

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**  
**REPORT FORMAT & CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**  
**VISUAL RESOURCES**



**LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP**

**Department of Planning and Land Use**  
**Department of Public Works**

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## **PURPOSE**

These Visual Resources Report Format and Content Requirements provide guidance on conducting visual resource studies and preparing reports for discretionary projects being processed by the Land Use and Environment Group. These guidelines are designed to:

1. Ensure the quality, accuracy and completeness of Visual Resources Reports.
2. Aid in staff's efficient and consistent review of maps and documents from different consultants.
3. Provide adequate information to make appropriate planning decisions and to make determinations regarding conformance with applicable regulations.
4. Increase the efficiency of the environmental review process and avoid unnecessary time delays.

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## I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Visual resources must be evaluated under CEQA. County staff will determine the level of analysis needed for a particular project, if analysis is required. For example, a photo-simulation may be adequate to analyze the effects to visual resources of some projects, whereas a visual analysis and report may be needed for others. These guidelines should be followed as they apply for the level of analysis requested.

All Visual Resources Reports will be reviewed for technical accuracy and completeness by County staff. Reports are considered draft until the County determines the report to be complete. Each submittal and review of a draft report is considered an "iteration." During each iteration County staff will either determine the report to be complete or respond with comments for necessary changes. These guidelines have been prepared so that the first iteration will be as complete and comprehensive as possible to address issues in the Scoping Letter. However, each report may have up to three iterations, after which project denial may be recommended due to inadequate environmental progress.

The preparer must disclose the best information available.

## II. REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

The report should include photographs, aerial photographs, photo-simulations, and other figures, as necessary to illustrate the existing conditions and assessment of impacts. Include descriptive text with each photo and the location from where it was taken.

Include a copy of the project plot plan, landscape plan (if applicable) and all elevations.

Guidelines for preparing visual simulations are provided in Attachment A.

### TITLE PAGE

*At a minimum, the title page must include:*

- 1. the name of the project,*
- 2. the permit number(s),*
- 3. the project environmental review number,*
- 4. the date of the report,*
- 5. the applicant's name and contact information,*
- 6. the preparer's name and contact information, and*
- 7. a signature block for the consultant on the County approved consultant's list who completed, or supervised and takes responsibility for, the work performed.*

*The title page should be protected with a clear acetate cover.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Include a Table of Contents with page numbers identifying each section and subsection, as appropriate.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Briefly state the results of the visual analysis, the impacts anticipated and their significance under CEQA, and feasible mitigation and/or design considerations to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. Clearly state if less than significant impacts cannot be achieved.*

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 Purpose of the Visual Resources Report

**Always use statement such as this:** The purpose of this study is to assess the visual impacts of the proposed project, determine the significance of the impacts under CEQA, and to propose measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse visual impacts associated with the construction of \_\_\_\_\_ on the surrounding visual environment.

*Add additional information, as necessary.*

##### 1.2 Key issues

*Describe the key issues that will be evaluated in this report.*

##### 1.3 Principal Viewpoints to be Covered

*Define the principal viewpoints that will be evaluated, including views of the proposed project and views from the proposed project, if applicable.*

#### 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Describe what the project proposes to construct, what it will look like, the architectural style, and project phasing, specifically calling out elements providing the basis for or requiring evaluation in the analysis, including project design considerations.*

*Include a vicinity map showing the location of the site at an appropriate scale to show nearby roadways, structures and other features that will be important in the analysis.*

*Identify perceived continuous or unique elements, scenic highways, and or identified scenic vistas.*

*If the project is for a wireless telecommunication facility, identify the zone and location preference that the proposed facility is meeting (Z.O. §6986).*

## **2.1 Land Use Designations and Zoning**

*Include a description of current and planned on- and off-site land use designations. Include a description of current and planned zoning on the site and adjacent to the site.*

## **2.2 Regulatory Framework**

*Discuss regulations applicable to the protection of visual resources for the subject project. The following is a list of such regulations:*

*San Diego County General Plan ([http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/counties/San\\_Diego/plans.html](http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/counties/San_Diego/plans.html))*

*Open Space Element, Part I*

*Recreation Element, Part IV*

*Scenic Highway Element, Part VI*

*Scenic Highway Program*

*Conservation Element, Part X*

*San Diego County Zoning Ordinance*

*S – Scenic Area Regulations [§5200-5299]*

*J – Specific Historic Districts [§5749]*

*B – Community Design Review Area Regulations [§5750-5799]*

*D – Design Review Area Regulations [§5900-5910]*

*H – Historic/Archaeological Landmark & District Area Regulations [§5700- 5747]*

*G – Sensitive Resource [§5300-5349]*

*R – Coastal Resource Protection Area [§5950 – 5957]*

*Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance [§6980 – 6991]*

*County of San Diego Resource Protection Ordinance (i.e., steep slopes)*

*County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance Section 6712 (d), implemented by the*

*County of San Diego Landscape Water Conservation Design Manual*

*County of San Diego Board of Supervisors Policy I-73 Hillside Development*

*California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)*

*California Scenic Highway Program*

*California Street and Highways Code*

*National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*

*National Highway System Designation Act of 1995*

*Telecommunications Act of 1996*

## **2.3 Design Policies and Guidances**

*The County has many documents that address visual resources and project design. These documents should be identified here and used in the impact analysis.*

*Each area of the unincorporated County has a plan (Community Plan or Subregional Plan) that is part of the Regional Land Use Element of the County's General Plan. These community and subregional plans include goals and policies, many of which pertain to visual resources. Plans have been prepared for the following communities and subregions:*

*Fallbrook, Part I  
Valley Center, Part II  
Lakeside, Part IV  
Rainbow, Part V  
San Dieguito, Part VI  
Pepper Drive – Bostonia, Part VIII  
Julian, Part X  
Alpine, Part XI  
Valle de Oro, Part XII  
Sweetwater, Part XIII  
Ramona, Part XIV  
Bonsall, Part XVI  
Pala/Pauma, Part XVII*

*North Mountain, Part XVIII  
Central Mountain, Part XIX  
Mountain Empire, Part XX  
Desert, Part XXI  
Crest, Dehesa, Harbison Canyon/  
Granite Hills, Part XXII  
Otay, Part XXIII  
Jamul/Dulzura, Part XXIV  
North County Metropolitan, Part XXV  
County Islands, Part XXVI  
Spring Valley, Part XXVIII*

*In addition, the County has prepared Design Guidelines for the following areas:*

*Julian Historic District  
Alpine  
Bonsall  
Fallbrook  
I-15 Corridor  
Lakeside*

*Rancho San Diego  
Ramona  
Spring Valley  
Sweetwater  
Valley Center*

*The County has also prepared Historic Resources Inventories for Ramona, Julian, Rancho Santa Fe, Fallbrook and Sweetwater Valley that describe the history and list the historic resources that are in those communities (as of the date of publication). The information in these documents can provide insight into the community character.*

### **3.0 VISUAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE PROJECT**

*Describe the visual environment by discussing the visible landscape including the underlying landform and overlaying cover (topography, vegetation, drainages/surface waters, rock outcroppings, ridgelines, knolls, RPO steep slopes, etc.). Discuss the interrelationships of pattern elements (form, line, color, and texture) and pattern character (dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity). Discuss any designated scenic vistas, scenic highways, scenic corridors, or other scenic resources within the project viewshed. Also include human aspects such as cultural features, landscape history, buildings and settlements, and people affected or their perception of the landscape character.*

*Incorporate photos of the project site and surroundings into the Baseline Visual Environment discussion to help the reader “see” the project area. Text should accompany each photo to describe the photo and the location from where it was taken. Include a key showing the locations from which the photos were taken. Choose viewpoints for analysis and discuss justification for chosen location. Viewpoints should be chosen with the following criteria in mind: the “typicality” of project area views seen from them and of them, the potential number of viewers, uniqueness of the observed*

*view in the project area, whether or not the viewpoint represents a scenic vista or otherwise protected visual element (e.g., landmark trees), etc.*

### **3.1 Project Setting**

*Describe the project setting including the viewshed and the landscape units that will be used in the analysis.*

### **3.2 Project Viewshed**

*The visual environment can be vast; therefore, for purposes of analyzing impacts, boundaries must be placed on it. The area within those boundaries is commonly referred to as the viewshed. A viewshed is comprised of all the surface areas visible from an observer's viewpoint. The limits of a viewshed are defined as the visual limits of the views located from the proposed project. The viewshed also includes the locations of viewers likely to be affected by visual changes brought about by project features.*

*The Existing Viewshed is an analytical tool comprising the areas visible from an observer's viewpoint, including the screening effects of intermediate vegetation and structures.*

*The Topographic Viewshed is the landform, without the screening effect of vegetation and structures that would be visible from a viewpoint.*

*The Composite Viewshed is a compilation of overlapping areas that are visible from a series of viewpoints along a road or similar network (e.g. biking and hiking trail). The best examples of composite viewsheds exist along scenic highways and corridors.*

*Identify viewshed limits for the project. Include a figure identifying the extent of the viewshed on an aerial photograph and a topographic map (if the topography is variable).*

### **3.3 Landscape Units**

*A landscape unit is a portion of the regional landscape and can be thought of as an outdoor room that exhibits a distinct visual character. A landscape unit will often correspond to a place or district that is commonly known among local viewers.*

*Identify and describe the landscape units defined for this project.*

## **4.0 EXISTING VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEWER RESPONSE**

### **4.1 Existing Visual Resources**

#### **4.1.1 Visual Character**

*Visual character is descriptive and non-evaluative, which means it is based on defined attributes that are neither positive nor negative in themselves. A change in visual character cannot be described as having positive or negative attributes until it is*

compared with the viewer response to that change. If there is public preference for the established visual character of a regional landscape and resistance to a project that would contrast that character, then changes in the visual character should be evaluated.

Describe the existing visual character of each landscape unit by describing:

*Pattern elements: form [bulk, mass, size and shape], line, color and texture.*

*Pattern character: dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity.*

#### **4.1.2 Visual Quality**

*Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness and unity present in the viewshed. The analysis should correlate with public judgments well enough to predict those judgments. The three criteria for evaluating visual quality can be defined as follows:*

**Vividness** – *The visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.*

**Intactness** – *The visual integrity of the natural and built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. Intactness can be present in developed urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.*

**Unity** – *The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. Unity frequently attests to the careful design of individual built components in the landscape.*

Describe the existing visual quality of each landscape unit.

#### **4.2 Viewer Response**

*Viewer response is composed of two elements: viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure. These elements combine to form a method of predicting how the viewers might react to visual changes brought about by a project.*

*Include distances from the project to neighboring residences, commercial buildings, parklands/recreational areas or other potential viewer locations.*

##### **4.2.1 Viewer Sensitivity**

*Viewer sensitivity is both the viewers' concern for scenic quality and the viewers' response to change in the visual resources that make up the view. Local values and goals may confer visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional in a visual resource analysis. Even when the existing appearance of a project site is uninspiring, a community may still object to projects that fall short of its visual goals. Analysts can learn about these special resources and community aspirations for visual quality through citizen participation procedures, as well as from local publications and planning documents.*

Discuss existing viewer sensitivity.

## 4.2.2 Viewer Groups

*Groups and individual viewers are affected by their exposure to a project. Whether a viewer is near to or far from a project; whether they are viewing a project from above, at eye level, or from below; and whether the direction of view is from the north, south, east, west; all contribute to a viewer's response.*

*In addition, visual perception also has an important subjective element. Classes of viewers differ in their visual response to a project and its setting. Depending on the type of project, groups that should be considered when analyzing impacts to visual resources include, but are not limited to:*

- *Viewer groups with a view from the project to \_\_\_\_\_;*
- *Viewer groups with a view of the project from their homes or community;*
- *Viewer groups with a view of the project to or from an historic property if "setting" was an element in designation of the property;*
- *Viewer groups with a view of the project from roadways, particularly scenic highways, highway waysides, rest areas and vista points*
- *Recreational groups (park, resort, overlook, and historic site visitors; river and lake users, scenic railroad passengers, trail users, etc.)*
- *Special interest groups (civic, conservation, cultural, environmental, educational, economic, etc.)*

*Identify viewer groups.*

## 4.2.3 Viewer Exposure

*The number of viewers and the duration of view are also important to analyzing impacts. The number of viewers in nearby residences (stationary view), and the duration of their view of a project would be very different than the number of people who see a project from a highway or roadway (moving view). Whether the viewers on the highway are residents of the local community or visitors may also affect their responses to a viewshed.*

*Viewer exposure is typically assessed by measuring the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of their view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer. High viewer exposure heightens the importance of early consideration of design, art, and architecture and their roles in managing the visual resource effects of a project.*

*Describe viewer exposure.*

#### **4.2.4 Viewer Awareness**

*A viewer's response is also affected by the degree to which he/she is receptive to the visual details, character, and quality of the surround landscape. A viewer's ability to perceive the landscape is affected by his/her activity. A viewer on vacation in San Diego County would probably take pleasure in looking at the landscape, and an individual may be strongly attached to the view from his home, but a local County resident commuting to work may not "register" those same visual resources on a daily basis.*

*Describe anticipated viewer awareness.*

### **5.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

#### **5.1 Guidelines for Determining Significance**

*State the applicable guidelines for which the analysis will be done.*

#### **5.2 Key Views**

*Analyzing all the views in which the proposed project would be seen is not feasible. A number of key viewpoints that would most clearly display the visual effects of the project should be selected. These key views should also represent the primary viewer groups that would potentially be affected by the project.*

*Show key view locations with directional arrows on a figure.*

##### **Key View #1**

*Describe the following:*

- *Orientation*
- *Existing Visual Character and Quality*
- *Proposed Project Features*
- *Change to Visual Character and Quality*
- *Viewer Response*
- *Resulting Visual Impact*

##### **Key View #2**

*Same as above, and continue for each Key View.*

#### **5.3 Assessment of Visual Character and Visual Quality**

*Visual resource change is the combination of the change in visual character and change in visual quality. The visual impacts of project elements and alternatives are determined by assessing the change in seen elements caused by the project and predicting viewer response to that change.*

*The following should be considered in analyzing the project:*

- *The nature and quality of recognized or valued views such as natural topography, settings, context, built or natural features of visual interest, and other visual resources such as mountains;*
- *The extent to which the project negatively affects recognized views from a public roadway, bike path, or trail, including the length of the roadway, bike path or trail where the views would be affected and the number of viewers from these locations;*
- *The extent of view obstruction, e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment, etc.; and*
- *In cases when something is substantially different as result of a land use action (GPA/SPA/zoning), consider private views as well as public views.*

*Include a discussion of public and selected private locations where the project may be viewed as a prominent feature.*

*Include information identifying the portions of the proposed project that will be visible from the scenic highway. State whether and how long motorists and cyclists (if highway includes bike lanes) would be able to see the project if traveling at the posted rate of speed in each direction, or less if traffic congestion is anticipated that would make the viewing time longer.*

*Discuss the visual impact in terms of scale, bulk, and coverage in terms of applicable project elements such as development layout/clustering, fire clearing, grading, structures (including outdoor storage/ancillary buildings such as garages/barns), signage, service areas, towers etc.*

*Consider architectural guidelines for color/style/building materials.*

*Color and finish palette and proposed screening, if applicable.*

*Include before and after photo-simulations of the project on finished grade, cross-sections of major areas of grading and visual prominence, and elevations. At least one photo-simulation must be provided; if only one is included it must be from the point of highest visibility.*

*If the project is for a wireless telecommunication facility:*

- *State whether or not it is in a preferred zone or location,*
- *Provide the information requested in Z.O. §6986 B (<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/z6000.pdf>)*
- *Refer to Z.O. §6987 Design Regulations (<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/z6000.pdf>).*
- *Indicate how the project is in compliance with these regulations.*

### **5.3.1 Assessment of Visual Character**

*The first step in determining visual resource change is to assess the compatibility of the proposed project with the visual character of the existing landscape.*

*Describe the visual character for the following stages of the project and the changes from one stage to the next:*

- *Existing condition*
- *During construction [grading, cut and/or fill slopes, other open ground]*
- *End of construction*
- *Maturity*

### **5.3.2 Assessment of Visual Quality**

*The second step is to compare the visual quality of the existing resources with projected visual quality after the project is constructed.*

*Describe the visual quality for the following stages of the project and the changes from one stage to the next:*

- *Existing condition*
- *During construction [grading, cut and/or fill slopes, other open ground]*
- *Completion of construction*
- *Maturity*

### **5.4 Assessment of Viewer Response**

*The viewer response to project changes is a combination of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity to the project as determined in the preceding section. Viewer exposure is the degree (number of viewers, length of time and/or frequency) to which viewers are exposed to a view or visual resource. Viewer sensitivity and expectations are based on the preferences, standards, ideas, opinions, and bias of different viewers. For example, recreational and residential viewers' sensitivity and expectations of their visual surroundings are traditionally higher than viewers in industrial or commercial settings.*

*Discuss viewer exposure, sensitivity and expectations. Describe the existing/expected viewer response during the following stages of the project and the changes from one stage to the next:*

- *Existing condition*
- *During construction [grading, cut and/or fill slopes, other open ground]*
- *Completion of construction*
- *Maturity*

### **5.5 Determination of Significance**

*State each Guideline for Determining Significance. Provide a discussion explaining the affirmative or negative response to each guideline and clearly state if the impact is significant, less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation incorporated, based on the analysis.*

## **5.6 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

*Define cumulative boundaries by using the viewshed or another boundary determined to be most appropriate based on the type and location of the visual impact. Generally the viewshed will not be the whole community. Include a discussion of the reasoning and justification for the chosen boundaries. The cumulative impact area for a Scenic Highway may be the length of the highway itself or a segment of the highway.*

*Analyze the significance of the project's visual impact on a cumulative level pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (§15130 and 15355) using the CEQA "List of Projects Method".*

*Use projects within the cumulative impact boundary that have similar visual impacts. For example, cellular facilities should analyze the cumulative visual impact of a proposed cellular tower in addition to the visual impact of other cellular facility projects within the cumulative study area.*

*Projects within the cumulative study area for which a CEQA document found a less than significant direct visual impact may still contribute to a cumulative impact.*

*To identify projects that may contribute to a cumulative visual impact, DPLU is tracking discretionary projects in a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) layer known as the Discretionary Projects Layer. This GIS layer is available as a printed copy of a map for each Community Planning Area for \$30 by calling (858) 694-2960, or (800)-411-0017 in advance to order the most current map. The layer is updated monthly. Alternatively, the GIS layer with all of its associated data may also be purchased from SANGIS ([www.sangis.org](http://www.sangis.org)).*

*Make a clear statement indicating whether or not the project will result in a significant adverse direct and/or indirect impact on the visual environment.*

## **5.7 Summary of Project Impacts and Significance and Conclusions**

*Describe the overall project impacts including those not depicted in a key view and provide a conclusion as to the significance of the impact.*

## **6.0 VISUAL MITIGATION AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

*Describe visual mitigation and design considerations for the project and provide a conclusion as to the significance of the impact after mitigation.*

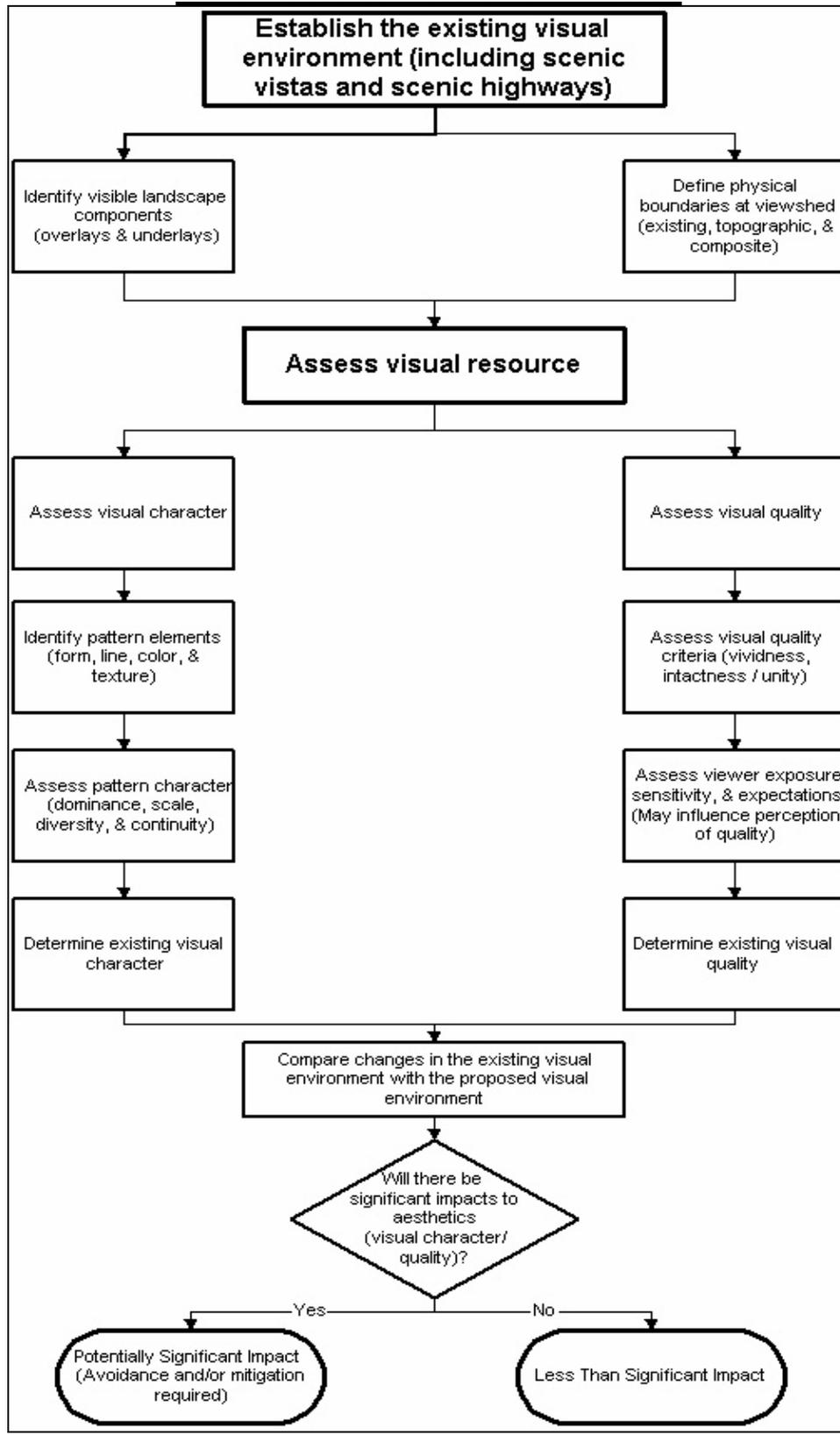
## **7.0 REFERENCES**

*Include citations for all references used in the analysis.*

## **8.0 REPORT PREPARERS**

*Provide names and qualifications of those participating in the fieldwork and in the report preparation. Ensure the primary consultant is on the County Approved Consultants List to prepare Visual Analyses. The County Approved Consultant must sign the front cover of the report.*

**Figure 1**  
**Visual Resource Assessment Process**



## [ATTACHMENT A]

### GUIDELINES FOR PHOTO-SIMULATIONS

Photo-simulations are an important tool for representing the relative scale and extent of change to the existing visual environment a project represents, as well as the overall visual effect and aesthetics of the proposed project. Technology and techniques have evolved to the point where very realistic photo-simulations are not only possible but they are often expected by the public. County staff and consultants should work together to decide which key view points should be used for simulations as well as to agree on whether the intent is to show "worst case" or "typical" amounts of change. County staff and consultants should agree as to whether the photo-simulation would show the project during construction (possibly during grading) at completion or at some point in the future (5 years for example). Photo-simulations are to be used objectively in the visual impact analysis process, not as merely sales or public relations tools for the project proponents.

Simulations should:

- Always be prepared from agreed upon Key View Points. Key View Points should always represent conditions from which the project will actually be viewed (i.e. not aerial or oblique "bird's eye" views), and should be taken at points that would "most clearly display the visual effects of the project" based on County staff/consultant coordination.
- Adequately represent a real view as the public would see it from a publicly accessible location.
- Be from ground level, not be aerial views or oblique bird's-eye views (unless view point is from a place viewers can access that overlooks the project).
- Not be panoramic view or "pasted together" in an attempt to show entire project in one single view.
- Use a (standard) 50-mm photo lens or the closest equivalent with a digital camera because that most closely represents the 60° "Cone of Vision" perceived by the human eye.

A few other suggestions:

- Checks and balances should be used to ensure accuracy. Consultants should have a defensible photo-simulation process.
- Know and be able to prove with certainty the point and angle from which the key view "before" photo was taken; this also should be the point and angle from which the simulation of the proposed project is prepared. GPS is one current tool, and aerial maps also are important for verifying location and view angles.
- Digital modeling tools to represent terrain and structures are excellent, but also must be field verified for positioning and scale.
- Tried and true methods like using story-poles, field markers, and/or balloons are useful tools to help determine/verify scale and extent of project features.

## [ATTACHMENT B]

### ATTRIBUTES OF VISUAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY

#### VISUAL CHARACTER

A viewer observes the visual environment as a whole, not one object at a time. However, the viewer's understanding of that environment is based on the visual character of objects and the relationships between them. Visual character is the order and combination of patterns that are created by visual elements in a scene. Defining visual character is an objective process based on a hierarchy of elements, pattern, and order.

#### Pattern Elements

Interrelationships of elements in the landscape create pattern character, and pattern character forms visual character. Four elements create pattern, with form being the most dominant, followed by line, color, and lastly texture (Figures B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4).

**form + line + color + texture = pattern**

**Form** is represented by bulk, mass, size and shape. A mountain is an example of visual pattern with governing form based on bulk, mass, size and shape. Figure B-1 shows a large boulder with massive bulk, mass, size and shape compared to its immediate surroundings.

**Line** is the geometric representation of a point that has been extended or the intersection of two planes. In the context of visual resources, common examples of lines include horizons, silhouettes, or a boundary between planes in the landscape. Figure B-2 depicts many aspects of line.

**Color** is the reflected hues (red, yellow, and blue) and value (light or dark) of the light reflected or emitted by an object. Figure B-3 shows an example of color within a flower field.

**Texture** is the apparent coarseness of the surface of various elements in the landscape. Figure B-4 portrays a landscape textured with rocks and boulders encountered in San Diego's local foothills or mountains.

#### Pattern Character

Pattern character can best be described in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity (Figures B-5, B-6, B-7, and B-8).

**dominance + scale + diversity + continuity = pattern character**

**Dominance** occurs when a specific feature is prominently positioned, contrasted or extended to a point where the specific feature strongly influences the pattern character

of a scene. An example of dominance may be a billboard as shown in Figure B-5, or a telecommunications tower in an undeveloped area.

**Scale** is the size relationship among landscape components in the visual environment. Scale results from the overall size and positioning of pattern elements and character. For example, the scale of a power plant is greater than a backup generator and as a result is a greater influence on pattern character. Figure B-6 shows an example of scale with several freeway interchanges.

**Diversity** is the frequency, variety and positioning of pattern elements. The more these pattern elements are intermixed the greater the diversity. For example, a rural town between a highway and river, surrounded by a combination of residential uses, agricultural flower operations and natural landscape would have a high level of diversity (Figure B-7).

**Continuity** is the uninterrupted flow or transition among pattern elements. An example of pattern elements with high continuity may be extensive grasslands on rolling hills (Figure B-8). The continuity expressed by the grasslands on rolling hills would be interrupted if manufactured cut slopes and retaining walls were installed to support an infrastructure project across the hills.

## **VISUAL QUALITY**

Visual quality is dependent upon the visual environment's brilliance, distinction, and/or excellence. The most commonly used criteria to define visual quality are vividness, intactness and unity.

$$\text{vividness} + \text{intactness} + \text{unity} = \text{visual quality}$$

**Vividness** is the memorability of visual impression received from contrasting landscape components that combine to form a striking and distinctive visual pattern and impression.

**Intactness** is the integrity of visual pattern, evaluated by the extent to which the landscape is free from encroachment by competing visual elements.

**Unity** is the compositional harmony and intercompatibility of landscape components and the degree to which the landscape components join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern.

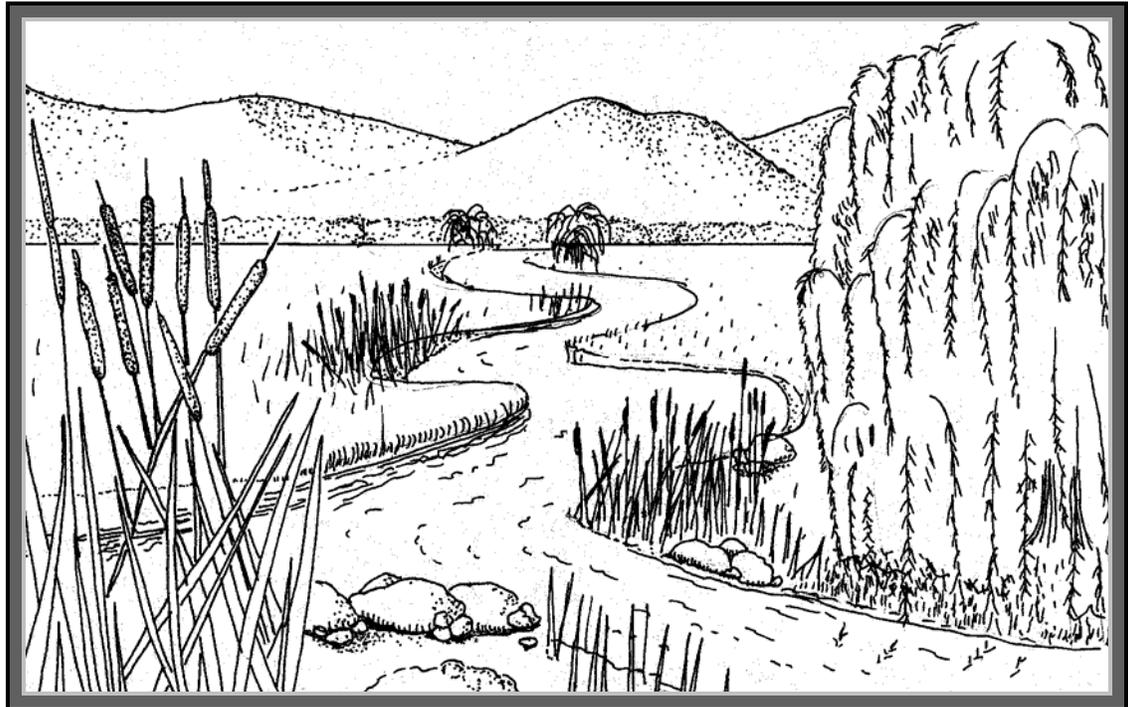
A visual resource with a high degree of vividness, intactness and unity will typically have a high level of visual quality. For examples refer to Figures B-9 and B-10.

**VISUAL CHARACTER CRITERIA**  
**Pattern Elements**

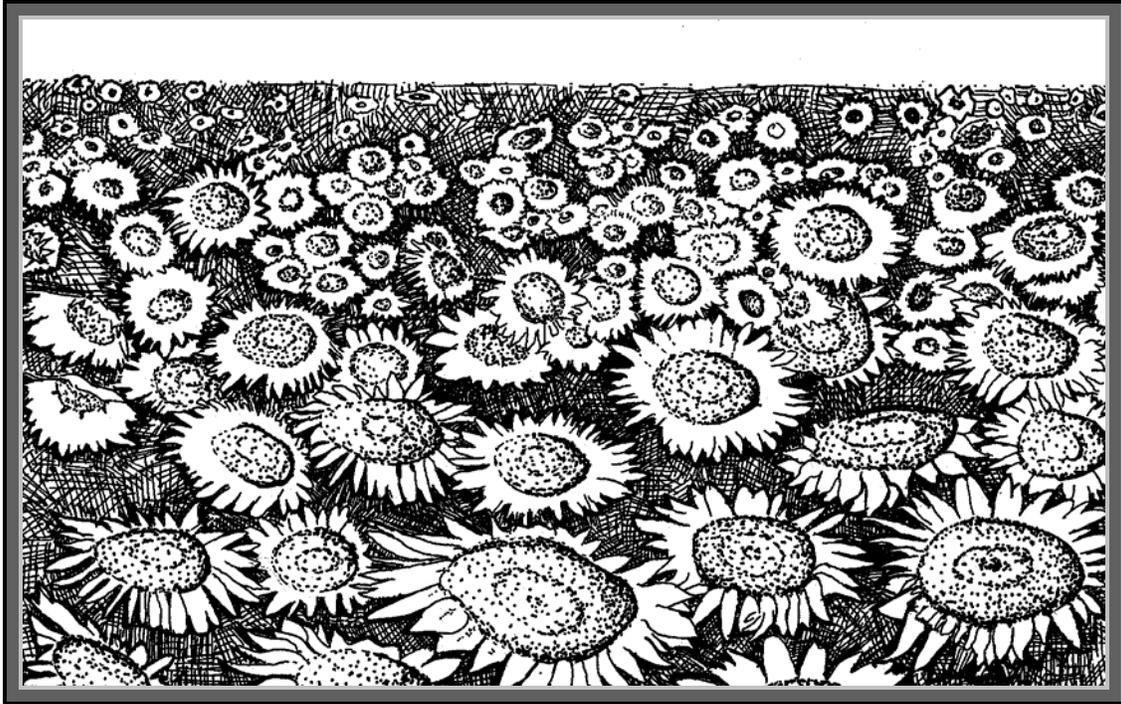
**Figure B-1**  
**Form**



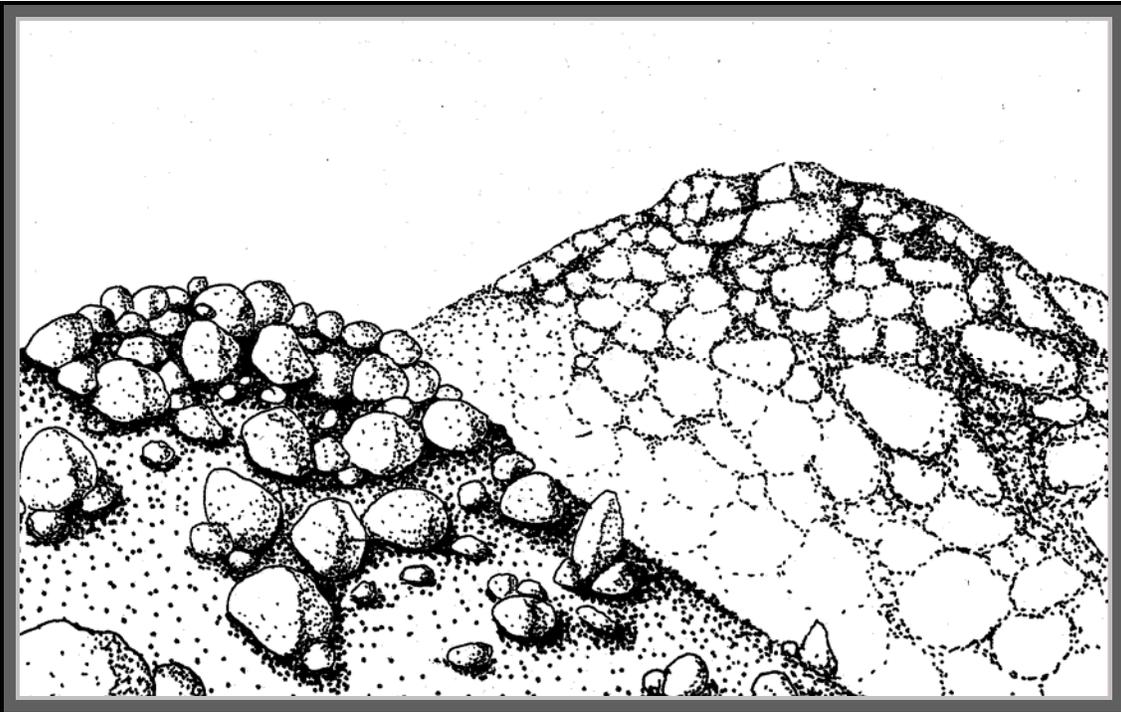
**Figure B-2**  
**Line**



**Figure B-3**  
**Color**



**Figure B-4**  
**Texture**



Pattern Character  
Figure B-5  
Dominance

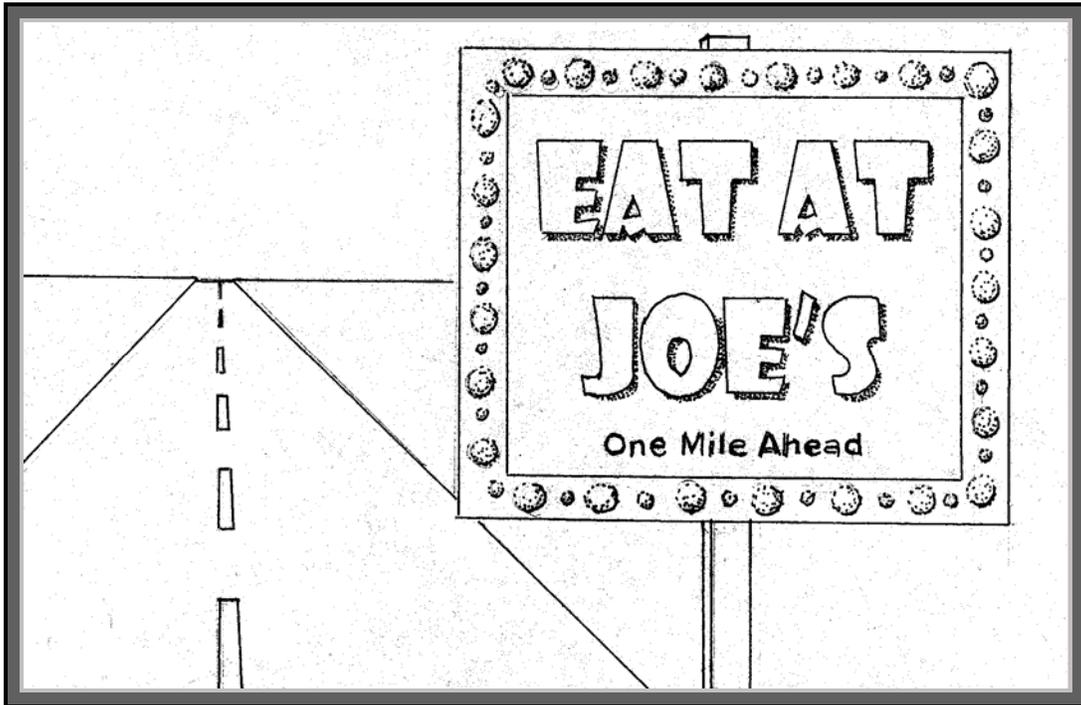
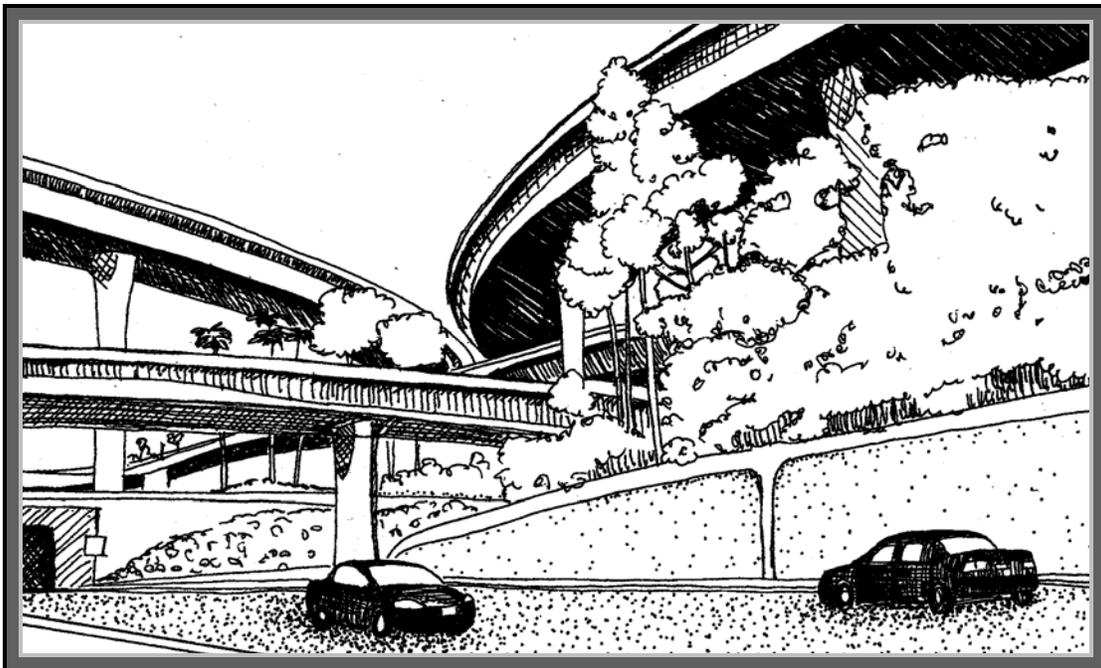
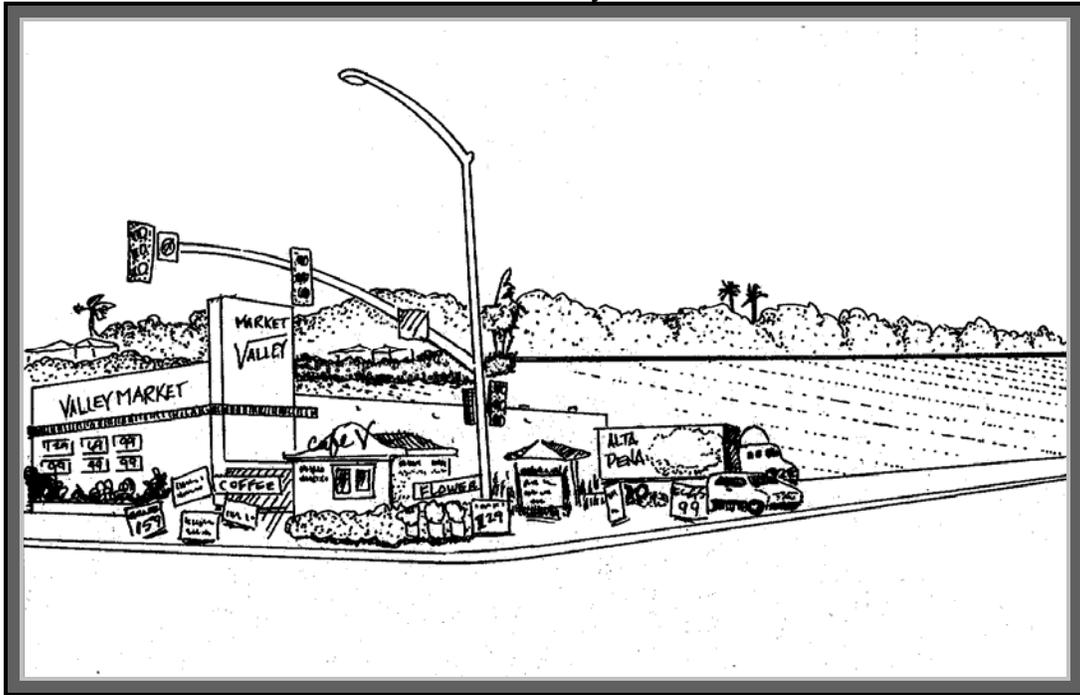


Figure B-6  
Scale



**Figure B-7  
Diversity**



**Figure B-8  
Continuity**



**VISUAL QUALITY CRITERIA**  
**Figure B-9**  
**Vividness**



**Figure B-10**  
**Intactness/Unity**

