

## 2.1 Aesthetics

This section of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) describes the visual setting of the Alpine Community Plan Area (CPA) and evaluates the potential impacts from the proposed project on scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, and light and glare. This section incorporates information and analysis from the 2011 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and 2016 Forest Conservation Initiative (FCI) General Plan Amendment (GPA) EIR (referred throughout the rest of this section as “prior EIRs”) as they apply to the proposed project. Section 1.3, *Project Background*, of this SEIR provides a background for both EIRs. The 2011 General Plan EIR analyzed the entirety of the Alpine CPA while the FCI EIR provided an updated analysis of impacts of land use changes within the FCI lands. These prior EIRs both have similar significance statements related to aesthetics. Table 2.1-1 summarizes the impact conclusions identified in this section.

**Table 2.1-1. Aesthetics Summary of Impacts**

<b>Issue Number</b>	<b>Issue Topic</b>	<b>Prior EIRs Conclusion</b>	<b>Project Direct Impact</b>	<b>Project Cumulative Impact</b>	<b>Level of Significance After Mitigation</b>
AES-1	Scenic Vistas	Less Than Significant	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant
AES-2	Scenic Resources	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant
AES-3	Visual Character or Quality	Significant and Unavoidable	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable
AES-4	Light or Glare	Significant and Unavoidable	Potentially Significant	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable

Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) related to aesthetics and visual resources included suggestions for design guidelines to be used to minimize impacts of increased development adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest (CNF) and requests to maintain the rural and small-town nature of Alpine. These concerns are addressed and summarized in this section.

Specifically, Issues 1, 2, and 3 in Section 2.1.3, below, analyze the project’s potential to damage or degrade scenic resources and visual character and quality, and identify existing regulations and proposed policies and measures to reduce impacts to these resources. A copy of the NOP and comment letters received in response to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this SEIR.

### 2.1.1 Existing Conditions

This section discusses the existing visual character and quality of the Alpine CPA and the seven subareas, where applicable. It also identifies the existing visual resources that are visible from within the Alpine CPA and existing sources of light and glare in the Alpine CPA.

### **2.1.1.1 Community 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. Scenic resources in the higher elevation of the Peninsular Range region are plentiful, including large open spaces such as CNF, 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.

Alpine is located within the County's mountainous Peninsular Range, situated in the foothills of the Cuyamaca Mountains. The area is rugged and diverse, ranging from densely vegetated lower drainage-ways to semi-arid hilly terrain, to the peaks of the Viejas and El Cajon Mountains. Interstate (I-) 8 bisects the community. Existing development has a rural character typical of light agricultural activities practiced in conjunction with residential uses. The mountainous setting in which Alpine is located greatly influences the visual character and scenic resources in the community, which include features such as Viejas Mountain, El Cajon Mountain, El Capitan Reservoir, Loveland Reservoir, Poser Mountain, and Palo Verde Lake.

### **2.1.1.2 Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources**

Certain areas in the County have been designated as Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) for the purposes of informing future planning decisions (see Figures 2.1-1a and 2.1-1b). 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 have been identified in the prior EIRs for the Alpine CPA. These RCAs would be carried forward into the proposed project as identified in the prior EIRs, and no changes are proposed to this list.

- **El Capitan 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 seen from an (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 mountain is valued as a visual landmark and for its high archaeological resource potential.

Figures 2.1-2a and 2.1-2b identify the locations of these features and the locations of key views. Figures 2.1-3 through 2.1-7 provide representative photographs of visual resources from key views in the Alpine CPA.

### **2.1.1.3 Scenic Highways and 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. State Scenic Highways are designated by the California Department of Transportation. There are no designated State Scenic Highways in the Alpine CPA. The nearest designated State Scenic Highways are State Route (SR-) 125 and SR-52, each of which is approximately 11 miles to the southwest and northwest, respectively, from Alpine. The majority of the entire length of I-8 from the eastern border of California to its western terminus in the community of Ocean Beach is considered an eligible State Scenic Highway, including the segment of I-8 that travels through Alpine, which includes views of Viejas Mountain, El Capitan Reservoir, Peutz Valley, and the Sweetwater River.

In addition to Section 2.1.1.1 above, the prior EIRs identify I-8 from the El Cajon city limits in the west to the Imperial County line in the east as part of the County Scenic Highway System Priority List. This includes the portion of I-8 that traverses Alpine. Other roadways identified on the County Scenic Highway System Priority List that fall within the Alpine CPA include Japatul Road from Lyons Valley Road to I-8, Honey Springs Road from SR-94 to Lyons Valley Road (only the northern portion of this segment falls within the Alpine CPA), Dehesa Road from the El Cajon city limits to Tavern Road, and Mountain View Road from La Cresta Boulevard to Harbison Canyon Road.

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 County Scenic Highway System List serves as a source for identifying resources to implement the scenic highways program. Finally, the existing Alpine Community Plan identifies three scenic view corridors from I-8: (1) views toward El Capitan Reservoir, (2) east and west views of Viejas Mountain, and (3) south views along Sweetwater River (see Figures 2.1-2a and 2.1-2b).

### **2.1.1.4 Visual Character and Quality**

Aesthetic experiences can be highly subjective and vary from person to person; therefore, when feasible, it is preferable to evaluate aesthetic resources using a process that strives to objectively identify the visual features of the area, their importance, and the sensitivity of the associated viewers. The proposed project-related changes to the aesthetic character of the project area and surrounding area are identified and qualitatively evaluated based on the extent of the modification to the existing physical conditions and based largely on viewer sensitivity to the modification. For the purposes of this analysis, *views* refer to visual access and obstruction, or whether it is possible to see a focal point or panoramic scene from an area, and *visual quality* is evaluated based on the relative degree of vividness, intactness, and unity within a landscape.

Viewer sensitivity is based on the visibility of a scenic resource, the proximity of viewers to the resource, the relative elevation of viewers to the resource, the frequency and duration of views, the number of viewers, and the types and expectations of the individuals and viewer groups. Generally, visual sensitivity increases as the total number of viewers, frequency, and duration of viewing activities increase.

An evaluation of the project area and the potentially affected environs, along with a review of public scoping comments, served to identify indicators of public sensitivity to changes to views. The range and

quality of public views of the project area were determined by reviewing street maps and designated vista areas in the Alpine Community Plan, conducting site visits, and reviewing photos of areas within or adjoining the project area. Consideration was also given to how viewers would experience the land use changes as a result of the proposed project due to varying degrees of visibility and distance from the project area, as well as the structures, vegetation, topographic features, or other intervening obstacles that were present.

The visual character and quality of a site and its surrounding area are defined by land uses, historical resources, community design, architectural themes, natural resources, and any other human-made or natural features that give the area its overall look and feel. 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 visual character and quality of a site and its surrounding area.

The visual character and quality of the Alpine CPA are typical of a predominantly residential small town in the semi-rural areas of San Diego County. Structures rarely exceed two stories in height and largely feature traditional architectural styles. Commercial uses consist mostly of neighborhood-serving retail establishments, such as a grocery store and restaurants, contained within strip commercial centers and are largely concentrated along Alpine Boulevard. There are a few multi-family residential uses, which again, tend to be located on or near Alpine Boulevard. Industrial uses are also limited and concentrated in the northwestern region of the Alpine CPA. The rest of the community comprises largely suburban or semi-rural residential development. However, because the community is nestled in the foothills of the Peninsular Ranges with relatively hilly topography, the development pattern does not follow a grid, but instead consists of a more organic pattern with streets that meander over or around hillsides and down through valleys.

There are some pockets of suburban residential development, such as the centrally located Crown Hills neighborhood off of Tavern Road/Victoria Park Terrace, north of I-8, or the Sundance neighborhood south of I-8 and east of South Grade Road. These neighborhoods comprise evenly spaced medium or large single-family homes featuring the same architectural style and uniform setbacks and lot sizes. Homes are all oriented toward the street and include landscaping typical of suburban development such as grass lawns, ornamental trees, and fencing. Much of the Alpine CPA, however, features a much less dense residential development pattern. Typical of more rural development, houses are spread out farther away from each other and contain varying architectural styles, setbacks, landscaping, etc. Again, because of the mountainous topography, development is interrupted by canyons or hilly areas.

The specific visual character of each subarea is summarized below.

**Subarea 1** is located to the northwest of the Tavern Road/I-8 intersection in the northwesternmost portion of the village area; this subarea consists mainly of graded, but undeveloped gravel lots, some of which provide storage space for construction equipment. This subarea is near a planned Mobility Element road, close to services located by the Tavern Road off-ramp, and adjacent to the existing Crown Hills residential development. The topography of this area of Alpine is hilly, and because of their low-profile nature, these features are not very visible from the surrounding public roadways. Other portions of this subarea are undeveloped natural open space.

**Subarea 2** is concentrated along Tavern Road roughly between Ball Ranch Road and South Grade Road and undeveloped parcels abut Wright's Field to the north. The stretch of Tavern Road within Subarea 2 is a somewhat sparsely developed two-lane road with shallow or no curbs along some portions and gravel shoulders, except near Joan McQueen Middle School and Boulder Oaks Elementary School where the road



widens to allow for dedicated bike lanes and turning lanes. Overhead electrical equipment (posts and wires) is visible along the entire length. However, the streetscape is also heavily vegetated with trees or open, grassy fields lining much of the roadway. Multiple undeveloped lots front the roadway.

Other parcels in Subarea 2 are developed with low-density residential uses, which include one-story homes situated within a large lot with deep setbacks from the roadway. Various styles of fencing often enclose the residential homes. The two schools along Tavern Road—Joan McQueen Middle School and Boulder Oaks Elementary—represent a marked deviation from the predominant visual character along Tavern Road due to the presence of the larger school buildings being visible as well as the parking lots, wide driveways, and manicured lawns that front the road. The parcels north of Wright's Field comprise undeveloped, natural open space. They are currently not highly visible from public roadways.

**Subarea 3** is located centrally within the Alpine CPA, east of East Victoria Drive, south of Otto Avenue, and north of I-8. The western boundary of the subarea aligns roughly with the Alpine Boulevard/Willows Road freeway overpass. Similar to Subarea 2, Subarea 3 is sparsely developed and includes low-density residential uses on large lots, with large parcels of undeveloped open space separating many of the parcels. The East Victoria Drive end of Otto Avenue is slightly more densely developed. While lots are generously sized, they are smaller than those farther east down Otto Avenue. The houses are generally closer together and situated closer to the street, with visible fencing and landscaped yards. Farther east along Otto Avenue, the streetscape becomes more heavily vegetated with trees or open space with native vegetation. Houses are set back farther and are minimally visible from the roadway.

**Subarea 4** is located in the westernmost area of the Alpine CPA to the south and west of El Capitan Reservoir. The subarea encompasses an area roughly bounded by El Monte Drive on the north, Chocolate Summit Drive on the east, I-8 on the south, and the community of Lakeside on the west. The western portion of the subarea is characterized by low-density residential on large lots, comprising mostly one-story, single-family homes. The development pattern has a somewhat haphazard appearance with setbacks, architectural styles, and landscaping and fencing varying from one lot to the next. Many of the lots contain one or more outbuildings, such as stand-alone garages or sheds, and some contain equestrian facilities such as round pens or paddocks.

The middle portion of Subarea 4 is publicly owned land designated Public Agency Lands (PAL) and is not part of the subarea. However, aside from the Los Coches Creek Middle School and a church, this area contains undeveloped, naturally vegetated open space. The eastern portion of the subarea includes another small low-density residential community similar in character to the western side. The northern portion includes active agricultural production with planted fields and undeveloped open space, some of which has been graded with other areas containing natural vegetation.

**Subarea 5** is located south of I-8 between the Alpine Boulevard/Willows Road and the East Willows Road overpasses. The southern boundary varies but is generally north of Palo Verde Lake and the Sweetwater River. This area is minimally developed, including only a few small pockets of low-density residential uses where, again, houses that vary in architectural styles and setbacks, etc., are situated within large lots, often with several other outbuildings with varying purposes. These pockets of residential development are interspersed between large areas of hilly and naturally vegetated open space. Three parcels within this subarea are currently part of the CNF.

**Subarea 6** is Alpine's "Main Street" and Village area, centered along Alpine Boulevard between West Victoria Drive and East Victoria Drive/South Grade Road. Development within this portion of the Alpine CPA is relatively dense and comprises mostly small stand-alone commercial enterprises, such as liquor stores, restaurants, bicycle shops, gas stations, banks, auto-repair shops, and childcare centers. Various

buildings are present along this stretch of Alpine Boulevard. Generally, buildings front the road or are separated from the roadway by small parking lots. While not exceeding two stories, building heights vary from one parcel to the next and range from two full stories, buildings with parapets that give the appearance of a taller façade, to buildings with low-flat roof lines. Building styles also vary considerably. Some exhibit plain traditional architectural styles, others have more contemporary styles, and there is a distinct style reminiscent of a country village. Landscaping varies as well with most lots containing minimal vegetation, such as a few small shrubs, while others have larger ornamental trees.

**Subarea 7** is located throughout the Alpine CPA but most heavily oriented in the central and southern portion of the area. Development is limited and is semi-rural and rural.

### **2.1.1.5    *Light and Glare***

The lower density, semi-rural uses in many unincorporated communities provide darker skies than that of an urban community. Because of its semi-rural nature, sources of glare and nighttime lighting are somewhat limited in the Alpine CPA. Commercial uses tend to produce more nighttime lighting than residential uses, and, therefore, nighttime lighting tends to be concentrated along Alpine Boulevard, including parking lot security lighting and building lighting. Alpine Boulevard, as well as other major thoroughfares in the community and some of the residential communities, also includes street lighting. Viejas Casino and Resort, on the eastern edge of the community, provides another major source of lighting for the casino and resort buildings as well as the outlet mall. The segment of I-8 that traverses Alpine does not contain nighttime street lighting.

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 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. There are very few sources of glare in the Alpine CPA, with typical sources limited to sunlight reflecting from car windshields.

## **2.1.2    Regulatory Framework**

Chapter 2.1 of the prior EIRs describes the Regulatory Framework related to aesthetics and is hereby incorporated by reference. The regulatory framework discussion in the prior EIRs regarding aesthetics has not changed since adoption and is therefore not repeated here. The FCI EIR applied to 71,715 acres within nine CPAs and did not specifically discuss community design regulations. Therefore, the Alpine Design Review Guidelines, and the Alpine Village Core Form-Based Code Ordinance (Ordinance 8900) are discussed below. It should be noted that the County is currently undertaking a comprehensive update of the Land Development Code (LDC), which includes the County's Zoning Ordinance and could result in revisions to the local regulations listed below.

Applicable federal regulations include:

- National Highway System Designation Act of 1995
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1962
- Telecommunications Act of 1996

Applicable state regulations include:

- California Energy Code
- California Street and Highways Code
- State Scenic Highways Program

Applicable local regulations include:

- San Diego County Board of Supervisors Policy I-73, Hillside Development Policy
- County Community Right-of-Way Development Standards
- Design Review Guidelines
  - Adopted in 1987, the purpose of Alpine's Design Review process is to encourage development that contributes to Alpine's special character and identity as a mountain village. Design review is required for all new construction or alteration in commercial, industrial, and public/semi-public development as well as multi-family residential development zoned at a density of 7.3 or more dwelling units per acre occurring within the Alpine CPA boundaries. The design guidelines cover topics such as site planning principles, natural features, architectural character, visual linkages and landscaping guidelines, lighting guidelines, and signage. The guidelines also establish the design review application process and requirements.
- County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 86.601-86.608, Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO)
- County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 59.101-59.115, Light Pollution Code (LPC)
- Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and the County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 86.501-86.509, Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO)
- San Diego County Scenic Highway Program
- San Diego County Zoning Ordinance
  - Sections 5200–5212, Scenic Area Regulations
  - Section 5749, Specific Historic Districts
  - Sections 5750–5758, Community Design Review Area Regulations
  - Sections 5900–5910, Design Review Area Regulations
  - Sections 5700–5749, Historic/Archaeological Landmark and District Area Regulations
  - Section 6320, Amended by Ord. No. 9620, Humidity, Heat, Cold and Glare
  - Section 6322, Amended by Ord. No. 7110, Outdoor Lighting
  - Section 6324, Amended by Ord. No. 9690, Lighting Permitted in Required Yard
  - Section 6980, Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

Applicable local regulations not included in or adopted after adoption of the 2011 General Plan Update are described below.

### ***2.1.2.1 Sections 8900–8980, Alpine Village Core Regulations (Adopted July 31, 2014)***

The Alpine Village Core regulations apply to the area identified in the Alpine CPA as the Village Core and are intended to preserve and promote the village character while creating a balanced automobile, bicycling, and pedestrian-friendly environment for residents, business owners, and visitors. These regulations are also intended to encourage the continuation and growth of the character of Alpine while promoting the economic development of the Alpine Village Core. These regulations establish permitted uses, development standards, design standards, and thoroughfare design standards. As noted above, the LDC is currently being updated, and the Alpine Village Core Regulations may be revised as part of that process.

### ***2.1.2.2 Forest Conservation Initiative***

The 2011 General Plan and associated certified General Plan EIR included land use map changes that excluded approximately 71,300 acres of private lands within the CNF in the unincorporated County that were formerly designated as FCI lands. The FCI was a voter-approved initiative in 1993 that required a minimum lot size of 40 acres for these lands. The FCI expired on December 31, 2010. With its expiration, the former FCI lands reverted to the land use designations of the previous General Plan (1978) in effect before the FCI was enacted. As a result, the land use designations associated with the FCI lands were not consistent with the 2011 General Plan land use designations. In addition, the land use mapping for the former FCI lands was not consistent with the General Plan Goals and Policies, and Guiding Principles. The subsequent FCI GPA and associated EIR resulted in re-designation of former FCI lands with land use categories consistent with the Guiding Principles, and Goals and Policies of the adopted 2011 General Plan. In addition, the FCI GPA included changes in land use designations for approximately 400 acres of private lands adjacent to former FCI lands to ensure that the land use designations for these additional 400 acres are consistent with the changes proposed for the former FCI lands and vice versa (County of San Diego 2016).

### ***2.1.2.3 County of San Diego General Plan Policies***

The General Plan includes goals and policies intended to protect aesthetics and visual resources within the Land Use, Conservation and Open Space, Mobility, and Housing elements. These goals and policies are summarized below.

#### **Land Use Element**

Goal LU-1 is to develop a land use plan and development doctrine that sustain the intent and integrity of the Community Development Model and the boundaries between Regional Categories. Policies LU-1.3 and LU-1.4 specifically support this goal by focusing land use designations to be consistent with community character, preserve surrounding rural areas, and support orderly and contiguous expansion of a Village area.

Goal LU-2 focuses on the conservation and enhancement of the unincorporated County's varied communities, rural setting, and character. Policies LU-2.1 and LU-2.2 address this goal by focusing on the importance of maintaining updated community plans and the relationship between the General Plan and community plans. Additionally, Policies LU-2.3 and LU-2.5 further address this goal by requiring density and lot sizes in character with each unincorporated community and the identification and maintenance of greenbelts.

Goal LU-6 states that the built environment should be in balance with the natural environment, scarce resources, natural hazards, and the unique local character of individual communities. A number of policies address this goal, specific to conservation-oriented design and integrating natural features into project design, specifically Policies LU-6.2, LU-6.3, LU-6.6, and LU-6.9. Additionally, Policies LU-6.4 and LU-6.7 require that projects conserve and protect open space, protect natural resources, and preserve scenic vistas and areas.

Goal LU-10 addresses the function of semi-rural and rural lands buffering communities, protecting natural resources, fostering agriculture, and accommodating unique rural communities. Policies LU-10.1 and LU-10.2 meet this goal and require residential development in Semi-Rural areas to integrate with existing communities; provide connected and continuous streets, pathway/trail, and recreational open space networks; and require development in semi-rural and rural areas to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character.

### Mobility Element

Goal M-2 responds to physical constraints and preservation goals by working to establish a road network that provides adequate capacity to reasonably accommodate both planned land uses and regional traffic patterns, while supporting other General Plan goals such as providing environmental protections and enhancing community character. Policy M-2.3 specifically addresses this goal through environmental sensitive road design by locating and designing public and private roads to minimize impacts to significant biological and other environmental and visual resources.

Goal M-10 addresses parking for community needs through parking regulations that service the community while enhancing community character. Policy M-10.6 meets this goal by establishing restrictions for on-street parking to retain rural character outside Villages and Rural Villages.

### Conservation and Open Space Element

Goal COS-11 identifies the importance of preserving scenic resources, including vistas of important natural and unique features, where visual impacts of development are minimized. Specifically, Policies COS-11.1 and COS-11.2 meet this goal by requiring protection of scenic resources and connection of these resources. Policy COS-11.3 requires development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, Policies LU-4 and LU-5 require coordination with state and federal agencies, jurisdictions, and private and public power agencies to protect scenic resources and corridors, avoid impacts to visually sensitive areas, and design public improvements within visually sensitive areas to blend into the landscape.

Goal COS-12 preserves ridgelines and steep hillsides for their character and scenic value. Policies COS-12.1 and COS-12.2 meet this goal by restricting development and protecting these features through semi-rural and rural designations and locating structures down and away from ridgelines.

Goal COS-13 establishes the preservation of dark skies as they contribute to rural character and are necessary for the local observatories. This goal is met through implementation of Policies COS-13.1, COS-13.2, and COS-13.3, which restrict light and glare from development projects in semi-rural and rural lands, minimize light pollution specifically in the vicinity of Palomar and Mount Laguna Observatories, and require coordination with adjacent federal and state agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments.

## Housing Element

Goal H-2 aims to establish well-designed residential neighborhoods that respect unique local character and the natural environment while expanding opportunities for affordable housing. Policy H-2.1 meets this goal by requiring that development in existing residential neighborhoods are well designed so they do not degrade or detract from the character of surrounding development consistent with the Land Use Element.

### **2.1.2.4 Alpine CPU Policies**

Specific Alpine Community Plan Update (CPU) goals and policies in the Land Use, Mobility, and Conservation and Open Space Elements are relevant to impacts and visual resources and are summarized below.

## Land Use Element

Goal LU-1 is proposed to capitalize on the economic opportunity afforded by I-8 and the regional access it provides. Policy LU-1 meets this goal by establishing commercial quadrants at the three I-8 interchanges (Tavern Road, West Willows, and East Willows).

Goal LU-7 recommends analyzing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Pilot Program, and Policy LU-7.1 specifically implements a TDR Pilot Program in support of this goal.

Goal LU-8 furthers the early designation of a scenic highway system that will provide attractive and scenic travel routes within the Alpine planning area. Policy LU-8.1 refines the scenic vistas/view corridors from the current Alpine Community Plan, as documented in Section 2.1.1.3 above, to include I-8 looking north and south through Peutz Valley and east and west views of Viejas Mountains.

## Mobility Element

Goal M-1 works to support a multi-modal transportation system that serves the general convenience and safety of Alpine citizens and enhances the beauty and quality of the built environment. Policies M-1.6, M-1.9, and M-1.10 encourage replacement of all trees lost during road construction/renovation projects; encourage streetscape designs that promote walkability, such as shade and benches; and support walkways in residential communities and around existing and future school sites.

## Conservation and Open Space Element

Goal COS-2 encourages planting of trees to absorb carbon dioxide and provide water quality benefits through runoff retention. Policy COS-2.1 recommends exploring incentives and tax breaks to meet this goal and consideration of support for removal of non-native vegetation.

Goal COS-3 aims to create an open space system that provides connectivity for the community and wildlife and provides buffers between open space and development. Policy COS-3.1 encourages preservation/conservation of open space corridors that connect the community of Alpine to CNF, El Capitan and Loveland Reservoirs, and Sweetwater River Basin.

Goal COS-4 recommends creation of a system of parks and natural open space preserves that provide both passive and active recreation opportunities. Specifically, Policies COS-4.1 and COS-4.2 require placement of open space areas and access in alignment with adjacent jurisdictions and located adjacent to each other in residential developments.

### 2.1.3 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

Based on guidance provided in Appendix G of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, and the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007), except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, the proposed project would result in a significant impact if it would:

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

#### 2.1.3.1 *Issue 1: Scenic Vistas*

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance Analysis

Based on Appendix G of CEQA and the County's Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista that is visible from the following:

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

##### Impact Analysis

The prior EIRs determined that the proposed land use designations and accompanying future development based on those designations would result in potentially significant direct and cumulative impacts on scenic vistas. Impacts of the General Plan and FCI GPA were determined to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and General Plan policies, which would require protection of scenic vistas through development design and siting, including integration of open spaces and natural resources in developments; and maintenance of lower density land use designations in areas that include scenic vistas visible from a public road, a trail within an adopted County or state trail system, a scenic vista or highway, or recreational area. The discussion of impacts related to scenic vistas from the General Plan and FCI GPA implementation can be found in Sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.4.1 of the General Plan EIR and 2.1.3.1 of the FCI EIR and is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed project would result in similar direct and cumulative impacts related to scenic vistas through future development that could affect views of locally important scenic vistas. The proposed project concentrates density in existing highly developed areas of Alpine, specifically the Village. The proposed project would allow for a greater density and increase in the number of dwelling units in Subareas 2, 4, and 6; however, Subarea 5 would have a reduction in dwelling units. The land use designation changes would involve changing existing Village Residential (VR-4.3, VR-2.9, VR-2) land uses

to a higher density (VR-10.9, VR-7.3) and reclassifying a small area from Village Residential to Semi-Rural Residential (SR-1) or Neighborhood Commercial (C-3). Subarea 4, located in the northwestern portion of the CPA and north of I-8, would have an increase in density through the re-designation of existing Semi-Rural Residential (SR-1, SR-2) to uniformly SR-0.5 land use designations. Subarea 6, located in Alpine Village and south of I-8, would result in an increase in density as the land use designations for the area would be re-designated from Residential Commercial (RC) to Village Core Mixed Use (VCMU) to provide additional high-density residential options and flexibility in commercial options. An increase in density would have the potential to obstruct, interrupt, or detract of 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.

One new roadway segment, New Road 26, is proposed to be added to the Mobility Network Element. New Road 26 would be within Subarea 5, along Viejas Creek Trail, from Alpine Boulevard to Via Dieguenos. New infrastructure would have the potential to interrupt or detract from a scenic vista that previously did not include infrastructure.

The proposed project would allow for increased building height and scale within Subareas 2, 4, and 6 as compared to the prior EIRs, which in turn would have the potential to affect views of Viejas Mountain (a locally important scenic vista). The proposed project includes Policy LU-8.1, which requires the protection of locally important scenic vistas, including corridors along I-8, Viejas Mountain, and El Cajon Mountain. Despite these policies, this impact is **potentially significant** because the land use designations of the proposed project and the resulting development would have the potential to obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista.

### ***Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes***

Several federal, state, and local regulations identified in Section 2.1.2, *Regulatory Framework*, that are applicable to the Alpine CPU protect visual resources, including CEQA, RPO, and design guidelines. Through CEQA review of discretionary projects, the County is able to minimize impacts to scenic vistas. The County has prepared guidelines specifically for reviewing impacts to scenic vistas.

Although not specific to scenic vistas, the County Zoning Ordinance contains several regulations that address aesthetic character and resources, as described 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. Therefore, the existing regulations and processes aid in reducing impacts to scenic vistas but are not comprehensive to this issue.

### ***Summary***

The proposed project has the potential to create more severe impacts to scenic vistas associated with increased density, new road infrastructure, and building height and scale as compared to the FCI EIR. Goals and policies proposed in the Alpine CPU could help reduce impacts from future development projects implemented under the proposed project. There are also numerous regulations in place that will continue to apply to subsequent projects that are discretionary, including the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources, scenic designators, and the Community Design Review Board. Despite these policies and regulations, impacts would be **potentially significant** and specific implementation programs are identified as mitigation (**Impact-AES-1**).



### **2.1.3.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources**

#### **Guidelines for the Determination of Significance Analysis**

Based on Appendix G of CEQA and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources, the proposed project 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 State or County Scenic Highway, or localized area, including, but not limited to, landmarks (designated), historic resources, trees, and rock outcroppings.

#### **Impact Analysis**

The prior EIRs determined that the proposed land use designations would allow development to occur with the potential to result in significant direct and cumulative impacts on scenic resources. Impacts were determined to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and General Plan goals and policies, which require protection of scenic resources through development design and siting, including integration of open spaces and natural resources in developments; and maintenance of lower density land use designations in areas adjacent to scenic resources. The discussion of impacts related to scenic resources from implementation of the General Plan and FCI GPA can be found in Sections 2.1.3.2 and 2.1.4.2 of the General Plan EIR and 2.1.3.2 of the FCI EIR and is hereby incorporated by reference.

As discussed above, I-8 is the only eligible State Scenic Highway designated on the County Scenic Highway System Priority List (2007) in the vicinity of the land use designation changes that would occur under the proposed project. There are no other eligible or designated State Scenic Highways in the vicinity of the Alpine CPA and other designated County highways on the Priority List in the area do not include views of the seven subareas where land use designation changes would occur, largely due to intervening topography and vegetation. However, the project proposes land use designations allowing greater densities adjacent to the I-8 corridor than are allowed under the General Plan.

Implementation of these densities has the potential to result in the removal or substantial adverse change of features contributing to the existing visual character within viewsheds available from I-8, including the removal of trees and the potential removal of rock outcroppings during grading activities, particularly in the eastern portion of the Alpine CPA. As such, similar to the prior EIRs, the proposed project has the potential to result in a significant adverse impact on scenic resources. As described in Section 2.1.3.1, Issue 1, the General Plan and Alpine CPU include goals and policies that protect scenic resources, and all of the policies listed for Issue 1 are also applicable to scenic resources. Implementation of these densities has the potential to result in the removal or substantial adverse change of features contributing to the existing visual character within viewsheds available from I-8 resulting in a **potentially significant impact**.

#### ***Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes***

As described in Section 2.1.3.1 above, the existing regulations and processes that are relevant to scenic resources are the same as those documented for scenic vistas. These regulations and processes indirectly assist with preservation of scenic resources, except for implementation of the CEQA process for discretionary projects.

#### ***Summary***

The proposed project has the potential to create more severe impacts to scenic resources as a result of the removal or substantial adverse change of features contributing to the existing visual character within viewsheds available from I-8 as compared to the prior EIRs. Goals and policies from the current General

Plan and proposed in the Alpine CPU could help reduce impacts from future development project implemented under the proposed project. There are also numerous regulations in place that will continue to apply to subsequent projects that are discretionary, including the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources, scenic designators, and the Community Design Review Board. Despite these policies and regulations, impacts to scenic resources would be **potentially significant (Impact-AES-2)**.

### ***2.1.3.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality***

#### **Guidelines for the Determination of Significance Analysis**

Based on Appendix G of CEQA and the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources, the proposed project 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) or by being inconsistent with applicable design guidelines.

#### **Impact Analysis**

The prior EIRs determined that some proposed land use designations would result in increased development densities in certain rural areas that could in turn adversely affect or degrade the existing visual character or quality of a community due to incompatibility, substantial change to community character, or alteration or loss of a community's visual resources. Direct and cumulative impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable even with County regulations, ordinances, General Plan goals and policies, and mitigation measures. The discussion of impacts related to visual character and quality from implementation of the General Plan and FCI GPA can be found in Sections 2.1.3.3 and 2.1.4.3 of the General Plan EIR and 2.1.3.3 of the FCI EIR and is hereby incorporated by reference.

The land use designation changes occurring as part of the proposed project would allow for an increase in density of residential development within Subareas 2, 4, and 6, the implementation of which would result in considerable alteration of the visual character and quality of the subareas. The Alpine CPA is defined by its small-town character currently consisting largely of semi-rural residential uses. Architecture tends to be low profile with most structures remaining within one- to two-story height limits and containing varying, but relatively traditional styles. Streetscapes also reflect this semi-rural character with relatively narrow road widths, lined with mature trees, gravel shoulders instead of curbs or sidewalks, and considerable variations in setbacks for structures. There are a few pockets of more suburban residential neighborhoods with more uniform development patterns, including houses fronting the street, consistent setbacks, and curbed streets with sidewalks. Multi-family housing is even rarer in the community.

To accommodate the densities proposed for the proposed project, a more suburban development pattern would occur with a focus on residential density close to existing or planned services and concentrated in existing highly developed areas of Alpine, specifically the Village. Land use designations within Subareas 1, 3, and 7 remain unchanged from the current General Plan. The proposed project would allow for a greater density and increase in the number of dwelling units in Subareas 2, 4, and 6; however, Subarea 5 would have a reduction in dwelling units. In Subareas 2 and 4, a denser development pattern would occur with implementation of VR-7.3, VR-10.9, and VCMU where land use designations currently allow for lower density residential uses. For example, existing land use designation VR-2 would allow for two dwelling

units per acre while proposed land use designation VR-10.9 would allow for 10.9 dwelling units per acre, potentially more than five times greater density on 1 acre of land. Subarea 5 would result in a slight decrease in residential density than what was planned in the current General Plan, including maintaining a lower density buffer to the CNF.

Subarea 6 includes an area centered around the Tavern Road/Alpine Boulevard intersection, an area centered along Alpine Boulevard between West Victoria Drive and South Grade Road, and an area between I-8 and Alpine Boulevard between East Victoria Drive and the Alpine Boulevard overpass. The western two areas in Subarea 6 would be re-designated from General Commercial to VCMU uses. These areas already have an urban development pattern, but would experience greater density than currently exists; however, there would be no substantial change in the existing development pattern in this area over that which would have occurred under the General Plan. The eastern area of Subarea 6 would be re-designated from Rural Commercial to VCMU. This portion of Subarea 6 is currently sparsely developed; as with the other subareas, there would be a substantial change in the existing development pattern in this area—from a more rural character to a suburban or urban character.

Uniform lot and structure sizes, greater lot coverage, consistent setbacks and massing, and similar architectural styles would become more common. Building heights would also increase under the higher VR residential designations (for example, VR-10.9 or the VCMU designations), including development of three-story multi-family housing complexes. Streetscapes would likely be altered to reflect a more suburban character as well, with curbs and sidewalks becoming more common and potentially larger intersections with new traffic signals being required to accommodate the increased traffic that would occur if higher density development is implemented.

Four roadway segments are proposed to be removed from the existing Mobility Element Network: New Road 14 (from Tavern Road to West Victoria Drive), New Road 18 (from Alpine Boulevard to Eltinge Drive), New Road 23 (from Victoria Circle to East Victoria Drive), and El Monte Road (from Lakeside community boundary to El Capitan Reservoir). One new roadway segment, New Road 26, is proposed to be added to the Mobility Network Element. New Road 26 would be located within Subarea 5, along Viejas Creek Trail, from Alpine Boulevard to Via Dieguenos.

These changes to the visual character of the community would result in conflicts with the existing visual elements that define the visual quality of the area, including the introduction of new styles, setbacks, density, and building materials. Prior to the application of existing relevant regulations and General Plan policies and mitigation measures, the proposed project has the potential to result in adverse impacts on the visual character and quality of the Alpine CPA.

Even with implementation of General Plan policies, the prior EIRs mitigation measures, and proposed Alpine CPU policies, and because the prior EIRs did not anticipate the densities being proposed in the Alpine CPU, impacts related to visual character and quality with implementation of the proposed project would be more severe than those identified. Implementation of these General Plan policies, the prior EIRs mitigation measures, and the Alpine CPU policies would reduce the proposed project's impacts associated with visual character or quality but would remain **potentially significant** and mitigation would be required.

### *Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes*

As described in Section 2.1.3.1 above, visual character and quality are currently addressed through many of the same regulations and processes. For visual character, those regulations that relate to preservation of the natural environment (such as RPO) have greater relevance in rural communities, such as Alpine.

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.

### *Summary*

The proposed project would not reduce impacts to visual character and quality below a level of significance with implementation of General Plan policies, Community Plan policies, and the prior EIRs mitigation measures. Numerous regulations are in place that will continue to apply to subsequent projects that are discretionary, including the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources, scenic designators, and the Community Design Review Board. Implementation of policies, regulations, and mitigation measures would further reduce impacts associated with visual character or quality, although not to below a level of significance; therefore, a **potentially significant** direct impact would occur and mitigation would be required (**Impact-AES-3**).

### ***2.1.3.4 Issue 4: Light and Glare***

#### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance Analysis

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

#### Impact Analysis

The prior EIRs determined that the proposed land use designations and accompanying future development based on those designations in the General Plan and FCI GPA would result in potentially significant direct and cumulative impacts related to light and glare. The discussion of impacts related to light and glare from implementation of the General Plan and FCI GPA can be found in Sections 2.1.3.4 and 2.1.4.4 of the General Plan EIR and 2.1.3.4 of the FCI EIR and is hereby incorporated by reference. Impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable even with implementation of mitigation measures and General Plan policies. The mitigation and policies would help reduce impacts related to light because they establish lighting regulations designed to minimize impacts on sensitive areas and community character including restricting or prohibiting outdoor lighting within certain land use designations or within specified distances from the observatories.

Future development occurring under implementation of the proposed project would cause glare impacts if it would result in the installation of highly reflective building materials that create glare or does not conform to applicable federal, state, or local regulations related to glare. Reflective building materials are commonly used in office professional land uses to provide office windows and in commercial land uses to display goods or advertisements in store fronts. The land use designation changes occurring under the proposed project mostly involve residential land uses, which generally do not make use of large expanses of reflective surfaces. As such, glare impacts related to implementation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

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, as 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. Under existing conditions, the Alpine CPA, which has a concentration of commercial uses along Alpine Boulevard, has a greater lighting footprint in that part of the Alpine CPA and a lesser lighting footprint in the surrounding rural uses. With the density increases that would be allowed with implementation of the proposed project, up to 2,013 residential units could be added to the Alpine CPA, which would result in a substantial new source of nighttime lighting. The eastern portion of the Alpine CPA falls outside and west of the 15-mile radius of the Mount Laguna Observatory, which is the area most critical for light pollution to be minimized (identified as Zone A in the San Diego County LPC). In addition, Alpine has identified dark skies as a contributing part of their community character.

As highlighted in Section 2.1.2.3 above, a number of County zoning regulations address light standards. Additionally, mitigation measures from the prior EIRs, including Aes-4.1 and Aes-4.2, would also be implemented to reduce impacts associated with light or glare. The measures would reduce impacts related to light because they establish lighting regulations designed to minimize impacts on sensitive areas and community character including restricting or prohibiting outdoor lighting within certain land use designations or within specified distances from the observatories. However, despite the Zoning Ordinance regulations, General Plan goals and policies aimed at light trespass and spillover, and mitigation measures, given the magnitude of the potential development that would occur under implementation of the proposed project, impacts related to nighttime lighting with implementation of the proposed project would be more severe than those identified in the prior EIRs. Implementation of these policies and the prior EIRs mitigation measures would reduce the proposed project's impacts associated with light but not below a level of significance; impacts would remain **potentially significant** and mitigation would be required.

### ***Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Existing Regulatory Processes***

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 that 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. Furthermore, the General Plan promotes the preservation of dark skies that is necessary for local observatories and to contribute to the rural character of a community. Policies COS-13.1, COS-13.2, and COS-13.3 are applicable to the proposed project (see Section 2.1.2.3).

### *Summary*

The proposed project would have the potential to result in increased light and glare within the CPA that would adversely affect nighttime views. While existing County policies and regulations are intended to minimize light and glare, including the prior EIRs mitigation measures, these programs in place do not reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. As such, implementation of the proposed project would result in **potentially significant** impacts (**Impact-AES-4**) related to light and glare effects and dark skies.

## **2.1.4 Cumulative Impacts Analysis**

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis for aesthetics includes the communities that surround Alpine, including Crest/Dehesa, Lakeside, Cuyamaca, Descanso, Pine Valley, and Jamul/Dulzura because the surrounding communities have somewhat similar character and may also be affected by the land use designation changes.

The geographic scope would also include the Viejas Reservation, which is within the Alpine CPA but is not within the jurisdiction of the County. For the issue of lighting, it would also include any area within the 15-mile radius of the Mount Laguna Observatory, which is the area most critical for light pollution to be minimized (identified as Zone A in the San Diego County LPC).

### **2.1.4.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas**

A cumulative impact would occur on scenic vistas if development associated with cumulative projected growth within the Alpine CPA or directly surrounding community combined with the proposed project would result in the obstruction, interruption, or detracting of scenic vistas. Future growth within and adjacent to the Alpine CPA would result in denser or taller development than currently exists within the vicinity of scenic vistas and, thus, would have the potential to obstruct or detract from a scenic vista. Therefore, as identified in the prior EIRs, the cumulative projects in communities adjacent to the Alpine CPA would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact.

Cumulative projects located in the geographic scope would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to scenic vistas if, in combination, they would result in the obstruction, interruption, or detracting of a scenic vista. Other communities would be subject to the General Plan and FCI GPA and have existing Community Plans, which regulate the protection of scenic vistas. Development on tribal lands within the County also has the potential to result in the impacts to scenic vistas. For example, 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 2.1.3.1, the land use designations within the proposed project would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detracting 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 **potentially significant cumulative impact** and mitigation would be required (**Impact-C-AES-1**).

#### ***2.1.4.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources***

Cumulative projects located within and near the Alpine CPA would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact on 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. Similar to the proposed project, future development would be constructed in locations that fall within the viewsheds of County of San Diego Scenic Highway System Priority List. These projects have the potential to remove or result in an adverse change to resources that contribute to the scenic value of the viewshed, which would result in a significant cumulative impact from future growth and development within the cumulative study area.

As discussed above, the proposed project also has the potential to remove or adversely affect scenic resources within a designated viewshed. The land use changes that would occur under the proposed project would also have the potential to result in damages to scenic resources, resulting in a significant impact. Therefore, similar to the prior EIRs, the combination of future growth and development in the adjacent communities with the proposed project would have the potential to result in a cumulatively considerable impact on scenic resources. However, General Plan policies identified in Section 2.1.2.3 and the prior EIRs mitigation measures Aes-1.2 and Aes-1.4 through Aes-1.9 identified in Appendix B would be implemented, which would reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Impacts on scenic resources would be similar to those identified in the prior EIRs and would **not be cumulatively considerable**.

#### ***2.1.4.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality***

Future development located in the Alpine CPA and surrounding area would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact on 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. As discussed in the prior EIRs, the nearest communities of Descanso and Crest-Dehesa also have the potential to accommodate more intensified development within their town centers, which would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact on the visual character or quality of the area.

The project proposes land use changes that would facilitate higher density development, which would result in more severe significant impacts on visual character and quality of the area as compared to the prior EIRs. When combined with the future growth and development in the adjacent communities, this would result in degradation of the visual character and quality of the area surrounding the Alpine CPA as well. The General Plan policies identified in Section 2.1.3.2 and the prior EIRs mitigation measures would be implemented, which would help reduce impacts related to visual character and quality. However, even with implementation of mitigation measures and General Plan policies, the proposed project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable. In addition, because the proposed project would increase density beyond what was anticipated in the General Plan and FCI GPA, impacts related to visual character and quality would be more severe than those identified in the prior EIRs and would be considered a potentially significant cumulative impact of the proposed project. In combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would have the potential to result in a **potentially significant cumulative impact** and mitigation would be required (**Impact-C-AES-2**).

#### **2.1.4.4 Issue 4: Light and Glare**

The construction and operation of cumulative projects located in the Alpine CPA or surrounding area 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, cumulative projects have the potential to introduce substantial new sources of nighttime light pollution in the area, which would result in a potential lighting impact on the Mount Laguna Observatory. Therefore, cumulative impacts from future growth and development within the cumulative study area would be significant.

The proposed project includes land use changes that would enable more development than currently exists within the Alpine CPA. When combined with future development in the adjacent community, the development could produce a substantial new source of nighttime lighting in the cumulative study area and the project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable. The General Plan policies and the prior EIRs mitigation measures (Appendix B) would be implemented, which would help reduce impacts related to nighttime lighting. However, even with implementation of mitigation measures and General Plan policies, the proposed project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable. In addition, because the proposed project would increase density beyond what was anticipated in the General Plan or FCI GPA, impacts related to dark skies would be more severe than those identified in the prior EIRs, and would be considered a potentially significant cumulative impact of the proposed project. In combination with other cumulative projects, the proposed project would have the potential to result in a **potentially significant cumulative impact** and mitigation would be required (**Impact-C-AES-3**).

#### **2.1.5 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation**

The proposed project and the cumulative effects of the proposed project in conjunction with subsequent projects in the Alpine CPA would result in potentially significant direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas, visual character or quality, and light and glare, and less than significant direct and cumulative impacts to scenic resources.

**Impact-AES-1: Have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista.** The proposed project has the potential to create more severe impacts to scenic resources associated with increased building height and scale as compared to the prior EIRs. This would be considered a significant impact.

**Impact-AES-2: In Non-urbanized Areas, Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public View of the Site and Its Surrounding.** The land use designation changes occurring as part of the proposed project would allow for an increase in density of residential development within three subareas, and mobility network changes, the implementation of which would result in considerable alteration of the visual character and quality of the subareas as compared to the prior EIRs. This would be considered a significant impact.

**Impact-AES-3: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare that would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area.** Given the magnitude of the potential project development, impacts to dark skies would be more severe than those identified in the prior EIRs. This would be considered a significant impact.



**Impact-C-AES-1: Result in a Cumulatively Considerable Contribution to Having a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista.** The proposed project would cause a similar impact related to impacts to scenic resources with increased building height and scale compared to the prior EIRs. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable.

**Impact-C-AES-2: Result in a Cumulatively Considerable Contribution in Non-urbanized Areas, Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public View of the Site and Its Surrounding.** The proposed project would cause a similar impact to dark skies as compared to prior EIRs. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable.

**Impact-C-AES-3: Result in a Cumulatively Considerable Contribution by Creating a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare that would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area.** The proposed project would cause a similar impact to visual character and quality as compared to prior EIRs. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to this impact would be cumulatively considerable.

## 2.1.6 Mitigation

### 2.1.6.1 *Issue 1: Scenic Vistas*

The following prior EIRs specific mitigation measures would reduce **Impact-AES-1** and **Impact-C-AES-1**, impacts to scenic vistas, to **less than significant**. Therefore, no new mitigation measures would be required.

#### 2011 General Plan and FCI EIR Mitigation Measures

The following prior EIRs mitigation measures are being carried forward and shall apply to the proposed project: Aes-1.2 and Aes-1.4 through Aes-1.9 (see Appendix B). Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce the proposed project's impacts on aesthetic resources.

#### Alpine CPU Mitigation Measures

No additional mitigation measures are required.

### 2.1.6.2 *Issue 2: Scenic Resources*

The following prior EIRs specific mitigation measures would reduce **Impact-AES-2** and **Impact-C-AES-2**, impacts to scenic resources, to **less than significant**. Therefore, no new mitigation measures would be required.

#### 2011 General Plan and FCI EIR Mitigation Measures

The following prior EIRs mitigation measures are being carried forward and shall apply to the proposed project: Aes-1.2 and Aes-1.4 through Aes-1.9.

#### Alpine Community Plan Update Mitigation Measures

No additional mitigation measures are required.

### 2.1.6.3 *Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality*

The following prior EIRs specific mitigation measures would reduce **Impact-AES-3** and **Impact-C-AES-2**, impacts to visual character or quality; however, with the scale and density allowed under the proposed land use designations of the Alpine CPU, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

### Infeasible Mitigation Measures

The following measures were considered in attempting to reduce impacts on visual character or quality to below a level of significance. However, the County 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.

Explanation: Although development has been focused to the Village areas with the proposed project, additional severe restrictions on the type or amount of development within Alpine and other community plan areas would conflict with the goals of the Housing Element and other General Plan goals for accommodating a reasonable share of regional growth.

- Comprehensively expand the Zoning Ordinance to specifically dictate the exact development type and design allowed in Alpine to avoid impacts to community character.

Explanation: This measure would be the equivalent of preparing detailed land development master plans for the community of Alpine and would be infeasible because of the extent of the community. While the County intends to improve the Zoning Ordinance (including updating the LDC) and associated Design Review Guidelines for Alpine, preparing land development master plans for the community 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.

Explanation: This measure would be infeasible because it would result in restrictions on future development within the subareas, which were identified through the planning process as being appropriate for growth. 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.

### 2011 General Plan and FCI EIR Mitigation Measures

The following prior EIRs mitigation measures are being carried forward and shall apply to the proposed project: Aes-3.1 and Aes-3.2.

### Alpine Community Plan Update Mitigation Measures

No additional feasible mitigation measures are available.

#### ***2.1.6.4 Issue 4: Light and Glare***

The following prior EIRs specific mitigation measures would reduce **Impact-AES-4** and **Impact-C-AES-3**, impacts to nighttime views; however, with the scale and density allowed under the proposed land use designations of the Alpine CPU, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

### 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 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

Explanation: This measure would result in restrictions on future development in areas identified for increased growth in the CPU because night lighting is required for safety or other reasons for development accommodated within Zone A areas such as commercial or residential development. The measure would also prohibit potential growth within subareas, which already have nighttime lighting. 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.

### 2011 General Plan and FCI EIR Mitigation Measures

The following prior EIRs mitigation measures are being carried forward and shall apply to the proposed project: Aes-4.1 and Aes-4.2.

### Alpine Community Plan Update Mitigation Measures

No additional feasible mitigation measures are available.

## **2.1.7 Conclusion**

### ***2.1.7.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas***

Development allowed under the proposed project would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction of a scenic vista and would be potentially significant (**Impact-AES-1**). Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact (**Impact-C-AES-1**). However, for the reasons described above, existing regulations and the prior EIRs mitigation measures identified in Appendix B, in combination with the RPO and County Zoning Ordinance, would mitigate direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas to a **below a level of significance**, similar to the prior EIRs.

### ***2.1.7.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources***

The proposed project has the potential to create more severe impacts to scenic resources as a result of the removal or substantial adverse change of features contributing to the existing visual character within viewsheds available from I-8 and would be potentially significant (**Impact-AES-2**). Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact (**Impact-C-AES-2**). However,

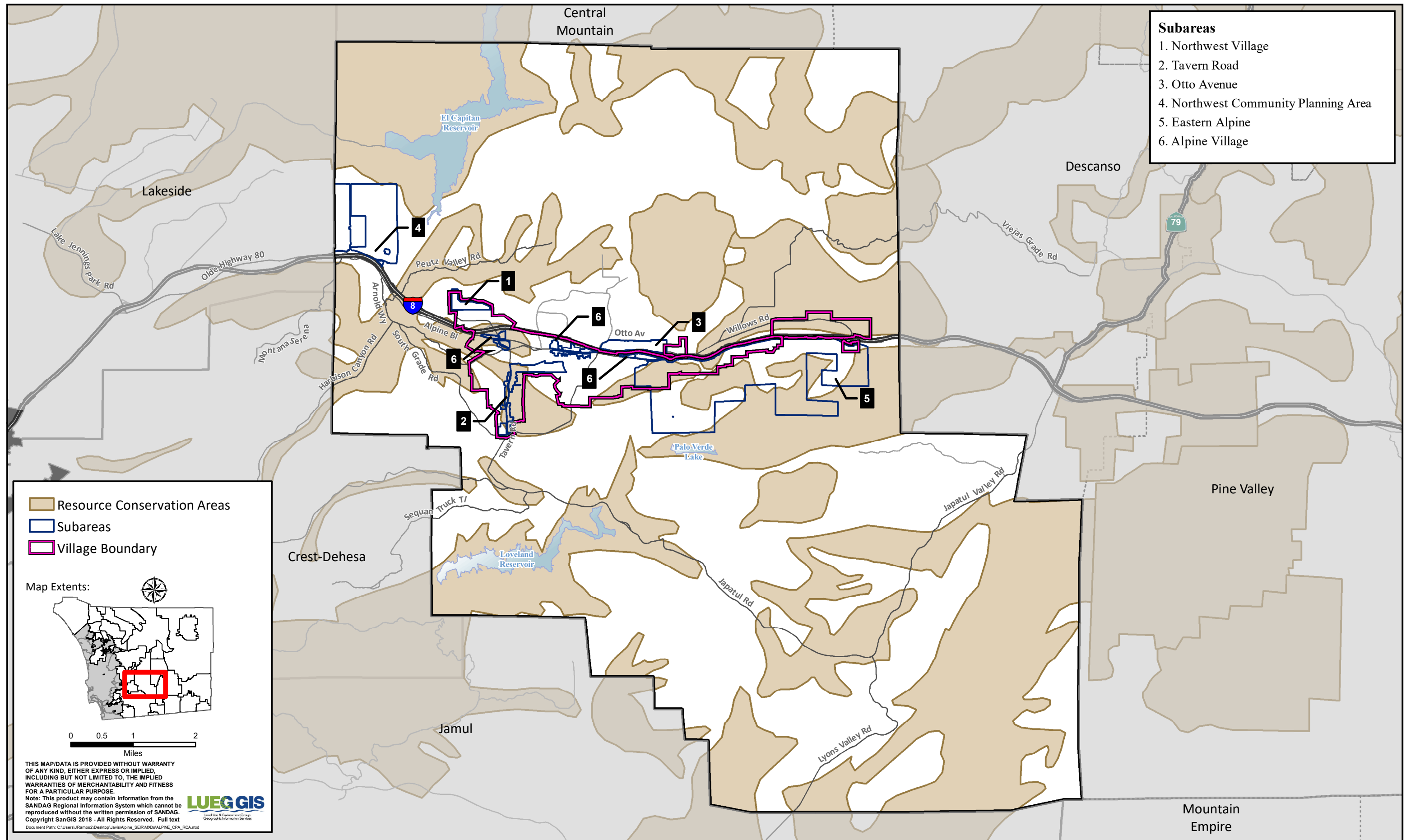
for the reasons described above, existing regulations and the prior EIRs mitigation measures identified in Appendix B, would mitigate direct and cumulative impacts to scenic vistas to a **below a level of significance**, similar to the prior EIRs.

#### ***2.1.7.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality***

Implementation of the Alpine CPU would allow increased development densities to occur in some areas of the community, which could 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 on visual character and quality, which would be more severe than impacts identified in the prior EIRs (**Impact-AES-3**). Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact (**Impact-C-AES-2**). General Plan policies and the prior EIRs mitigation measures identified above would reduce direct impacts on visual character and quality, but not to below a level of significance. Impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable** because the visual character of the Alpine CPA would have the potential to change with implementation of the proposed project, regardless of the zoning regulations and design review imposed.

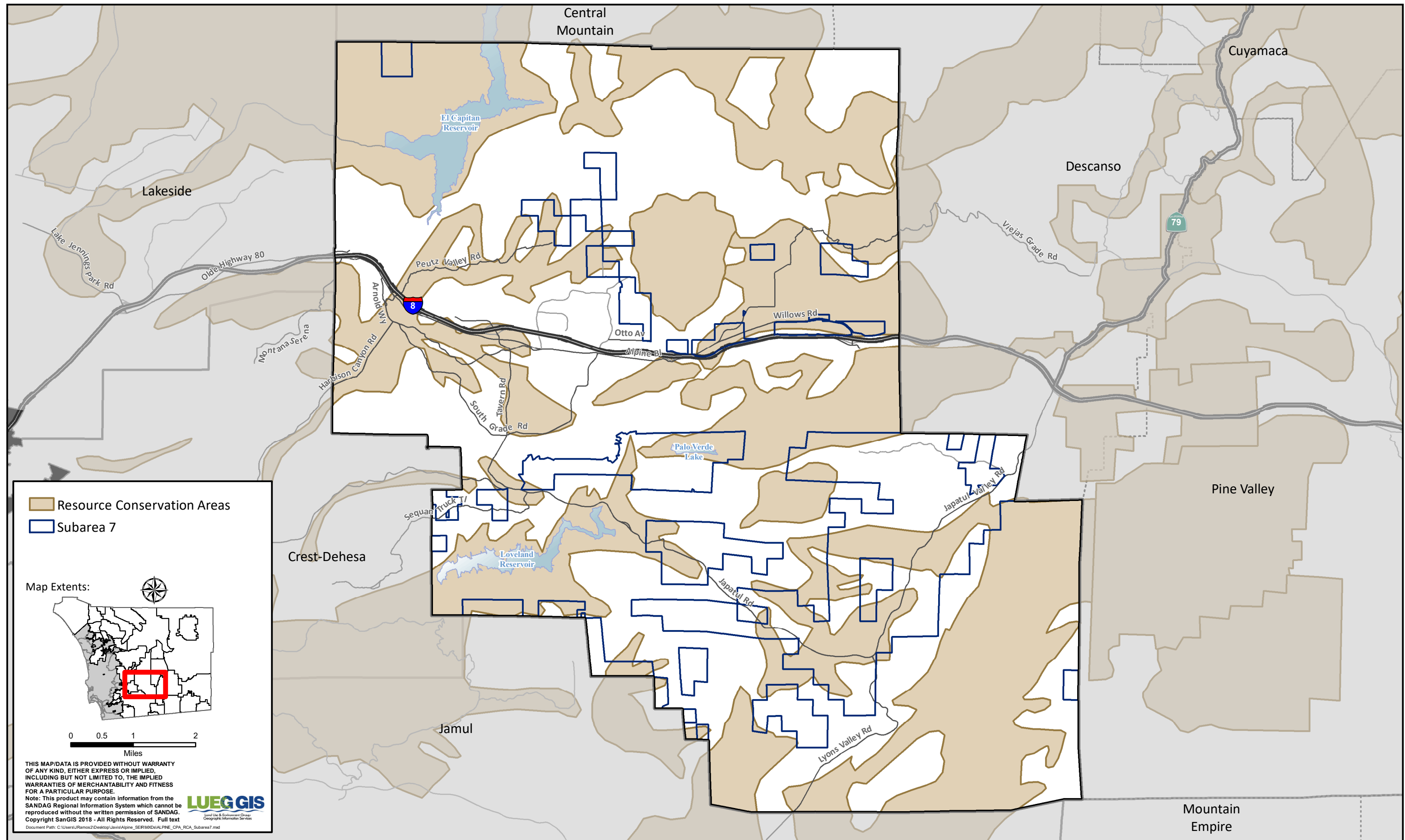
#### ***2.1.7.4 Issue 4: New Light or Glare***

The proposed project would have the potential to result in increased light within the community that would adversely affect nighttime views and would affect dark skies within Zone A of the Mount Laguna Observatory. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant (**Impact-AES-4**). Additionally, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact (**Impact-C-AES-3**). General Plan policies and the prior EIRs mitigation measures identified above, in combination with other applicable regulations including the LPC and the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, would lessen impacts on nighttime views, but not to below a level of significance. Direct and cumulative impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.



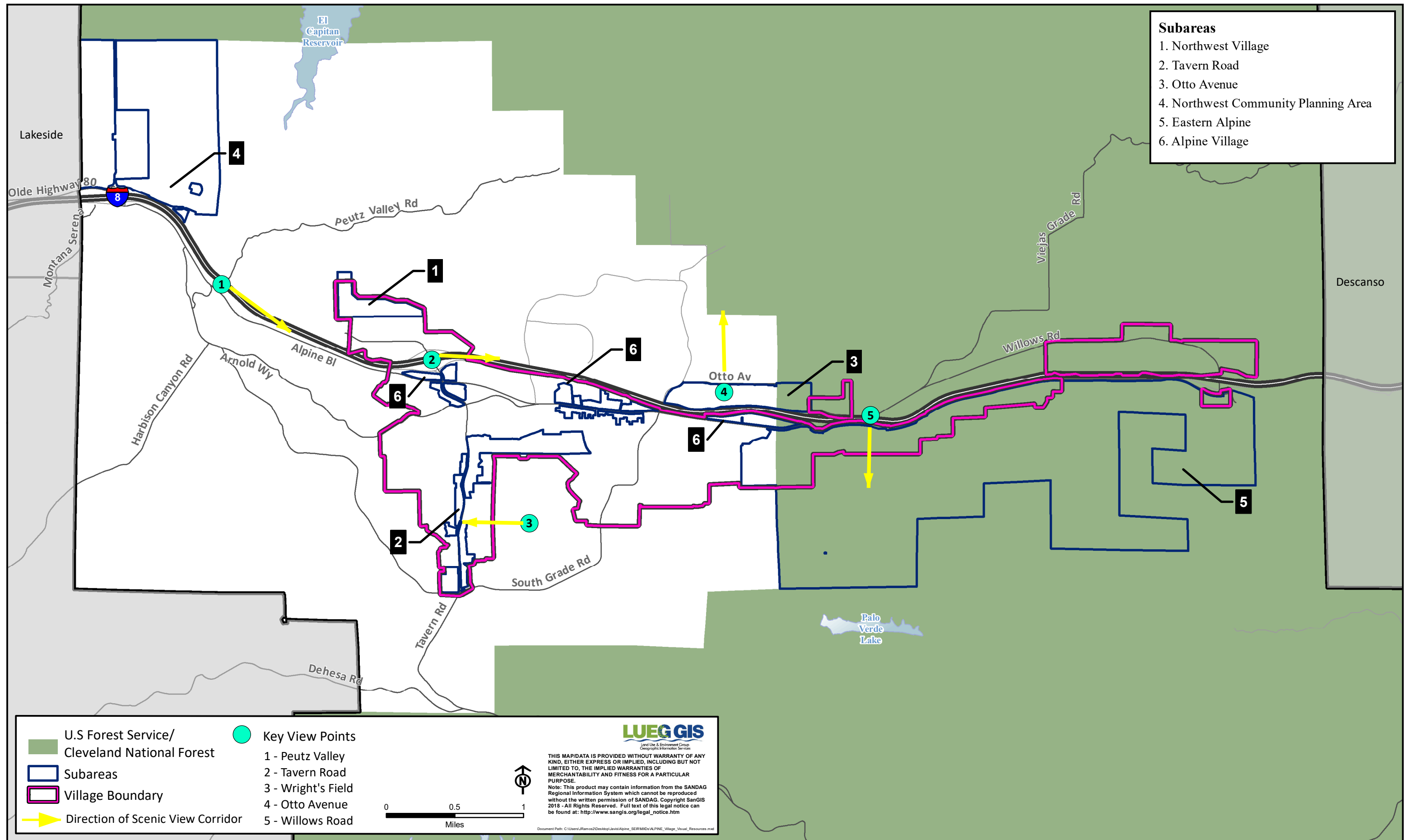
Source: SanGIS, County of San Diego, 2020

**Figure 2.1-1a**  
**Resource Conservation Areas**  
**Subareas 1-6**



Source: SanGIS, County of San Diego, 2020

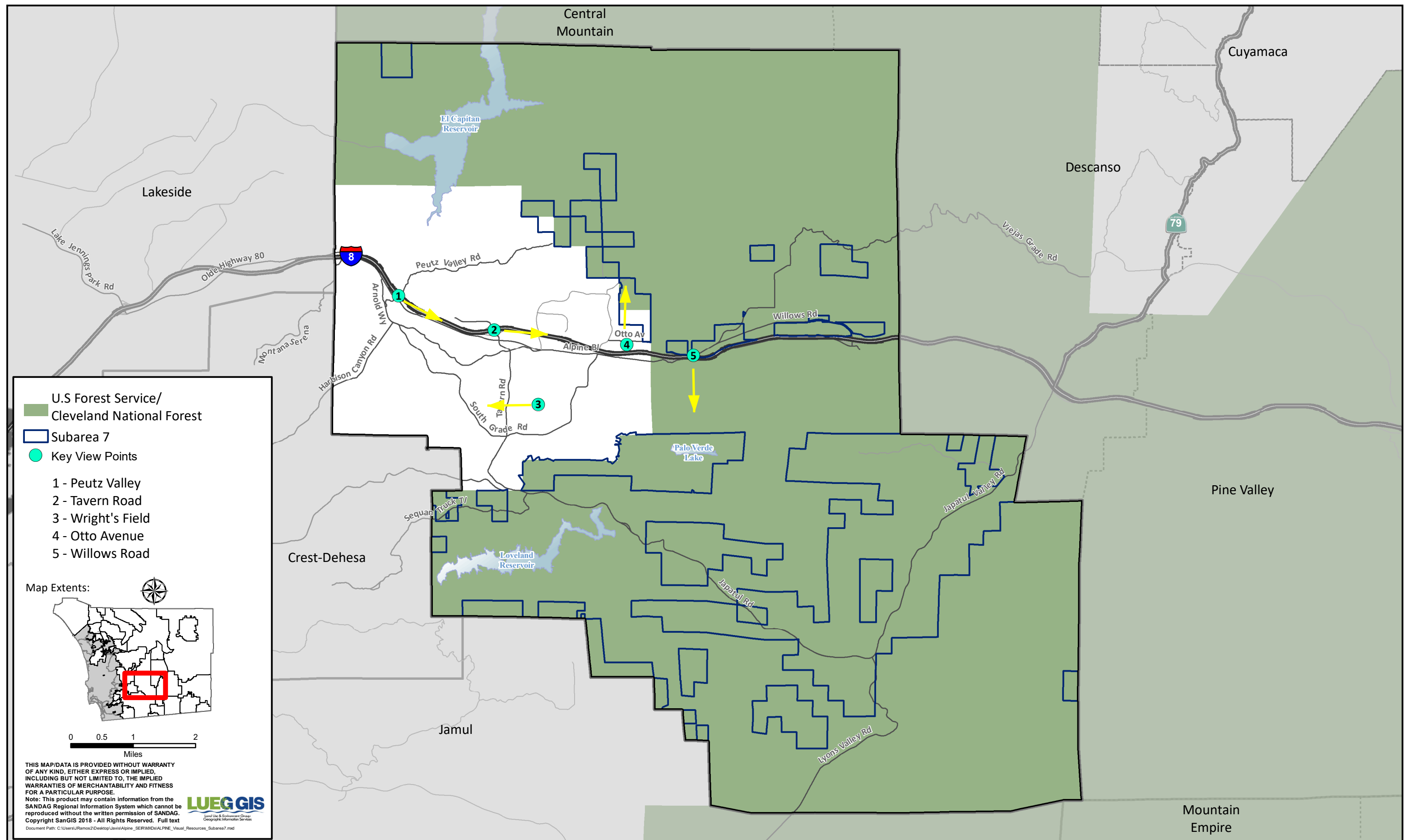
**Figure 2.1-1b**  
**Resource Conservation Areas**  
**Subarea 7**



Source: SanGIS, County of San Diego, 2020

**Figure 2.1-2a**  
**Key View Points**  
**Subareas 1-6**





Source: SanGIS, County of San Diego, 2019

**Figure 2.1-2b**  
**Key View Points**  
**Subarea 7**





Looking north from I-8



Looking south from I-8



North of Joan McQueen Middle School, looking north



West of Victoria Park Terrace, looking west





Looking northwest



Looking northeast





Looking southeast



Looking south





Near I-8 off-ramp, looking northwest



I-8 eastbound, near Alpine Blvd/Willows Road exit , looking south

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