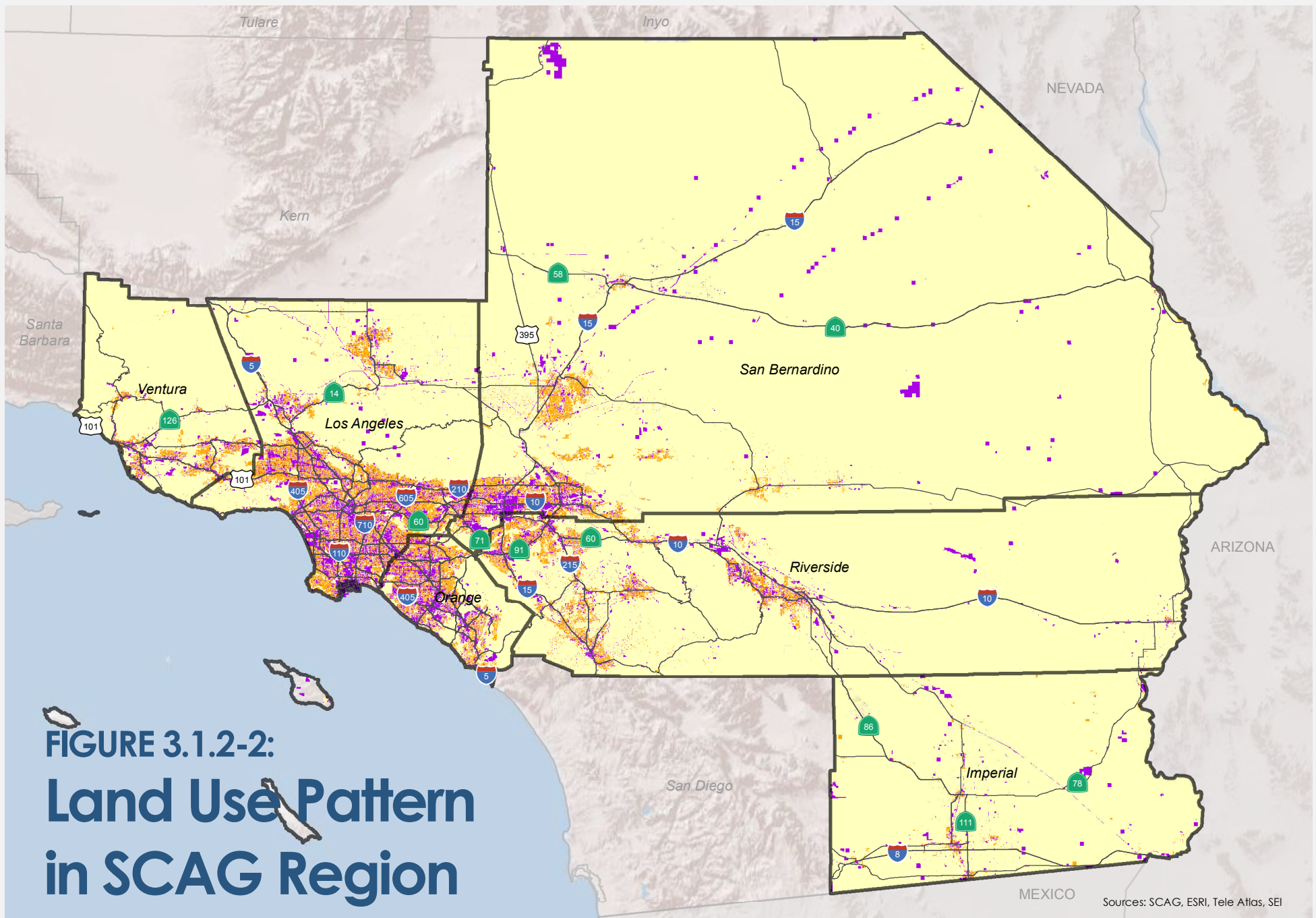
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<sup>29</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. Adopted 6 October 2015. *Los Angeles County General Plan. Chapter 9: Conservation and Natural Resources Element. Section VII. Scenic Resources*. Available at: [http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp\\_final-general-plan-ch9.pdf](http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan-ch9.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Orange County Public Works OC Development Services. July 2014. *Orange County General Plan. Chapter VI Resources Element*. Available at: <http://ocplanning.net/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=40235>

<sup>31</sup> Ventura County. 28 June 2011. *Ventura County General Plan: Resources Appendix*. Available at: <http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/General-Plan-Resources-Appendix-6-28-11.pdf>

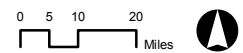
<sup>32</sup> Southern California Association of Governments, Energy and Environment Committee. 2 July 2015. *EEC July 2, 2015 full agenda packet. Agenda Item No. 8 Re: 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) – Natural/Farm Lands Update*. Available at: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/Pages/Current-Agendas.aspx>



**FIGURE 3.1.2-2:**  
**Land Use Pattern**  
**in SCAG Region**

Sources: SCAG, ESRI, Tele Atlas, SEI

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban



**TABLE 3.1.2-6  
URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL LAND USE PATTERNS BY COUNTY**

County	Urban Land Use Pattern (Square Miles)	Percent Urban Land of Overall Area	Suburban Land Use Pattern (Square Miles)	Percent Suburban Land of Overall Area	Rural Land Use Pattern (Square Miles)	Percent Rural Land of Overall Area
Imperial	78.0	1.7	34.4	0.8	4,327.7	97.5
Los Angeles	454.6	12.0	494.8	13.1	2,709.3	71.7
Orange	151.5	21.5	161.6	22.9	385.4	54.7
Riverside	208.0	2.9	238.0	3.3	6,684.7	93.7
San Bernardino	329.6	1.65	248.8	1.25	19,356.5	97.10
Ventura	61.1	3.4	79.1	4.4	1,644.3	90.6
<b>SCAG region</b>	<b>1,282.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1,256.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>35,107.9</b>	<b>92.9</b>

**SOURCE:**

SCAG Existing Land Uses (10/14/2015). Land use patterns have been interpreted from the following existing land use categories:

**URBAN:** multi-family residential, general office, commercial and services, facilities, education, industrial, transportation/communications/utilities, mixed commercial and industrial, and under construction.

**SUBURBAN:** single-family residential, mobile homes and trailer parks, mixed residential, and mixed residential and commercial

**RURAL:** rural residential, military installations, open space and recreation, agriculture, vacant, water, undevelopable, and unknown

**NOTE:**

Portions of each County have not been categorized, which means that percentages may not add up to 100 percent. This margin of error ranges from 0.0 percent in Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties to 3.15 percent in Los Angeles County.

Most existing urban development is found along the coastal plains of Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura Counties, as well as in adjoining valleys that extend inland from the coastal areas. Urban development also has moved into the inland valleys such as the Antelope, San Bernardino, Yucca, Moreno, Hemet–San Jacinto, Coachella, and Imperial Valleys. Downtown Los Angeles is the largest urbanized center within the SCAG region. Other urbanized areas include the cities of Long Beach, Burbank, Glendale, Pasadena, and Pomona in Los Angeles County; Riverside in Riverside County; San Bernardino in San Bernardino County; Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Irvine in Orange County; Oxnard and Ventura in Ventura County; and El Centro in Imperial County. The urban form is limited by national forests, mountains, and the coast. The majority of medium- and high-density housing in the region is found in the urban core of the region, in Downtown Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, and the “West Side” of Los Angeles. Large cities, such as Long Beach, Santa Ana, Glendale, Oxnard, and Pasadena, also have concentrations of high-density development in their downtown areas. Several beach communities, such as the Cities of Santa Monica, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Huntington Beach, and Newport Beach, have high density close to the ocean. Surrounding suburbs are predominantly low-density housing tracts. Low-density housing expands west into Ventura County, east through southeast Los Angeles County, throughout much of Orange County, and through the western Inland Empire. The resort communities and cities of the Coachella Valley in Riverside County also are built primarily on a low-density scale. The developing land on the urban fringe, such as the Antelope Valley of Los Angeles County and the Victorville-Hesperia area, Lucerne Valley, and Yucca Valley of San Bernardino County, also are primarily low-density residential. The Imperial Valley in Imperial County is primarily an agricultural region with a growing, yet still regionally small, population that lives in primarily low-density developments. There are approximately 2.6 million acres of important agricultural lands in the SCAG

region: approximately 1.1 million acres of Important Farmland and approximately 1.5 million acres of grazing land/rangeland (see **Section 3.2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources**).

Over 2 million acres in the region are developed, including over 100,000 acres used for transportation facilities (see **Section 3.16, Transportation, Traffic, and Safety**). Elements of the transportation infrastructure, including freeways, highways, roadways, bridges, and railroads are a component of the visual character of the urban environment. A discussion of these components is provided below.

### *Freeways, Highways, and Roadways*

In urban areas, roadway rights-of-way make up approximately 20 to 30 percent of the total land area. Because most vehicular movement occurs along transportation corridors, their placement largely determines what parts of the SCAG region will be seen by persons traveling in the area. In the SCAG region, arterials and freeways constitute a major component of the existing visual environment. The visual character of freeways themselves depends on the scale at which observers view them. Above and from a distance, freeway traffic forms a compelling contribution to the scenery, whether by lights moving at night or by the changing visual character of daytime traffic. From below and at close range, freeways are often barriers to views of near and distant scenery. Arterials and freeways make up a major component of the existing visual environment of the region. Arterials in the SCAG region offer a variety of visual experiences from the uncrowded, narrow winding roads in mountain areas to the high-volume urban streets in the densely populated areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Many arterials have been built connecting urban concentrations with natural areas with key scenic resources. Examples include:

- The Pacific Coast Highway 1 (PCH) traverses the entire coastal side of the SCAG region. Proceeding northward, PCH enters the region at Dana Point in Orange County and follows the shoreline of the Pacific Ocean, illuminating its beaches and rugged cliffs, through Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, where it continues on to Northern California.
- The 50-mile Santa Monica Mulholland Scenic Corridor runs westward from the Hollywood Freeway (U.S. 101), winding its way through the Santa Monica Mountains to Leo Carrillo State Beach in Malibu.
- The 15-mile Palos Verdes Scenic Drive begins at Palos Verdes Estates and goes to Point Fermin Park in the community of San Pedro. The cliff-top section of the road offers many scenic views.

In addition, county and local roads in foothill and mountain areas also afford panoramic views throughout the region. Examples of areas with these types of views include:

- Los Angeles County: Santa Monica Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, Santa Susana Mountains (also in Ventura County), San Jose Hills, Puente Hills
- Orange County: San Joaquin Hills, Anaheim Hills, and Santa Ana Mountains
- Riverside County: San Jacinto Mountains
- San Bernardino County: Chino Hills and San Bernardino Mountains
- Ventura County: Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains

Mountainous portions of Imperial County are not generally accessible from county roads. Large areas in the Chocolate Mountains are owned by the military and are not accessible to civilians.

### *Trains*

Passenger rail operations (i.e., Amtrak, Metrolink, Metro) occupy existing railroad tracks and right-of-way areas and generally limited in terms of routes and overall passengers served. Except in predominantly residential areas, the view of passenger trains (at-grade or elevated guideways) is not generally considered visually offensive to most viewers. Conversely, passenger rail operations afford riders a variety of views. In Ventura County, for example, Amtrak provides scenic views of the coastline and adjacent mountains. Because of their prevalence in the urban core at relatively low elevations, passenger rail operations in the SCAG region provide accessible views of scenic resources comparable to those associated with freeways, highways, and roadways.

Freight railroads and associated rail yards are often considered to have a negative aesthetic effect in many urban communities. This perception is largely due to graffiti associated with rail cars and rail yards, unsightly building facilities, and viewshed blockage. Additional factors include building scale and utilitarian architectural style, visual intrusiveness on surrounding land uses, and community context (i.e., predominately industrial vs. residential uses). Negative opinions are particularly acute within adjacent residential communities. Views of freight railroads (i.e., rail cars) and rail yard facilities are largely limited, due, in part, to topography, security fencing, and limits on operation within urban communities. However, some facilities are visible from adjacent roadways, along freeways, highways, railroad right-of-ways, and hillside areas. Rail yard facilities within the SCAG region are predominately located within industrial core areas and include the Port of Los Angeles, Long Beach, East Los Angeles, Hobart, City of Industry (Los Angeles County), West Colton, and Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) (San Bernardino County). Additional freight facilities are also located in less densely populated areas such as Barstow and Yermo (San Bernardino County).

### *Airports*

The SCAG region includes numerous airports serving both commercial and private airplane flights. Major commercial airports in the region include Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Palmdale Airport, Long Beach Airport, and Burbank Airport in Los Angeles County; John Wayne Airport in Orange County; Ontario International Airport, San Bernardino International Airport, and Southern California Logistics Airport in San Bernardino County; and Palm Springs International Airport and March Inland Port in Riverside County. From an aesthetic resources standpoint, the proximity of aviation facilities to residential areas is considered to have a negative impact due to the industrial nature of aviation facilities and their attraction of related industrial uses including warehousing and freight-based businesses. Direct views of aviation operations at airports, views of takeoffs and landings, and the prevalence of trucks and vehicular congestion near aviation facilities all contribute to the perceived negative aesthetic effects of airports on residential areas.

Within the SCAG region, proximal views of takeoffs and landings of large commercial aircraft occur near all major commercial airports. Proximal, but temporary, passing views of aviation facilities and airport operations are also prevalent from highways and major arterials serving these facilities. Near LAX, residents of Inglewood, El Segundo, Playa del Rey, and Westchester are exposed to these types of views. Residential areas in Palmdale, Lancaster, and unincorporated Los Angeles County are proximal to flights

at the Palmdale facility. Long Beach and Signal Hill residents have views of takeoffs and landings at the Long Beach Airport. Residents in Tustin, Newport Beach, Irvine, and Costa Mesa are located in proximity to the John Wayne Airport. Residential and resort housing is located close to the Palm Springs Airport. Moreno Valley and Riverside residents have the closest views of flights from March Inland Port. Residential areas in San Bernardino, Colton, and Redlands have views of flights at the San Bernardino International Airport. Ontario residents have the closest views of flights from the Ontario International Airport. Victorville residents have the closest views of flights from the Southern California Logistics Airport.

To a lesser degree, similar conditions are experienced near general aviation facilities throughout the region, although air traffic is considerably less than at commercial aviation facilities. In general, there is a great deal less air traffic and therefore less population exposed to this traffic at general aviation facilities than near commercial facilities. However, several general aviation facilities (e.g., Santa Monica, Hawthorne) are located near urban residential areas.

### *Ports*

The adjacent shipping ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach represent the major shipping location in the SCAG region and also one of the most important shipping locations in the United States. Smaller ports include Port Hueneme in Ventura County, Redondo Beach Harbor in Los Angeles County, and Dana Point Harbor in Orange County. Proximity to rail and air transport facilities increases the utility and importance of these ports. Because of security and safety concerns, ports generally block public access to the waterfront within the port, limiting visual access as well. However, provisions of the California Coastal Act provide for public access to the coast elsewhere in the SCAG region.

Port facilities in Los Angeles and Long Beach offer views of container terminals, cranes, other types of loading equipment, and ships carrying cargo in and out of the ports. Operations in the Port of Los Angeles are visible in portions of the San Pedro area (City of Los Angeles). Port facilities in Long Beach are widely visible from downtown Long Beach, portions of West Long Beach, and along the shoreline south of downtown. Port of Long Beach facilities are also visible from two of the city's major tourist attractions along Queensway Bay: the Queen Mary and the Aquarium of the Pacific.

### **Light, Glare, and Shade and Shadow**

The more urbanized areas of the SCAG region tend to produce high levels of nighttime light, daytime glare from reflective materials such as glass building facades and wide stretches of asphalt roads, and shadows on adjacent outdoor land uses from tall buildings and structures (**Table 3.1.2-7, Existing Sources of Nighttime Light in SCAG Region**). Suburban areas tend to produce high levels of nighttime light and daytime glare but lower levels of shadows on shade-sensitive uses due to lower building heights. Rural areas tend to produce low levels of nighttime light; low to moderate levels of daytime glare, as agricultural structures and paved roads produce some glare; and very low levels of shadows from taller structures due to the distance between structures.

**TABLE 3.1.2-7  
EXISTING SOURCES OF NIGHTTIME LIGHT IN SCAG REGION**

County	Approximate Percentage of Light and Dark Sky Area at Night	Characterization of Nighttime Light Levels
Imperial	5% light; 95% dark	Very low throughout most of county, with brightly lit areas in the urbanized southern portion of the County adjacent to the City of Mexicali, scattered in the locations of larger communities, and in the city of El Centro.
Los Angeles	50% light; 50% dark	High levels of nighttime light in the urbanized southern half of the county including the cities of Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Pomona. The cities of Santa Clarita and Lancaster are also brightly lit areas within the county. The darker areas include the Santa Monica Mountains, Los Padres National Forest, Angeles National Forest, and the rural desert communities in the northern portion of the county.
Orange	80% light; 20% dark	High levels of nighttime light in the county, with two darker areas: the mountains northwest of Laguna Beach and Cleveland National Forest on the eastern side of the county.
Riverside	15% light; 85% dark	Very low throughout most of county, with brightly lit areas in the urbanized western portion of the county including the city of Riverside, scattered in the locations of larger communities, and in the cities of Palm Springs and Temecula.
San Bernardino	5% light; 95% dark	Very low throughout most of county, with brightly lit areas in the urbanized southwestern portion of the county, scattered in the locations of larger communities, and in the city of Victorville.
Ventura	25% light; 75% dark	Very low throughout most of county, with brightly lit areas in the urbanized southern portion of the county, scattered in the locations of larger communities, and in the cities of Oxnard and Thousand Oaks. The darker area includes the Los Padres National Forest.

**SOURCE:**

NASA Earth Observatory/NOAA NGDC. Accessed 25 August 2015. *Earth City Lights*. Available at: GoogleEarth.com

**3.1.3 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The potential for the 2016 RTP/SCS to result in impacts related to aesthetics was analyzed in relation to the four questions contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Plan would normally be considered to have a significant impact related to aesthetics/scenic resources if it has the potential to:

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

In addition, the following threshold is applied in regard to light and glare, based on precedent and appropriateness to the 2016 RTP/SCS. The Plan would have a significant impact:

- If shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than three hours in the winter or for more than four hours during the summer.

## Methodology

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects and coordinated regional strategies for transportation investments and land use growth that are aimed to increase mobility, promote sustainability, and improve the regional economy. The Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM) used for this analysis captures pass-through traffic that does not have an origin or destination in the region, but does impact the region, so that too is included in the analysis. Although land use development is anticipated to occur within the region even without the 2016 RTP/SCS, the Plan includes regional land use growth policies and strategies that could influence growth, including distribution patterns, throughout the region. To address this, the analysis in the PEIR covers overall impacts of transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS and land development strategies described in the 2016 RTP/SCS. In addition, this PEIR considers cumulative impacts from other community development projects, which could result in additional impacts inside and outside the region. The methodology for determining the significance of aesthetics impacts compares the existing conditions to future (2040) conditions, as required pursuant to CEQA Section 15126.2(a). This analysis evaluates the potential for significant impacts of the 2016 RTP/SCS to aesthetics in accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and guidelines established by USFS; BLM; Caltrans; Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties; and major cities within the SCAG region.

To assess potential impacts to aesthetics adjacent to transportation corridors, a geographic information system (GIS) was used to analyze major highway, transit, and freight rail projects in the 2016 RTP/SCS.<sup>33</sup> The GIS analysis determined that transportation projects included in the Plan could affect scenic vistas, scenic highway corridors, visual character, nighttime light and daytime glare levels, and shadow effects on shadow-sensitive uses in the SCAG region. Indirect impacts were evaluated based on the land pattern assumptions that protected lands would remain protected and strategies intended to shift new growth away from high value habitat areas and concentrate growth in existing urbanized areas or opportunity areas such as high-quality transit areas (HQTAs) (near transit projects), livable corridors, neighborhood mobility areas, and suburban town centers that are well served by transit and are conducive to higher-density housing and walkable, mixed-use communities in the future.

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<sup>33</sup> Major Transportation Projects include but are not limited to projects that involve ground disturbing activities and projects outside of existing rights-of-way such as projects that require new rights-of-way, adding traffic lanes, and grade separation.



### 3.1.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

#### IMPACT AES-1. Potential to have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

##### *Significant Impact*

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects and development influenced by land use strategies that would require the conversion of open space to development, including designated open space that is visible from USFS, Caltrans, county, and city designated scenic vistas, constituting a significant impact.

Implementation of the transportation projects and land use strategies in the 2016 RTP/SCS could result in both short-term and long-term visual impacts by blocking views from FHWA National Scenic Byways or Caltrans, county, and/or city designated scenic vista points. For purposes of this PEIR, public views (i.e., from look-outs, roadways, parks, and other public places) are also analyzed for visual impacts. The Preferred Alignment of the High Speed Rail project (which may involve underground tunneling for portions of the alignment) as it passes through Los Angeles County along the Antelope Freeway (SR-14) is located between the eastern and western segments of the Angeles National Forest, and the proposed alternatives would pass through the Angeles National Forest, which would have the potential to affect views of the rural community of Acton or affect views of Angeles National Forest from USFS-designated high scenic integrity objective (SIO) areas if the entire alignment is not underground.<sup>34</sup> High scenic integrity is a USFS management objective for conditions where human activities are not visually evident and the valued (desired) landscape character “appears” intact or unaltered.<sup>35</sup> One of Caltrans’ scenic vista points would have the potential to be substantially affected by projects included in the Plan, as the High Speed Rail project in Los Angeles County would be located approximately 0.8 mile northeast of Lamont Odett Vista Point, which would have the potential to affect views of the valley.

Construction of new transportation facilities, expansion of existing facilities, development influenced by land use strategies, or growth in previously undisturbed sites would block or impede views of scenic resources in a given area. For example, construction of highways, connectors, interchanges, goods movement roadway facilities, High Speed Rail, and sound walls would block or impede views of mountains, oceans, or rivers. Similarly, individual development projects that could be planned in existing urbanized areas or opportunity areas as an indirect result of the Plan would have the potential to have the same effects. Effects from anticipated growth would result in new development constructed in existing urbanized areas where views of a scenic resource are blocked. This could occur as a result of increased density in HQTAs or other areas with views of scenic elements such as the San Bernardino, Santa Monica, or San Gabriel Mountains.

Construction impacts, although short-term, would also result in view blockage by construction equipment and scaffolding, removal of landscaping, temporary route changes, temporary signage, exposed excavation activities and slope faces with contrasting soil colors, and construction staging areas. Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized during construction to minimize the potential visual impacts would include

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<sup>34</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS). September 2005. *Angeles National Forest Final Land Management Plan: Scenic Integrity Objectives*. Available at: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_MEDIA/stelprdb5311723.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MEDIA/stelprdb5311723.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS). September 2005. *Land Management Plan, Part 3: Design Criteria for Southern California National Forests*. Available at: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5166878.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5166878.pdf)

locating construction staging areas in less visible locations (given other environmental considerations such as avoiding sensitive habitat, etc.), fencing and/or screening staging areas, and revegetation of exposed slopes at the earliest possible opportunity. Even with these typical practices, short-term visual impacts would often be unavoidable.

Development in floodplains, wetlands, wooded areas, coastal bluffs, lagoons, reservoirs, regional parks, recreational areas, agricultural lands, or in areas that include steep slopes or scenic vistas has the potential to adversely impact the region's visual resources by blocking such scenic vistas. Specifically, several transportation projects included in the Plan would have the potential to create a significant visual impact, such as highway projects involving noise barriers that can block views; construction that involves cut and fill within the viewshed of Caltrans, county, or city designated scenic vistas; or construction of tall structures that obstruct views (see **Figure 2.4.2-1, Major Highway Projects, Figure 2.4.2-2, Major HOV Projects, Figure 2.4.2-3, Major Mixed Flow Projects, Figure 2.4.2-4, Major Rail Projects, and Figure 2.4.2-5, Major Toll Projects, in Section 2.0, Project Description**). Additionally, proposed transportation projects that would create a significant visual impact include construction of roadway improvements such as grade separated facilities for rail or buses, goods movement roadway facilities, and widened roads with high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) and high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and connectors. Each of these types of transportation projects would block or impede vistas of surrounding scenic resources during and after construction. Moreover, the elevation and scale of some of the transportation projects in the Plan would be visually intrusive to surrounding areas (depending on the degree of visibility of the transportation facilities).

Highway widening projects such as SR-74 in Riverside County and I-10 in San Bernardino County and the SR-57/SR-60 Interchange improvement in Los Angeles County also have the potential to impact visual resources. In addition, construction of new highway facilities such as the High Desert Corridor Project would obstruct scenic resources. Creation of aerial structures over the top of existing transportation features, such as connectors, has a very high potential to create visual impacts to panoramic views, views of significant landscape features, or landforms.

Several transit projects, if implemented, would affect the region's visual environment. As discussed above, the 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects involving new transportation facilities, as well as those that would involve modifications to existing facilities. New light rail transit projects in Los Angeles County, such as the Slauson Light Rail and the Gold Line extensions from Azusa to the San Bernardino County line, would also obstruct views, especially if all or parts of these lines are elevated. Many of the transit projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, if implemented, would be located in existing urbanized areas and new growth opportunity areas that would block views of historic resources. These effects would also occur as a result of anticipated development following implementation of the land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS, as many valued visual resources are located within urban areas. A few transportation projects, such as the Regional Connector – Light Rail and portions of the California High Speed Rail project, would tunnel underground and not affect scenic vistas.

Goods movement highway facilities, such as the High Desert Corridor project and freight toll lanes extending from East Los Angeles in the Pomona Freeway into Riverside County, are examples of transportation projects that would obstruct scenic views. Adding new goods movement highway facilities may require construction of new roadway facilities and acquisition of right-of-way property that would result in the loss of vegetation along these routes and changes in topography of the given area depending on the route alignment. Elevated highway and roadway facilities would block views of

the San Gabriel Mountains, Whittier Hills, Puente Hills, San Bernardino Mountains, and Jurupa Mountains, depending on the alignment chosen.

Construction of transportation projects and facilities that involve modifications such as widening or upgrading existing roadways and safety improvements would involve lesser changes to the visual environment. These modification projects would most likely occur within existing highway and roadway facilities, although they could require acquisition of right-of-way property. Such changes may not block or impede views of scenic resources or view from designated scenic vistas much more than at present.

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation modification projects in all six counties of the SCAG region. These proposed transportation projects would consist of improvements to existing highways, HOV lanes, HOT lanes, arterials, interchanges, bridges and grade crossings, sound wall retrofitting, and improvements to transit rail and bus services. Impacts from transportation modification projects would generally be less substantial than those created by new transportation projects. The improvements proposed by these transportation modification projects would occur on existing facilities, and are not assumed to be designed at a higher elevation and therefore would not be expected to block views of scenic resources. The 2016 RTP/SCS also includes active transportation projects such as regional greenway networks, regional and local bikeway networks, coastal trails access, and safe routes to school. In many cases, such projects would not only improve access to scenic parts of the region, such as coastal areas, but would also add visually pleasing elements to the region through landscaping, lighting, and sustainable or a complete street approach to design.

However, due to the large number of transportation projects and potential development influenced by land use strategies included in the Plan, it is expected that new and expanded highway and roadway facilities, new and expanded transit projects, and new and expanded goods movement projects, or other facilities would result in significant impacts to vistas of scenic resources in the region. Similarly, anticipated increased growth and development in the region has the potential to impact scenic vistas by obstructing views. Therefore, the Plan would result in a significant impact to scenic vistas requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

**IMPACT AES-2: Potential to substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.**

***Less than Significant Impact***

The general location of 2016 RTP/SCS transportation projects in urban areas and anticipated new growth and development focused within HQTAs avoids the potential to substantially damage scenic resources within state-designated scenic highway. Therefore, the Plan would have a less than significant impact on scenic resources within designated scenic highways. The transportation projects considered in the 2016 RTP/SCS do not include projects that would require the acquisition or development of previously undisturbed vacant land, including designated open space that is visible from Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. The 2016 RTP/SCS does not include transportation projects within the immediate vicinity of any Officially Designated State Scenic Highways, or Officially Designated County Scenic Highways. Major projects within the immediate vicinity of roadways eligible for State Scenic Highway designation include:

- Urban Rail (approximately 0.3 mile northeast of SR-1 in Santa Monica)
- HOV Lanes (SR-5, SR-74, SR-91, SR-101)
- High Speed Rail (SR-5)
- HOT Lanes (SR-15, SR-91, SR-138)
- Mixed Lane Flow Projects (SR-15, SR-58, SR-74, SR-91, SR-118)
- Freight Toll Lanes (SR-57)
- Metrolink (SR-74)
- Bus Rapid Transit Projects (SR-111)

At SR-74, the construction of a new freeway segment that will connect to the eligible scenic highway near Warren Road, in particular, will require careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping in accordance with Section 261 of the Streets and Highways Code.

As a scenic highway corridor is the land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway, identified by using a motorist's line of vision, with a view that extends to the distant horizon, there is the potential for adverse visual impacts related to implementation of transportation projects along eligible and designated scenic highways. In the event that a project is proposed in one of these areas, that project would be required to comply with applicable rules and regulations governing the protection of that area as a scenic resource. As the majority of the transportation projects in the 2016 RTP/SCS are minor modifications or maintenance within the region's urban areas, the majority of scenic routes would not be affected.

While there are no restrictions on scenic highway projects, local agencies and Caltrans must work together to coordinate projects and ensure the protection of the scenic value to the greatest extent possible. For example, state law (Section 320 of the California Public Utilities Code) requires the undergrounding of all visible electricity distribution lines within 1,000 feet of a scenic highway.<sup>36</sup> In some cases, local governments have their own land use and site planning regulations to protect scenic values along a given corridor.

Additionally, the 2016 RTP/SCS includes land use strategies that encourage more compact growth development patterns in the region and aim to shift growth away from high value habitat areas toward existing urbanized areas with transportation infrastructure in place and opportunity areas that are conducive to more mixed-use and higher-density housing in the future. Several HQTAs extend along scenic highways and, as such, would have the potential to impact scenic highways or vistas. Impacts would occur if anticipated development were to detract or diminish the elements that contribute to the scenic nature of the highway, such as a modern office building or retail center located along such a highway that could be incongruous with the surrounding scenic nature if not properly shielded from view.

The 2016 RTP/SCS would also have the potential to impact rock outcroppings or other scenic elements such as historic resources within eligible state scenic highways. As discussed above, many of the transportation projects and the HQTAs are located in areas with designated scenic resources including historic buildings and scenic rock outcroppings. Therefore, there is potential for the 2016 RTP/SCS to affect these resources. Due to the general location of transportation projects in urban areas and the

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<sup>36</sup> California Department of Transportation. October 2008. *Scenic Highway Guidelines*. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/guidelines/scenic\\_hwy\\_guidelines\\_04-12-2012.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/guidelines/scenic_hwy_guidelines_04-12-2012.pdf)

anticipated new growth and development focused within HQTAs instead of along scenic highways in the land use scenario, this would be a less than significant impact, and the consideration of mitigation measures is not required.

### **IMPACT AES-3: Potential to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

#### ***Significant Impact***

The transportation projects and development influenced by land use strategies considered in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to degrade the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings where such improvements pass through open space areas, constituting a significant impact. The SCAG region is comprised of approximately 38,000 square miles, many of which are in their natural state or are primarily rural. Transportation projects outside of the urban core would add visual elements of urban character to these areas. Some of the transportation projects in the 2016 RTP/SCS are located in rural parts of the region. Transportation projects that require new construction and modification projects would add visual elements of urban character to these rural areas. Proposed enhancements to existing transportation facilities and construction of new highways, roadways, and other transit facilities, as well as new development or densification of residential, commercial, and similar land uses would create adverse visual impacts by adding visual elements of urban character to existing rural or open spaces. This would occur where new alignments or road widening pass through primarily rural, agricultural, and/or open space areas, and the contrast would potentially result in a significant impact to visual quality (e.g., High Speed Rail, widening of State Route 138). The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects that would intersect with the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties (i.e., mixed lane flow projects, California High Speed Rail, HOT Lanes), which would affect the visual character of the scenic trail at these locations.

As described in **Section 3.14, Population, Housing, and Employment**, land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would focus new growth in existing urbanized areas and opportunity areas like HQTAs that are supported by existing transportation facilities and are conducive to walkable and/or transit-oriented land patterns. The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation investments and land use strategies that have the potential to affect the pattern of new growth in the region. As discussed in **Section 3.14**, the total SCAG region population is expected to increase by approximately 3.8 million persons from 2014 to 2040. Additionally, the land use development strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS assumes a significant increase in small-lot, single- and multi-family housing that is expected to mainly occur in infill and mix use locations near transit infrastructure (HQTAs and transit priority areas [TPAs]). As the transportation investments and land use strategies in the 2016 RTP/SCS have the potential to influence new growth in less urban parts of the region or outside the existing suburban town centers, the proposed land use strategies could result in some new growth to areas of the region that are currently not developed or underdeveloped, which would ultimately result in the conversion to a more urban character.

The 2016 RTP/SCS focuses the majority of new housing and job growth in HQTAs and other opportunity areas in existing main streets, downtowns, and commercial corridors. This strategy supports and complements the proposed transportation network that emphasizes system preservation, active transportation, and transportation demand management measures. However, the densification of uses, even in existing urbanized areas, would result in changes to the overall visual character. For example,

Phase 2 of the Gold Light Rail Line will travel through urban neighborhoods with distinct character and may be located adjacent to historic resources depending on the final alignments. The wires, structures, and other elements associated with light rail would change the character of these areas. Increased urbanization through taller buildings or more compact development would have a similar effect by changing the low-scale nature of a particular neighborhood.

In urbanized areas, roadways and ancillary improvements such as sound walls included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would also result in adverse visual impacts depending on the scale of improvements and location of sensitive viewers, including the driving public, users of gathering places, rest areas and vista points, and residents who live near resources. Highway widening and the construction of HOV/HOT and managed lanes and park-and-ride lots may result in some loss of existing freeway landscaping. Although these activities generally occur in urbanized environments, these actions would have an adverse effect on visual quality, depending upon nearby sensitive viewers.

Arterials and freeways comprise a major component of the existing visual environment of the region. Arterials in the region offer a variety of visual experiences from the uncrowded, undeveloped stretches of rural roads in Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties to the narrow winding roads in the mountain areas and the high-volume urban streets in the densely populated areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Improvement of existing highway facilities in highly urbanized areas would result in relatively minor impacts to visual quality because of their location in urban environments.

Significant impacts would also occur if proposed alignments or transportation facilities require large cut-and-fill slopes or noise barriers, whether in previously undeveloped areas or in already developed urban areas. Careful alignment and design, conformance with local grading ordinances, and installation of landscaping to ensure compatibility with surrounding development would be expected to reduce visual impacts to below the level of significance at the project level. Since the majority of the transportation projects documented in the Plan are in areas with existing roadway networks, impacts to areas such as wetlands, coastal bluffs, and forests are generally unlikely.

As already mentioned, transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS consist of construction of highway or roadway improvements such as grade separated facilities for rail and buses, goods movement roadway facilities, and HOV and HOT connectors, as well as construction of the High Speed Rail system. Grade separated facilities would have a substantial adverse visual impact on surrounding land uses during and after construction. The elevation and scale of the proposed grade separated facilities would create a significant contrast with the overall visual character of the existing landscape setting. Transportation modification projects that involve the widening or upgrading of existing roadways can be designed to complement the existing system and, therefore, would involve lesser changes to the visual character of the existing landscape setting.

Transit centers and park-and-ride lots would be constructed primarily within the heavily urbanized portions of the SCAG region and consequently affect a large number of viewers. Transit centers would be expected to be dominant visual elements due to their fixed structures, including terminals, service facilities, and lighted parking lots. While these facilities would become integrated with the urban setting over time, their initial effect would result in a change in visual quality. Elevated and at-grade transit facilities such as the Gold Line Extension have the greatest potential to change the visual character of an area, while underground rail facilities such as the Metro Regional Connector would have fewer impacts.

Nonetheless, transportation projects and land use strategies in the 2016 RTP/SCS have the potential to result in changes to the visual character of existing landscapes or natural areas. Therefore, the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in a significant indirect impact in regard to degradation of visual character and quality, requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

**IMPACT AES-4: Potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Potential to result in shade and shadow impacts.**

***Significant Impact***

The 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to result in significant impacts in relation to creating a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views and expanded areas of shade and shadow in jurisdictions without ordinances protecting night skies or local standards protecting shadow-sensitive land uses.

Light and glare effects often occur in urban areas. Glare is typically a daytime condition where the sun reflects off a particular building, while lighting effects often occur when new nighttime sources of lighting are introduced into an area. Both of these conditions would occur as a result of the 2016 RTP/SCS, which includes transportation projects that would introduce nighttime sources of lighting as well as anticipated development, buildings, and vehicles that would produce sources of glare. Anticipated sources of light and glare as a result of the transportation projects in the 2016 RTP/SCS include nighttime construction lights, security lighting, and operations lighting such as vehicles, buildings, parking lots, and walkways. The majority of the transportation projects and land use strategies in the Plan would occur in urbanized areas with existing high levels of nighttime light, such as transportation projects in Los Angeles County that include adding security lights at existing transit stops and street lighting systems along existing major roads. However, the following major transportation projects would occur in areas that currently have low levels of nighttime light:

- HOV Lanes (western Ventura County)
- High Speed Rail (northern Los Angeles County)
- Mixed Lane Flow Projects (northern Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County)
- Toll Lanes (northern Los Angeles County, northern San Bernardino County, and southeastern Orange County)
- HOT Lanes (southwestern San Bernardino County)

Transportation projects and development influenced by land use strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would be subject to the provisions of dark skies ordinances and/or general plan policies in select cities in Imperial County, the Los Angeles County Rural outdoor Lighting District (unincorporated northern Los Angeles County) and select cities in Los Angeles County, select cities in Orange County, properties within a 45-mile radius of Palomar Observatory that are subject to Ordinance No. 655 and select cities in Riverside County,<sup>37</sup> select cities in San Bernardino County, and select cities within Ventura County. These provisions include shielding lights at night to avoid light trespass on other

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<sup>37</sup> Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside. Accessed 21 October 2015. *Ordinance No. 655: An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Regulating Light Pollution*. Available at: <http://www.clerkoftheboard.co.riverside.ca.us/ords/600/655.htm>

properties and toward the night sky. However, as none of the counties are completely within the jurisdiction of a dark skies ordinance district or city, several of the projects in the Plan would not be inherently required to reduce light and glare impacts as part of the project design.

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects that would require the acquisition or development of previously undisturbed vacant land with low levels of existing nighttime light and few existing sources of glare, such as Phase I of the California High Speed Rail project in northern Los Angeles County. Construction and operation of transportation projects (including nighttime maintenance) in currently rural areas would result in significant direct impacts in regard to creation of a new source of substantial light which would adversely affect nighttime views in the area. As discussed above, compact development anticipated with the HQTAs to accommodate new growth would result in more occurrences of glare in urban areas. It is also anticipated that the introduction of new roads and infrastructure, such as transit infrastructure in previously undisturbed areas, would result in lighting impacts. This could also occur as a result of new land use development pattern strategies included under the Plan. Therefore, the 2016 RTP/SCS would result in a significant impact in regard to light and glare.

Shade and shadow impacts generally occur when construction of a new element, such as a tall building, casts a shadow on a nearby shadow sensitive use. Shadow sensitive uses are generally any usable outdoor space, such as eating or playing areas. For example, construction of a new building that cast a shadow on a nearby school playground for an extended period of time would likely have a shadow impact. The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects such as new transit transfer terminals, street and rail grade separation projects, sound walls, new potentially elevated freeway lanes and off-ramps, new potentially elevated light rail extensions, and new bridges, that may be tall enough to cast a shadow on adjacent property. However, most transportation projects would not be expected to result in shade or shadow impacts because most transportation infrastructure is not located near sensitive outdoor uses. The majority of the transportation projects in the Plan would be located within existing transportation corridors (i.e., existing freeway right-of-ways), and would be expected to result in a less than significant direct impact in regard to shade and shadow.

Shade and shadow impacts would be expected to occur as an indirect impact from the Plan in urban areas as a result of the densification of land uses in HQTAs (i.e., the construction of new taller structures casts shadows on sensitive outdoor uses) or through elevated transportation infrastructure, such as elevated light rail, in residential or commercial areas instead of transportation corridors. Both the light rail line and the associated stations have the potential to cast shadows on nearby uses. Although the 2016 RTP/SCS does not include specific development projects, it is anticipated that shade and shadow impacts would occur.

The proposed transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views and expanded areas of shade and shadow in jurisdictions where there are no ordinances protecting night skies or local standards protecting shadow-sensitive land uses, constituting a significant impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.



### 3.1.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects and land use strategies that will shape the region over the next 25 years. These changes will include the extension of transportation and related infrastructure that would impact scenic resources. Many of these transportation projects will improve access and connectivity not only within the region (as discussed above) but also to areas outside the region. In addition, transportation projects included in the Plan will connect with other transportation projects outside the region, facilitating and potentially inducing construction of transportation infrastructure outside the region. This additional infrastructure outside the region could lead to development outside the region.

#### **IMPACT AES-1. Potential to have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

##### ***Significant Cumulative Impact***

The 2016 RTP/SCS includes transportation projects that require the conversion of open space to development, including designated open space that is visible from USFS, Caltrans, county, and city designated scenic vistas, when taken into consideration with the other infrastructure and development projects in the SCAG region and surrounding areas, constituting a significant cumulative impact requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

#### **IMPACT AES-2: Potential to substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.**

##### ***Less than Significant Cumulative Impact***

The general location of 2016 RTP/SCS transportation projects in urban areas and anticipated new growth and development focused within HQTAs avoids the potential to substantially damage scenic resources within state-designated scenic highways. HQTAs would be located near two State-designated scenic highways that are already developed: at the northeastern end of the portion of SR-74 in Riverside County, which is characterized by single-family residences and commercial development in the City of Palm Desert, and on the northern side of the western portion of SR-91 in Orange County, which is characterized by single-family residences, commercial and industrial development, the Santa Ana River Lake, Anaheim Lake, and a few parks (see Figure 2.4.4-1, *High Quality Transit Areas Throughout the SCAG Region in 2040*; see Figure 3.1.2-1). HQTAs would not be located near the State-designated scenic highways that are characterized by rural uses and open space, such as Angeles Crest Highway (Sr-2), which is located within the Angeles National Forest that precludes future development, or State Route 243, which is predominantly located within the San Bernardino National Forest. As these HQTAs in proximity to State-designated scenic highways are already developed, the land use strategies considered in the Plan would not be expected to substantially damage scenic resources within an officially designated State scenic highway. The land use strategies would not be expected to substantially damage historic buildings within these scenic highway corridors because, although a small portion of the single-family residences were constructed in the 1950s, the majority of development in Palm Desert along SR-74 occurred more recently in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s; similarly, although the area was developed for agricultural use in the 1940s and 1950s, the majority of single-family residential, commercial, and

industrial development to the north of SR-91 occurred in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the Plan when taken into consideration with other development and transportation infrastructure projects anticipated in the SCAG region and surrounding area would have a less than significant impact on scenic resources within designated scenic highways, and would not contribute to cumulative impacts on scenic resources within state-scenic highways in the SCAG region.

**IMPACT AES-3: Potential to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

***Significant Cumulative Impact***

The proposed transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to degrade the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings where such improvements pass through areas where open space is the existing condition, which, when considered in combination with other infrastructure and development with the SCAG region and nearby areas, constitutes a significant cumulative impact on the visual character of the region. The combination of urban transportation facilities infrastructure and anticipated new growth and development would change the character of the region over time. Some of these changes would be expected to occur on the fringe of the region. Urbanization or loss of these visual resources would also affect areas outside the region, as many of these scenic areas extend beyond the Plan's regional boundaries. As a result, the 2016 RTP/SCS could indirectly result in changes to the visual character or to scenic areas outside the SCAG region. Therefore, the 2016 RTP/SCS would contribute to a cumulatively considerable change in the visual character or quality of the SCAG region, requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

**IMPACT AES-4: Potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Potential to result in shade and shadow impacts.**

***Significant Cumulative Impact***

The proposed transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS would have the potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views and expanded areas of shade and shadow in jurisdictions where there are no ordinances protecting night skies or local standards protecting shadow-sensitive land uses, constituting a significant impact on visual resources. The combination of the transportation projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS and the anticipated development that could occur as a result of the extension of transportation and related infrastructure would contribute to cumulative impacts to light and glare where there are no local ordinances protecting dark skies, and contribute to cumulative shade and shadow impacts where there are no local standards protecting shadow-sensitive land uses, requiring the consideration of mitigation measures.

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<sup>38</sup> Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC. Accessed 23 November 2015. *Historic Aerials*. Available at: <http://www.historicaerials.com/>

### 3.1.6 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures as they pertain to each CEQA question related to aesthetics are described below. Mitigation measures are categorized into two categories: SCAG mitigation and project-level mitigation measures. SCAG mitigation measures shall be implemented by SCAG over the lifetime of the 2016 RTP/SCS. Project-level mitigation measures can and should be implemented by the Lead Agencies for transportation and development projects, as applicable and feasible.

#### **IMPACT AES-1. Potential to have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

##### *SCAG Mitigation Measures*

**MM-AES-1(a):** SCAG shall facilitate minimizing impacts to scenic vistas through cooperation, information sharing regarding the locations of designated scenic vistas, and regional program development as part of SCAG's ongoing regional planning efforts, such as web-based planning tools for local government including CA LOTS, and other GIS tools and data services, including, but not limited to, Map Gallery, GIS library, and GIS applications, and direct technical assistance efforts such as Toolbox Tuesday Training series and sharing of associated online Training materials. Caltrans and Lead agencies, such as county and city planning departments, shall be consulted during this update process.

##### *Project-Level Mitigation Measures*

**MM-AES-1(b):** Consistent with the provisions of Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, SCAG has identified mitigation measures capable of avoiding or reducing the significant effects of visual intrusions on scenic vistas, or National Scenic Byways that are in the jurisdiction and responsibility of Caltrans, other public agencies, and/or Lead Agencies. Where the Lead Agency has identified that a project has the potential for significant effects, the Lead Agency can and should consider mitigation measures to ensure compliance with regulations for Caltrans scenic vistas and goals and policies within county and city general plans, as applicable and feasible. Such measures may include the following, or other comparable measures identified by the Lead Agency:

- Use a palette of colors, textures, building materials that are graffiti-resistant, and/or plant materials that complement the surrounding landscape and development.
- Use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain. Contour edges of major cut-and-fill to provide a more natural looking finished profile.
- Use alternating facades to "break up" large facades and provide visual interest.
- Design new corridor landscaping to respect existing natural and man-made features and to complement the dominant landscaping of the surrounding areas.
- Replace and renew landscaping along corridors with road widenings, interchange projects, and related improvements.
- Retain or replace trees bordering highways, so that clear-cutting is not evident.
- Provide new corridor landscaping that respects and provides appropriate transition to existing natural and man-made features, and is complementary to the dominant landscaping or native habitats of surrounding areas.
- Implement design guidelines, local policies, and programs aimed at protecting views of scenic corridors and avoiding visual intrusions in design of projects to minimize

contrasts in scale and massing between the project and surrounding natural forms and developments. Avoid, if possible, large cuts and fills when the visual environment (natural or urban) would be substantially disrupted. Site or design of projects should minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds and use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain.

### **IMPACT AES-3: Potential to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

#### *SCAG Mitigation Measures*

See **MM-AES-1(a)**.

#### *Project-Level Mitigation Measures*

**MM-AES-3(b):** Consistent with the provisions of Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, SCAG has identified mitigation measures capable of avoiding or reducing the significant effects of degrading the existing public viewpoints, visual character or quality of the site that are in the jurisdiction and responsibility of local jurisdictions and/or Lead Agencies. Where the Lead Agency has identified that a project has the potential for significant effects, the Lead Agency can and should consider mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the goals and policies within county and city general plans, as applicable and feasible. Such measures may include the following, or other comparable measures identified by the Lead Agency:

- Minimize contrasts in scale and massing between the projects and surrounding natural forms and development, minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds, and use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain in accordance with county and city hillside ordinances, where applicable.
- Design landscaping along highway corridors to add significant natural elements and visual interest to soften the hard-edged, linear transportation corridors.
- Require development of design guidelines for projects that make elements of proposed buildings/facilities visually compatible, or minimize visibility of changes in visual quality or character through use of hardscape and softscape solutions. Specific measures to be addressed include setback buffers, landscaping, color, texture, signage, and lighting criteria.
- Design projects consistent with design guidelines of applicable general plans.
- Apply development standards and guidelines to maintain compatibility with surrounding natural areas, including site coverage, building height and massing, building materials and color, landscaping, site grading, and so forth in accordance with general plans and adopted design guidelines, where applicable.
- Require that sites are kept in a blight/nuisance-free condition. Remove blight or nuisances that compromise visual character or visual quality of project areas including graffiti abatement, trash removal, landscape management, maintenance of signage and billboards in good condition, and replace compromised native vegetation and landscape.

**MM-AES-1(b).**

**IMPACT AES-4: Potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Potential to result in shade and shadow impacts.**

*SCAG Mitigation Measures*

**MM-AES-4(a):** SCAG shall facilitate minimizing impacts on aesthetics related to new sources of light or glare or expanded areas of shade and shadow through cooperation, information sharing regarding the guidelines and policies, design approaches, building materials, siting, and technology, such as web-based planning tools for local government including CA LOTS, and other GIS tools and data services, including, but not limited to, Map Gallery, GIS library, and GIS applications, and direct technical assistance efforts such as Toolbox Tuesday Training series and sharing of associated online Training materials. Lead agencies, such as county and city planning departments, shall be consulted during this update process.

*Project-Level Mitigation Measures*

**MM-AES-4(b):** Consistent with the provisions of Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, SCAG has identified mitigation measures capable of avoiding or minimizing the effects of light and glare on routes of travel for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians, or on adjacent properties, and limit expanded areas of shade and shadow to areas that would not adversely affect open space or outdoor recreation areas that are in the jurisdiction and responsibility of local jurisdictions and/or Lead Agencies. Where the Lead Agency has identified that a project has the potential for significant effects, the Lead Agency can and should consider mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the goals and policies within county and city general plans, as applicable and feasible. Such measures may include the following, or other comparable measures identified by the Lead Agency:

- Use lighting fixtures that are adequately shielded to a point below the light bulb and reflector and that prevent unnecessary glare onto adjacent properties.
- Restrict the operation of outdoor lighting for construction and operation activities to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Use high pressure sodium and/or cut-off fixtures instead of typical mercury-vapor fixtures for outdoor lighting.
- Use unidirectional lighting to avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties.
- Design exterior lighting to confine illumination to the project site, and/or to areas which do not include light-sensitive uses.
- Provide structural and/or vegetative screening from light-sensitive uses.
- Shield and direct all new street and pedestrian lighting away from light-sensitive off-site uses.
- Use non-reflective glass or glass treated with a non-reflective coating for all exterior windows and glass used on building surfaces.
- Architectural lighting shall be directed onto the building surfaces and have low reflectivity to minimize glare and limit light onto adjacent properties.

### **3.1.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

#### **IMPACT AES-1. Potential to have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AES-1(a)** and **MM-AES-1(b)** would reduce potential impacts to scenic resources and vistas. However, even with the implementation of these mitigation measures, the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

#### **IMPACT AES-3: Potential to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AES-3(a)**, **MM-AES-1(b)**, and **MM-AES-3(b)** would reduce impacts related to adverse effects on visual character and quality. However, even with the implementation of these mitigation measures, the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

#### **IMPACT AES-4: Potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Potential to result in shade and shadow impacts.**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM-AES-4(a)** and **MM-AES-4(b)** would reduce the potential for light and glare impacts and shade and shadow impacts. However, even with the implementation of these mitigation measures, the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.