2.1 Aesthetics

This section of the EIR describes the visual setting of San Diego County and evaluates the potential for changes in the visual character with implementation of the General Plan Update. The following discussion provides information on the character of the existing visual landscape, including the visual character of the unincorporated area and each CPA, scenic vistas and visual resources such as natural landforms, scenic highways, dark skies, and community character. This section also describes the potential for land uses and development occurring under the General Plan Update to impact scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and light and glare. This section incorporates information and analyses from the Conservation and Open Space Background Report (DPLU 2007b), Guidelines for Determining Significance, Visual Resources (DPLU 2007r), and Guidelines for Determining Significance, Dark Skies and Glare (DPLU 2009b).

A summary of the aesthetics impacts identified in Section 2.1.3 is provided below.

Aesthetics Summary of Impacts

Issue Number	Issue Topic	Project Direct Impact	Project Cumulative Impact	Impact After Mitigation
1	Scenic Vistas	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant
2	Scenic Resources	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant
3	Visual Character or Quality	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable
4	Light or Glare	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable

2.1.1 Existing Conditions

San Diego County is a visually diverse region with a dramatic coastline, mountains, and desert. The County's sunny weather allows people to spend much of their time outside throughout the year. For this reason, people come from all over the world to partake in the County's resources. The County is rich in natural open space, topographic resources, scenic highways, scenic vistas, and other diverse aesthetic resources. These natural features contribute greatly to the overall quality of the existing visual setting.

2.1.1.1 Visual Character

San Diego County has three distinctive geographic regions that provide a backdrop for visual resources: the low-lying Coastal Plain, the mountainous Peninsular Range, and the lowlands of the Desert. These regions are described in detail in Section 2.6.1.1, General Geologic Setting. The diversity of these regions provides San Diego County residents and visitors with an array of natural vistas and scenic environments that provide a unique aesthetic collection from the ocean to the desert. Urban land uses are focused in the western third of the County, while the eastern two-thirds are largely undeveloped with mountains and desert dominating the landscape.

Throughout these three distinctive geographic provinces are vast amounts of publicly owned lands that provide open space and visual relief from the human-made environment. Examples include the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Base Camp Pendleton on the Coastal Plain in northern San Diego County; the Cleveland National Forest in the Peninsular Range; and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in the Desert region. In addition to these examples of large expanses of open space, County parks, habitat preserves, reservoirs, farmland and undeveloped lands contribute to San Diego County's open space lands and overall aesthetic resource value.

Primary aesthetic resources in the Coastal Plain region include coastlines, bays, lagoons, canyons, mesas, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, and agricultural lands. Notable scenic resources in the Peninsular Range foothills include the Otay River, Sweetwater River, upper San Diego River, Upper and Lower Otay Lakes, Sweetwater Reservoir, Lake Hodges, and San Vicente Reservoir. Scenic resources in the higher elevation of the Peninsular Range region are plentiful, including large open spaces such as Cleveland National Forest, Agua Tibia Wilderness Area, San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Palomar Mountain State Park, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, and various County reserves and parks, as well as the large water bodies of El Capitan Reservoir, Barrett Lake, Lake Morena, Lake Cuyamaca, and Lake Henshaw. Most of the Desert region is located within the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, a valuable visual resource providing scenic beauty for many visitors. The Desert region also provides expansive views characterized by dramatic landforms, native desert habitat, and low desert valleys.

2.1.1.2 Scenic Vistas and Visual Resources

Resource Conservation Areas

Certain areas in the County have been designated as Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) for the purposes of informing future planning decisions. RCAs include, but are not limited to, areas of aesthetic quality, groundwater problem areas, coastal wetlands, native wildlife habitats, construction quality sand areas, littoral sand areas, astronomical dark skies areas, scenic geologic formations, and significant archaeological and historical sites. The following RCAs in unincorporated San Diego County are considered valuable because of visual resources. A summary of RCAs by CPAs and Subregional Planning Areas (Subregions) is provided below.

Alpine CPA

- **El Capital Reservoir and El Cajon Mountain.** El Cajon Mountain is valuable as a visual landmark and for wildlife habitat.

- **Viejas Mountain.** Viejas Mountain is a visual landmark and is valuable for its excellent example of undisturbed broad leaf and narrow leaf chaparral.

- **Sweetwater River Canyon and Adjacent Archaeological Resource Areas.** This canyon is valuable for its undisturbed habitats, including chaparral, virgin riparian woodland and oak woodland as well as a pristine perennial stream and aquatic ecosystems. It also offers a dramatic view that can be partially viewed at an Interstate 8 (I-8) roadside viewpoint.

- **Loveland Reservoir and Surrounding Visual Resources.** Loveland Reservoir serves as a rest stop for migratory waterfowl and its surrounding environs contain habitat used by the protected Golden eagle and other raptorial birds, as well as large mammals.

- **Horsethief Creek/Pine Valley Creek Region.** Portions of this isolated area are suitable habitat for several species of rare plants. It is also valued for its high visual resource and archaeological potential.

- **Gaskill Peak Region.** Habitats on this mountain are inhabited by large mammals and raptorial birds as well as plants. It is also valued as a visual resource.

- **Bells Mountain.** This is valued as a visual landmark and its high archaeological resource potential.

Bonsall CPA

- **Gopher Canyon.** This area is valued for its scenic oak woodlands.

- **San Marcos Mountains.** These mountains are a visual landmark.

Central Mountain Subregion

- **Boulder Creek Basin.** The area contains steep slopes and sensitive habitats including coastal sage scrub and riparian woodland. Significant geologic features include Mildred Falls, Devil's Jump-Off and Devil's Punchbowl.

- **Descanso Valley.** The Descanso Valley is the centerpiece of the community of Descanso and an important viewshed because of its farmland, cattle and horse pastures, and scattered rural structures such as barns, which give the valley a rustic character. The valley is also the confluence of three waterways: Sweetwater River, Descanso Creek, and Samagatuma Creek.

- **Guatay Mountain.** This area, with its steep slopes rising to a pinnacle, is a visual landmark to the communities of Guatay and Descanso.

- **Lake Cuyamaca and Meadows.** This area is one of the most important biological resources areas in San Diego County, with 15 sensitive plant species. Lake Cuyamaca and its surrounding meadows are also an important viewshed.

- **Crouch Valley.** This large meadow area is an important visual resource, as it serves as a gateway to the Laguna Mountain Recreation Area, and is easily visible from the Sunrise Highway, which is designated a U.S. Forest Service Scenic Highway under the National Scenic Byway (NSB) Program, as described below.

- **Buckman Springs Meadow.** This area is an important visual resource for travelers on I-8 because of the agricultural uses in the meadow that also provides habitat for raptors, reptiles, deer, birds, and other animals.

- **Pine Valley.** This area is characterized by residences hidden amongst the trees and a vast central montane meadow that provides open space. This area provides clear views

of the mountains beyond the numerous trees and the location of residences gives Pine Valley the appearance of being much smaller than it actually is.

Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills Subregion

- **McGinty/Dehesa/Sequan.** These three peaks are all prominent visual features for the El Cajon, Harbison Canyon, and Crest/Dehesa regions.

- **Harbison Canyon.** The gorge area at the southern end of Galloway Valley is a highly visible landmark and contains populations of the threatened Lakeside wild lilac.

- **North Fork of the Sweetwater River.** This area has high aesthetic and wildlife value, and contains sensitive oak woodland habitat and streamside riparian vegetation.

Fallbrook CPA

- **Landcaster Mountain.** This area is valued as a visual resource and also includes areas of oak woodland, mixed chaparral habitat, and steep rocky slopes.

Jamul/Dulzura Subregion

- **Lawson Peak.** Lawson Peak is an important scenic resource as well as a biologically important area because of the presence Gander's butterweed, and the rare Campo clarkia and creeping sage.

- **Mother Grundy.** The rock formation namesake for this mountain is a prominent visual landscape feature for the Dulzura area.

- **Tecate Peak/Cottonwood Creek.** The prominence of Tecate Peak in the skyline approaching the U.S./Mexico international border has made it an international landmark.

- **San Miguel/Jamul Mountains.** San Miguel Mountain is a scenic landmark that has appeared in many photographs of San Diego's skyline.

Lakeside CPA

- **El Cajon Mountain/El Capitan Reservoir.** This large area contains very steep slopes and isolated rocky peaks and ridges, including some of the largest granitic domes in San Diego County. The rocky peaks, especially on El Cajon Mountain, serve as a scenic backdrop for the El Cajon and Lakeside regions.

North County Metro Subregion

- **Jesmond Dene Oaks.** The scenic value of the oaks contributes to the character of the semi-rural residential community of Jesmond Dene.

- **Valley Center Ridge.** This steep, high ridge contains a diversity of oak woodlands and large growth chaparral that provides a scenic backdrop for the Subregion.

- **Burnt Mountain.** This area serves as wildlife habitat and is a visual landmark for residents of the Subregion as well as the Valley Center CPA.

- **San Marcos Mountains:** These mountains are an important visual landmark for residents of the Subregion and the Bonsall CPA and are especially significant because they contain rare and endangered plant species such as Cleveland sage and southern mountain misery.

North Mountain Subregion

- **Mesa Grande.** This area is a scenic resource and contains diverse vegetation and wildlife. The area also contains gem-bearing pegmatites that produce tourmaline and topaz. Gem-quality tourmaline is very rare and San Diego County is a world famous producer of this gem.

- **Palomar Mountain/Aqua Tibia Wilderness.** This represents one of the most scenic areas in San Diego County. Palomar Mountain is also valued because it contains scenic montane coniferous forest and the related species that this habitat supports.

- **Volcan Mountain.** This mountain is an important visual landmark because it can be seen from almost any vantage point in the Subregion. It contains biological sensitive oak woodland and chaparral species that grow on its steep slopes. On clear days, views from the mountaintop offer broad vistas of both the desert and ocean.

Otay Subregion

- **Otay Mountain/Lower Otay Lake.** Otay Mountain is a scenic landmark for the region because of rare and endangered plants that occur in the area. Otay Mountain contains the world's largest population of the rare Tecate cypress tree and numerous other rare and endangered plants. Portions of Otay Mountain are under consideration for wilderness designation by the BLM.

Pala/Pauma Valley Subregion

- **San Luis Rey River.** The river environs contain valuable biological resources including wetland habitat, plant and animal species, and extensive areas of oak woodlands. The biological resources and a rocky gorge along the river contribute to the scenic quality of the area.

Rainbow CPA

- **Mount Olympus.** This mountain is a prominent physical feature of the area and includes steep slopes with mixed chaparral, riparian wetland vegetation, wildlife habitat and populations of a rare and endangered plant, Peninsular manzanita.

- **Rainbow Oak Woodland Areas.** This area is known for its scenic quality and provides habitat for a variety of animal species.

Ramona CPA

- **Goose Valley Ridge.** This area provides an important visual mountain backdrop for the Santa Maria Valley and provides habitat for large mammals.
- **State Route (SR) 78 Corridor.** The slopes visible from the SR-78 delineate a scenic corridor and provide habitat along Hatfield Creek for riparian and oak woodland animals.
- **Mussey Grade Road.** The area along this road through a rural area of Ramona is valued for its scenic and biological resources, including oak woodlands.
- **Mount Woodson.** Mount Woodson, with a peak at approximately 2,800 feet Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL), and its surrounding slopes provide a notable visual landmark from Ramona and the nearby incorporated City of Poway.

San Dieguito CPA

- **Batiquitos Lagoon Region.** The area is valued for its scenic sandstone bluff formations, which is characterized by caves created by weathering (Batiquitos 2008).
- **Oak Crest Park Site.** This site is characterized by eroded sandstone bluffs and chaparral habitat.
- **San Elijo Lagoon/San Dieguito Park Area.** San Elijo Lagoon is one of the few remaining coastal wetlands in San Diego County and provides habitat for numerous plant and animal species. Sandstone bluffs also form a significant feature in this area.

Sweetwater CPA

- **Eucalyptus Groves 1, 2, and 3.** The eucalyptus groves provide habitat for avian species as well as an aesthetic buffer from surrounding development.
- **Mother Miguel Mountain.** The steep rugged terrain of this area contributes to the scenic viewshed in the eastern Sweetwater Area and contains a large undisturbed area of coastal sage scrub, as well as some chamise chaparral and grasslands. These vegetation types provide excellent habitat for the Golden eagle, a sensitive bird species known to occur here.

Valley Center CPA

- **Valley Center Ridge.** This scenic, steep, high ridge contains a diversity of oak woodlands and large growth chaparral that provides habitat for wildlife.
- **Chaparral Ridge.** This area includes a large, scenic rock slab north of Woods Valley Road.
- **Keys Creek.** This is a long, narrow riparian and oak woodland-lined stream bottom that provides high quality wildlife habitat and is a scenic community resource.

Natural Landforms

Natural landform features that are located throughout the County include important geologic and scenic landform features, hillsides and ridgelines, canyons, creeks, prominent trees, and watershed areas.

Watersheds

Rivers, lakes, reservoirs and fresh water bodies are visually attractive and provide opportunities for recreation. The rivers and streams flowing from the mountains to the desert and the coastal area are important natural features that link the diverse eco-regions of the County. These features are shown in Figure 2.8-2, Surface Water, and a detailed discussion of the watersheds within the County is provided in Section 2.8, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Open Space

Open space includes, but is not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, rivers and streams; and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open space reserves, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Lands

The MSCP is a long-term conservation planning program designed to facilitate the establishment of a connected preserve system that ensures the long-term survival of sensitive plant and animal species and protects the native vegetation found throughout San Diego County. The MSCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment and creates plans to mitigate for the potential loss of sensitive species and their habitats. The regional San Diego County MSCP Plan was finalized in March of 1998 and covers 582,243 acres over 12 jurisdictions. Individual jurisdictions have the responsibility of preparing Subarea Plans to implement the MSCP within their boundaries. The South County Subarea Plan was adopted by the BOS on October 22, 1997. This South County Subarea Plan covers 252,132 acres in the southwestern portion of the unincorporated area. The County is currently developing new MSCP Plans for the North County and East County. Upon the adoption of these two additional plans, the entire unincorporated County would be included in a MSCP long-term conservation plan, as shown in Figure 2.1-1. However, each MSCP plan is completely independent of the others. Each covers separate territory and includes its own conservation analysis and documentation, including an EIR.

Parks, Open Space Preserves and Reserves

There are a number of regional parks that contain important historical or cultural sites and often museums and/or interpretive centers. The County also has a system of 18 open space preserves and reserves that are distributed primarily in the western and central areas of the County. Figure 2.14-1, Existing Parks, in Section 2.14, Recreation, shows the major parks in San Diego County.

Regional Trails

Regional Trails cover long linear distances, transcend community and/or municipal borders, have State or national significance, and provide important connections to existing parks, open space preserves, and other visual resources. The regional trails system is shown in Figure 2.14-2, Regional Trails Map, in Section 2.14, Recreation.

Privately Owned Open Space Lands

The range of privately owned open space lands includes uses such as private parks, private nature preserves, private land banks, golf courses, club playing fields, and landscaped outdoor areas. Private open space also includes floodplains, steep slope areas, seismic hazard zones, and sensitive habitats over which the County has land use authority. Many of the lands are owned and managed by non-profit conservation groups. These lands are shown in Figure 2.14-1, Existing Parks, in Section 2.14, Recreation.

2.1.1.3 Scenic Highways and Corridors

Scenic Corridors

A freeway, highway, road, or other vehicular right-of-way along a corridor with considerable natural landscape and a high aesthetic value would have the potential to be eligible for a scenic highway designation. Scenic highway corridors generally include the land adjacent to and visible from the vehicular right-of-way. The dimension of the corridor is usually identified using a motorist's line of vision, but a reasonable boundary is selected when the view extends to the distant horizon. Scenic highways are important because land use controls can be applied at a scale that allows the County to preserve the visual integrity of the natural landscape.

Even though the County has an abundance of natural and human-made beauty, only limited segments of these visual resources are viewed regularly. Scenic corridors along the County's roadways, particularly scenic highways, offer an easy means of viewing these resources. Scenic highways can be used to identify and preserve important viewsheds along roadways. The County has prepared Scenic Preservation Guidelines for the Interstate 15 (I-15) Corridor and a Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan Update that aim to maintain existing scenic highways and corridors.

National Scenic Byway (NSB) Program

The NSB Program was established under the Federal Highway Administration with the adoption of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act 1991, with the vision "to create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and treasured places." Sunrise Highway, located in Central Mountain, is designated a U.S. Forest Service Scenic Highway under the NSB Program and is the only NSB in the County. The basis for the NSB Program is to provide resources for the preservation of scenic corridors. The program does not place new restrictions on these highways, and is a voluntary program for citizens to participate in.

State Scenic Highways

State Scenic Highways are those highways that are either officially designated as State Scenic Highways by the Caltrans or are eligible for such designation. Eligible scenic highways are identified in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. The status of a State Scenic Highway changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway designation, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as an official State Scenic Highway. Only two highways in the unincorporated County have been designated as a State Scenic Highway: SR-78 through the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and SR-125 between I-8 and SR-94. Eligible scenic highways include portions of I-5, I-15, SR-94, I-8, SR-79, SR-78, and SR-76 within the unincorporated County. Officially designated California Scenic Highway routes receive street signs displaying a poppy logo. Both designated State Scenic Highways and select eligible scenic highways are shown on Figure 2.1-2. Highways eligible for a State Scenic Highway designation in the unincorporated County are shown in Table 2.1-1.

County Scenic Highway System

The County Scenic Highway System was originally intended to serve as a master plan for official State Scenic Highway designations. The County's Scenic Highway System Priority List serves as the basis for initiating specific corridor studies. Criteria for establishing the County Scenic Highway System Priority List includes:

1. Routes traversing and providing access to major recreation, scenic or historic resources;
2. Routes traversing lands under the jurisdiction of public agencies;
3. Routes supported by significant local community interest; and
4. Routes offering unique opportunities for the protection and enhancement of scenic recreational and historical resources.

Projects meeting three or more of the above criteria are classified as first priority projects and are the highest priority for corridor studies. Routes meeting only two of the above criteria are classified as second priority projects. All other projects are classified as third priority. Only a handful of corridor studies have been initiated due to lack of funding and no routes have been officially designated as a County Scenic Highway. Currently, the list serves more as a source for identifying resources than as a way to implement the scenic highways program. Table 2.1-2 provides the County Scenic Highway System Priority List.

2.1.1.4 Dark Skies

Dark skies are a natural resource in San Diego County and are essential to the study of the celestial bodies. Astronomical research has contributed to a greater understanding of our solar system, supported advances in space travel, improved telecommunication systems, defense and surveillance systems, advanced weather forecasting and atmospheric physics, and provided insight to energy production. The maintenance of dark skies in San Diego County is vital to the two world-class observatories that depend on them for astronomical research: Palomar and Mount Laguna Observatories. Only a few high-quality astronomical research sites exist in the U.S. As two of the best, Palomar and Mount Laguna Observatories currently meet

all of the criteria to be classified as premier astronomical sites. The five criteria for a high-quality site include:

1. **Elevation Over 5,000 Feet AMSL.** A moderately high elevation is necessary to reduce the scattering of light by dust in the lower atmosphere and to place observatories above the marine layer. Very high mountains are of diminished value because of increased cloudiness and snowfall, and frequently very high winds.

2. **Clear, Cloud-free Night Sky.** Mount Palomar and Mount Laguna are the nation's best continental mountain sites in this respect with an average of 6.4 cloud-free hours per night.

3. **Proximity to the Pacific Ocean.** The prevailing on-shore winds at the moderate altitudes of the local observatories provide dust-free and smooth laminar air flow over the observatory mountain tops, which results in stable celestial images. In contrast, the Atlantic Ocean has primarily warm air currents, which when combined with cool air can cause atmospheric turbulence that produces inferior and blurred images. Desert sites, while dark, generally suffer from convective turbulence produced by the daily heating and nighttime cooling cycle, and also from increased dust contamination.

4. **Distance From Urban Areas.** The site must be far enough from large lighted areas, generally 30 to 40 miles, so that the sky over the observatory will not be brightened appreciably. In relative terms, the 200-inch mirror at the Palomar Observatory is strong enough to detect the striking of a match at a point as far away as San Francisco.

5. **Freedom From Nearby Sources of Light, Dust and Smoke.** A light source at a one mile distance has 1,600 times the impact on an observatory as an equivalent light at 40 miles distance. Smoke and dust, even in extremely small amounts, are also highly detrimental to observatories because they increase the scattering of stray light down into the telescope from above.

Sites in the continental U.S. that meet the majority of these criteria are found only in West Texas, Central New Mexico, Arizona, the Central California coast, and San Diego County.

Palomar Observatory

Palomar Observatory, located at the top of Palomar Mountain (5,500 feet elevation) in northern San Diego County, is privately owned and operated by the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and is used to support some of the U.S. and California's premier scientific research programs. Caltech shares use of their Hale Telescope at the Palomar Observatory with astronomers from Cornell University and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The principal instruments at Palomar Observatory include the:

- 200-inch Hale Telescope;
- 48-inch Samuel Oschin Telescope;
- 60-inch reflecting telescope; and
- Palomar Testbed Interferometer, operated by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Scientific research at the Palomar Observatory has been remarkably successful and productive since the site was selected for an observatory in 1934. One of the reasons Palomar Mountain was selected as the site was because its dark skies allow observation of the faintest galaxies without the interference of city lights. The Hale and the other telescopes at the observatory have been used on virtually every clear night to provide astronomers with the information they need to continue to advance the science of astronomy. The scope of research ranges from studies of near-earth asteroids and distant worlds within our solar system to the stars that comprise the Milky Way, and the uncharted and unknown galaxies beyond our own. The Observatory and associated museum and gift shop are open to the public daily.

Mount Laguna Observatory

San Diego State University (SDSU) and the University of Illinois jointly operate the Mount Laguna Observatory. It is located at an altitude of 6,100 feet on the eastern edge of the Cleveland National Forest near the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, approximately 45 miles east of downtown San Diego. Mount Laguna Observatory is one of the best astronomical research sites and educational facilities in the nation. The Observatory was dedicated on June 19, 1968; only seven years after Astronomy became a new department on the SDSU campus. Visiting researchers and students also use the SDSU facilities at Mount Laguna. Sky conditions at Mount Laguna enable the astronomers to conduct their observations almost year-round. The Observatory maintains the Buller 21-inch telescope for public outreach and operates a free Summer Visitors Program jointly with the U.S. Forest Service during which the public is given an astronomical lecture and then given the opportunity to look through the Buller telescope.

Lighting Footprint

For those reasons stated above, the County is committed to ensuring that the two valuable research observatories continue to operate and function for future generations. The observatories are such an important fixture of San Diego County that the County Seal includes an observatory atop a mountain. Conscious efforts must be made to protect the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories from the effects of light pollution that have a detrimental effect on astronomical research by restricting the permitted use of outdoor light fixtures on private property. Dark skies are also an important component to the rural character of several County communities, as described below in Section 2.1.1.5.

Nighttime light is produced primarily by upward pointing or upward reflected light from outdoor lighting. This type of lighting illuminates the nighttime sky from below, just as the sun does from above in the daytime, and can be detrimental to astronomical observations by impacting dark skies. Nighttime light that spills outside its intended area can be annoying to neighbors and potentially harmful to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Further, the health of natural wildlife can also be adversely affected from nighttime lighting. Nighttime lighting in excess of what is necessary for its purpose is called light pollution.

Some land uses tend to have a greater impact on night lighting than others. Commercial land uses tend to have lighted parking lots and signs at night, and use more lighting for nighttime security. Therefore, areas of higher commercial use generally have a greater lighting footprint than most residential areas. Additionally, CPAs with greater development overall generally have a greater lighting footprint than less developed CPAs. The most developed CPAs, which generally have the greatest lighting footprint, are Spring Valley, Valle de Oro, Lakeside, San Dieguito, and North County Metro. Mostly rural residential and/or agricultural CPAs, or those

that contain large areas of open space, such as Bonsall, Central Mountain, and the Desert Subregion, generally have a smaller lighting footprint. CPAs such as Alpine, Ramona, and Fallbrook that have an established commercial village center have a greater lighting footprint in the village center and a lesser lighting footprint in the surrounding rural uses.

2.1.1.5 Community Character

Human-made Scenic Environment

Community design reflects the quality of experiences associated with the community. The range of experiences is defined largely by the visual impression created by the community and its setting. A key factor contributing to community design is the relationship between the built environment and the natural setting.

Aesthetic value is not limited to open space and rural lands, but can also be held in historic structures and districts, architectural design, streetscapes, and manufactured landscapes. These valuable aesthetic elements of the human-made environment can be found throughout the County. A well-known example is the historic gold-mining community of Julian.

Community Character

Community character can be described as the "personality" of the community and is defined by land uses, historical resources, community design, architectural themes, natural resources, and any other man-made or natural features that give the community its overall look and feel. The unincorporated area of San Diego is unique because varying features such as topography, land uses, and natural features allow for a variety in community character throughout the County. The rural uses in many unincorporated communities provide dark skies that are an important nighttime visual resource, as described above, and are an important component of the rural character. Distinct features such as terrain and topography, land uses such as agriculture, the presence of a distinct town center, rural development densities, and designated open space or other natural features are examples of factors that contribute to the character of a community. San Diego County contains 23 CPAs and Subregions, each of which has a distinct community character. The following section describes the character of each community in the unincorporated County.

Alpine CPA

Alpine is a rural community with a well-developed town center area and predominantly residential development. Land use and lot sizes have considerable influence on the rural characteristics of the community, as well as the visual aspects of the community. The town center acts as the central hub of industrial development and higher density residential development. Design guidelines ensure that development within this area maintains a rustic village character. More rural estate residences with two-acre minimum lots are separated from the town center by a buffer of one-acre minimum residential lots. A portion of Alpine is located outside of the SDCWA boundary. Outside of the SDCWA service area, residential lots are larger, with a minimum of four acres per lot, which contribute to the rural quality of the area. The visual quality of the landscape is extremely important as well as the protection of scenic ridgelines from excessive grading. The sparse ridgeline development in the Alpine area can be seen in Photo Location 1 in Figure 2.1-3. The preservation of natural oak groves and the

maintenance and extension of street tree plantings are of special concern to the community. The dark night sky is also considered an important visual characteristic of the Alpine CPA.

Bonsall CPA

Bonsall is a rural community consisting of wide, open panoramic views of agriculture, estate lots, scenic valleys, canyons, ridgelines, and steep boulder-strewn slopes with sweeping views to distant hills, as shown Photo Location 2 in Figure 2.1-3. The Bonsall area consists primarily of low-density estate type residential and agricultural uses. Houses are generally located far apart on hillsides and hilltops, as well as in the valleys. Surrounding the residences are large open spaces composed of fallow fields, undisturbed native vegetation, and agriculture. Agriculture is a key factor in Bonsall's rural community character, as are the scenic, sometimes narrow and winding, rural roads and rolling hill and valley topography. The area offers a tranquil, private, rural life to its residents, through the large open spaces between houses, screening vegetation, beauty of natural landforms, natural resources and features, lack of noise and congestion, and the presence of agriculture and animal farming. The rural characteristic of the Bonsall CPA also provides a dark sky, which is an important characteristic due to the CPA's close proximity to the Palomar Mountain Observatory.

There are many scenic landforms of special concern to the community including Mount Ararat and the view of Sleeping Indian Hill. The Bonsall CPA has a well-developed river system that is centered around the San Luis Rey River, which includes both wetlands and floodplains. Views in this community are enhanced by the many avocado and citrus groves, flower nurseries, and horse ranches surrounded by white estate rail fences. The ridgelines, hilltops, and steep slopes prevalent in Bonsall are important natural resources, and are important factors in the visual beauty and rural character of the community.

Central Mountain Subregion

The Central Mountain Subregion is one of the most visually significant areas in southern California. Claiming six of the 10 highest peaks in San Diego County, the Subregion offers residents and visitors undisturbed views of mountains, meadows, chaparral covered hills, oak woodlands, and riparian canyons. The character varies throughout the many communities in the Subregion, but land uses generally consist of large lot, single-family residential developments, grazing, dry farming lands, and undeveloped open space. Identified visual resources in the Cuyamaca area of the Subregion include the predominance of natural features such as coniferous forests, meadows, peaks, and Cuyamaca Lake, with few residences visible from roads. Sunrise Highway, the only access road to the Laguna Mountain area, is a picturesque, winding, two-lane mountain road with a variety of scenery that includes nearby mountains covered with chaparral, meadows and conifers, and desert panoramas. The area of Buckman Springs is one of the most scenic areas in the Subregion because of its large meadows dotted with oaks and cattle. The Subregion also contains many areas that are not visible from a designated scenic highway, but that have been identified as having scenic value. These areas include Cleveland National Forest, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Cuyamaca Lake, and certain private lands that are visible from public lands and roadways. Dark skies are an important nighttime visual resource in this subregion due to its proximity to the Mount Laguna Observatory. The Central Mountain Subregion contains several communities with distinct character, including Cuyamaca, Descanso, and Pine Valley. These communities are described in greater detail below.

Cuyamaca

Cuyamaca is a small, low-density residential community characterized by several land uses and natural resources. Cuyamaca Lake is a key recreational resource in the community, which also includes a substantial multi-purpose trail network. Land uses in Cuyamaca include limited commercial services serving visitors and the few residents that are nestled among Jeffrey and Coulter pine trees on North Peak. Portions of four very scenic roads traverse the community: SR 79, Sunrise Highway, Engineers Road and Boulder Creek Road. Additionally, the community includes vast acreages of public lands, two very large agricultural preserves, open meadows, and the Inaja Indian Reservation. The main visual characteristic of the area is the predominance of natural features such as coniferous forests, meadows, peaks, and Cuyamaca Lake, with few residences visible from public roads. Rural uses dominate this area. Approximately 95 percent of the region is composed of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest, which also provide important open space visual resources.

Descanso

Descanso is a rural mountain community that values maintaining an agricultural/ranching lifestyle and access to open space. Descanso is bounded on all sides by Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest, and is located on the Viejas Boulevard loop to the west of SR 79. The town is nestled in a river valley, with open meadows, oak groves and pine trees. The valued resources of Descanso include oak, pine, manzanita and woodlands mixed with chaparral, grassland meadows, seasonal creeks below rocky peaks, and an abundance of wildlife. These resources are enjoyed by the riders and hikers using the many trails that are present in the area. The Descanso area is also rich in historical and archaeological sites. Many of the existing residences were built as summer cabins in the early part of this century, and help define Descanso's rural charm. Because Descanso has grown slowly, there is a strong sense of community and a low crime rate. The FCI and lack of water have limited development and preserved open space in the area. The FCI applies 40-acre minimum lots in certain areas in the Cleveland National Forest. For more information on the FCI, refer to Section 2.9.2.3, Local Regulations in Section 2.9, Land Use.

Pine Valley

This area contains three small communities: Pine Valley, Guatay, and Mount Laguna. All are rural communities with low-density development. Commercial development is concentrated along Old Highway 80, and is small in scale, which reflects the area's rural character. Wildlife, forest lands, trails, and open spaces are valued visual resources.

The community of Pine Valley is in the southeast portion of the Central Mountain Subregion along both sides of Old Highway 80. The valley floor has an abundance of large oak and Jeffrey pine trees, manzanita and lilac, and is surrounded by the higher Laguna mountains. The community is bordered on four sides by the Cleveland National Forest, which prevents lateral expansion of any private interest. The area is favored by bicyclists and is a center for equestrian use and hiking into the surrounding mountains. An example of the rural development of Pine Valley surrounded by open space is shown in Photo Location 3 in Figure 2.1-4.

Guatay is located on Old Highway 80 at an elevation of 4,000 feet AMSL, rising above Descanso on the west and Pine Valley on the east. Guatay has an abundance of oak trees, manzanita, wild lilac and a grove of rare Tecate cypress. Guatay is surrounded by Cleveland

National Forest. This provides Guatay with an abundance of open space and wildlife habitat. Scattered commercial and civic uses are located throughout the town.

The Mount Laguna area is characterized by its moderate to cool summer mountain climate, natural pine-oak forests with various types of wildlife, a rural atmosphere with picnic areas and campgrounds, and panoramic desert views. The few residences and cabins in the area are generally constructed of logs, wooden planks, and stonework, which reflect the rustic charm of decades gone by.

County Islands CPA

The County Islands CPA is comprised of three small, non-contiguous, isolated areas interspersed within incorporated areas. These separate areas are known as Lincoln Acres, Greenwood, and Mira Mesa (not to be confused with the community of Mira Mesa in the City of San Diego). The Lincoln Acres area is characterized by single family residences and a cemetery. Greenwood is entirely encompassed by a cemetery. Mira Mesa is comprised predominantly of equestrian-oriented use.

Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills Subregion

The Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills Subregion contains four separate communities that exhibit, to varying degrees, a physical, social and cultural environment that provides relief from fast growing areas such as the City of El Cajon and the unincorporated community of Alpine. A dark night sky is an essential element of the rural character of each community in the Subregion.

Crest

Crest is a unique mountain-top community that overlooks the Dehesa Valley to the south, Lakeside to the north and El Cajon to the west. The historic town center of Crest contains single-family residences built at densities typical of suburban areas. There are many constraints to development within the town center. There are no sewers; consequently, lots must be large enough to accommodate adequate septic systems. Many of the residential streets in Crest are narrow and unpaved, which is consistent with the rural character of the area. Only certain small businesses are allowed in areas designated for limited agricultural use, which adds to the rural historic character of the community.

The topography of the area isolates Crest from urbanized areas to the north and west, while giving residents access to urban amenities via La Cresta Road. The steep slopes that surround the Crest town center are mostly exposed granite. The landscape within the town center is varied and includes introduced species, indigenous oak and coastal sage scrub, and thriving stands of eucalyptus trees that have existed since the early days of the settlement. Large groupings of granite rocks are another important element of the visual character of Crest. The historic town site of Crest contrasts with the area of estate development located to the north. In addition, many large, undeveloped and heavily constrained tracts of land are located to the south, east and west. Dehesa (Suncrest) Mountain to the south, Ironside Mountain to the northeast and El Capitan, in the distance to the north, are highly significant scenic resources in the Crest area.

Dehesa

The Dehesa Valley is a picturesque, pastoral, agricultural area located along the upper reaches of the north fork of the Sweetwater River and along the lower portions of Harbison Canyon Creek. Today, Dehesa remains primarily an agricultural and residential community. While agriculture has almost disappeared from the Dehesa Valley, its distinctive rural character still remains. Mountains rising up on all sides of Dehesa keep development contained and separated from the neighboring communities of Alpine, Crest, Harbison Canyon, and Granite Hills. An example of the mountains in the Dehesa area is shown in Photo Location 4 of Figure 2.1-4.

Architecturally, the Dehesa area is a diverse mixture of farm houses and estate-sized residences with no specific style predominating. Horseback riding is an important pastime in Dehesa and trails exist throughout the area. Sloan Canyon is formed by the main channel of the Sweetwater River and it is located between Loveland Reservoir and where the river turns west to parallel Dehesa Road. The landscape is rugged and very scenic with steep slopes covered with oaks, chaparral and scenic rock outcroppings. With the exception of the portion of the channel that is currently being mined for construction quality sand, Sloan Canyon remains in its natural state.

Harbison Canyon

Harbison Canyon is a small community located along an oak-lined mountain valley. First subdivided in the early 1900's, the intent was to provide a destination for those seeking some relief from the pressures of the urbanizing San Diego area. The original lots were very small and would not be able to accommodate today's full-sized single-family residence. Most of the initial development was comprised of small cottages or cabins used mostly for weekend retreats.

Development progressed slowly and in most cases the small lots were combined to provide building sites that would meet the County Department of Environmental Health requirements for septic systems. Over the years, the lack of large scale development in Harbison Canyon has given the community a pleasingly eclectic appearance and the need to customize building sites creates a positive sense of closeness. The need to carefully pick building sites has resulted in residential development that is adapted to the major physical elements of the community, which include vegetation and natural habitat, Harbison Canyon Creek, steep canyon walls with massive rock outcroppings, and ridgetops that provide an important aesthetic resource.

The roads in Harbison Canyon are tree-lined country lanes. Some are not paved and many simply appear to end up as private driveways. Even Harbison Canyon Road, despite increasing traffic, retains a winding alignment and tree-lined appearance.

Granite Hills

Granite Hills is located in the western portion of the Subregion. It is split into north and south sections by a finger of land that is within the jurisdiction of the City of El Cajon, which penetrates in a west-to-east direction. Development within the County's jurisdiction generally blends in well with the development within the City. One main difference is that sewer service is available to the residents within the City, and consequently, lot sizes can be smaller. While smaller lots do exist, especially in the northern section of Granite Hills, the prevailing lots size is about one acre. Another typical difference between City of El Cajon and County development is that streets within the City have curbs, gutters and, sometimes, sidewalks, while the County areas

do not. The absence of these types of street improvements enhances the semi-rural ambience of Granite Hills.

While Granite Hills has been gradually changing from agriculture to residential uses, some small-scale agricultural operations remain. Horse ownership is common and there is a frequently used equestrian facility on Greenfield Drive. The topography is gently rolling in character and gradually increasing in elevation to the east where it rises abruptly along a ridge covered in chaparral and granite rock outcroppings. The predominant feature of the Granite Hills area is the semi-rural settlement pattern set against a background of chaparral covered granite ridges.

Desert Subregion

This subregion has a natural desert ambiance and rural town character. The environment of the Borrego Valley is the greatest natural resource in the Desert Subregion. The warm, mild winters make it a prime location for resort development. Clean air, clear skies and proximity to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are also factors that add to Borrego Valley's potential as a high-quality and profitable winter resort. Seasonal wildflower displays in the Desert are an important visual resource that provides a tourist attraction during the spring. Additionally, a great deal of scenic and recreational value is gained from the presence of the Anza-Borrego State Park within the Subregion.

Agriculture became an important activity in the Borrego Valley during the years following World War II. Various types of agricultural activity still remain in the northwest corner of Borrego Springs including the harvesting of citrus orchards, potato fields, and tree farms. Additionally, the dark night sky in the Desert Subregion is a natural resource enjoyed by residents and visitors to the desert. The dark sky is also essential to the effective operations of the nearby observatories.

Borrego Springs is a low-density rural and commercial community with a diverse but small-scale commercial area serving the Desert Subregion, low-density permanent and seasonal homes, hotels and tourist resorts. The community is tourist destination because of these resorts and its proximity to the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, which surrounds the community and also provides a visual resource to residents and visitors. Borrego Springs strives to maintain a pedestrian-friendly village and pedestrian-friendly roads. The Borrego Springs town center is composed of well-maintained, low rise commercial buildings, small shops and offices giving it an attractive and unique small desert town character. Christmas Circle marks the entrance into the village of Borrego Springs from the east and hosts many art shows and community events. The Borrego Springs town center caters to over one million Anza-Borrego Desert State Park visitors annually. The community also caters to a large retirement community that enjoys the five golf courses situated in densely landscaped resorts.

Fallbrook CPA

Fallbrook currently has a unique village atmosphere characterized by predominately low density residential development and agricultural uses. The community has a well-developed network of roads that consists of multiple linkages to allow for narrower roads. Fallbrook contains a vibrant and prosperous town center that is important to its community character and is the primary commercial and industrial area. Outside of the town center Fallbrook has a rural and agricultural character. Areas of rugged terrain, particularly in the northern part of the community

along the Santa Margarita River, are important natural resources, as well as the San Luis Rey River floodplain in the southern area. The CPA has maintained a dark night sky, which is important to the nearby Palomar Observatory.

Jamul/Dulzura Subregion

Important to the character of the Jamul/Dulzura Subregion are the historical aspects of the community and the preservation of environmental resources and rural character. There are several historical sites of significance within the Subregion, including the Barrett House, the Mataguay Historic District, the Barn at the Oaks, and Dulzura Cafe. These sites not only offer a unique glimpse into the past and contribute to the rural atmosphere, but also add to its sentimental appeal and strong roots.

The Jamul/Dulzura Subregion is composed of several small rural communities including Jamul, Steele Canyon, Dulzura, and Barrett Junction. Generally, the Subregion has remained rural in character due in part to the lack of a sewer system and availability of imported water service only in the northwestern portion of the Subregion. Commercial activities are comprised of the small shopping plaza located at Proctor Valley Road and SR-94 as well as the Barrett Café Fish Fry. Agriculture is still a major land use in the Subregion and much of the land is dedicated to this use. This rural development gives the Subregion a historical character. Dark skies in the area are considered an important aesthetic resource.

Jamul

Jamul is the largest community in the Subregion, and its surrounding hills and valleys accommodate a majority of the Subregion's population. Jamul is a rural town with small commercial centers located at two main intersections along SR-94. The town is the social focal point and primary recreational center for the community. It contains historical structures, including the Jamul School House and the Barrett House, built in 1890, which give it a scenic character. The riparian and oak woodlands along SR-94 are another important visual resource for the community.

Steele Canyon

Steele Canyon is a small, semi-rural community along SR-94. The community is located in a meadow on the Proctor Valley floor that contains woodland and streams. The valley is an important visual resource to the community and is especially vital to the scenic character of the Steele Canyon Golf Course. This is an important asset to the community because it is one of three San Diego County golf courses to be awarded Golf Digest's Four Star Rating (Steele 2008).

Dulzura

Dulzura is also a rural community, but it is valued as a recreational resource because of its outstanding scenic value in terms of view, natural vegetation, watercourses, and scenic geological formations, such as the Mother Grundy rock formation. Dulzura Creek and the historic Dulzura Café, built in 1900, are also important contributors to the visual character of the community.

Barrett Junction

Barrett Junction is located along a portion of SR-94 that offers scenic views of the surrounding mountain landscape. The historic Barrett Junction Café and Mercantile is an important

contributor to the community's rural and historic character that attracts SR-94 travelers (Barrett 2008).

Julian CPA

Julian continues to remind visitors of its colorful gold-rush past by preserving the architectural authenticity of the area's early years of settlement. Today, this area is known as the Julian Historical District and is shown in Photo Location 5 is Figure 2.1-5. The area continues to maintain a rural lifestyle outside the Historic District. Large ranches dedicate expanses of land to grazing and smaller ranches often support orchards or wineries.

Scenic resources in the surrounding areas also add to the community character of Julian. Volcan Mountain's great size (20 square miles) dominates the Julian area and is considered an important visual resource. In addition, the area from the junction of SR-78 and SR-79 through the historic town site to Santa Ysabel offers a scenic drive that alternates between enclosed wooded areas and wide open meadows.

Lakeside CPA

Lakeside is a large, distinct residential community that maintains a rural atmosphere and is made up a several individually distinct residential neighborhoods, including Bostonia, Glenview, Johnstown, Lakeview, Wintergardens, Rockcrest, Eucalyptus Hills, Moreno Valley, and Blossom Valley. These neighborhoods are primarily single-family residential developments; however, Bostonia also includes multi-family residences. Eucalyptus Hill, Moreno Valley, and Blossom Valley also include agricultural uses. Many residential areas of Lakeside are bordered by undeveloped areas, such as the Eucalyptus Hills neighborhood. Distinct business/industry and agricultural neighborhoods are also found in the CPA, such as the Slaughterhouse Canyon industrial area. The majority of commercial and industrial uses in Lakeside are located in the town center, which has a historic rural character. Lindo Lake, shown in Photo Location 6 in Figure 2.1-5, is a visual resource important to the character of Lakeside. Located in Lakeside's town center, the Lindo Lake County Park provides a library, community building, and outdoor passive recreation areas. Another prominent visual resource in Lakeside is the San Diego River, which runs east to west through the center of the CPA.

Mountain Empire Subregion

The Mountain Empire Subregion contains six communities/areas that have their own unique identities but are similar in many natural characteristics such as topography, water resources, and environment. These areas are Tecate, Potrero, Boulevard, Campo/Lake Morena, Jacumba and the remainder of the plan area. The dark night sky is an important resource for each community in the Subregion.

Tecate

Because the Tecate area contains a U.S./Mexico international border crossing, it has certain land uses that are unique, such as commercial and industrial uses at higher densities than other nearby communities. This is due to its proximity to Tecate, Mexico, which is a heavy industrial and commercial area that has given rise to intensive non-residential uses in Tecate, California, as shown in Photo Location 7 in Figure 2.1-6. The prominent Tecate Peak provides a visual resource to the community.

Potrero

The Potrero area has unique natural characteristics including a gently sloping valley floor bisected by Potrero Creek and surrounding mountains that offer views of the Potrero Valley. Potrero is also located in close proximity to the U.S./Mexico international border and the growing City of Tecate, Mexico. This community is rural and contains historic structures that give it a country character. The town center and its commercial uses are located along SR-94 and attract traveling visitors.

Campo/Lake Morena

The Campo area consists of three clusters of development that have historically been rural in character: Campo, Lake Morena and Cameron Corners. Campo and Lake Morena have existing town centers. The Campo Stone Store is an important historic building open to the public that adds to the historic character of the area. Lake Morena Park is an important visual resource on the Lake Morena lakefront with facilities for camping, fishing, hiking, and an entrance to the Pacific Crest Trail.

Boulevard

Boulevard is a linear, highway-oriented community that has been altered by the construction of I-8. Boulevard has a rural character with a town center area. The Golden Acorn Casino in the community has expanded commercial development; however, most commercial development is comprised of small businesses and maintains its rural character. The natural resources in the area, such as large areas of open space and varied topography, are considered a visual resource to the community and the region.

Jacumba

Jacumba is unique in both its natural and manmade settings and has a long history of human occupation. Natural attributes such as hot springs, a desert environment, and clean air attracted many residents to the area, which brought about the town's development and remain important natural resources.

Remaining Area

The northern portions of the Subregion consist primarily of lands such as the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, agricultural preserves and other public lands. Mountain Empire residents recognize the presence of native oaks as a significant historical, aesthetic and ecological resource that contributes to its distinctive character. A variety of land formations are also located in the Subregion, some of which have scenic value.

North County Metro Subregion

Development pressure from urbanized areas has resulted in single-family development patterns throughout the Subregion. The two main communities in this Subregion are Hidden Meadows and Twin Oaks; however, the Subregion contains several other developed or developing areas including the site of the approved Harmony Grove Village Specific Plan discussed further below. While topographically constrained areas remain largely undeveloped in the Twin Oaks and Hidden Meadows areas, both communities contain single-family homes with varying lot sizes. Additional unincorporated areas that are included in this Subregion are interspersed throughout the adjacent cities of Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido, and are predominately rural residential in nature but also provide multi-family uses. The Subregion does not have significant amounts

of commercial and industrial uses because these uses are generally found within the neighboring cities. The steep slopes that have constrained development in this area provide scenic rugged terrain. The Jesmond Dene Oaks located in this Subregion also have scenic value and contribute to the character of the subregion.

Hidden Meadows

Hidden Meadows is a semi-rural community with an established village core. The area is characterized by steep slopes that are an important visual resource. The community is also known for the numerous rock outcrops that have been integrated into the development of the community.

Twin Oaks

Steep slopes in the Twin Oaks community provide a visual resource and have constrained development that has helped to maintain the rural character of the area, especially in the northern area. Much of the land uses in community consist of avocado fields, nurseries, and tree farms that contribute to the scenic visual character.

Harmony Grove Village

Harmony Grove Village is an approved specific plan in the southern portion of the North County Metro Subregion adjacent to Escondido. The specific plan proposes a village center providing residential and commercial uses. The village would maintain a rural and equestrian character with single-family residential development and large areas of open space. The specific plan also proposes multi-purpose recreational trails, including trails for equestrian use. As part of the General Plan Update, Harmony Grove Village and the surrounding area are proposed to be moved to the San Dieguito CPA.

North Mountain Subregion

The North Mountain Subregion is characterized by vast open expanses of land and scattered rural residential development. The Aguana Mountains are a visual resource for this Subregion by providing a scenic mountainous landscape. The mountains are partially located within the Aqua Tibia Wilderness RCA and contain scenic rock outcroppings. Lake Henshaw is an important scenic water resource and recreation area for the Subregion. Other visual resources associated with Lake Henshaw are the San Luis Rey River, which empties into Lake Henshaw, and the Lake Henshaw Basin, which is characterized by vast expanses of grasslands and isolated oak woodlands. San Felipe Hills and San Felipe Valley are also important visual resources. The area is characterized by a series of large hills reaching 4,000 feet AMSL. This roadless area contains undisturbed desert-transition vegetation types that provide shelter for reptiles and desert birds. Additionally, the majority of the Mesa Grande area is within the Cleveland National Forest. This area is mountainous with elevations over 5,000 feet AMSL. Gem-bearing pegmatite producing tourmaline and topaz are known to occur in the area. Vegetation and wildlife in Mesa Grande is highly diverse. In the area surrounding Mesa Grande, vast acreages of relatively undisturbed oak woodlands occur supporting a wide range of species. Additionally, within the valley, rare riparian habitat occurs surrounded by steep chaparral-covered slopes. The Oak Grove area contains extensive chaparral, forested mountains, and grassland valleys that are characteristic of this community and contribute to its scenic visual character. Rural communities in the North Mountain Subregion include Santa Ysabel and Sunshine Summit, Warner Springs, Palomar Mountain, and Chihuahua Valley and

Ranchita. Each community is distinctly different, but common to all is the pursuit of a rural lifestyle. Additional discussions of these communities are provided below.

Santa Ysabel and Sunshine Summit

Santa Ysabel and Sunshine Summit are smaller commercial areas that serve a scattered population in the surrounding rural areas. Santa Ysabel provides highway-oriented commercial uses which provide services to local residents and are a popular tourist destination for mountain areas visitors. Both are located along SR-78 and SR-79 and are characterized by large stands of oak and eucalyptus trees. These trees are important visual resources that distinguish these communities from their surroundings. Additionally, Santa Ysabel Valley in the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve is an important visual resource with sloping meadows and oak trees.

Warner Springs

Warner Springs contains the Warner Springs Ranch Specific Plan. The ranch was first used as a resort in the late 1800s for travelers from New Mexico and Arizona and its use as a resort continues today. The Warner Springs Ranch supports various recreational amenities, resort lodging, commercial uses, residential uses within and adjacent to Warner Springs, range lands, and a Native American cultural preserve that are visual resources.

Palomar Mountain

This area is located in the northwest portion of the Subregion. Dense forests of coniferous and deciduous trees provide the scenic mountain ambience that defines the community character of Palomar Mountain. Palomar Mountain supports montane coniferous forest and the related species found in this habitat. The montane coniferous forest is characterized by large trees and a well-shaded understory. The residential areas first experienced significant development in the early 1900s and some of the older cabins and other structures still exist. Today, the mountain supports both full and part-time residents, resulting in a mixture of types and sizes of residences, as well as the Palomar Mountain Observatory. The observatory is located in this area because of another visual resource of the community, its dark night sky. Palomar Mountain is also a unique historical area because it has been preserved, in part, by inclusion in the State Park System and as federal forest land.

Chihuahua Valley and Ranchita

These are primarily low-density residential areas located in isolated valleys that support a relatively concentrated population. Historically Chihuahua Valley was used for cattle grazing. Continued use of the area for animal husbandry and other agriculture, combined with the availability of open space including hiking trails, provides visual resources for the area (Chihuahua 2008).

Otay Subregion

The Otay community is characterized by rolling hills, vast open mesas, numerous river valleys and canyons, and a series of mountain ranges with steep, rugged terrain. Otay Mesa contains large undeveloped parcels of land, and is located near a large labor pool (Mexico), moderately priced housing and a general aviation airport (Brown Field), which makes it highly suitable for large scale industrial development. In addition, the Subregion also contains valuable agricultural land. The most distinguishing geographic features include the Upper and Lower Otay Reservoirs, Otay Mountain, and the Jamul and San Ysidro Mountain ranges. Two major canyons, O'Neal and Johnson, have been deeply cut into the northernmost edge of the mesa

and drain into the Otay River located within Otay Valley. Otay Valley, comprising the northerly portion of the area, contains at its center the relatively flat Otay River floodplain. The topography to the east of the mesa is characterized by low, gently rolling hills that gradually evolve into the deep slopes of the San Ysidro Mountains. A large portion of the land within the Subregion is either within a specific plan or contains public/semi-public uses. Industrial uses are present primarily in the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan, which encompasses an area of approximately 3,374 acres extending generally from the Otay River Valley southerly to the international border. The East Otay Mesa Specific Plan is bordered on the west by the City of San Diego and on the east by the San Ysidro Mountains.

Pala/Pauma Valley Subregion

Due to its relatively remote location and rugged topography, much of the CPA is either undeveloped, parkland, or in agricultural production. Land uses are rural and agricultural, with open space buffers providing a visual separation between communities. Commercial land uses in Pala/Pauma are located exclusively along SR-76 including the Pauma Valley Country Club. Additionally, two private airports are located in this Subregion: the Pauma Air Park and Lyall Roberts Airport. Several Native American Indian reservations are located in the Subregion, including Pala, Pauma/Yuima, Rincon, and La Jolla. Collectively, the reservations contain multiple casinos; however, they also provide scenic areas of open space. Pala Mountain and the San Luis Rey River are important visual resources because of large areas of undisturbed riparian woodland vegetation and large growth mixed chaparral vegetation on the mountain slopes. The rural community of Pala includes the Pala Pegmatite District, which contains extensive pegmatite dikes with gem-quality minerals. The Rincon Springs community also contains the Rincon Pegmatite District, which is an area containing scenic pegmatite dikes that have produced gem-quality minerals. It has been listed by the California Natural Area Coordinating Council as a significant natural area. The agricultural character of Pauma Valley is a visual resource with extensive citrus trees, avocado groves, and a large nursery.

Pendleton/De Luz CPA

The Pendleton/De Luz CPA is a rural region, characterized by steep topography and minimal development. The majority of the plan area is undeveloped with wild shrub and tree-covered mountains. The plan area is comprised of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and the Cleveland National Forest. Access to the area is limited and over 75 percent of the planning area is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. military (Camp Pendleton), with the vast majority of the area population located on the military base. I-5 traverses the western edge of this planning area.

Rainbow CPA

Rainbow is a highly scenic rural community with low density development consisting primarily of agricultural uses centered within the town center. Septic problems, access issues, and topographic and biological constraints have greatly limited development and preserved open spaces in this area. The CPA contains relatively unspoiled natural topography and scenic resources, characterized by primarily undeveloped land, steep slopes and panoramic ridgeline views. The I-15 corridor that passes through the Rainbow area is considered scenic, characterized by mostly undeveloped land, steep slopes, ridges and panoramic views. Rainbow's town center is located along the I-15. In addition, the I-15 corridor is one of the major

entryways into San Diego County and has a rural and scenic quality. Pristine riparian valleys and steep rocky slopes are scattered throughout the CPA.

Ramona CPA

Ramona is a rural community with a well-developed town center area that prides itself on maintaining a country lifestyle. Residential development is similar to suburban development densities. While land use and lot sizes have considerable influence on the rural characteristics of the community, the visual aspects of the community and the "design ambiance" at the community scale preserve Ramona's rural atmosphere. Centralized industrial and commercial areas have been created to keep the residential and agricultural areas of the Goose Valley and Highland Valley free from industrial/commercial encroachment and to maintain the present lifestyle. Within the town center, design guidelines have been applied to existing developments to ensure that landscaping, lighting, siting of structures, appearance, and signage are compatible with the existing "country look" of the community. Additionally, the visual quality of the landscape is extremely important. Ridgelines are the scenic backdrop of the Santa Maria Valley that is significant to the visual character of the community. Other scenic features in Ramona are the historic town center, Main Street colonnade, street trees, Santa Maria Creek, vernal pools, wetlands, oak groves, grasslands, rock outcroppings, riding and hiking trails, and agricultural land.

San Dieguito CPA

The San Dieguito CPA is primarily an estate development area with many idyllic, rural qualities, as shown in Photo Location 8 in Figure 2.1-6. The residents are, generally, in the upper income levels and have purposely located in San Dieguito because of the peaceful, quiet, rural elements that the area offers. The combination of low noise levels, a dark night sky and abundant open space distinguishes this area from the urbanized development to the west. There are a number of communities within the San Dieguito CPA that have developed independently and have evolved distinct identities.

4S Ranch

The 4S Ranch Specific Plan encompasses the eastern portion of the CPA and is located just west of the City of San Diego community of Rancho Bernardo. This specific plan has a suburban character, with single-family residential development and a town center, interspersed with open space and recreational trails. In addition, this specific plan contains a business park.

Rancho Santa Fe

The design of the residential subdivision called Rancho Santa Fe was based on a concept that had its origins in the English countryside. The roads have a winding, rural appearance that tends to discourage high speeds and through traffic. The Rancho Santa Fe Association, a homeowners association, was formed as a non-profit corporation on July 14, 1927. The association adopted a protective covenant that used deed restrictions to maintain community style. This protective covenant set forth detailed building, land use and subdivision requirements. As it exists today, the Rancho Santa Fe covenant area covers approximately 6,200 acres. This area contains 1,830 residential building sites, 321 of which are unimproved.

Elfin Forest

The settlement of Elfin Forest is located in the northern part of the San Dieguito CPA. This area is rural in nature, extremely quiet, peaceful, and generally remains in its natural state. Large areas of vacant land remain in Elfin Forest. The area contains mostly 2 and 4 acre minimum parcel sizes. There is no street lighting, lighted signs or traffic signals in Elfin Forest, making the dark night an important aesthetic resource. In addition, outside lighting of residences is customarily kept to a minimum. The most scenic views are of the hills, valleys and riparian habitat.

Del Dios

Del Dios is a small community located along the western shores of Lake Hodges. The Lake Hodges Dam was constructed around 1918 to serve the water needs of downstream coastal areas. The original subdivision design of Del Dios included 5,000 square feet lots to promote the area for resort and recreational opportunities. A strict building and septic moratorium was placed on Del Dios in 1954 because of its proximity to the potable water supply within the lake. Since then, Del Dios has changed very little and it retains a unique rural character that has been unaffected by recent development trends. The Del Dios community has remained intact since the mid 1920s, and has served the region as a retreat from urban pressures.

Mount Israel

Mount Israel is located in the mountainous area west of Lake Hodges and Del Dios. The area was once known as Aliso, and it was comprised of a community of homesteaders living between San Elijo Canyon and the San Dieguito River, northwest of what is now Lake Hodges. The Mount Israel area is noted for its peaceful, rural atmosphere with undisturbed natural views, oak groves and creeks. From many areas of the community there is a feeling of being totally isolated from urbanization.

Fairbanks Ranch and Vicinity

This area is located, generally, south of the San Dieguito River and it is bounded by the limits of the City of San Diego on the south, west and east. It is separated from the primarily residential Santa Fe Valley Specific Plan located to the east by a line running due south from the confluence of the San Dieguito River and Lusardi Creek. The Fairbanks Ranch area has been developed since 1980 with single family detached dwellings on lots with two acre minimums. Existing residential development has taken place mainly on the low rolling hills south of the San Dieguito River and generally consists of beautiful residential projects with ample open space and recreational areas. Other important elements contributing to the character of this area are the native vegetation; the night skies that are free from light pollution; riding trails; and careful supervision of residential architecture by homeowners associations.

Sun Valley and Vicinity

The Sun Valley area is comprised of a number of homeowners associations and other residentially subdivided land located between the incorporated cities of Solana Beach and Encinitas; the City of San Diego; and the covenant area of the Rancho Santa Fe Association.

When Solana Beach incorporated in 1985, this area was purposely excluded because the residents felt that they had more in common with the rural areas to the east. Hoping to maintain and enhance the rural aspects of their neighborhood, citizens from the area formulated a report describing those elements that give their neighborhood its unique character. The report also

included recommendations on how these qualities might be preserved. This area was generally characterized as being quiet, peaceful, serene, and scenic. The absence of urban type improvements like curbs, gutters and sidewalks help give the narrow, meandering roads a country like appearance. Also, the wooded corridor that Sun Valley Road follows from Linea del Cielo south toward Via de la Valle is a valuable visual resource. Low noise levels are a unique quality of this area which significantly enhances its character.

Spring Valley CPA

The Spring Valley area is an older suburban community with a wide range of development types due to fragmented ownership and subsequent development in the area. The community provides older semi-rural development in the northern area near Bancroft Drive, upper-income housing on Dictionary Hill and the adjacent slopes, tract-housing developments west of Spring Valley Creek, and areas with newly constructed apartment projects. This CPA is one of the most developed in the unincorporated area with little undeveloped area, as shown in Photo Location 9 in Figure 2.1-7; however, the Sweetwater River floodplain does provide scenic riparian and riparian woodland habitats that support a variety of wildlife.

Sweetwater CPA

Surrounded by highly urbanized areas, the Sweetwater community contains rural features with suburban development that make the Sweetwater River Valley unique. The visual character of the community includes large lots, hiking and riding trails, large open spaces, and unobstructed views of these open spaces. Sweetwater Road and Bonita Road are the principal roadways providing access to land uses within the community. Large areas of open space occur in many locations throughout the community. Two golf courses lie in the riverbed. Sweetwater and Rohr Parks line the south side of Sweetwater Road from Willows Road to Central Avenue. The San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, semi-public lands, and a section of undeveloped land known as Bonita Meadows make up the eastern portion of the Sweetwater area. Expansive unobstructed vistas, as well as Mother Miguel Mountain, are also important visual resources.

Valle de Oro CPA

The Valle de Oro community consists of a unique balance of urban, semi-rural, agricultural, and open space land uses. It contains three broad areas that are somewhat divergent in their individual character. The Mount Helix/Casa de Oro area generally consists of commercial and high-density residential land uses along Campo Road and low-density, high-income housing on the slopes of Mount Helix. To the east, the area gradually becomes more rural and agricultural in the vicinity of Jamacha Road. The Rancho San Diego in the southeast has been developed with large-scale, well-planned residential and commercial developments interspersed with large areas of green-belt open space and biological open space needed for wildlife preservation. This area also includes a 1,800-acre National Wildlife Refuge that offers opportunities for open space, habitat conservation, and limited forms of recreation. The Vista Grande Hills area in the northeast contains suburban and semi-rural development that transitions to more rural, agricultural, and estate-oriented development. Mother Miguel Mountain, Sweetwater Reservoir, and San Miguel Mountain are located in the vicinity of Valle de Oro and constitute important visual resources.

Valley Center CPA

Valley Center is characterized as a scenic, rural community with a combination of agricultural uses, riparian valleys, open space and rolling hills scattered throughout the plan area. Although urbanization has greatly diminished agricultural uses in other areas of the County, Valley Center has maintained its rural identity. A rural residential pattern of development, historically dependant upon septic systems, with scattered agricultural and livestock uses predominates the valley, as shown in Photo Location 10 in Figure 2.1-7. Two-lane roads that follow the natural topography, many of which are bordered with beautiful oak canopies, support the circulation system. The residents of Valley Center consider their community to be one of the few places where one can enjoy a scenic natural environment and climate, while at the same time live within a reasonable distance to areas for employment and other regional urban services. The rural character of the community has retained a dark nighttime sky which is considered an important resource due to the proximity of the Palomar Mountain Observatory.

2.1.2 Regulatory Framework

2.1.2.1 Federal

National Highway System (NHS) Designation Act of 1995

This landmark legislation designates almost 260,000 kilometers (160,955 miles) of roads as the NHS. Title III, Section 304 of the legislation allows, but does not mandate, design standards for NHS projects that take into account the constructed and natural environment of the area including the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and preservation impacts of the proposed activity.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1962

The NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. In addition to other projects, prospective issuance of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license for construction of cell towers and other wireless communication facilities is an “undertaking” subject to Section 106 of the NHPA.

Telecommunications Act of 1996

This legislation of the FCC standardizes the playing field for telecommunications businesses. The legislation also prohibits local governments from banning wireless telecommunications towers, but gives local governments the right to enact ordinances to ensure wireless towers are sited and designed appropriately.

2.1.2.2 State

California Energy Code

The California Energy Code creates standards in an effort to reduce energy consumption. The type of luminaries and the allowable wattage of certain outdoor lighting applications are regulated.

California Street and Highways Code

The California Street and Highways Code establishes standards for undertaking the development and designation of official scenic highways and assigns responsibility for the development of scenic highways to local jurisdictions. It establishes the State Scenic Highway system by designating highways that are either eligible for designation as a State Scenic Highway or have been designated as such.

State Scenic Highways Program

The California Scenic Highways Program was created by the California Scenic Highway Law in 1963 with the purpose of preserving and protecting scenic highway corridors from any change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. State Scenic Highways are those highways that are either officially designated by Caltrans or are eligible for designation. The statewide system of scenic highways is part of the Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official State Designation as Scenic Highways. Scenic highway nominations are evaluated using the following criteria:

- The proposed scenic highway is principally within an unspoiled native habitat and showcases the unique aspects of the landscape, agriculture, or man-made water features;
- Existing visual intrusions do not significantly impact the scenic corridor;
- Strong local support for the proposed scenic highway designation is demonstrated; and
- The length of the proposed scenic highway is not short or segmented.

A highway's status changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a Scenic Corridor Protection Program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as an official State Scenic Highway. Once a scenic highway is designated, the responsibility lies with the local jurisdiction to regulate development within the scenic highway corridor. This applies only to areas where the local agency has land use jurisdiction.

2.1.2.3 Local

San Diego County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Policy I-73, Hillside Development Policy

The Hillside Development policy was adopted by the County of San Diego BOS in 1979 to minimize the effects of disturbing natural terrain and provides for creative design of hillside developments. The Hillside Development Policy provides flexible guidelines for reducing the effects of disturbance of steep slopes. Specifically, the guidelines aim to "preserve, enhance, or improve the physical features of the area consistent with providing building sites while at the same time optimizing the aesthetic quality of the final product." However, this policy is duplicative with the goals and policies of the General Plan Update and County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 86.601-86.608, the RPO. As described in Chapter 1.0, Project Description, the Hillside Development Policy is proposed to be repealed as part of the proposed project.

Community Plans

Individual community plans identify, and sometimes prioritize, policies for specific scenic corridors that are important resources for the community to preserve. Generally, these corridors are consistent with the priority list of scenic routes identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element. Community plans list and describe the RCAs that are located within the community and identify goals and policies for their protection.

County Community Right-of-Way Development Standards

Board Policy J-36, adopted December 1989, provides a procedure by which communities can deviate from the established County Public Road Standards, and replace or augment them with standards tailored to their community. The Community Right-of Way Development Standards provide alternative right-of-way regulatory standards within the road right-of-way that supersede the County Public Road Standards. The purpose of these Standards is to ensure that the road right-of-way is designed to better enhance and retain the character of individual communities while maintaining the safety of the roadway. Community Right-of-Way Development Standards have been prepared for the communities of Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Julian, and San Dieguito.

Design Review Guidelines

Design review guidelines have been developed for the I-15 Corridor from the Escondido City Limit to the Riverside County Line and for the following communities of unincorporated San Diego County: Alpine, Bonsall, Fallbrook, Julian, Lakeside, Ramona, Rancho San Diego, Spring Valley, Sweetwater, and Valley Center. The design guidelines specify the types of design permitted in each community, including architecture, landscaping, building uses, designation of scenic roads, slope modifications, and overall visual effect.

I-15 Corridor: Scenic Preservation Guidelines

Scenic preservation guidelines have been established to help preserve viewsheds in five communities within the unincorporated county along the I-15 corridor. These communities are Rainbow, Fallbrook, Bonsall, Valley Center, and North County Metro. The guidelines seek to balance protection of scenic resources within the I-15 corridor area while accommodating "development which harmonizes with the natural environment." The guidelines establish standards to regulate the visual quality and the environmental integrity of the entire corridor and encourage scenic preservation and development practices compatible with the goals and policies of the five CPAs when appropriate.

County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 86.601-86.608, Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO)

The RPO protects a variety of resources, including steep slopes. The ordinance limits development on steep slopes through encroachment minimums, density restrictions on steep slope lands, and through requirements for steep slope areas to be placed in easements. The requirements of this ordinance therefore will often result in the protection of slopes in their natural state, which provides the added benefit of protecting a potential aesthetic resource. Other provisions of the RPO require preservation of sensitive habitat, floodplains, wetlands, and historic and cultural resources. In terms of the preservation of aesthetic resources, this policy

encourages the preservation of the existing natural terrain, established vegetation, and visually significant geologic displays.

County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 59.101-59.115, Light Pollution Code (LPC)

The LPC, or the Dark Sky Ordinance, was adopted "to minimize light pollution for the enjoyment and use of property and the night environment by the citizens of San Diego County and to protect the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories from the effects of light pollution that have a detrimental effect on astronomical research by restricting the permitted use of outdoor light fixtures on private property" (Section 59.101). The LPC regulates applicants for any permit required by the County for work involving outdoor light fixtures, unless exempt. The LPC designates all areas within a 15-mile radius of each observatory as Zone A, with all other areas designated as Zone B. Zone A has more stringent lighting restrictions due to its proximity to the observatories, including limits on decorative lighting.

Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and the County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 86.501-86.509, Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO)

As a major program in the County that addresses land use, trails and its relationship with County parks, the MSCP, BMO, and supporting regulations help preserve the scenic value of lands within MSCP boundaries. These documents define how much native habitat, wildlife corridors, and linkage areas can be impacted or preserved.

San Diego County Scenic Highway Program

The San Diego County Scenic Highway Program establishes a scenic highway system priority list. Two officially designated State scenic highways exist in San Diego County, one of which is in the unincorporated area of the County. The rest of the routes in San Diego County's scenic highway program are listed as First, Second, or Third Priority Scenic Routes. There are six first priority routes, 16 second priority routes, and 38 third priority routes.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance

The San Diego County Zoning Ordinance contains several ordinances that pertain to aesthetic character and resources. These are summarized below.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 5200-5212, Scenic Area Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Sections 5200-5212 serve to regulate development in areas of high scenic value in order to exclude incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance the scenic resources in adjacent areas. The regulations apply to areas of unique scenic value, including, but not limited to, scenic highway corridors designated by the County General Plan; critical viewshed and prime viewshed areas as designated on the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan; and areas adjacent to significant recreational, historic, or scenic resources, including, but not limited to, federal and State parks.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 5749, Adopted 7-29-92, Specific Historic Districts

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Section 5749 includes a provision for the establishment of Specific Historic Districts having their own review boards and specific review criteria. For more information of historic districts, refer to Section 2.5.2.3, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Local Regulations and Standards.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 5750-5758, Community Design Review Area Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Sections 5750-5758 include provisions to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of a community's individual visual character and identity. The provisions require that a site plan be submitted for development within those areas having a Community Design Review Area Special Designator (Designator B). The provisions include exemptions to the site plan requirement for certain project types and provisions for granting a site plan waiver for Community Design Review. Currently, the following communities have developed Design Guidelines: Valley Center, Sweetwater, Fallbrook, Lakeside, Ramona, Spring Valley, Bonsall, and Alpine. The Community Design Review Area Special Designator also covers portions of I-15. The I-15 corridor has its own Scenic Preservation Guidelines and Design Review Board to review discretionary projects that are subject to the guidelines.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 5900-5910, Adopted 11-18-81, Design Review Area Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Sections 5900-5910 include provisions to ensure that future structures and development of a site will complement not only the site to be developed but also the surrounding areas and existing development. The provisions require that a site plan be submitted for certain discretionary project applications within those areas having a "D" zoning designator indicating the need for design review. The regulation requires that specific criteria be reviewed to achieve the objectives of the approving authority.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 5700-5749, Historic/Archaeological Landmark and District Area Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Section 5700-5749 include provisions intended to identify, preserve, and protect the historic, cultural, archeological and/or architectural resource values of designated landmarks and districts and encourages compatible uses and architectural design. Areas designated by the Historic/Archaeological Landmark District have an "H" special area designator while areas within a Specific Historic District are noted with a "J" special area designator. Where an "H" designator exists, the Historic Site Board, a board appointed by the BOS, may provide guidance to advise the Director of DPLU on historical/archeological matters. The Historic/Archeological Landmark and District Area Regulations include the requirements for a site plan review for certain discretionary projects, site plan review criteria, and site plan waiver provisions.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 6320, Amended by Ord. No. 9620 (New Series), Adopted 12-10-03, Humidity, Heat, Cold, and Glare

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Section 6320 has performance standards for glare for all commercial and industrial uses in residential, commercial, and identified industrial zones. All commercial and industrial uses subject to this section shall be operated in a manner that does not produce glare, which is readily detectable without instruments by the average person beyond the stated zones in this section.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 6322, Amended by Ord. No. 7110 (New Series), Adopted 4-02-86, Outdoor Lighting

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Section 6322 controls excessive or unnecessary outdoor light emissions which produce unwanted illumination of adjacent properties by restricting outdoor lighting usage.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 6324, Amended by Ord. No. 9690 (New Series), Adopted 12-15-04, Lighting Permitted in Required Yard

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Section 6324 establishes limitations upon lighting permitted in required yards by Section 4835; of particular importance is the limitation upon light trespass.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 6980, Adopted 4-30-03, Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Section 6980, provides a uniform and comprehensive set of standards for the development, siting and installation of wireless telecommunications facilities.

2.1.3 Analysis of Project Impacts and Determination of Significance

2.1.3.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas

<u>Guidelines for Determination of Significance</u>

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance, Visual Resources, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista that is visible from a:

- Public road;
- Trail within an adopted County or State trail system;
- Scenic vista or highway; or
- Recreational area.

Impact Analysis

As described in Section 2.1.1, the County contains visual resources affording opportunities for scenic vistas in every community. The RCAs identified in Section 2.1.1.2 are the closest that the County comes to specifically designating scenic vistas. Many public roads in the County currently have views of RCAs or expanses of natural resources that for the purposes of this EIR would have the potential to be considered scenic vistas. Numerous public trails are also available throughout the County. As described in Section 2.14, Recreation, the County has developed a Regional Trails Plan and a Community Trails Master Plan. Two designated scenic highways are also located in the unincorporated County: These include SR-78 through the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and SR-125 between I-8 and SR-94. Eligible scenic highways include portions of I-5, I-15, SR-94, I-8, SR-79, SR-78, and SR-76 within the unincorporated County. The County has identified additional roads as scenic in its County Scenic Highway System Priority List. Recreational areas available for public use throughout the County include parks, open space preserves and reserves. Additionally, the County contains a vast amount of publicly owned land that provides open space and visual relief from the human-made environment, including Cleveland National Forest in the Peninsular Ranges region and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in the Desert region. The proposed General Plan Update applies to the entire unincorporated County; therefore, it includes every scenic vista in the County, including those visible from public roads, trails, scenic highways, and recreational areas.

Views from scenic vistas within the County include coastlines, bays, lagoons, canyons, mesas, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, and agricultural lands in the Coastal Plain region; various water resources such as rivers and reservoirs, and large open spaces including County reserves and parks in the Peninsular Ranges; and expansive views characterized by dramatic landforms, native desert habitat, and low desert valleys in the Desert region. The General Plan Update proposes land use designations that have the potential to result in new development (approximately 71,540 new homes as well as new commercial and industrial uses) that could obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista. For example, a new housing development would have the potential to interrupt the view of a large open space area from an existing roadway. If future development or redevelopment is inconsistent with the surrounding landscape, it would detract from the scenic elements of a vista. Additionally, new infrastructure such as roads or bridges would have the potential to interrupt or detract from a scenic vista that previously did not include infrastructure or development. Therefore, the proposed project would have the potential to impact scenic vistas in the County.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes

As noted in Section 2.1.2, there are a number of federal and State regulations currently in place that help protect the County's visual resources including RPO and design guidelines. The County Zoning Ordinance contains several regulations that pertain to aesthetic character and resources, as described above in Section 2.1.2.3, and implement the design and scenic preservation guidelines. The Scenic Area Regulations of the County Zoning Ordinance serve to regulate development in areas of high scenic value in order to exclude incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance the scenic resources in adjacent areas. These areas are designated with a Scenic Area Designator (Designator S). The County Zoning Ordinance includes provisions for the maintenance and enhancement of a community's individual visual character and identity in areas with a Community Design Review Area Special Designator (Designator B). Projects within Designator B areas are typically regulated by the community's

design review guidelines. Additional areas having a Design Review Zoning Designator (Designator D) are subject to design review regulations that ensure that future structures and development will complement both the site and surrounding areas of existing development.

The most direct efforts currently taken by the County to minimize impacts to scenic vistas is through CEQA review of discretionary projects. The County has prepared guidelines specifically for reviewing impacts to scenic vistas. With the exception of CEQA review, few of the above regulations directly relate to the preservation of scenic vistas. Furthermore, design review guidelines and special area designators are only implemented in some areas and communities. Therefore, while a number of existing regulations and processes aid in reducing impacts to scenic vistas, they are not comprehensive to the issue.

Proposed General Plan Update Goals and Policies

The proposed General Plan Update contains several goals and policies to protect scenic vistas by requiring development to preserve or conserve scenic features of the County. Goals and policies pertaining to scenic vistas are found in the Land Use, Mobility, and Conservation and Open Space Elements.

In the Land Use Element, part of Goal LU-6 is a built environment in balance with the natural environment. Policies supporting this goal are LU-6.2, LU-6.3, LU-6.4, LU-6.6, LU-6.7 and LU-6.8. These policies direct development away from undeveloped areas with intact sensitive natural resources by designating these areas for very low-density or intensity land uses, support conservation-oriented project design when consistent the applicable community plan, require certain residential subdivisions to conserve open space and natural resources, require incorporation of natural features into proposed development, require contiguous open space areas, and require new development to conform to the natural topography to limit grading and not significantly alter the dominant physical characteristics of a site. Policy LU-6.7 explicitly requires the preservation of scenic vistas and areas.

Specific goals for protecting resources are established in the Land Use Element for semi-rural and rural lands, which comprise the majority of land within the unincorporated County. The goal for these lands (LU-10) is to buffer communities, protect natural resources, and accommodate unique communities. Protection of natural resources is accomplished through Policies LU-10.1 and LU-10.2 that require new residential development to be integrated with existing neighborhoods by providing continuous recreational open space networks and requiring development to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character, while preserving sensitive or intact environmental resources.

The Mobility Element contains policies that protect scenic vistas along public roads and trails. Goal M-2, which proposes a roadway network that provides adequate capacity and environmental protection, is supported by Policy M-2.3 that requires the location and development of private roads to minimize impacts to significant biological, environmental resources and to minimize visual impacts.

The primary focus of the Conservation and Open Space Element is to provide direction to future growth and development in the County of San Diego with respect to the following: the conservation, management, and utilization of natural and cultural resources; the protection and preservation of open space; and the provision of park and recreation resources." This Element includes Goal COS-11, which requires the preservation of scenic resources, including vistas of

important natural and unique features and minimization of impacts from development. Policies COS-11.1 and COS-11.2 supports the protection of scenic highways by promoting the connection of regionally significant natural features and points of visual interest via designated scenic corridors. Policy COS-11.1 also requires the protection of scenic vistas and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes. Other policies that support this goal that protect scenic vistas are Policies COS-11.3, COS-11.5, COS-11.6, and COS-11.7. These policies require future development to minimize visual impacts and preserve unique or special visual features, encourage the design of public improvements to blend into the landscape, restrict new billboards and other large-scale advertising within scenic corridors, and require new development to place utilities underground. Policy COS-11.4 ensures that scenic vistas in the publicly owned lands within the County are not significantly impacted. This policy requires coordination with adjacent federal and State agencies and jurisdictions to protect scenic resources and corridors that extend beyond the County's land use authority. Additionally, Goal COS-12 is to preserve prominent ridgelines and steep hillsides for their character and scenic value. This is accomplished through Policies COS-12.1 and COS-12.2 by maintaining lower-density semi-rural or rural designations in areas with steep slopes and requiring that new development be located below and away from prominent ridgelines so that structures are not silhouetted against the sky, in order to maintain scenic views of the slopes and ridgelines.

Summary

The land use designations and accompanying future development based on those designations proposed in the General Plan Update would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction of a scenic vista as a result of future development activity. While existing County policies and regulations and proposed General Plan Update goals and policies are intended to protect scenic vistas, specific measures that implement these policies and regulations are proposed to ensure that the intended protections are achieved. Therefore, the proposed project is concluded to result in a potentially significant impact to scenic vistas and specific implementation programs are identified as mitigation.

2.1.3.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources

Guidelines for Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance, Visual Resources, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, State Scenic Highway, or localized area, including, but not limited to, landmarks (designated), historic resources, trees, and rock outcroppings.

Impact Analysis

The unincorporated County contains many scenic resources including mountains, watersheds, scenic geologic features, and RCAs that have been identified for protection because of their scenic value. Scenic resources throughout the County are summarized above in Section 2.1.3.1, Issue 1: Scenic Vistas. Scenic resources are often found in County parks, habitat

preserves, reservoirs, RCAs, MSCP areas, and other undeveloped lands throughout the County, but are found in more urbanized areas as well.

Future residential, commercial or infrastructure development consistent with the General Plan Update would have the potential to result in the removal or destruction of scenic neighborhood or community resources, such as historic resources, trees or rock outcroppings. Future development or redevelopment of General Plan Update land uses along the two designated state scenic highways located in the County would have the potential to detract from the visual quality of the scenic highway. Therefore, a potentially significant impact to State Scenic Highways would occur.

Impacts to historic resources in the unincorporated County are described in Section 2.5, Cultural Resources. As discussed in this section, new development under the proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to result in the destruction of historical resources through development activities such as grading, clearing, demolition, alteration, or structural relocation. Impacts would be similar for designated landmarks, which are often historical resources, such as the Julian Historic District. Landmarks are considered visual resources because they are unique to a community and communicate a sense of place. CPAs and Subregions have identified their own landmarks within RCAs, such as Tecate Peak in the Mountain Empire Subregion and El Cajon Mountain in the Alpine CPA. Development and redevelopment of land uses consistent with the General Plan Update would result in a significant impact to these resources if it would block public views of these resources. The General Plan Update proposes intensified development in several areas of the County compared to existing conditions, as described in greater detail in Section 2.1.3.3, Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality. Intensified development would block viewsheds that were previously available for viewing. For example, intensified development would be accommodated in the town center of Julian CPA. New development or redevelopment has the potential to obstruct views of Volcan Mountain, a visual landmark for the Julian CPA. Therefore, a potentially significant impact to historic resources or landmarks would occur.

Similarly, trees and rock outcroppings are located throughout the County that would have the potential to be considered visual resources because these resources are considered to contribute to the character and beauty of communities in their community plans. Some have been identified as RCAs for their scenic value. Examples of scenic trees are the Jesmond Dene oaks in the North County Metro Subregion and the eucalyptus groves in the Sweetwater CPA. Examples of scenic rock outcroppings include a scenic rock slab in Valley Center on Chaparral Ridge and the Mother Grundy rock formation in the Jamul/Dulzura area. The proposed project would result in a significant impact to trees and rock outcropping if development or redevelopment of General Plan Update land uses would block public views of these resources, or if it would result in the removal of the resource. The General Plan Update proposes intensified development in several areas of the County compared to existing conditions, as described in greater detail in Section 2.1.3.3, Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality. New development would have the potential to result in the removal of trees or rock outcroppings or block a viewshed of a resource. For example, intensified development would be accommodated in Crest/Dehesa Subregion, which has identified trees, especially oak woodland, and rock outcroppings as visual resources. The proposed project would have the potential to directly impact oak woodland and other woodland habitats in the Crest/Dehesa Subregion (refer to Table C-3 in Appendix C, Impacts to Vegetation Communities by CPA and Subregion). Therefore, a potentially significant impact to trees or rock outcroppings would occur.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes

The existing regulations and processes that are relevant to scenic resources are the same as those identified for scenic vistas, described in Section 2.1.3.1 above. Similar to scenic vistas, most of these regulations indirectly assist with the preservation of scenic resources or are applied locally at the community level.

Proposed General Plan Update Goals and Policies

As described in Section 2.1.3.1, Issue 1, above, the proposed General Plan Update includes several goals and policies that protect scenic resources, including Policies LU-10.1 and LU-10.2 that pertain specifically to scenic highways. Additionally, scenic resources would also be protected through the areas designated for protection or conservation, including lands outside of the County's jurisdiction that are anticipated to be conserved, areas designated for very limited development, and through applicable regulations that protect scenic resources. Each of these is described in detail under Section 2.1.3.1, Issue 1, above.

Summary

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update include land use designations that would potentially allow development to occur that would have the potential to remove or change a feature that contributes to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, State Scenic Highway, or localized area. While existing County policies and regulations and proposed General Plan Update goals and policies are intended to protect scenic resources, specific measures that implement these policies and regulations are proposed to ensure that the intended protections are achieved. Therefore, the proposed project is concluded to result in a potentially significant impact to scenic resources and specific implementation programs are identified as mitigation.

2.1.3.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality

Guidelines for Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance, Visual Resources, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings by introducing features that would detract from or contrast with the existing visual character and/or quality of a neighborhood, community, or localized area by conflicting with important visual elements or the quality of the area (such as theme, style, setbacks, density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, building materials, etc.) or by being inconsistent with applicable design guidelines.

Impact Analysis

Geologic Regions in the Unincorporated County

The unincorporated County consists of a variety of visual characteristics and qualities. As described above, the County consists of three geologic regions, each with its own general character: the low-lying Coastal Plain, the mountainous Peninsular Range, and the lowlands of

the Desert. Urban land uses are focused in the western third of the County, while the eastern two-thirds are largely undeveloped with mountains and desert dominating the landscape.

Primary aesthetic resources in the Coastal Plain region include coastlines, bays, lagoons, canyons, mesas, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, and agricultural lands. Currently, urban land uses are focused in this region of the County. The proposed project's consistency with the existing character of each CPA and Subregion is described in detail below. The General Plan Update is generally consistent with the existing development character and quality of the Coastal Plain region because it proposes higher intensity land uses near existing town centers and developed areas, while maintaining lower intensity semi-rural and rural land uses in areas in the Coastal Plain region that currently support these types of land uses.

Several scenic water bodies and large open space areas characterize the visual quality of the Peninsular Range. Portions of the Peninsular Range are located within the SDCWA boundary and are currently developed with higher intensity development. Outside of the SDCWA boundary, the Peninsular Range is rural and semi-rural in character and contains many parks and open space reserves, including Cleveland National Forest, Agua Tibia Wilderness Area, San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Palomar Mountain State Park, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, and various County reserves and parks. The General Plan Update maintains the open space and low intensity development qualities of this region by continuing to concentrate development in this region within the SDCWA boundary, near existing higher intensity development. The proposed project would maintain low density rural development outside the SDCWA boundary that would be consistent with the large areas of open space that are a primary contributor to this region's visual character.

Most of the Desert region is located within the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, a valuable visual resource that provides the scenic desert beauty that characterizes this region and attracts many visitors. Areas that are not part of the State park are generally characterized by rural and agricultural land uses, with some higher intensity development in Borrego Springs for resort and visitor serving uses. However, the General Plan Update maintains the visual quality of the desert by maintaining low density rural development in this region that is compatible with existing land uses and preserves the vast open space views of the desert. Higher density development is proposed for Borrego Springs and existing town centers, also consistent with the existing character in this region.

FCI Areas

Some areas of the County are currently affected by the FCI, which includes approximately 91,000 acres of land in the County through the establishment of a 1 du/40 acres minimum parcel size in order to preserve the land's unique resources, the rural environment and open space. This initiative required a General Plan Amendment and rezone that remain in effect until December 31, 2010. The CPAs and Subregions affected by this measure include Alpine, Central Mountain, Desert, Jamul/Dulzura, Julian, Mountain Empire, North Mountain, Pendleton/De Luz, and Ramona. The General Plan Update does not apply to the FCI affected lands because of the current mandate. Therefore, the General Plan Update would not affect the visual character or quality of FCI lands. After the FCI sunsets in 2010, a General Plan Amendment would be required to apply new land use designations to the FCI areas. If the proposed land uses would have potentially significant impacts that were not adequately addressed in this EIR, then additional CEQA environmental review would be required. Additional information regarding the FCI is provided in Section 2.9, Land Use.

Conservation Subdivisions

The General Plan Update accommodates flexibility in subdivision design, through consolidation of development footprint, exceptions to standard lot design criteria, reductions in lot sizes, and removal of other barriers to innovative design. The purpose is to allow for greater preservation of environmental resources, agriculture, and open space, without compromising the development potential of a piece of land. However, this flexibility could result in a significant impact to community character because it would have the potential to result in different development patterns and characteristics than those in the existing community. Yet, subdivision development would be required to comply with the proposed General Plan Update and applicable community plan, which dictates the specific character of a community. Additionally, community compatibility would be considered as part of the subdivision approval process in order to safeguard community character.

CPAs and Subregions

Each CPA and Subregion in the unincorporated County has a unique community character that would have the potential to be impacted by the proposed General Plan Update if it proposes land uses that are incompatible with the existing character of the community or would result in the loss of or adverse change to scenic resources that contribute to the community's character. While most of the General Plan Update designations are generally compatible with the existing communities, in most areas they allow for additional future development. Community character impacts can occur from one improperly designed and located development. Therefore, since the General Plan Update allows for future development, there is a potential of community character impacts.

Impacts to community character can also occur from a transformation of a community and an overall change of its character. The potential future development is typically more intense in the villages or town centers and less in the more rural and remote areas. The communities that would accommodate the most growth would also have the greatest potential to experience a substantial change in community character. As a result, potentially significant impacts to community character are possible for several communities.

The following section discusses in greater detail the compatibility of the proposed General Plan Update land use plan with existing land uses in each CPA or Subregion. Community character would have the potential to be adversely impacted by other environmental impacts of the General Plan Update. For example, an increase in ambient noise or traffic in an area that has identified a quiet setting as part of its community character would be a significant impact to the character of the area. Refer to the other sections of Chapter 2.0 for the analysis of the other potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, such as Section 2.11, Noise, and Section 2.15, Transportation and Traffic.

Alpine CPA

Alpine is a rural community with a well-developed town center area that is the central commercial and industrial hub, with higher density residential. A portion of the CPA is outside of the SDCWA boundary. This area is characterized by low density estate residential development. These land uses are considered to influence the rural characteristics and visual quality of the community. Large areas of land in the northern and southeast portions of the CPA are tribal lands that are not under the jurisdiction of the County and public/semi-public lands,

both of which consist primarily of open space. Under the proposed General Plan Update, general commercial is planned for the existing town center, surrounded by village and semi-rural residential areas, primarily in the center of the CPA along I-8. Moving away from the town center, residential densities transition to semi-rural and then to rural lands to provide a buffer between the open space and proposed development. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town center which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the Alpine community character. There is also a large area designated for industrial development that would be located to the northwest of the Tavern Road/I-8 interchange. Design guidelines are currently in place to guide future development within the town center in order to maintain a rustic village character.

Bonsall CPA

Bonsall is a rural community consisting primarily of low-density estate type residential and agricultural uses. Agriculture is a key factor in Bonsall's rural community character. Residents value the large open spaces between houses, screening vegetation, beauty of natural landforms, natural resources and features, lack of noise and congestion, unobstructed ridgelines, and the presence of agriculture and animal farming. Under the proposed General Plan Update almost the entire CPA is designated as rural or semi-rural residential except for areas in an around its town center. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of additional development would have the potential to occur under the General Plan Update. Agricultural uses are allowed under all General Plan Update land use designations and would continue in Bonsall. A portion of land in the northern part of the CPA is designated for village residential and general commercial uses, which would increase development in this area. If not property planned and designed, this development would have the potential to result in impacts to the community character. Future development in other areas of the CPA would have the potential to result in community character impacts as well. New development would be subject to the Bonsall Community Plan and Design Guidelines in existence for the community.

Central Mountain Subregion

The community character of this Subregion is generally defined by large lot, single-family residential development, grazing and dry farming land, and undeveloped open space. The majority of the Subregion is open space and is part of the Cleveland National Forest or Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, or part of a tribal reservation. The northern portion of the Central Mountain Subregion is mostly undeveloped while the southern portion contains some rural development. The Subregion contains several rural communities that are generally characterized by low density development, including Cuyamaca, Descanso, Guatay, and Pine Valley. Pine Valley, Descanso and the Guatay area have small town centers with commercial development. The proposed General Plan Update would be consistent with these land uses and proposes commercial and semi-rural residential uses in Descanso, Pine Valley, and Guatay. The rest of the Subregion where the County has jurisdiction is designated for rural uses only. Some of the areas in the northern portion of the Subregion that proposed for rural residential use are currently undeveloped. However, the General Plan Update proposes very low density development of one dwelling unit to every 40 or 80 acres so that open space would be maintained and the proposed land use designations would be compatible with the existing open space character. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town centers which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the visual character of the Central Mountain communities.

County Islands CPA

The County Islands CPA is comprised of three small, non-contiguous, isolated areas interspersed within incorporated areas. These separate areas are known as Lincoln Acres, Greenwood, and Mira Mesa. Each area is characterized by one or two primary land uses due to its small size. The General Plan Update proposes land use designations that are nearly identical to existing land uses for all three areas. The Lincoln Acres area is currently characterized by single family residences and a cemetery and the General Plan Update designates the area as village residential and public/semi public facilities, which includes cemetery use. Greenwood is entirely encompassed by a cemetery and is proposed for public/semi-public facilities. Mira Mesa is comprised predominantly of low density development and equestrian-oriented uses. The General Plan Update designates this area as rural land, which would be generally compatible with the existing uses.

Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills Subregion

The Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills Subregion contains four separate communities that are semi-rural or rural in nature, each with a town center area containing general commercial and semi-rural or village residential densities. The rest of the Subregion consists of low density development, tribal land and open space, and a specific plan. The General Plan Update would maintain the existing town centers by proposing general commercial and semi-rural development in these areas. The majority of the remaining Subregion area is designated for rural development, with some areas of semi-rural residential. This is generally consistent with existing development between communities and along the southern boundary of the Subregion, which contains primarily open space and rural residential development. However, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town centers which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the character of the Crest/Dehesa community.

Desert Subregion

This Subregion has a natural desert ambiance and rural town character. The majority of this Subregion is within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, which is mostly open space and is not under the land use jurisdiction of the County. A great deal of scenic and recreational value is gained from the presence of the Anza-Borrego State Park within the Subregion. The Subregion contains one community, Borrego Springs, which is a low-density rural and commercial community containing a diverse but small-scale commercial area, low density permanent and seasonal homes, hotels and tourist resorts. Outside of Borrego Springs, some agricultural and rural development exists. Some additional development is concentrated in the Ocotillo Wells area near the Ocotillo Airport along SR-78. The proposed General Plan Update would be consistent with the existing commercial and semi-rural uses in Borrego Springs and the rural development throughout the remainder of the Subregion. However, the General Plan Update also accommodates a substantial amount of future growth in the Borrego Springs area. The growth has the potential to result is substantial changes to the communities character in and around the center of Borrego. The General Plan Update also provides for future residential growth in the northwestern portion of the Borrego Springs community where there is currently a substantial amount of agriculture. Therefore, in the future the character of this area will likely convert to a residential area.

Fallbrook CPA

Fallbrook contains a vibrant and prosperous town center that is important to its character and is the primary commercial and industrial area in the community. Outside of the town center,

Fallbrook has a rural and agricultural character. Development generally decreases in density as distance from the town center increases, so that development surrounding the town center is semi-rural, while development farther from the town center is very rural. The proposed General Plan Update would be generally consistent with the existing land uses in Fallbrook. Rural and general commercial, light impact industrial uses, and village land uses are proposed in the town center. Outside of the town center, semi-rural residential is proposed that decreases in density moving away from to town center, and eventually becomes rural along the northern and southern CPA boundaries. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town center which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the character of the Fallbrook community.

The Fallbrook CPA also encompasses a portion of the I-15 corridor. In this area, the I-15 corridor consists of a number of specific planning areas separated by semi-rural and rural lands. While many of the area have been developed, some remain to be built. One area that is subject to the planning of the General Plan Update is the area to the north and southeast of the I-15 interchange. In additional to a new community college, this area is slated for a substantial amount of future development that would transform the character of this area.

Jamul/Dulzura Subregion

Important to the character of the Jamul/Dulzura Subregion are the historical aspects of the community and the preservation of environmental resources and rural character. Generally, the Subregion has remained rural in character due in part to the fact that only a portion of the Subregion is within the SDCWA boundary. The Jamul/Dulzura Subregion is composed of several small communities including Jamul, Steele Canyon, Dulzura, and Barrett Junction that are all rural in character. Commercial activities and higher density residential uses are concentrated within the SDCWA boundary in the northwestern portion of the Subregion. Agriculture is a major land use in the eastern portion of the Subregion. The General Plan Update would be generally consistent with existing land uses. The northwestern portion of the Subregion is proposed for semi-rural and commercial development, and the rest of the Subregion is designated as rural land.

Julian CPA

Julian continues to remind visitors of its colorful gold-rush past by preserving the Julian Historical District which is the town center of Julian and contains the highest intensity semi-rural and commercial development, along with some industrial development. Primarily rural development exists outside of the historic district. Large ranches dedicate expanses of land to grazing and smaller ranches often support orchards or wineries. An area of industrial development and another area of commercial development exist in the western portion of the CPA, along the SR-78/79 corridor. The proposed General Plan Update would be consistent with these existing land uses, by proposing commercial, industrial, and semi-rural land uses in the Historical District and along the SR-78/79 corridor where commercial and industrial uses already exist. The remainder of the CPA not designated as open space under the General Plan Update would be designated for semi-rural or rural use. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town center area which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the character of the Julian community.

Lakeside CPA

Lakeside is a primarily residential community with a rural character. The southern portion and eastern boundary of the CPA are mostly developed with semi-rural or higher density residential development and commercial and industrial areas, while the northern portion of the CPA is primarily rural development and open space. The General Plan Update would maintain these land uses, including higher density village residential in the southwest portion of the CPA and lower density rural residential closer to the SDCWA boundary. As a result, intensification of residential and commercial uses would be accommodated within the Lakeside town center, and along major thoroughfares such as Winter Gardens Boulevard and Old Highway 80. This future development would likely result in some transformations to the community character. Lakeside maintains Design Review Guidelines that will help guide this future development in a manner that is desired by the community.

Mountain Empire Subregion

The Mountain Empire Subregion contains six communities/areas that have their own unique identities. These areas are Tecate, Potrero, Boulevard, Campo/Lake Morena, Jacumba and the remainder of the plan area.

Tecate currently contains general commercial uses and medium impact industrial uses adjacent to the U.S./Mexico international border. These areas would remain commercial and industrial under the proposed General Plan Update; however, the General Plan Update would also allow for a substantial amount of new commercial and industrial growth in the community. In the future, the community will likely see a transformation as business and shops are developed due to the community's proximity to the large population of Tecate, Mexico, and the presence of a Border crossing. The remainder of Tecate is generally open space with some rural development. The General Plan Update proposes rural development with a low density of one du/40 acres in most of the remaining Tecate area and some open space, which would be generally consistent with the existing rural development.

In Potrero, rural commercial uses are located in the town center along SR-94 and an area of semi-rural development exists in the middle of the community. These areas would remain semi-rural areas under the General Plan Update. The remainder of this community consists of semi-rural residential along major roads with sporadic commercial uses and rural designations and open space for the remainder of the area. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain these land uses and future growth would be minimal.

Commercial development and semi-rural land uses are currently concentrated along the I-8 in the community of Boulevard, and would remain so under the proposed General Plan Update. Rural land uses would be proposed outside of the Boulevard town center, which is also consistent with the existing development in this area. Boulevard has experienced some pressure for additional development (similar to that planned for Jacumba) that would have the potential to result in a substantial change in character to the community and surrounding area. However, due to limited community support, this is not reflected in General Plan Update. Boulevard is also impacted by the uses of the Campo Reservation to the west and pressures for energy infrastructure and wind energy projects. These types of projects are discussed in Section 2.1.4, Cumulative Impacts.

In the Campo/Lake Morena area, the General Plan Update maintains the existing commercial and residential development located adjacent to Morena Reservoir in Morena Village with

minimal new development. The land use designations proposed along SR-94 by the General Plan Update would accommodate greater commercial and residential growth in the neighborhoods of Cameron Corners and Campo. Intensified development in Cameron Corners and Campo, including village residential and industrial land uses, would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the rural character of these communities. A private project (Star Ranch) is currently being planned for this area at higher intensities than the General Plan Update. There are also pressures in the community to increase growth beyond that planned by the General Plan Update and Star Ranch. The remainder of this subarea is composed primarily of rural with semi-rural areas closer to the major roadways. The General Plan Update proposes similar development patterns for these areas.

The community of Jacumba has commercial development and residential and agricultural development in the Jacumba town center along SR-94 and in a very small commercial area along I-8. These areas would remain the only commercial designations in the area under the General Plan Update; however, there is an expanse of land covering the land in between these two areas that is covered by a specific plan (Ketchum Ranch). Development in this area south of I-8 is currently very sparse. The specific plan accommodates a large amount of additional residential and commercial development that would have the potential to redefine the whole valley. The private project to prepare the specific plan to cover this development is underway. The remainder of the subarea is open space with very scattered rural development. Under the proposed General Plan Update, the portion of the subarea north of I-8 would remain open space.

North County Metro Subregion

The North County Metro Subregion generally consists of single-family development throughout the Subregion. The two main communities in this Subregion are Hidden Meadows, which is located east of the I-15, and Twin Oaks, which is located west of the I-15. Both communities contain primarily single-family residences with varying lot sizes. Commercial development currently exists in two areas along I-15 in Hidden Meadows. The southern commercial area is a higher density area, while the northern commercial area is surrounded by more rural development and a golf course. Semi rural development exists throughout the remainder of the Hidden Meadows area. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the two existing commercial areas and semi-rural development throughout the community. Hidden Meadows also contains several residential specific plans, most of which have been built. The specific plans that have not been developed would be required to comply with the existing community character, as described in the General Plan Update policies below.

West of the I-15, in the Twin Oaks area, the southern and western portion of the community consists of commercial and institutional areas, agriculture, and semi-rural residential development. The northern portion of the community generally consists of open space with some scattered residential development. The General Plan Update proposes development that is consistent with the rural commercial and semi-rural development in the southern portion of the community and the lower density semi-rural and rural development in the northern community area. To the west of Twin Oaks, pockets of unincorporated land extend to the city boundaries of Vista and San Marcos. The proposed land use densities generally increase towards these cities. The General Plan Update proposes higher density residential and commercial land uses in the proximity of the Buena Creek Sprinter Station. When realized, this area would have the potential to become of a hub of commercial and residential uses, in

contrast to the single family residences and low intensity commercial uses that are found there today.

Additional unincorporated areas that are included in this Subregion are interspersed throughout the Cities of Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido, and are predominately rural residential in nature with some multi-family uses. These land uses would remain similar under the proposed General Plan Update.

North Mountain Subregion

The Mountain Subregion is very rural with scattered development. The main commercial areas are small and rural in nature and exist along SR-76 in Santa Ysabel and in Warner Springs. Smaller rural communities exist along the eastern boundary of the Subregion in Ranchita and in the northern portion of the Subregion along SR-79. Semi-rural development surrounds these commercial areas. Otherwise, the North Mountain Subregion is characterized by vast open expanses of land and scattered rural residential development. The proposed General Plan Update would be generally consistent with existing land uses in the Subregion by maintaining rural commercial designations in existing commercial areas and proposing semi-rural development in the surrounding areas. Under the General Plan Update, the rest of the Subregion would be designated for rural development or open space. A slightly more dense semi-rural residential area would be designated in the northeastern portion of the Subregion; however, this area currently contains higher density development than elsewhere in the Subregion.

Otay CPA

The Otay CPA is characterized by rolling hills, vast open mesas, numerous river valleys and canyons, and a series of mountain ranges with steep, rugged terrain. Otay Mesa contains large undeveloped parcels of land. The majority of the land within the CPA is either within a specific plan area or contains public/semi-public uses, specifically the County's George F. Bailey Detention Facility and the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility. Industrial uses are present primarily in the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan along the U.S./Mexico international border. Scattered development exists along the border of the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan and in a specific plan along Otay Lakes Road. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the two specific plans discussed above and the public/semi-public use areas around the detention and correctional facilities. Additionally, the General Plan Update proposes rural development outside of the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan and open space throughout the rest of the CPA, generally consistent with existing conditions.

Pala/Pauma Valley Subregion

Due to its relatively remote location and rugged topography, much of the CPA is either undeveloped, parkland, or in agricultural production. The northern Pauma Valley region has more semi-rural development than in the southern region, which is generally rural. Land uses are low-density residential and agricultural, with open space buffers providing a visual separation between communities. The General Plan Update proposes semi-rural residential development in the north of the CPA with scattered rural residential development, and rural residential development in the south, consistent with existing conditions. Commercial land uses in Pala/Pauma are located exclusively along SR-76. The commercial areas and surrounding area in the middle of the Subregion currently contains the highest density development. The General Plan Update would be generally consistent with the current development pattern and

would designate rural commercial and higher density residential uses along SR-76 in Pauma Valley and Rincon Springs.

Pendleton/De Luz CPA

The Pendleton/De Luz CPA consists primarily of USMC Camp Pendleton, where the County does not have land use jurisdiction. However, the community of De Luz is located in the northeastern portion of the CPA and primarily consists of semi-rural development and open space. The General Plan Update would propose similar uses, including semi-rural development surrounded by rural land, which acts as a buffer between the semi-rural areas and open space areas.

Rainbow CPA

Rainbow is primarily a low density development community consisting primarily of agricultural uses on semi-rural lots centered on the town center. Rainbow's town center is located near the I-15 and contains commercial and higher density development. The proposed General Plan Update would be generally consistent with these land uses and maintain commercial, higher density semi-rural, and village residential development near I-15. Low-density semi-rural and rural uses are proposed throughout the remainder of the CPA, consistent with existing uses that maintain open space buffers between rural properties. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate some intensified development within the town center which would have the potential to result in changes to the character of the Rainbow community.

Ramona CPA

Ramona is a rural community with a well-developed town center that maintains a country lifestyle. Residential developments in the town center, west of the town center along SR-67, and southeast of the town center north of the Barona Reservation are similar to suburban development densities. Centralized industrial and commercial areas in the town center and the area north of the Barona Reservation have been created to keep the residential and agricultural areas of Goose Valley and Highland Valley free from industrial/commercial encroachment. The proposed General Plan Update would be consistent with the existing land use pattern of the area by proposing commercial, industrial, and relatively higher density semi-rural and village residential uses in the areas where these uses currently exist. Future development in the town center would have the potential to affect the character of the community by intensifying residential, commercial and industrial development. Ramona maintains Design Review Guidelines to help guide future growth in a manner that is compatible with the community. Moving away from the town center, the character of the community would transition to lower density semi-rural and rural development proposed in the western and eastern portions of the CPA.

San Dieguito CPA

The San Dieguito CPA is primarily developed with estate, semi-rural residential development including several specific plans, most of which have been or are currently being developed. An established town center with higher density residential uses exists in the Rancho Santa Fe area. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the primarily residential uses throughout the CPA. Higher density semi-rural and village development would be concentrated in the existing Rancho Santa Fe town center and on the northern and southern boundaries of the CPA adjacent to the more urbanized incorporated Cities of San Marcos, Carlsbad, San Diego, and Escondido. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the specific plan areas and

semi-rural residential development throughout the CPA. Rural development would be scattered throughout the CPA, with a large rural area in the north, consistent with the existing open space area in the northeast portion of the CPA. While this is generally consistent with the existing development pattern of the community, the General Plan Update would accommodate intensified development within the town center which would have the potential to result in substantial changes to the character of the San Dieguito community.

Spring Valley CPA

This CPA is one of the most developed in the unincorporated County with little undeveloped area, except in the southern portion adjacent to Sweetwater Reservoir and a small amount in the middle of the CPA. Development is concentrated along the borders of the CPA and consists of moderate to high density village residential development with commercial and industrial uses throughout. A large specific plan in the southeast portion of the CPA contains village residential development surrounded by open space. The proposed General Plan Update would continue to concentrate development along the borders of the CPA, except near Sweetwater Reservoir, where high density residential, commercial, and industrial uses already exist. The lowest density semi-rural development is proposed for the center of the CPA which currently has the lowest density development in the CPA and contains open space with some semi-rural development. The proposed semi-rural land use designation would have the potential to result in an increase in density in this area. However, the proposed semi-rural development would be generally consistent with the surrounding more developed uses in the CPA, including existing semi-rural development.

Sweetwater CPA

The Sweetwater community contains rural features with suburban development that makes the Sweetwater River Valley unique. The western portion of the CPA is mostly developed with single family residences with village or semi-rural development densities. Commercial areas are also located in the western portion of the CPA. The eastern portion of the CPA primarily consists of undeveloped open space. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain higher intensity development in the western portion of the CPA, including semi-rural, village residential, and general commercial development. The General Plan Update proposes rural residential development in a primarily undeveloped area on the southeastern boundary of the Sweetwater community. This land use would be generally consistent with nearby residential areas in the City of Chula Vista to the east and south. In addition, the proposed rural density would allow for the preservation of open space, which would be consistent with the surrounding open space in the Sweetwater CPA.

Valle de Oro CPA

The Valle de Oro community consists of a unique balance of urban, semi-rural, agricultural, and open space land uses. The Mount Helix/Casa de Oro area in the western portion of the CPA generally consists of commercial and higher density residential land uses. To the east, the area gradually becomes semi-rural and agricultural in the vicinity of Jamacha Road, with little open space. The Rancho San Diego area in the southeast has been developed with higher density residential and commercial developments interspersed with areas of open space. This area also includes a 1,800-acre National Wildlife Refuge that provides open space in the southern portion of the CPA. The General Plan Update would be generally consistent with the development pattern of the area by proposing semi-rural, village and commercial uses in the western and northern portions of the CPA where such development currently exists. In addition,

lower density semi-rural uses would be proposed in the currently semi-rural agricultural area in the eastern portion of the CPA.

Valley Center CPA

Valley Center is characterized by a rural and semi-rural residential pattern of development, with scattered agricultural and livestock uses. Commercial and higher density residential uses are concentrated along Valley Center Road in the town center. Rural development is located along the edges of the CPA consistent with neighboring tribal lands and open space and rural land uses in adjacent CPAs. The General Plan Update proposes a similar land use pattern with commercial, industrial, and higher density residential development in the town center, surrounded by semi-rural residential development, with rural uses closer to the CPA boundaries. The village residential and commercial uses proposed in the town center will likely increase development intensity in this area. It is anticipated that the Valley Center town center, which is divided into northern and southern "nodes," will experience a significant increases in density under the General Plan Update. While the community maintains Design Review Guidelines, increased scrutiny or guidance will be necessary for this growth to occur in a manner that does not completely change the identity of the community.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes

Visual character and quality is currently addressed through many of the same regulations and processes described in Section 2.1.3.1, Issue 1: Scenic Vistas. For visual character, those regulations that relate to preservation of the natural environment (such as RPO) have greater relevance in rural communities and less in developed areas. However, natural features would have the potential to still be key components of a community's visual character or quality. Those regulations that relate specifically to the built form of a community (such as design review designators and guidelines) are directly relevant to visual character and quality. Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance contains additional controls beyond those discussed under Section 2.1.3.1 that relate to visual character, including density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, and building materials requirements.

Proposed General Plan Update Goals and Policies

In addition to the goals and policies described above in Issues 1 and 2 that would protect scenic resources and vistas, the General Plan Update includes goals and policies to protect visual character or quality, within communities and in the unincorporated County as a whole. Two guiding principles of the General Plan Update address community character. Guiding principle #3 would reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing communities and guiding principle #4 would promote environmental stewardship that protects the range of natural resources and habitats that uniquely define the County's character. Additionally, the Land Use, Mobility, and Housing Elements contain goals and policies to protect community character.

In the Land Use Element, Goal LU-2 is to conserve and enhance the unincorporated County's varied communities, rural setting and community character. This is implemented through Policies LU-2.1 through LU-2.4 require community plans to be maintained and to guide development to reflect character, densities and minimum lots sizes to be compatible with character, and greenbelts to be established to reinforce identity of individual communities. Additionally, Policy LU-1.6 allows for the expansion of village density areas only where it is

consistent with community character. Goal LU-4 is to maintain a land use plan that is coordinated with the plans and activities of other agencies that relate to community character. Policies LU-4.1 through LU-4.4 require the County to participate in regional planning; review, comment, and coordinate when appropriate on the plans, projects, and proposals of neighboring jurisdictions; consider the plans of overlapping and neighboring agencies and invite comments and coordination when appropriate; and ensure compatibility with U.S. government military installations. Goals LU-11 and LU-12 require commercial, office and industrial development (LU-11), and public services (LU-12), to consider community character. Policy LU-11.2 requires commercial, office, and industrial development to be compatible with community character. Policy LU-12.4 requires that public utilities and facilities be planned and sited in a manner compatible with community character.

The Mobility Element contains several policies that require roadways and parking to be consistent with community character. Policies regarding proposed roadways and community character are discussed in Section 2.9, Land Use. In addition to these policies, Goal M-10 supports the enforcement of parking regulations to enhance community character and Policy M-10.6 requires design of parking outside of villages and rural villages to be consistent with rural character. The Housing Element contains Goal H-2.A, which calls for neighborhoods to respect local character and the natural environment, and Policy H-2.1 which requires development to be designed in a manner that respects community character. In addition, as discussed above, several communities have prepared design guidelines that would protect the visual character and quality of development occurring in these communities.

Summary

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update includes land use designations that would result in increased development densities in some areas of the unincorporated County that would have the potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of a community. While existing County policies and regulations and proposed General Plan Update goals and policies are intended to protect visual character and quality, specific measures that implement these policies and regulations are proposed to ensure that the intended protections are achieved. Therefore, the proposed project is concluded to result in a potentially significant impact to visual character or quality and specific implementation programs are identified as mitigation.

2.1.3.4 Issue 4: Light or Glare

Guidelines for Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance, Dark Skies and Glare, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Impact Analysis

The proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to result in a substantial new source of light or glare from new development or redevelopment that requires night lighting, such as security lighting in commercial areas, or from the use of materials that would result in

glare, such as expanses of glass on office buildings. As discussed above, most of the proposed General Plan Update land use designations would be consistent with existing conditions, though intensified development would be accommodated in several town centers, such as in the San Dieguito and Rainbow CPAs. Building materials and outdoor lighting used in the development or redevelopment of residential, commercial, industrial, or public/semi-public uses would have the potential to result in a new source of glare and/or lighting. Of particular concern are new sources of night lighting that would have the potential to cause light trespass and light pollution which would affect the Palomar Mountain and Mount Laguna Observatories.

Glare

Glare is a continuous or periodic intense light that is greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted and would have the potential to cause annoyance, discomfort or visual impairment, and can be a nuisance or hazard. Glare commonly occurs when an object is significantly brighter in contrast to the rest of the viewshed, such as light reflecting off an expanse of glass, such as those that are found in commercial or industrial developments. Potentially reflective exterior building materials can affect motorists, cyclists, pedestrians or other persons within sight of the project depending on the position of the sun, outdoor lighting and/or building materials. Future development or redevelopment consistent with he proposed General Plan Update would cause glare impacts if it would result in the installation of highly reflective building materials that create glare or not conform to applicable federal, State, or local regulations related to glare. Reflective building materials such as large expanses glass are commonly used in office professional land uses to provide office windows and commercial land uses to display goods or advertisements in store-fronts; however, reflective materials have the potential to be used in any type of development. The CPA and Subregions that would accommodate the greatest amount of office professional land use would be the Desert Subregion (27 acres), Valle de Oro CPA (24 acres), and North County Metro Subregion (66 acres). Commercial land uses are proposed throughout the County, but the planning areas that would accommodate the greatest amount of commercial land use are the Desert Subregion (655 acres), Lakeside CPA (403 acres), Mountain Empire Subregion (406 acres), and Ramona CPA (399 acres).

Lighting

Daytime lighting would not result in a substantial new source of light or result in light pollution or light trespass because these conditions do not normally occur during the day when light is plentiful. However, excessive nighttime lighting would have the potential to result in light pollution, also called skyglow, which is the haze of light that surrounds highly populated areas and is the result of brightening of the night sky from both artificial (outdoor) and natural (atmospheric and celestial) light. Skyglow reduces the ability to see stars and other features of the nighttime sky, which is of particular importance to the Palomar Mountain and Mount Laguna Observatories located in San Diego County. Light pollution interferes with operation of the observatory telescopes, which can detect the faintest galaxies when dark skies are available. Excessive lighting would have the potential to also have an adverse impact on wildlife, which is discussed in Section, 2.4, Biological Resources.

Artificial lighting components that can contribute to skyglow include roadway/walkway lighting, security lighting, decorative and landscape lighting, building lighting (including residential, commercial, and industrial), and site lighting. Lighting of vertical surfaces such as billboards, signs, buildings, and landscaping is especially problematic, because the light is often emitted

upward into the atmosphere, resulting in uplight and ultimately increased skyglow. Areas with rural residential development would have the least lighting footprint of the developed areas because night lighting would be limited to security or ornamental lighting on houses and other structures, which would be spaced far apart. The highest lighting footprint would occur in areas with commercial or village residential development because these areas contain lighted signs, nighttime security lighting and more dwelling units with nighttime lighting. Higher density areas are more likely to contain additional sources of light, such as street lights, that are not found in the more rural areas. The most developed CPAs, which generally have the greatest lighting footprint, are Spring Valley, Valle de Oro, Lakeside, Ramona, San Dieguito, and North County Metro. Mostly rural residential and/or agricultural CPAs, or those that contain large areas of open space, such as Bonsall, Central Mountain, and the Desert, generally have a smaller lighting footprint. CPAs such as Alpine and Fallbrook, which have an established commercial town center, have a greater lighting footprint in the town center, and a lesser lighting footprint in the surrounding rural uses. Additionally, the County contains large areas of open space that would continue to provide dark skies in federal, State, and County parks and open space preserves. Under the proposed General Plan Update, existing rural and semi-rural areas would remain rural or semi-rural and higher density development would be located in areas that already contain higher intensity development. The land uses proposed in the General Plan Update would be consistent with existing land uses throughout the County; however, any new development would have the potential to result in a new source of light.

Of particular concern are the land uses in closest proximity to the Palomar Mountain and Mount Laguna Observatories. Increasing skyglow from light pollution places severe constraints on the ability of astronomers to observe fainter objects, regardless of filtering or enhanced techniques. For example, if the sky brightness increases by a factor of two, the exposure time must be doubled to obtain an accurate answer. In general, as sky brightness increases, the reduced observing time restricts one's ability to observe as many objects, forcing the observatories to limit their research projects to fewer kinds of objects and only to brighter celestial (natural) objects (Etzel 2002). Figure 2.1-8 shows the 15 mile buffer around each observatory, referred to as Zone A, which is the area most critical for light pollution to be minimized. A light source at a one mile distance has 1,600 times the impact on an observatory as an equivalent light source at 40 miles distance; therefore, land uses in closer to proximity to the observatories have a greater impact on their use than those farther away.

As shown in Table 2.1-3, 771,442 acres are included within Zone A. Under the General Plan Update, approximately 235,046 acres within Zone A are proposed for land uses that would have the potential to include night lighting, including 12,008 residential units. This total includes all land uses, with the exception tribal land and national forests and State parks, where the General Plan Update does not proposed land uses, and open space. The majority, approximately 72 percent, of these acres are designated for rural development, which would have a smaller lighting footprint than higher density development such as village residential land uses. Semi-rural residential uses, which also have a relatively small lighting footprint, would make up 21 percent of the land uses within Zone A. The remaining seven percent of land uses would consist of public/semi-public facilities, village residential, commercial, industrial, and office professional land uses.

The CPAs and Subregions in Zone A around Palomar Mountain Observatory are the North Mountain Subregion, Rainbow CPA, Fallbrook CPA, Valley Center CPA, North County Metro Subregion, and Pala/Pauma Subregion. Zone A currently contains large areas of open space, including the Cleveland National Forest, that help minimize light pollution. As discussed above,

land uses in Zone A would be primarily rural (see Table 2.1-3). Some higher intensity residential and commercial development would be accommodated in the Pauma and Valley Center town centers. Therefore, although the General Plan Update would maintain the generally rural land uses in this region and maintain open space, new development, especially in the two town centers, would have the potential to result in new sources of light within Zone A.

CPAs and Subregions in Zone A for Mount Laguna Observatory are Mountain Empire Subregion, Desert Subregion, Central Mountain Subregion, Alpine CPA, Julian CPA, and Jamul/Dulzura CPA. This Zone A also contains a large amount of open space, including the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, and Cleveland National Forest. As shown in Table 2.1-3, development accommodated within Mount Laguna's Zone A would be generally rural. However, small semi-rural town centers in the Mountain Empire Subregion and the Descanso and Pine Valley communities would accommodate commercial, industrial and higher density residential uses. Similar to the Zone A for Palomar Mountain, the proposed General Plan Update would maintain the existing rural land uses and open space areas in this region; however, new higher density development in the town centers would have the potential to result in new sources of light within Zone A. Additionally, increases in skyglow outside of Zone A would also have the potential to impact to the observatories because they can be impacted by light at a great distance away. For example, the Palomar Observatory can detect the striking of a match at a point as far away as San Francisco (DPLU 2007r).

New sources of light would have the potential to also result in light trespass, which is a result of spill light shining in undesirable locations, such as a neighbor's backyard or bedroom window. Spill light is light cast beyond the parameters of useful light or the intended area to be lit, and would have the potential to be a nuisance or hazard to neighboring uses. Typical examples include streetlights or floodlights that are not angled or shielded correctly and invade areas on a neighbor's property that are desired to be kept darker. The General Plan Update proposes land uses that are generally consistent with existing land uses throughout the County; therefore lighting for the proposed uses would be compatible with the existing setting. However, individual developments would have the potential to result in a nuisance or hazard to surrounding uses.

Several CPAs and Subregions have identified dark skies as part of their community character, including those with a Zone A. These CPA and Subregions are the Alpine CPA, Bonsall CPA, Central Mountain Subregion, Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills CPA, Desert Subregion, Fallbrook CPA, Jamul/Dulzura CPA, Mountain Empire Subregion, North County Metro Subregion, North Mountain Subregion, and Valley Center CPA. Of particular note is the Tierra Del Sol Observation Site within the Subregion of Mountain Empire and more specifically within the Boulevard planning area. There is an on-going effort to protect the aesthetic and scientific value of this area from light pollution. As described above in Section 2.1.3.3, Issue 3, General Plan Update goals and policies would be implemented to maintain community character, including dark sky communities.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes

The Zoning Ordinance sets performance standards for glare for commercial and industrial uses in residential, commercial, and industrial zones. All commercial and industrial uses subject to these standards are required to operate in a manner that does not produce glare, which is readily detectable without instruments by the average person.

At this time, the standards for glare in the Zoning Ordinance are not proposed to change. Therefore, conformance with the Zoning Ordinance would reduce the potential for commercial and industrial development occurring under the proposed General Plan Update to result in impacts associated with glare. While the Zoning Ordinance does not set performance standards for residential uses, glare impacts from residential uses are uncommon because these types of uses do not typically include construction materials that would result in significant increases in glare. In addition, many communities have adopted design guidelines which would not allow development to result in a significant increase in glare.

The San Diego County LPC and Zoning Ordinance performance standards minimize light pollution and light trespass. The intent of the LPC is to restrict the permitted use of outdoor light fixtures emitting undesirable light into the night sky which can have a detrimental effect on astronomical research. The LPC sets restrictions on illuminations sources, shielding, and hours of operation. Any permit required by the County for work involving outdoor light fixtures must submit evidence that the proposed work will comply with the LPC. Section 6322 of the Zoning Ordinance reduces light pollution by controlling excessive or unnecessary outdoor light emissions which produce unwanted illumination of adjacent properties by restricting outdoor lighting usage. Sections 6324 and 6326 of the Zoning Ordinance establish limitations on outdoor lighting. Additionally, Section 1.10 of the County's MSCP Subarea Plan requires uses within or adjacent to MSCP Preserves to be minimized and shielded.

Proposed General Plan Update Goals and Policies

The proposed General Plan Update contains Goal COS-13, which promotes the preservation of dark skies that is necessary for local observatories and to contribute to the rural character of a community, which would be implemented by Policies COS-13.1 and COS-13.2. Policy COS-13.1 restricts outdoor lighting and glare from development projects in semi-rural and rural areas in order to retain the quality of the night sky by minimizing light pollution. Policy COS-13.2 requires that development in areas surrounding the Palomar Mountain and Mount Laguna Observatories be designed to maintain dark skies to the maximum extent feasible.

Summary

The proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to result in increased light and glare within the County that would adversely affect day or nighttime views. While existing County policies and regulations and proposed General Plan Update goals and policies are intended to minimize light and glare, specific measures that implement these policies and regulations are proposed to ensure that the intended protections are achieved. Therefore, the proposed project is concluded to result in a potentially significant impact related to light and glare and specific implementation programs are identified as mitigation.

2.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis for aesthetics includes the immediate vicinity of view corridors, view sheds, or scenic resources in the County as well as areas in the vicinity of existing community development and areas surrounding the two observatories.

2.1.4.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas

Cumulative projects located in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to scenic vistas if in combination they would result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction from a scenic vista. Adjacent jurisdictions, including incorporated cities, adjacent counties, and federal and State-managed lands, have general plan policies, zoning and other ordinances or regulations in place to protect scenic vistas within their jurisdictions. Cumulative projects within these jurisdictions would be required to comply with applicable regulations pertaining to scenic vistas. In addition, projects on tribal lands and in Baja California near the border would also be subject to applicable scenic resources regulations; however, these regulations may not be as strict or regularly enforced. For example, the Sunrise Powerlink Project, included in Table 1-9, Regional Energy Projects, proposes the construction of new transmission lines through the Desert Subregion which would have the potential to detract from or obstruct scenic vistas in the desert landscape. Development on tribal lands within the County also has to potential to result in the impacts to scenic vistas. For example, as shown in Table 1-12, Projects on Tribal Lands in San Diego County, a new casino, hotel, concert venue, and theatre are proposed on the Viejas Reservation in the Alpine CPA. Development on this reservation would have the potential to obstruct, interrupt, or detract from the public view of Viejas Mountain and scenic ridgelines in the Alpine CPA. Therefore, the cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact related to scenic vistas.

As described above in Section 2.1.4.1, Issue 1: Scenic Vistas, the land use designations proposed in the General Plan Update would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction of a scenic vista as a result of future development activity. In combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact and mitigation would be required.

2.1.4.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources

Cumulative projects located in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to scenic resources if in combination they would result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, State scenic highway, or localized area, such as a landmark (designated), historic resource, trees, or rock outcropping. Adjacent jurisdictions, including incorporated cities, adjacent counties, and federal and State-managed lands, have general plan policies, zoning, and other ordinances and regulations in place to protect scenic resources within their jurisdictions. Cumulative projects within these jurisdictions would be subject to applicable regulations pertaining to scenic resources. Projects in Mexico or on tribal lands would be required to comply with applicable scenic resources regulations; however, these regulations may not be strict or regularly enforced. For example, tribal lands in the Pala/Pauma Valley Subregion provide areas of open space that are considered scenic resources to this planning area. The proposed casino and hotel on the La Jolla Reservation, included in Table 1-12, Projects on Tribal Lands in San Diego County, would have the potential to obstruct the scenic open space of this area with the construction of buildings associated with the casino and hotel. Therefore, the cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact related to scenic resources.

As described above in Section 2.1.4.2, Issue 2: Scenic Resources, implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to remove or change a feature that contributes to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, State Scenic Highway, or localized area. In combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact and mitigation would be required.

2.1.4.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality

Cumulative projects located in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to visual character or quality if, in combination, they would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings by introducing features that would detract from or contrast with the existing visual character and/or quality of a neighborhood, community, or localized area. Adjacent jurisdictions, including incorporated cities, adjacent counties, and federal and State-managed lands, have general plan policies, zoning ordinances, other ordinances, and additional regulations/policies such as design guidelines in place to protect visual character and quality within their jurisdictions. Cumulative projects within these jurisdictions would be subject to the applicable regulations pertaining to visual character and quality. However, a cumulative impact to community character may still occur from projects already in process in the County that would not be consistent with the General Plan Update. For example, several proposed cumulative projects listed in Table 1-11, Projects Not Included in the Proposed General Plan Update Land Use Map, would have the potential to result in an impact to existing community character because the proposed projects are larger developments than those that currently exist surrounding the project sites and have the potential to transform the surrounding community. Examples of these projects include Merriam Mountain in the Bonsall CPA, Warner Ranch in the Pala/Pauma Valley Subregion, Campus Park in the Fallbrook CPA, Star Ranch in Campo, and Harmony Grove Meadows in North County Metro Subregion. The Merriam Mountains, Warner Ranch, Star Ranch, and Harmony Grove Meadows projects all propose large residential developments in relatively undeveloped areas of the unincorporated County and have the potential to impact the rural character of the project areas. The Campus Park projects in Fallbrook, which are all slightly different than the proposed project, would result in industrial, commercial, and residential land uses in an area that is currently mostly undeveloped and would substantially change the character of this area. Additionally, projects in Mexico or on tribal lands may not be subject to regulations protecting scenic resources, or they may not be as strict or regularly enforced. Therefore, the cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact related to visual character or quality.

As described above in Section 2.1.4.3, Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality, implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of a community. In combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact and mitigation would be required.

2.1.4.4 Issue 4: Light or Glare

The construction and operation of cumulative projects located in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a new source of glare from new development or redevelopment that requires night lighting, such as security lighting in commercial areas, or is constructed with

materials that would result in glare, such as expanses of glass on office buildings. Impacts from glare are generally localized and not cumulative in nature; therefore, a significant cumulative impact related to glare would not occur. However, any new sources of nighttime light pollution in the San Diego region would result in a potential lighting impact to the Palomar Mountain and Mount Laguna Observatories. New sources of lighting would be created from development of the proposed new and expanded casino projects identified in Table 1-12, Projects on Tribal Lands in San Diego County, which would be in operation at night and generally include decorative and security lighting. For example, the Campo Reservation proposes an entertainment hall and a 42,800 SF gaming area that would require lighting at night for operation, decoration, and advertising. Despite lighting ordinances and other regulations pertaining to night lighting and mitigation measures that would reduce light pollution on a project by project basis, the combined effect of all cumulative projects in the San Diego region would be a cumulative increase in light pollution. Therefore, the cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with nighttime lighting. As discussed above in Section 2.1.3.4, Issue 4: Light or Glare, the General Plan Update would have the potential to result in substantial new sources of nighttime light. Therefore, in combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact associated with night lighting.

2.1.5 Significance of Impact Prior to Mitigation

The proposed General Plan Update would result in potentially significant direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character or quality, and light and glare.

2.1.6 Mitigation

2.1.6.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas

The following General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures would mitigate direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas to below a significant level.

General Plan Update Policies

Policy LU-6.2: **Reducing Development Pressures.** Assign lowest density or lowest intensity land use designations to areas with sensitive natural resources.

Policy LU-6.3: Conservation Oriented Project Design. Support conservation-oriented project design when appropriate and consistent with the applicable Community Plan. This can be achieved with mechanisms such as, but not limited to, Specific Plans, lot area averaging, and reductions in lot size with corresponding requirements for preserved open space (Planned Residential Developments). Projects that rely on lot size reductions should incorporate specific design techniques, perimeter lot sizes, or buffers, to achieve compatibility with community character.

Policy LU-6.4: Sustainable Subdivision Design. Require that residential subdivisions be planned to conserve open space and natural resources, protect agricultural operations including grazing, increase fire safety and defensibility, reduce impervious footprints, use sustainable development practices, and, when appropriate, provide public amenities consistent with the applicable community plan.

Policy LU-6.6: Integration of Natural Features into Project Design. Require incorporation of natural features (including mature oaks, indigenous trees, and rock formations) into proposed development and require avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.

Policy LU-6.7: Open Space Network. Require projects with open space to design contiguous open space areas that protect wildlife habitat and corridors; preserve scenic vistas and areas; and connect with existing or planned recreational opportunities.

Policy LU-6.8: Development Conformance with Topography. Require development to conform to the natural topography to limit grading; incorporate and not significantly alter the dominant physical characteristics of a site; and to utilize natural drainage and topography in conveying stormwater to the maximum extent practicable.

Policy LU-10.1: Residential Connectivity. Require residential development in Semi-Rural areas to be integrated with existing neighborhoods by providing connected and continuous street, pathway/trail, and recreational open space networks.

Policy LU-10.2: Development Environmental Resource Relationship. Require development in Semi-Rural and Rural areas to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character, and avoid sensitive or intact environmental resources and hazard areas.

Policy M-2.3: Environmentally Sensitive Road Design. Locate and design public and private roads to minimize impacts to significant biological and other environmental and visual resources. Avoid road alignments through floodplains to minimize impacts on floodplain habitats and limit the need for constructing flood control measures. Design new roads to maintain wildlife movement and retrofit existing roads for that purpose. Utilize fencing to reduce road kill and to direct animals to under crossings.

Policy COS-11.1: Protection of Scenic Resources. Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes.

Policy COS-11.2: Scenic Resource Connections. Promote the connection of regionally significant natural features, designated historic landmarks, and points of regional historic, visual, and cultural interest via designated scenic corridors, such as scenic highways and regional trails.

Policy COS-11.3: Development Siting and Design. Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:

- Creative site planning
- Integration of natural features into the project
- Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape
- Minimal disturbance of topography

- Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character
- Creation of contiguous open space networks

Policy COS-11.4: Collaboration with Agencies and Jurisdictions. Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to protect scenic resources and corridors that extend beyond the County's land use authority, but are important to the welfare of County residents.

Policy COS-11.5: Collaboration with Private and Public Agencies. Coordinate with the California Public Utilities Commission, power companies, and other public agencies to avoid siting energy generation, transmission facilities, and other public improvements in locations that impact visually sensitive areas, whenever feasible. Require the design of public improvements within visually sensitive areas to blend into the landscape.

Policy COS-11.6: Billboards. Prohibit new billboards and other forms of large-scale advertising and signage within scenic corridors. Encourage the removal of existing billboards and other forms of large-scale advertising and signage along State and County scenic highway corridors.

Policy COS-11.7: Underground Utilities. Require new development to place utilities underground and encourage "undergrounding" in existing development to maintain viewsheds, reduce hazards associated with hanging lines and utility poles, and to keep pace with current and future technologies.

Mitigation Measures

Aes-1.1 Adopt the General Plan Regional Category Map and Land Use Maps which locate land uses of less density or intensity on lands that contribute to scenic vistas.

Aes-1.2 Protect sensitive biological habitats and species through regulations that require avoidance and mitigation of impacts. Existing programs include the County MSCP and associated BMOs, RPO, and CEQA Guidelines. While protecting biological resources, these programs also preserve natural open space that contributes to the quality of many of the County's scenic vistas.

Aes-1.3 Amend community plans with improved vision and community character statements to ensure that new development reflects the character and visions for each individual unincorporated community. Community plans are used to review development projects (including General Plan Amendments). These reviews are implemented by State law, County policy and procedures, the Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance findings for certain permits, CEQA compliance, etc. The Community Plans also serve as the foundation for more detailed implementing regulations such as design review guidelines, Zoning box regulations, etc. Community Plans are also used for the interjurisdictional review and coordination on project conducted by other agencies.

Aes-1.4 Revise the Design Review process to streamline the process, improve consistency in implementation, and update design criteria as necessary. Current components of that process include Special Area Designators, Design Review Guidelines, and the Site Plan review and approval process.

Aes-1.5 Create a Conservation Subdivision Program that facilitates conservation-oriented project design.

Aes-1.6 Require that project approvals with significant potential to adversely affect the scenic quality of a community require community review and specific findings of community compatibility. Examples can be found in the Zoning Ordinance with the numerous special uses or exceptions allowed pursuant to Administrative and Use Permits, and Site Plans. This practice has been proven useful for reducing impacts to aesthetic resources and their usefulness will increase as community plans and design guideline are updated pursuant to Aes-1.3 and Aes-1.4.

Aes-1.7 Develop and implement programs and regulations that preserve agricultural lands (such as the County's CEQA guidelines and the Farm Program). Most existing agricultural lands are key components of scenic vistas and community character and the preservation of these resources is critical to minimizing impacts to these resources.

Aes-1.8 Continue to develop and implement programs and regulations that minimize landform alteration and preserve ridgelines and steep slopes where appropriate. Examples include the County's Grading Ordinance, RPO, and CEQA Guidelines.

Aes-1.9 Work with communities and other stakeholders to identify key scenic vistas, viewsheds of County scenic road and highways, and other areas of specific scenic value. Apply Resource Conservation Area designations or other special area designators, guidelines, and tools to guide future development of parcels within these viewsheds to avoid impacts to the scenic vistas.

Aes-1.10 Participate in regional planning and planning by agencies operating within or adjacent to the County to the extent practicable. This includes participation in SANDAG and other regional planning forums, reviewing and commenting on planning and environmental documents issued by other agencies, and ongoing collaboration with Native American tribes and adjacent jurisdictions.

Aes-1.11 Implement the Wireless Communications Ordinance and BOS Policies I-92 and J-17 to encourage the undergrounding of utilities.

2.1.6.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources

The General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures identified above in Section 2.1.6.1, Issue 1: Scenic Vistas, would also mitigate direct and cumulative impacts to scenic resources to below a significant level.

2.1.6.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality

The proposed General Plan Update would allow increased land use densities in some areas of the unincorporated County that would have the potential to conflict with or alter the character of existing communities. General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures (described below), have been identified that would minimize the potentially significant impact to visual character and quality. Some mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce impacts associated with visual character or quality to below a level of significance; however, the County has determined that their implementation would be infeasible. A discussion of infeasible mitigation measures, as well as General Plan Update policies and feasible mitigation measures is provided below.

Infeasible Mitigation Measures

The following measures were considered in attempting to reduce impacts to visual character or quality to below a level of significance. However, the County has determined that these measures would be infeasible, as described below. Therefore, the following mitigation measures would not be implemented.

- Require revised goals and policies to be prepared and incorporated into community plans that would severely limit the potential for development growth in order to maintain the existing visual character or quality of each community. Restrictions on the type or amount of development within a community would conflict with areas identified for increased growth under the General Plan Update. Therefore, this measure would be infeasible because community plans are required to be consistent with the adopted General Plan. The measure would also conflict with goals of the Housing Element to provide sufficient housing stock and would not achieve one of the primary objectives of the proposed project which is to accommodate a reasonable amount of growth.

- Comprehensively expand the Zoning Ordinance to specifically dictate the exact development type and design allowed in the various areas of the County to avoid impacts to community character. This measure would be the equivalent of preparing detailed land development master plans for the entire County and would be infeasible because of the extent and diversity of communities that exist within the County. While the County intends to improve the Zoning Ordinance and associated Design Review Guidelines for some areas, as well as prepare town center plans where appropriate, comprehensive coverage of all unincorporated areas in this manner is not feasible.

- Approve only development that is comparable in size, scope, and use as existing development in order to avoid impacts to the visual character and quality of the County's communities. This measure would be infeasible because it would result in restrictions on future development in areas identified for increased growth in the General Plan Update and/or areas where existing land uses are not the same as the land uses proposed by the General Plan Update. Therefore, this measure would also conflict with goals of the Housing Element to provide sufficient housing stock and would not achieve one of the primary objectives of the proposed project which is to accommodate a reasonable share of regional growth.

Because the measures listed above have been found to be infeasible, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. Chapter 4.0, Project Alternatives, provides a discussion of several land use alternatives to the proposed project that would result in some reduced impacts associated with visual character or quality as compared to the proposed project.

General Plan Update Policies

The following policies would reduce impacts associated with visual character or quality, but not to below a significant level.

Policy LU-1.6: Village Expansion. Permit new Village Regional Category designated land uses only where contiguous with an existing or planned Village and where all of the following criteria are met:

- Potential Village development would be compatible with environmental conditions and constraints, such as topography and flooding
- Potential Village development would be accommodated by the General Plan road network
- Public facilities and services can support the expansion without a reduction of services to other County residents
- The expansion is consistent with community character, the scale, and the orderly and contiguous growth of a Village area

Policy LU-2.1: Community Plans. Maintain updated community plans, as part of the General Plan, to guide development to reflect the character and vision for each individual unincorporated community, consistent with the General Plan.

Policy LU-2.2: Development Densities and Lot Sizes. Assign densities and minimum lot sizes in a manner that is compatible with the character of each unincorporated community.

Policy LU-2.4: Greenbelts to Define Communities. Identify and maintain greenbelts between communities to reinforce the identity of individual communities.

Policy LU-4.1: Regional Planning. Participate in regional planning to ensure that the unique communities, assets, and challenges of the unincorporated lands are appropriately addressed with the implementation of the planning principles and land use requirements of SB 375.

Policy LU-4.2: Review of Impacts of Projects in Adjoining Jurisdictions. Review, comment, and coordinate when appropriate on plans, projects, and proposals of overlapping or neighboring agencies to ensure compatibility with the County's General Plan, and ensure that adjacent communities are not adversely impacted.

Policy LU-4.3: Relationship of Plans in Adjoining Jurisdictions. Consider the plans and projects of overlapping or neighboring agencies in the planning of unincorporated lands, and invite comments and coordination when appropriate.

Policy LU-4.4: Development Compatibility with Military Facilities. Ensure compatibility of new development with the current and planned mission and operations of U.S. government military installations.

Policy LU-11.2: Compatibility with Community Character. Require that commercial, office, and industrial development be located, scaled, and designed to be compatible with the unique character of the community.

Policy LU-12.4: Planning for Compatibility. Plan and site infrastructure for public utilities and public facilities in a manner compatible with community character, minimize visual and environmental impacts, and whenever feasible, locate any facilities and supporting infrastructure outside preserve areas. Require context sensitive Mobility Element road design that is compatible with community character and minimizes visual and environmental impacts.

Policy M-10.6: On-Street Parking. Minimize on-street vehicular parking outside Villages and Rural Villages where on-street parking is not needed, to reduce the width of paved shoulders and provide an opportunity for bicycle lanes to retain rural character in low-intensity areas. Where on-street parking occurs outside Villages and Rural Villages, require the design to be consistent with the rural character and the applicable community plan.

Policy H-2.1: Development That Respects Community Character. Require that development in existing residential neighborhoods be well designed so as not to degrade or detract from the character of surrounding development consistent with the Land Use Element and Community Plans.

Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures listed under Section 2.1.6.1, Issue 1: Scenic Vistas, are applicable to this issue and are incorporated here by reference. In addition, the following mitigation measure would also contribute to a reduced impact to visual character or quality; however, impacts would not be reduced to below a significant level.

Aes-3.1 Improve upon the County road standards or other right of way design guidelines to provide standards related to road design, parking, landscaping, and elements of the public realm that to are critical to the character of a community.

Aes-3.2 Implement existing and prepare new community right-of-way development standards, as appropriate, that supplement the County road standards in order to recognize the unique constraints and character of different communities.

2.1.6.4 Issue 4: Light or Glare

The proposed General Plan Update would allow for additional growth in the County that would contribute new light sources with the potential to impact the County's dark skies. General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures (described further below), have been identified that would minimize these impacts. Some mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce dark-skies impacts to below a level of significance; however, the County has determined that their implementation would be infeasible. A discussion of infeasible mitigation measures, as well as General Plan Update policies and feasible mitigation measures is provided below.

Infeasible Mitigation Measures

The following measure (and variations of this measure) was considered in attempting to reduce impacts associated with light to below a level of significance. However, the County has determined that this measure would be infeasible to implement for the reasons below; therefore, it would not be implemented.

- Expand the LPC Zone A designation to encompass all of the unincorporated areas and create more stringent standards, including, but not limited to:

  - Nighttime lighting curfew of 10:00 p.m. for certain areas
  - Prohibit development requiring any night lighting within certain areas

  This measure would result in restrictions on future development in areas identified for increased growth in the General Plan Update because night lighting is required for safety or other reasons for development accommodated within Zone A areas such as commercial or residential development. The resulting restrictions could pose safety concerns, increase development costs, and in some cases, pose restrictions so great that a particular use may not be possible. Therefore, this measure could conflict with goals of the Housing Element to provide sufficient housing stock and would not achieve one of the primary objectives of the proposed project which is to accommodate a reasonable amount of regional growth. This measure could also impede attainment of other objectives such as minimizing public costs of infrastructure and services and reinforcing the vitality and local economy of communities.

Because the measure listed above has been found to be infeasible, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. Chapter 4.0, Project Alternatives, provides a discussion of several land use alternatives to the proposed project that would result in some reduced impacts associated with light effects on dark skies as compared to the proposed project.

General Plan Update Policies

The following policies would reduce impacts associated with light or glare, but not to below a significant level.

Policy COS-13.1: Restrict Light and Glare. Restrict outdoor light and glare from development projects in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands and designated rural communities to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.

Policy COS-13.2: Palomar and Mount Laguna. Minimize, to the maximum extent feasible, the impact of development on the dark skies surrounding Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories to maintain dark skies which are vital to these two world-class observatories by restricting exterior light sources within the impact areas of the observatories.

Policy COS-13.3: Collaboration to Retain Night Skies. Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures would reduce impacts associated with light or glare, but not to below a significant level.

Aes-4.1 Coordinate with communities and stakeholders to review light pollution controls and consider amendments or expansions to those controls as determined necessary to reduce impacts to dark skies that are important to community character.

Aes-4.2 Maintain light and glare regulations that minimize impacts to adjacent properties, sensitive areas, community character, observatories, and dark skies. These regulations are currently found in the Light Pollution Code and Zoning Ordinance. Additional reviews are implemented on discretionary projects in accordance with CEQA and the County's CEQA guidelines.

Aes-4.3 Participate in regional planning and planning by agencies operating within or adjacent to the County to the extent practicable. This includes participation in SANDAG and other regional planning forums, reviewing and commenting on planning and environmental documents issued by other agencies, and ongoing collaboration with Native American tribes and adjacent jurisdictions.

2.1.7 Conclusion

The discussion below provides a synopsis of the conclusion reached in each of the above impact analyses, and the level of impact that would occur after mitigation measures are implemented.

2.1.7.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas

Development allowed under the proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction of a scenic vista. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant. Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. However, the proposed General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures, in combination with the RPO and County Zoning Ordinance, would mitigate direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas to below a significant level.

2.1.7.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would allow development to occur that would have the potential to impact scenic vistas through the removal or substantial adverse change of features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, State Scenic Highway, or localized area. Therefore, the proposed General Plan Update would result in a potentially significant impact to scenic resources. Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. However, the goals and policies proposed in the General Plan Update, and mitigation measures, in combination with other applicable regulations including the County RPO and San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, would mitigate project-related direct and cumulative impacts to scenic resources to below a level of significance.

2.1.7.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality

Implementation of the General Plan Update would allow increased development densities to occur in some areas which would result in the potential degradation of the existing visual character or quality of a community. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact to visual character and quality. Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. The proposed General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures would reduce direct and cumulative impacts to visual character and quality, but not to below a level of significance. Impacts would remain significant and unavoidable because the character of some communities will change as they continue to grow regardless of the amount of zoning regulations and design review that is imposed.

2.1.7.4 Issue 4: Light or Glare

The proposed General Plan Update would have the potential to result in increased light and glare within the County that would adversely affect day or nighttime views. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant. Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures, in combination with other applicable regulations including the LPC and the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, would lessen impacts to nighttime lighting, but not to a below a level of significance. Impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Table 2.1-1. Eligible State Scenic Highways in Unincorporated San Diego County

Highway	Segment
I-5	City of Oceanside to Orange County line
I-8	City of El Cajon to Imperial County line
I-15	North of SR-76 to Riverside County line
SR-76	City of Oceanside to SR-79 in North Mountain
SR-78[(1)]	SR-79 near Santa Ysabel to SR-86 near Julian
SR-79	I-8 to SR-78 near Julian, and SR-78 near Santa Ysabel to Riverside County line
SR-94	SR-125 (Spring Valley) to I-8 (Boulevard)

(1) Approximately 18.2 miles of SR 78 along the Anza Borrego Desert State Park has been officially designated as a State Scenic Highway. Approximately 5 miles of road west of the park and 5 miles of road east of the park has not been officially designated but remains eligible.

Source: DPLU 2007b

Table 2.1-2. County Scenic Highway System Priority List

Highway	Segment
First Priority Scenic Routes	
SR-76	El Camino Real east to I-15, except portions within City of Oceanside
SR-79	I-8 to intersection of Sunrise Highway (S-1)
Bonita Road, San Miguel, Guajolote, and Sweetwater River Roads	I-805 to SR-94
Second Priority Scenic Routes	
N. Santa Fe Avenue and Osborne Street	Oceanside City limit east to Vista Way
Gird, Reche, Live Oak Park, and Mission Roads	SR-76 to I-15
Tecate Road	U.S./Mexico international border north to SR-94
SR-76	Interstate 15 east to SR-79
Via de la Valle, Paseo Delicias, Del Dios Highway (S-6)	Highway 101 north to Via Rancho Parkway
I-8	El Cajon City limit to SR-79
Lake Wohlford Road	Valley Center Road east to Guejito Road
SR-78	Via Rancho Parkway to SR-79, except portions within City of San Diego
Willows and El Monte Roads	SR-67 to the southern end of El Capitan Reservoir
Proctor Valley Road	Otay Lakes Road to SR-94
SR-79 and Sunrise Highway (S-1)	Wynola Road south to Kitchen Creek Road
Potrero Valley Road	SR-94 to Potrero County Park
Lake Morena Drive	Buckman Springs Road north to Morena Lake
Oak Drive	Lake Morena Drive north to Buckman Springs Road

Table 2.1-2 (Continued)

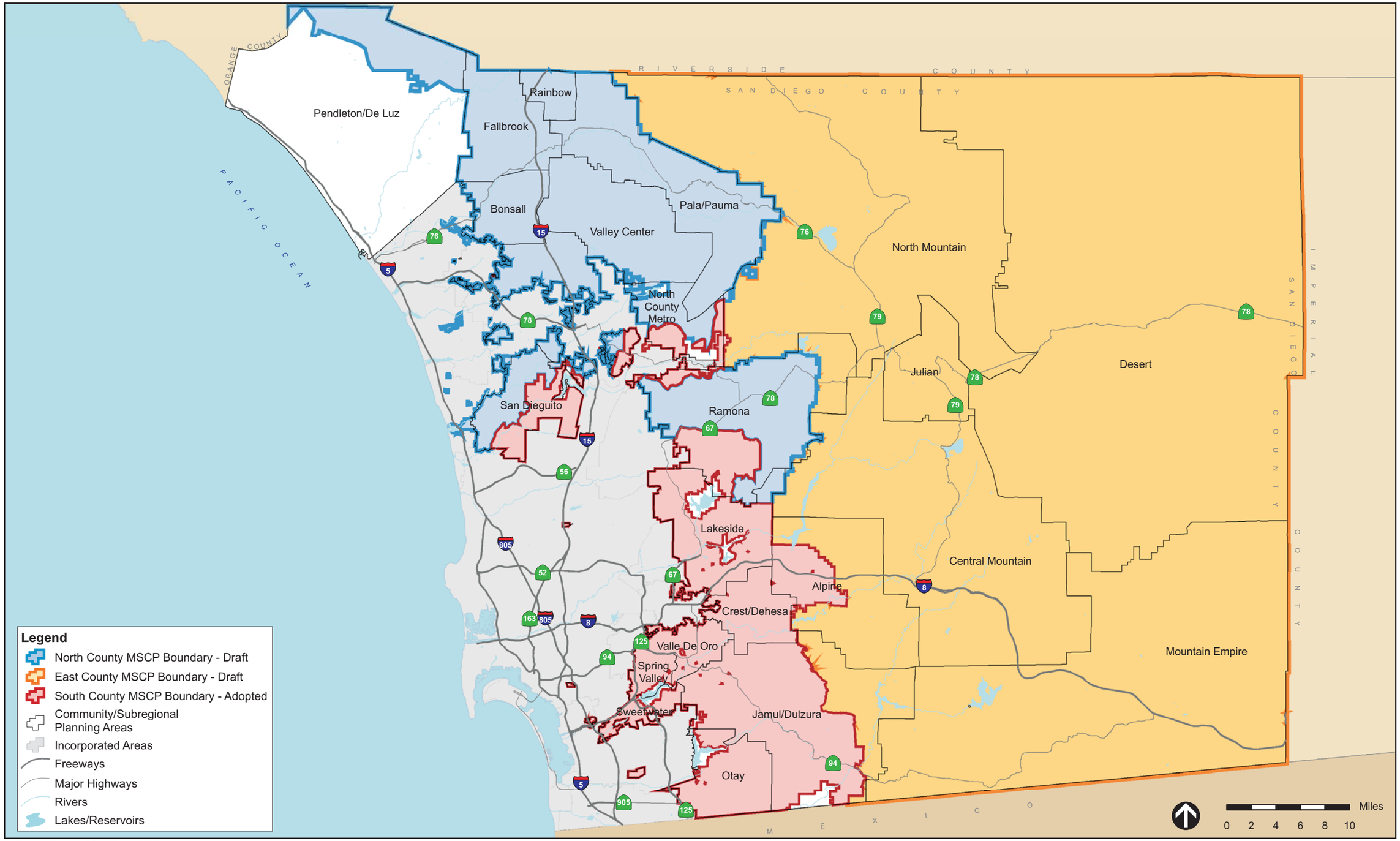
Highway	Segment
Third Priority Scenic Routes	
I-15	SR-76 north to Riverside County line
Mission and Green Valley Roads	SR-76, north and east to Gird Road
Otay Lakes Road	Proctor Valley Road east to SR-94
Honey Springs Road	SR-94 to Lyons Valley Road
Vista Way, Oransby Street, Gopher Canyon Road, Old Castle Road, Lilac Road, and Valley Center Road	Vista City limit to SR-76
Lake Wohlford Road	Guejito Road north to Valley Center Road
Twin Oaks Valley Road	Gopher Canyon Road to San Marcos City limit
Via Rancho Parkway	Del Dios Highway to SR-78, except in the City of Escondido and City of San Diego
Bear Valley Road and SR-78	Valley Center Road to Via Rancho Parkway
SR-79	Riverside County line to Anza Expressway (SR-78)
SR-78	Wynola Road to western boundary of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
SR-78	Eastern boundary of Anza-Borrego State Park to Imperial County line
Old Overland Stage Route (S-2)	Imperial County line north to SR-78
Recreation Park Road	I-8 north to SR-79
San Felipe Road, Montezuma Valley Road, Hoberg Road and Truckhaven Trail (S-22)	SR-79 east to Imperial County line
I-5	Oceanside City limit north to Orange County line
San Vicente Road, Conejos Valley Road, Goudie Road, Boulder Creek Road, and Viejas Boulevard	Anza Expressway (SR-78) to SR-79
Old SR-79 loop to Warner Springs	SR-79 to SR-79
I-8	SR-79 east to Imperial County line
Pomerado Road and Beeler Canyon Road	San Diego City limit to SR-125
SR-94	SR-125 to I-8
Lyons Valley Road, Pine Creek Trail, Morena Stokes Valley Road, and Buckman Springs Road	SR-94 to Oak Drive
Buckman Springs Road	Lake Morena Drive to SR-94
Japatul Road	Lyons Valley Road to I-8
Highland Valley Road	City of San Diego limit east to Lake Hodges
El Monte Park Road	Southern end of El Capitan Reservoir to I-8
Harvest Road and Otay Freeway	U.S./Mexico international border to Proctor Valley Road
Canfield Road, Divide Drive and Oak Grove Road	SR-76 to SR-79

Source: DPLU 2007b

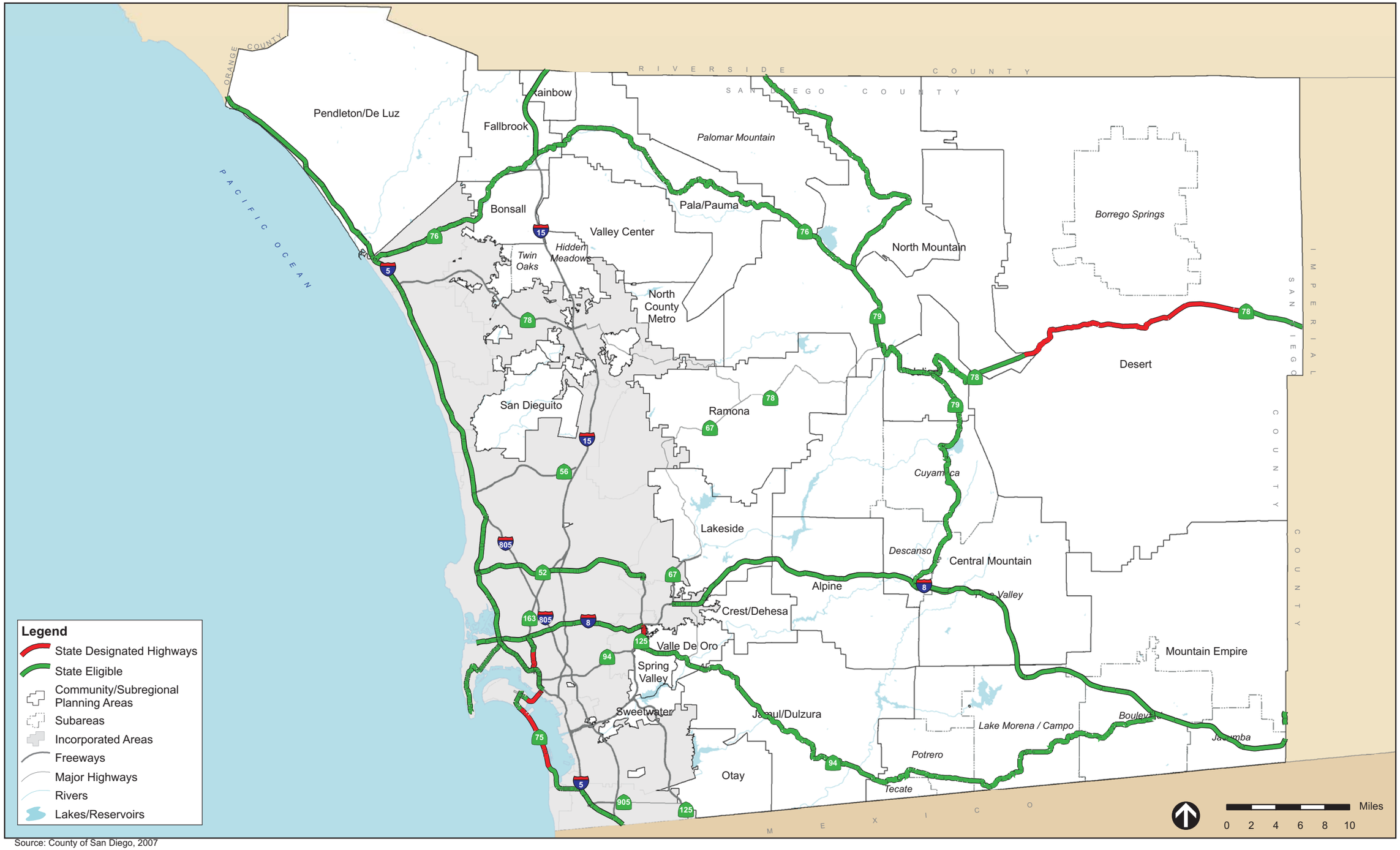
Table 2.1-3. Proposed Land Uses within Light Pollution Zone A (in acres)

Land Use Designation	Zone A - Mount Laguna Observatory	Zone A - Palomar Mountain Observatory
Commercial	262	292
Industrial	8	87
Military Installations	0	0
National Forest and State Parks	255,986	82,487
Office Professional	5	15
Open Space	79,754	52,221
Public/Semi-Public Facilities	3,427	2,678
Rural Lands	77,533	94,668
Semi-rural Residential	7,548	42,172
Specific Planning Area	0	4,121
Tribal Lands	28,136	37,793
Village Core Mixed Use	0	55
Village Residential	904	1,270
Total	**453,563**	**317,859**

Note: Data has been rounded to nearest whole number.
Source: DPLU GIS 2008



Source: County of San Diego, 2008



Source: County of San Diego, 2007

SAN DIEGO COUNTY STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS **FIGURE 2.1-2**

Photo 1 - Representative view of sparsely development ridgelines in Alpine.

Photo 2 - Example of a panoramic view in Bonsall of agriculture, estate lots, scenic valleys, and distant hills.

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2008

PHOTO LOCATIONS 1 AND 2 **FIGURE 2.1-3**

Photo 3 - Example of rural development surrounded by open space in Central Mountain.

Photo 4 - Representative view of rugged topography in Dehesa.

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2008

PHOTO LOCATIONS 3 AND 4 **FIGURE 2.1-4**

Photo 5 - Representative view of the Julian Historic District.

Photo 6 - Representative view of Lindo Lake County Park in Lakeside.

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2008

PHOTO LOCATIONS 5 AND 6 **FIGURE 2.1-5**

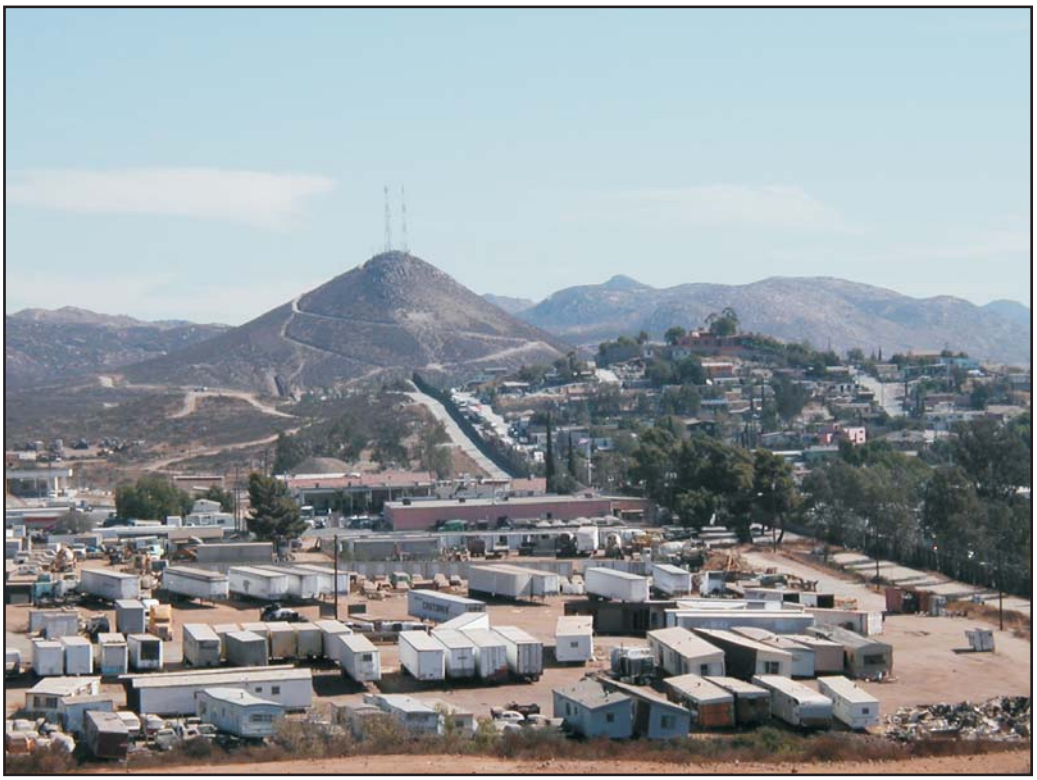


Photo 7 - View of industrial development in Tecate along the U.S./Mexico international border.

Photo 8 - Representative view of estate development in San Dieguito.

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2008

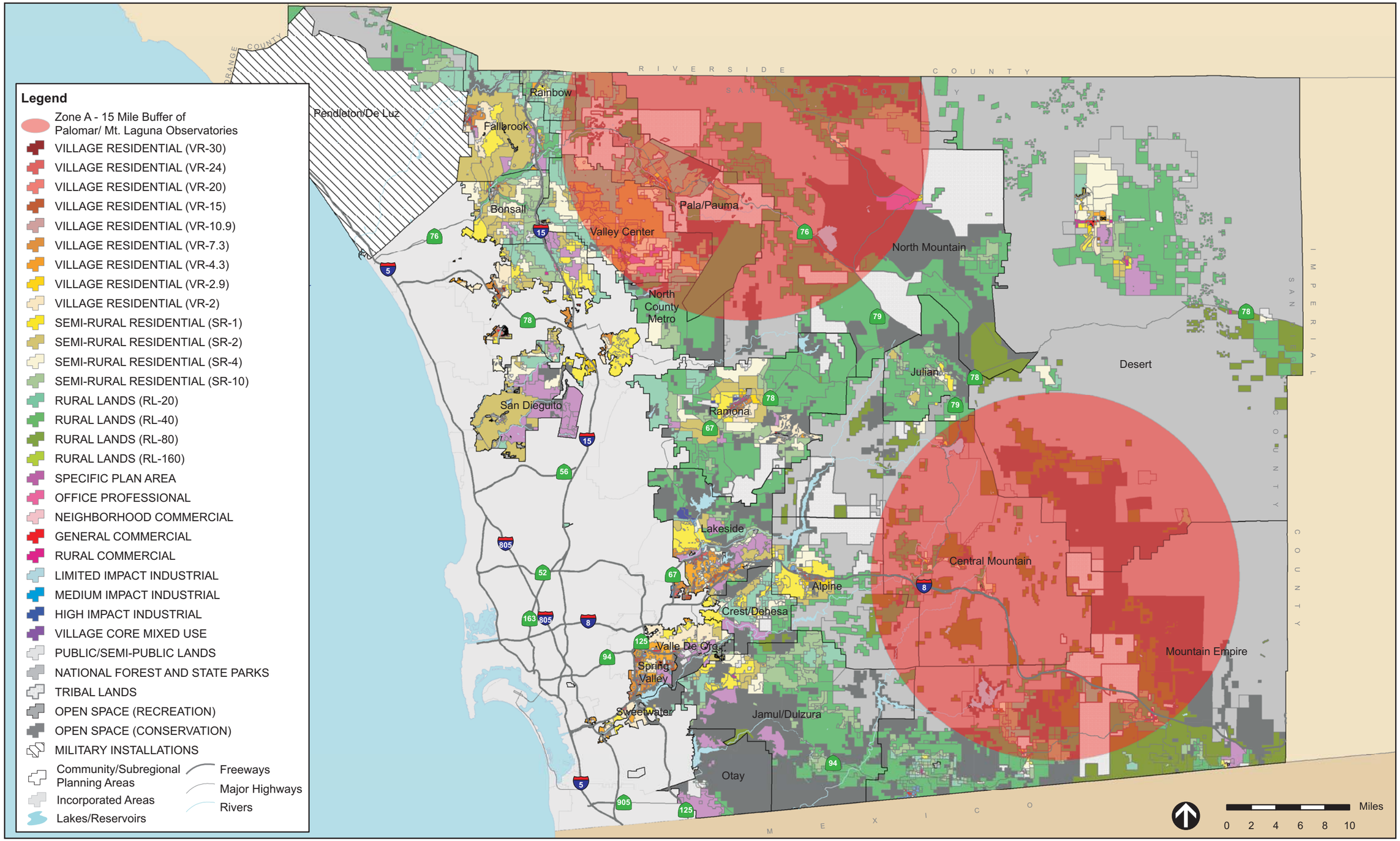
PHOTO LOCATIONS 7 AND 8 **FIGURE 2.1-6**

Photo 9 - Representative view of residential development in Spring Valley.

Photo 10 - Representative view of agricultural uses scattered throughout Valley Center.

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2008

PHOTO LOCATIONS 9 AND 10 **FIGURE 2.1-7**



Source: County of San Diego, 2008

ZONE A SURROUNDING PALOMAR AND MOUNT LAGUNA OBSERVATORIES **FIGURE 2.1-8**