Chapter 3—Aesthetics

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes existing aesthetic conditions (environmental and regulatory) and assesses the potential of the proposed 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (proposed MTP/SCS) to affect the aesthetic environment within the MTP/SCS plan area. This chapter evaluates potential impacts on visual resources that may result from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS. Where necessary and feasible, mitigation measures are identified to reduce these impacts.

The information presented in this EIR chapter is based on review of existing and available information and is regional in scope. Data, analysis and findings provided in this chapter are programmatic rather than project-specific. This document is appropriate for general policy planning and to use for tiering in preparation of subsequent environmental documents; however, site-specific, project-level evaluations may be necessary to determine future project-level environmental effects and appropriate mitigation measures. Once certified, this EIR may be used to streamline CEQA compliance for those projects listed in the Preferred Scenario Project List as well as the anticipated community development shown on the 2016 Draft MTP/SCS Preferred Scenario map to the extent those projects are consistent with requirements set forth in the Public Resources Code for streamlined environmental review.

No comments were received on aesthetics in response to the Notice of Preparation. Appendix PD-1 includes all NOP comments received.

3.2 Environmental Setting

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and quality, combined with the viewer response to the area (Federal Highway Administration, 1983). Visual character relates to the natural and built landscape features and the relationships that exist within the landscape. Form, line, color, and texture are the basic components used to describe visual character. Visual quality is the overall impression that an individual viewer retains after driving through, walking through, or flying over an area.

While aesthetic value is subjective, it is typically included as a criterion for evaluating those elements that contribute to the quality that distinguishes an area. Most communities identify scenic resources as an important asset, although what is considered “scenic” may vary according to its environmental setting.

Scenic resources can include natural open spaces, topographic formations, landscapes, and man-made features. Scenic resources can be maintained and enhanced in such a way as to continue promoting a positive image in the future. Many people associate natural landforms and landscapes with scenic resources, such as woodlands, lakes, rivers, streams, mountains, habitat, and agricultural lands. Scenic resources can also include urban open spaces and the built environment. Examples of these would include urban parks, trails, and nature centers, archaeological and historical resources, and man-made structures like buildings and bridges with unique architectural features. Tall buildings may...
also provide excellent views of scenic resources beyond the urban core. Typically, jurisdictions identify designated scenic resources, or some similar classification system, to identify priority scenic resources. These designated scenic resources are the focus of this chapter.

It is useful to think of scenic resources in terms of “typical views” seen throughout the MTP/SCS plan area because scenic resources are rarely encountered in isolation. A typical view may include several types of scenic resources, including both natural and man-made elements. The typical views seen in the MTP/SCS plan area are outlined in the following paragraphs.

It is important to distinguish between public and private views. Private views are views seen from privately-owned land and are typically viewed by individual viewers, including views from private residences. Public views are experienced by the collective public. These include views of significant landscape features such as the Tower Bridge or the Sutter Buttes, as seen from public viewing spaces, not privately-owned properties. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) case law has established that only public views, not private views, are protected under CEQA. For example, in Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah (1991) 2 Cal. App. 4th 720 [3 Cal. Rptr.2d 488] the court determined that “we must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general. As recognized by the court in Topanga Beach Renters Assn. v. Department of General Services (1976) 58 Cal.App.3d 188 [129 Cal.Rptr. 739]: ‘[A]ll government activity has some direct or indirect adverse effect on some persons. The issue is not whether [the project] will adversely affect particular persons but whether [the project] will adversely affect the environment of persons in general.’” Therefore, for this analysis, only public views are considered when analyzing the visual impacts of implementing the proposed MTP/SCS.

3.2.1 Typical Views of the MTP/SCS Plan Area’s Visual Resources

Aesthetically significant features occur in a diverse array of environments within the MTP/SCS plan area, ranging in character from urban centers to rural agricultural lands to natural woodlands. The extraordinary range of visual features is afforded by the mixture of climate, topography, and flora and fauna found in the natural environment, and the diversity of style, composition, and distribution of the built environment.

A viewshed is defined as all of the surface area within the field of view of an observer that is visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or sequence of locations (e.g., a roadway or trail) (Federal Highway Administration, 1983). The term is commonly used to describe the extent of a scenic resource. The extent of a viewshed can be limited by a number of intervening elements, including trees and other vegetation, built structures, or topography such as hills and mountains. Because of the scale of the MTP/SCS plan area, generalized landscape units, instead of specific viewsheds, were assessed.

The bulk of the MTP/SCS plan area is located in the Sacramento Valley, a basin bounded by the Sierra Nevada Range to the east and the Coastal Ranges to the west. Topography in the Sacramento Valley is generally flat, with relief anywhere from slightly below sea level near the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to over 2,150 feet above sea level at the Sutter Buttes. The network of rivers that drain the Sierra Nevada ranges and Central Valley are a key aesthetic component of the natural landscape.
The MTP/SCS plan area is characterized by many growth areas of varied size. The visual quality of these growth areas is enhanced by man-made elements. Examples of the visually significant built environment may include bridges or overpasses, architecturally appealing buildings or groups of buildings, landscaped freeways, and locations where historic events occurred. Transportation facilities also influence the visual quality of the region. In urban areas, roadway rights-of-way comprise 20 to 30 percent of total land area. Even for people not using the transportation system at a particular time, or who do not use certain modes of travel, transportation systems are usually a dominant element of the visual environment.

Viewsheds and visual quality are affected by air quality and, more specifically, visibility. In the Sacramento metropolitan area, high pollutant emissions—combined with poor natural ventilation in the air basin—can result in degraded visibility. Of particular note are photochemical smog and airborne particulates, finely divided solids or liquids such as soot, dust, aerosols, and mists that absorb sunlight, produce haze, and reduce visibility.

**Agricultural Land and Pasture**

Agricultural lands are a dominant visual landscape in the region, with over 72 percent of the land area in the SACOG region designated for agriculture, open space, or timber uses. Agriculture is an important industry for the region, but unlike most industrial uses, agricultural lands contribute to the scenic value of the region and offer a break from the urban landscape by providing an open space visual resource. The main agricultural uses in the region include row crops, field crops, orchards, vineyards, dairies, and grazing land. Adding additional character to the visual landscape are agricultural buildings, including barns, processing facilities, storage areas, and farm housing.

**Downtown Sacramento Skyline and Historic Downtowns**

The city of Sacramento skyline is distinguished by high-rise office towers ranging from 15-30 stories. Sacramento’s downtown skyline is visible from miles around the city, including from eastbound I-80 on the Sacramento-Yolo Causeway, from westbound I-80 above the city of Roseville, from northbound I-5 between Elk Grove and Sacramento, from westbound Highway 50 (U.S. 50), and from southbound I-5 and Highway 99 (State Route (SR) 99) north of the downtown area. Distinctive features of the skyline include the Wells Fargo Center, the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) building, the Robert T. Matsui Federal Courthouse, and, by night, the blue light of the Esquire Plaza.

The downtown Sacramento skyline, which is dominated by highly reflective glass buildings, can produce glare. Glare results when a light source directly in the field of vision is brighter than the eye can comfortably accept. Squinting or turning away from a light source is an indication of glare. The presence of a bright light in an otherwise dark setting may be distracting or annoying, referred to as discomfort glare, or it may diminish the ability to see other objects in the darkened environment, referred to as disability glare.

The downtown area is also brighter than the outlying residential areas due to the amount of artificial light associated with exterior building lights, street lights, roadways, and parking area lights. Ambient light levels or illumination is measured in foot-candles. The unit is defined as the amount of illumination the inside surface of a 1-foot radius sphere would be receiving if there were a uniform point source of one candela in the exact center of the sphere. Nighttime lighting is necessary to
provide and maintain safe, secure, and attractive environments; however, these lights have the potential to produce light that falls beyond the intended area, referred to as light trespass. Light trespass can adversely affect light sensitive uses, such as residential neighborhoods at nighttime.

Tall buildings, such as those found in downtown areas, can cast shadows on surrounding land uses. Density increases the prevalence of shadow. In some instances shadow can be beneficial, providing shade during hot, summer days. However, shadow can also cause discomfort and public hazard when it occurs sporadically, in conjunction with glare and light.

Many jurisdictions in the MTP/SCS plan area have distinctive downtown “Main Street” districts that preserve important historical sites and protect the visual character of the area. Downtown Placerville and Historic Downtown Folsom are two of the most well-known examples, though this landscape type can be found in nearly all jurisdictions in the region.

Landmarks

In addition to the linear infrastructure systems, there are also discrete man-made elements within the landscape that serve as landmarks that inform city character. The term landmark here is used to refer to a man-made structure (e.g., monument, building, other structure) that is easily recognizable. Through their scale and/or distinctive design, landmarks become reference points within the city that provide structure and orientation, and contribute to the design character of the surrounding area and create a unique sense of place. The State Capitol and Tower Bridge are two landmarks.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS

Most of the MTP/SCS plan area resides in the Central Valley, characterized by flat, open expanses with uninterrupted views of open space. However, mountains surround the MTP/SCS plan area on the eastern and western borders. The Sierra Nevada Range makes up the eastern boundary of the MTP/SCS plan area, covering vast areas of eastern Placer and El Dorado counties. The South Coast Ranges make up the western border of the MTP/SCS plan area. Both mountain ranges are visible from many parts of the region due to the low altitude and flat nature of the Central Valley.

Among the most unique topographic features within the MTP/SCS plan area are the Sutter Buttes. Approximately 75 square miles in size, the Buttes are remnants of eroded volcanic lava domes. Rising 2,000 feet above the valley floor, the Buttes create a dramatic viewshed when juxtaposed to the vast open farmland in the surrounding area.

OPEN SPACE, HABITAT, AND PROTECTED LANDS

Open space provides visual relief from urbanized areas, including views for residents, motorists, and pedestrians. Open space is comprised of both designated open space and “de facto” open space. Designated open space is land that has been left undeveloped by design. Such land uses could include national, state, and local parks and recreation areas, nature preserves, protected habitat, and conservation easements. Other land is deemed open space not by design, but because the land is not involved in a productive use, or in the case of agricultural lands, the land is consumed by a productive use that contributes to the visual quality of the land.
Preserves, parks, and forests make up most of the designated open space in the region. These areas are maintained by a combination of local jurisdictions, state agencies, federal agencies, and private foundations. Much of the forested land in Placer and El Dorado counties falls under federal protection. Open space provides wildlife habitat and can also provide opportunities for other facilities and services such as passive recreation, pedestrian and bike access, storm drainage, floodwater conveyance, utility infrastructure, and land use buffering.

**Residential and Commercial Neighborhoods**

Scattered throughout the MTP/SCS plan area in every county and city are residential and commercial landscapes featuring single-family neighborhoods, low-rise multi-family complexes, low-rise office parks, and low-scale shopping areas. The areas where homes dominate the viewshed are generally areas with more green space, less artificial light (meaning darker nighttime views), and less glare due to the limited amount of reflective materials. The retail centers generally consist of large concrete buildings located adjacent to the street frontage as well as set back with large, sparsely landscaped surface parking areas. These retail centers have a significant amount of artificial lighting both in the parking lots and on the storefronts and signs. Many of the storefronts consist primarily of glass that can create glare.

**Transportation Network**

Many views of the MTP/SCS plan area are from the Interstate and U.S. freeway routes that intersect the city. The freeways themselves are also a visual component of the city landscape. I-5 and SR 99 are the two main north/south routes. I-5 is a major truck route within the State of California and runs through the downtown area, adjacent to the Sacramento River. SR 99 is a four- to six-lane highway extending south from Business 80 (Capital City Freeway) to South Sacramento, Elk Grove, and the Central Valley. I-80, U.S. 50, and Capital City Freeway are the main east/west routes through the region. I-80 extends from the San Francisco Bay area, through West Sacramento and Sacramento and over the Sierra Nevadas. U.S. 50 extends from downtown Sacramento to the Tahoe Basin. Capital City Freeway extends northeast from downtown Sacramento through Sacramento County, connecting to I-80 just east of Watt Avenue.

Streets in the MTP/SCS plan area range from multi-lane, signalized roads to narrow tree-lined streets in residential neighborhoods. Roadways include minor arterials, collector streets that connect residential uses to major street systems, local streets that serve the interior of a neighborhood, and alleys that provide delivery access to businesses located along the transportation system. Many streets have sidewalks and bicycle facilities included in the transportation right-of-way.

Rural areas tend to have narrower roads that cater to agricultural and goods movement traffic. Some rural roads in town centers or residential areas may have sidewalks and bicycle facilities, though widened shoulders are the more common pedestrian and bicyclist treatments. In more remote rural areas, the transportation system may contain gravel or dirt roads.

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program is administered by Caltrans and regulated at the local level. The program consists of laws, incentives, and guidelines intended to protect the scenic, historic, and recreational resources within designated scenic highway corridors. A scenic highway
corridor is defined by Caltrans as the area of land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway (California Department of Transportation, 2011). It is usually limited by topography and/or jurisdictional boundaries.

Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 show state-designated or state-eligible scenic highways in the MTP/SCS plan area. These designations represent recognition of the high scenic and visual qualities of these corridors. Specific design guidelines are required and the state-designated corridors must be reviewed when improvements are proposed to determine if the highway will remain eligible for designation as a scenic corridor. The requirements for designation as a state scenic highway are explained more fully in the “State Regulations” section below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Highway</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>Countywide</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. 50</td>
<td>East of Placerville to SR89</td>
<td>Official State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placer</td>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>Countywide</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interstate 80</td>
<td>SR 20 to Truckee</td>
<td>(all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>State Route 160</td>
<td>Along the Sacramento River</td>
<td>Official State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutter</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolo</td>
<td>State Route 16</td>
<td>Portions between north border of</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>County to west of Interstate 505</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuba</td>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>From the Yuba County Line to the</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yuba Summit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: California Department of Transportation, 2011

In addition to roadways and freeways, rail lines also contribute to the region’s urban form. The region has two types of rail systems, light rail and heavy rail, and each has different implications for urban form and community character. The primary function of the heavy gauge rail system is to transport freight cargo, but there is also some regional passenger rail via Amtrak. Given their cargo function, the heavy rail lines tend to be located adjacent to industrial and warehouse type uses whose design character is utilitarian and scaled for train and truck traffic and large-scale storage and manufacturing operations; but heavy rail lines are also found in urbanized core areas throughout the region.
Figure 3.1 MTP/SCS Plan Area Official and Eligible State Scenic Highways

Official and Eligible State Scenic Highways*
- Officially Designated State Scenic Highway
- Eligible State Scenic Highway
- Major Highways
- State Highway or County Route
- Cities
- Counties
- SACOG Planning Area

*Source: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hr/LandArch/StateScenicHighways.html
Sources: USGS, ESRI, FANA, AHD
Light rail systems, on the other hand, are for public transit and are intended to attract people and to serve populated destinations. The light rail system is designed to be more integral to the urban fabric, as in the downtown area where light rail lines are located in the center of active urban streets. Thus, unlike the heavy rail lines that create edges and barriers within the community, light rail lines can function as magnets or focal features around which development and people congregate. The high-density, mixed-use development in the Sacramento downtown area is indicative of light rail’s potential to influence urban form and character, while the outlying stations tend to be stand-alone elements that are not fully integrated with, and have not significantly influenced, the surrounding development patterns.

Although at a much smaller scale, air traffic also contributes to the urban form. Small planes, airplane hangars, and surface parking lots are visible from roadways surrounding the MTP/SCS plan area’s airports. A majority of airport buildings, including the hangars, are warehouse-like buildings with metal siding. The airstrips are paved and there is artificial lighting throughout the night providing sky glow over the airports.

Refer to Chapter 16: Transportation and Traffic for a more thorough discussion of the region’s transportation network.

**Trees and Forested Lands**

The MTP/SCS plan area is home to many native tree types, such as valley oak, blue oak, interior live oak, cottonwood, sycamore, and willow. Eastern Placer and El Dorado counties are almost completely forested, as is the northern tip of Yuba County. The MTP/SCS plan area also includes numerous non-native species, which are generally used for ornamental value, shade production, resistance to particular pests, or proven adaptation to the urban environment. These trees also provide a visual break from the uniformity of urban development and can usually be found in housing developments, neighborhoods, and along local streets.

**Waterways**

The MTP/SCS plan area is home to a number of rivers, lakes, creeks, and man-made waterways. These include the American and Feather Rivers, both of which converge on the Sacramento River, the state’s largest and longest river, for eventual outlet into the San Francisco Bay.

The American River Parkway borders the American River on both the northern and southern sides. The Parkway is one of Sacramento County’s most visited and distinctive natural visual features and provides several scenic based activities (i.e., picnic sites, guided natural and historic tours, bird watching, and hiking). Portions of the American River are protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, including the segment from the confluence with the Sacramento River to the Nimbus Dam. Other protected segments of the American River lie outside the MTP/SCS plan area (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 1968). See the “Federal Regulations” section below for more information about the program.
Other major rivers in the MTP/SCS plan area include:

- Bear River in southern Yuba County and northern Placer County;
- Cache Creek, entering Yolo County from the northwest and roughly paralleling SR 16;
- Cosumnes River in southern El Dorado and Sacramento counties;
- Feather River creating the eastern border of Sutter County and western border of Yuba County;
- Honcut Creek, a tributary of the Feather River;
- Mokelumne River in the Delta region of Sacramento County;
- Putah Creek, forming the boundary between Yolo and Solano counties; and
- Rubicon River in Placer County; and Yuba River in central Yuba County.

The MTP/SCS plan area also includes a number of small creeks and lakes. Figure 3.2 shows waterways in the MTP/SCS plan area.

In addition to the region’s natural waterways, several manmade waterways contribute to the visual landscape. Folsom Lake, a reservoir formed by Folsom Dam and constructed in 1955 to control the American River, is one such example. Located at the base of the Sierra foothills, the lake and recreation area offers opportunities for hiking, biking, running, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, water-skiing, and boating. The Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel, a canal from the Port of Sacramento to the Sacramento River, is another example of a man-made waterway. It was completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers in 1963.

### 3.3 Regulatory Setting

#### 3.3.1 Federal Regulations

**MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY (MAP-21)**

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law in July 2012 and reauthorized the federal highway and public transportation programs for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 for a total of $105 billion, holding funding flat relative to prior years. In July 2014, the MAP-21 Reauthorization Act was signed into law to extend MAP-21 authorization through May 31, 2015. MAP-21 marks a notable departure from prior surface transportation acts in several respects, most notably its short duration, elimination of earmarks, consolidation of programs, and introduction of performance measures into the federal transportation policy framework. While the bill retains many of the larger highway and transit programs of its predecessor—the Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, known as SAFETEA—it eliminates almost 100 smaller programs and distributes a much larger share of funds by formula (93 percent compared to 83 percent under SAFETEA).

MAP-21 of 2012 includes numerous provisions for improvements and changes to the implementation of transportation enhancement activities. MAP-21 includes a list of qualifying transportation enhancement activities, which include several items supportive of visual quality enhancement such as acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, scenic or historic...
highway programs, landscaping or other scenic beautification, and control and removal of outdoor advertising, among others.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§ 1271-1287) consists of Public Law 90-542 (October 2, 1968) and amendments thereto. The Act established a method for providing federal protection for certain of the country’s remaining free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Eligible rivers can be designated as Wild River Areas, Scenic River Areas, or Recreational River Areas. Recreational River Areas are “those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.” The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, under Section 10, includes management direction for designated rivers. Section 10(a) states the following:

“...each component of the national wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.”

**United States Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)**

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (DOT Act) of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303) was enacted to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Section 4(f) requires a comprehensive evaluation of all environmental impacts resulting from federal-aid transportation projects administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Aviation Administration that involve the use-or interference with use-of the following types of land:

- public park lands;
- recreation areas;
- wildlife and waterfowl refuges; or
- publicly- or privately-owned historic properties of federal, state, or local significance.

This evaluation, called the Section 4(f) statement, must be sufficiently detailed to permit the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to determine that:

- there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land;
- the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to any park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site that would result from the use of such lands; and
- if there is a feasible and prudent alternative, a proposed project using Section 4(f) lands cannot be approved by the Secretary; or if there is no feasible and prudent alternative, the
The proposed project must include all possible planning to minimize harm to the affected lands.

Detailed inventories of the locations and likely impacts on resources that fall into the Section 4(f) category are required in project-level environmental assessments.

In August 2005, Section 4(f) was amended to simplify the process for approval of projects that have only minimal impacts on lands protected by Section 4(f). Under the new provisions, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation may find such a minimal impact if consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) results in a determination that a transportation project will have no adverse effect on the historic site or that there will be no historic properties affected by the proposed action. In such instances, analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete following consultation.

### 3.3.2 State Regulations

**California Department of Transportation Scenic Highway Program**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program was created by the State legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would reduce the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

State goals for scenic highways include the following:

1. preserve and enhance the unique visual, biological, and ecological resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
2. prevent and eliminate (when reasonably possible) conditions that detract from or compromise the quality of the aesthetic resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
3. encourage the development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
4. encourage preservation of historical landmarks adjacent to the Scenic Highway Corridor; and
5. encourage community civic groups to create programs that increase community interest in the visual assets of the Scenic Highway Corridor and facilitate the implementation of such programs.

To be included in the program, the highways proposed for designation must meet Caltrans’ eligibility requirements and have visual merit. After it is determined that a proposed highway satisfies the qualifications for Scenic Highway designation, the local jurisdiction, with support of its citizens, must adopt a program to protect the scenic corridor. The five legislatively required standards for scenic highways are:
1. regulation of land use and density (i.e., density classifications and types of allowable land uses);
2. detailed land and site planning (i.e., permit or design review authority and regulations for the review of proposed developments);
3. prohibition of off-site outdoor advertising and control of on-site outdoor advertising;
4. careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping (i.e., grading ordinances, grading permit requirements, design review authority, landscaping and vegetation requirement); and
5. the design and appearance of structures and equipment (i.e., placement of utility structures, microwave receptors, etc).

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 approval, and receives notification that the highway has been designated as a scenic highway.

**CALTRANS ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM**

To improve and maintain the visual quality of California highways, Caltrans administers the Adopt-a-Highway program, which was established in 1989. The program provides an avenue for individuals, organizations, or businesses to help maintain sections of roadside within California's State Highway System. Groups have the option to participate as volunteers or to hire a maintenance service provider to perform the work on their behalf. Adoptions usually span a two-mile stretch of roadside, and permits are issued for five-year periods. Since 1989, more than 120,000 California residents have kept 15,000 shoulder miles of state roadways clean by engaging in litter removal, tree and flower planting, graffiti removal, and vegetation removal.

**OPEN SPACE EASEMENT ACT OF 1974**

Cities and counties can use open space easements as a mechanism to preserve scenic resources, if they have adopted open-space plans, as provided by the Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Gov. Code, §§ 51070-51097). According to this Act, a city or county may acquire or approve an open-space easement through a variety of means, including use of public money.

**CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24 PART 6**

The California Energy Code (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 24 § 6) creates standards in an effort to reduce energy consumption. The type of luminaries and the allowable wattage of certain outdoor lighting applications are regulated.

**CAPITOL VIEW PROTECTION ACT**

Chapter 2.8 of the Cal. Gov. Code includes the Capitol View Protection Act (Gov. Code §§ 8162.5 – 8162.9). These sections establish building height limits and setback requirements within a portion of downtown Sacramento surrounding the State Capitol and Capitol Park to preserve and enhance the visual prominence of the State Capitol, and character and scale of Capitol Park, as a unique cultural and open-space resource.
SENATE BILL 743

Sen. Bill No. 743 (Stats. 2013, ch. 386) (SB 743) requires the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop a new approach to analyzing transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act, and creates a new exemption for certain projects that are consistent with an adopted specific plan. The exemption applies if the project is a) within a transit priority area, b) consistent with a specific plan for which an EIR has been certified, and c) consistent with an SCS. SB 743 also eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic and parking impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project, and 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area. The exemption for aesthetic impacts does not include impacts to historic or cultural resources. Local governments retain their ability to regulate a project’s transportation, aesthetics, and parking impacts outside of the CEQA process. (OPR, 2014).

3.3.3 Local Regulations

CITY OF SACRAMENTO CAPITOL VIEW PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

Title 17 of the Sacramento City Code includes the Capitol View Protection Requirements (17.216.860 C-3 zone). This section of the Sacramento City Code establishes building height limits, setback requirements, and parking alternatives within a portion of the Central Business District surrounding Capitol Park to provide visual protection to and from the Capitol building and Capitol Park (City of Sacramento, 2013).

SUTTER BUTTES OVERLAY ZONE ORDINANCE

The Sutter Buttes Overlay Zone (Chapter 15, Sutter County Zoning Code, Sections 1500-6010 through 1500-6040) reinforces and is coterminous with the Sutter Buttes Overlay in the Sutter County General Plan. The intent of the zone is to preserve the cultural, historic, geologic, and visual values of the Sutter Buttes. Structures within the Overlay Zone that are visible from public roads or adjacent residences are subject to development and siting standards that address landscaping, screening, grading, tree removal, roof areas and materials, building colors, roads and driveways, lighting, and other factors, and require approval of a zoning clearance. Specific development and siting standards are included in the ordinance for ridgelines (i.e., the crest of a ridge formed by a hillside/drainage divide), on hillsides (i.e., area either between a ridgeline and a valley floor or between ridgelines), and on the valley floor (i.e., consists of nearly level to gently sloping areas on alluvial fans).

CITY AND COUNTY GENERAL PLANS

Most local planning policies to preserve and enhance the visual quality and aesthetic resources of urban and natural areas are established in a jurisdiction’s general plan. The value attributed to a visual resource is based on the characteristics and distinctiveness of the resource and the number of persons who view it. Vistas of undisturbed natural areas, unique or unusual features forming an important or dominant portion of a viewshed, and distant vistas offering relief from less attractive nearby features are frequently considered to be scenic resources. In some instances, a case-by-case determination of scenic value may be needed, but often there is agreement within the relevant community about which features are valued as scenic resources, and these values are reflected in the policies included in the general plan.
Local general plans may include policies to:

- enhance the rural landscape;
- protect the rural night sky;
- preserve landmarks and icons;
- incorporate scenic elements into development;
- limit off-site advertising in scenic areas;
- place utilities underground;
- enhance the scenic quality of rural roads;
- promote sustainable design;
- reflect human-scale architecture;
- maintain and protect diverse established neighborhoods;
- promote mixed-use neighborhood centers;
- preserve natural waterways;
- maintain parks, forests, and other open space;
- encourage architectural design that creates a unique sense of place;
- preserve and create iconic buildings;
- provide appropriate transitions between land uses;
- encourage walking and biking;
- minimize obtrusive lighting; and
- avoid the creation of incompatible glare.

Local general plans are implemented by a variety of additional local plans and regulations that further achieve aesthetic goals and protect aesthetic resources. These include specific plan, area places, design requirements, design guidelines, park and open space plans, etcetera.

### 3.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### 3.4.1 Methods and Assumptions

This impacts analysis looks at each significance criterion individually, assessing how implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS, including changes to the land use pattern and transportation network, may impact the aesthetic environment. For each impact, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS is assessed on three levels. First, impacts are assessed at the regional level. Second, the analysis breaks the region down into five Community Types: Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, Rural Residential Communities, and Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS. Finally, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS is assessed in terms of its impacts to the region’s Transit Priority Areas (TPAs). TPAs are areas of the region that are within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor. For a full description of Community Types and TPAs in the region, refer to Chapter 2 – Project Description.
For each of the three levels of analysis (regional, Community Type, and Transit Priority Areas), impacts are assessed in terms of both the proposed land use pattern and transportation network. By 2036, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in a land use pattern and transportation network that is different from existing conditions. In general, "existing conditions" in the proposed MTP/SCS refers to conditions in the baseline year of 2012. The proposed MTP/SCS generally uses 2012 as the baseline because it is the most recent year for which comprehensive land use, demographic, traffic count, and VMT data are available for the SACOG region. Chapter 1 – Introduction includes a more detailed discussion of the baseline year for the proposed MTP/SCS.

For descriptions of the aesthetic environment, however, 2014 was used as the baseline year in order to reflect the conditions at the release of the NOP for this environmental impact report. The economic downturn has slowed regional growth and development over the past two years. Because of this, the overall aesthetic environment in the region has not changed significantly from 2012. Therefore, there is no demonstrative difference in comparing 2014 aesthetic conditions to 2012 population, housing, employment, and transportation conditions.

The analysis of aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed land use pattern assesses the amount of growth (population, housing, and employment) projected for the region, in each Community Type, and in the TPAs by 2036 and how that growth might impact the aesthetic environment. Although the proposed project sites within the MTP/SCS plan area were not physically surveyed for this program-level review, a brief description of the types of typical views found within the region are discussed above. These typical views are used in the impacts analysis rather than site-specific views, which are more appropriately considered in the context of future environmental documents prepared for specific transportation and/or development projects.

The proposed MTP/SCS includes different types of transportation projects that will have different effects on the aesthetic environment. This analysis examines categories of transportation investments in assessing the likely impacts of implementing the proposed MTP/SCS. For a full description of transportation investments included in the proposed MTP/SCS, refer to Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Generally, with regard to aesthetic impacts, the greater the change from existing conditions, the more noticeable the change to the aesthetic environment. For example, the construction of a new roadway generally has a greater impact on scenic resources than the widening of an existing one. Likewise, greenfield development usually has a greater impact on the surrounding area than infill development that occurs where similar views already exist. Therefore, the general approach in this impacts analysis is to determine how implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could potentially change the aesthetic environment from existing conditions and whether that change will have a potentially significant adverse effect on the region, the five Community Types, and the three TPAs.

### 3.4.2 Criteria for Determining Significance

For the purposes of this EIR, SACOG has determined that adoption and/or implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS (including adoption of the MTP policies, adoption of the SCS, and adoption of the transportation project list and financing plan) would result in significant impacts under CEQA, if any of the following would occur:
1. Cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

2. Block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms (mountains, rivers, bays, or important man-made structures) as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways.

3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.

4. Result in construction impacts that would increase glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time; block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways; or substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings including established neighborhoods.

3.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**IMPACT AES-1A: CAST GLARE AND LIGHT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CAUSE A PUBLIC HAZARD OR SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE EXISTING VISUAL/AESTHETIC CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF A SITE OR PLACE FOR A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME.**

**Regional Impacts**

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the MTP/SCS plan area is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The projected population and housing unit growth for the MTP/SCS plan area in and of itself does not necessarily translate into adverse outcomes for the aesthetic environment. It is the siting and design of new development, in relation to existing development, that determines if the aesthetic environment will experience positive or negative impacts.

New development could add additional sources of glare and light to the region. However, in portions of the region that are already built out, such increases would not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the area because existing sources of glare and light are already a dominant feature of the landscape. In less developed areas of the region, where existing sources of glare and light are not as prevalent, new housing and employment developments could create new sources that add a significant amount of glare and light in an area. This is especially true in areas of the region where development might affect views of the night sky. Additional sources of light would generally be limited to the uses for which they are intended. In addition, many jurisdictions have general plan policies relating to the protection of night skies and the prevention of obtrusive lighting.

At the regional level, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in development beyond the existing urban footprint that could create additional sources of glare and light associated with lighting of structures and surrounding grounds. Because the proposed MTP/SCS contains over
47,563 acres of new development, the increased amount of glare and light could result in a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of an area.

Therefore, the impacts of glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

The investments to existing roadways and highways, will not significantly increase the amount of glare and light in an area, as these improvements will take place on existing facilities that have existing sources of glare and light. The marginal increases in glare and light from additional vehicle headlights, new reflective signage, new streetlights, new intersection control devices, and other improvements are less than significant when considered at the regional level.

Investments in new transportation facilities could increase the amount of glare and light in an area if additional vehicles and additional street lights, intersection control devices, reflective signage, and reflective roadway materials increase the total amount of illumination in an area in such a way as to cause a public hazard or degrade the existing visual character or quality. During the daytime, additional vehicles could increase the amount of glare in an area, and at night additional vehicle headlights could increase the amount of light in an area where previously no sources of transportation glare and light existed. New transportation investments will be aligned with planned developments, which will help to reduce aesthetic impacts; however, these projects could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, resulting in potentially significant impacts.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of 554 additional miles of Class I bicycle facilities and 1,381 miles of Class II bicycle lanes. Class I bicycle facilities are multi-use paths, built on a separate right-of-way, exclusively for bicycle, pedestrian, and other designated uses. These types of projects do not often affect levels of glare and light. There is some possibility that these types of projects could install safety lights that may slightly increase the amount of light in an area, but such increases would be minimal and provide safety enhancements that would not constitute a public hazard or degrade the visual character of the area. Class II bicycle lanes are built within the automobile right-of-way. These types of projects may require additional striping or other distinguishing treatments. Depending on the materials used, such treatments may increase the amount of glare and light slightly. However, because these improvements are to be built within existing or future transportation rights-of-way, the roadways will already have existing sources of glare and light. The increases in glare and light from new Class II bicycle lanes will be minimal.

The additional bus and shuttle service described in Chapter 2 – Project Description will increase the number of transit vehicles on the transportation network at a given time and increase the area where buses can be seen on the transportation network. This could result in increased glare due to more reflective surfaces on the roads. However, the increased transit service could potentially reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on the transportation system, thereby reducing overall glare on the transportation network. With the exception of a handful of rural transit routes, most areas served by transit are urbanized; bus transit runs on existing or future transportation rights-of-way, which contain existing sources of glare and light. The incremental increase in glare and light from additional bus and shuttle service is not expected to differ dramatically from existing conditions.
As for light rail, increasing the number of route miles could increase the amount of glare and light in certain areas, especially where new stations are constructed. The proposed alignments for the South Line and Green Line light rail extensions are along urbanized corridors, with the exception of a couple of optional stations near the Sacramento International Airport. The streetcar lines will be built in urbanized areas. The incremental increase in the amount of glare and light generated from increases in streetcar and light rail route miles are not expected to differ significantly from existing conditions.

While impacts associated with investments in existing roadways and transit services will be minimal, the impacts of glare and light related to new transportation facilities from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

**Localized Impacts**

*Center and Corridor Communities*
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Center and Corridor Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Development in Center and Corridor Communities could add new sources of glare and light. The compact, infill development planned in the proposed MTP/SCS generally creates higher levels of glare and light than less compact development because there are such a variety of uses in close proximity to one another. However, these areas also tend to be built out already with existing sources of glare and light. The net increase in glare and light added from new, more compact development will be marginal and would not pose a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of an area, since glare and light are already a dominant feature of the landscape.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

Because Center and Corridor Communities are already urbanized, the incremental increases in glare and light associated with implementation of transportation projects under the proposed MTP/SCS are considered less than significant when compared with existing sources of glare and light.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

*Established Communities*
A summary of land use and transportation changes for Established Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could add to existing glare and light in Established Communities, but will likely not increase the overall glare and light in a significant way compared to existing conditions. As with Center and Corridor Communities, glare and light are
already dominant features of the landscape, and the increase is not likely to cause a public hazard or degrade the visual character or quality of an area.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

Because Established Communities already contain a significant amount of glare and light associated with urban development within this Community Type, implementation of transportation projects under the proposed MTP/SCS will not increase the amount of glare and light in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

Developing Communities

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Developing Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 - Project Description could add to existing glare and light in Developing Communities. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in such a way that the additional sources of glare and light will noticeably change the aesthetic environment. Unlike Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, where glare and light are already dominant features of the landscape, increased glare and light in Developing Communities could cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of transportation improvement projects that could increase the amount of glare and light in the area. However, Developing Communities will not necessarily see the same mix of transportation projects as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities will see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that will be built by 2036. These areas will see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects will not be as prevalent as in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities generally are not served by transit today, but new transit service will be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be similarly phased in over the life of the MTP/SCS.

Because Developing Communities do not have as much existing transportation infrastructure as other Community Types, the construction of new transportation projects or the implementation of
new transit service will result in noticeable increases in glare and light that could cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic quality or character of the Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

Rural Residential Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Rural Residential Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Increased light and glare in Rural Residential Communities is anticipated to result in greater impacts to night skies than in other Community Types. In urbanized areas, existing sources of glare and light already obscure views of the night sky, but in Rural Residential Communities this is generally not the case.

Although Rural Residential Communities have been allocated the least amount of growth of the Community Types, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in such a way that the additional sources of glare and light will noticeably change the aesthetic environment. Unlike Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, where glare and light are already dominant features of the landscape, increased glare and light in Rural Residential Communities could cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the Community Type, especially with regard to views of the night sky.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

Existing transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of roadway improvements, including road maintenance and rehabilitation, roadway widenings, newly constructed roadways, and freeway improvements. There may also be limited improvements to transit service. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in new sources of glare and light, such as headlights from increased vehicle traffic and new streetlights and lighted road signs. New transportation investments will be aligned with planned developments, which will help to reduce aesthetic impacts; however, these projects could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, which could be considered a degradation of the visual environment.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.
Lands Not Identified for Development in the Proposed MTP/SCS
A summary of land use and transportation changes for Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Although some housing and employment growth, consistent with historical trends, may occur in this Community Type within the MTP/SCS planning period, the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas by 2036.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any land use development in these areas by 2036, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

The focus for investments in these areas is on road maintenance, safety enhancements, other roadway operational improvements, and targeted capacity improvements to existing facilities that accommodate increased travel between urban areas. New transportation investments will be aligned with planned developments, which will help to reduce aesthetic impacts; however, these projects could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, which could be considered a degradation of the visual environment.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1a. Mitigation Measures AES-1, AES-2, and AES-3 are described below.

Transit Priority Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County Transit Priority Areas
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the TPAs is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could add to existing glare and light in the TPAs, but will not increase glare and light in a significant way compared to existing conditions. Individual projects may impact the amount of glare and light in an area, depending on the exact siting and timing of the development, but because the TPAs are already urbanized, the net increases in glare and light will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the area.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

The TPAs will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. In the Placer County TPA, transit service will include increased frequency on local fixed route buses, but the majority of transit service increases will be commuter service to downtown Sacramento.
Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS transportation improvements could cause increases in glare and light. However, because the TPAs already have a significant amount of glare and light from existing transportation infrastructure, and because the improvements planned are relatively modest compared to existing conditions, the net increases in glare and light associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the area.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1a. No mitigation is required.

**MITIGATION MEASURES**

As part of planning, design and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following mitigation measure(s) at a project level would reduce the impacts to aesthetics resources related to glare and light, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

**Mitigation Measure AES-1: Reduce sun glare resulting from implementation of new transportation projects.**

The implementing agency shall require measures that would minimize and control glare from transportation projects through the adoption of project design features that reduce glare. These features include:

- planting trees along transportation corridors to reduce glare from the sun;
- creating tree wells in existing sidewalks;
- adding trees in new curb extensions and traffic circles;
- adding trees to public parks and greenways; and
- landscaping off-street parking areas, loading areas, and service areas.

Tree species planted to comply with this measure shall provide significant shade cover when mature. Utilities shall be installed underground along these routes wherever feasible to allow trees to grow and provide shade without need for severe pruning.

**Mitigation Measure AES-2: Design structures to avoid or reduce impacts resulting from glare.**

The implementing agency shall require measures that would minimize and control glare from land use and transportation projects through the adoption of project design features that reduce glare. These features include:
- limiting the use of reflective materials, such as metal;
- using non-reflective material, such as paint, vegetative screening, matte finish coatings, and masonry;
- screening parking areas by using vegetation or trees;
- using low-reflective glass; and
- complying with applicable general plan policies or local controls related to glare.

Mitigation Measure AES-3: Design lighting to minimize light trespass and glare.

The implementing agency shall require measures that would impose lighting standards that ensure that minimum safety and security needs are addressed and minimize light trespass and glare. These standards include the following:

- minimizing incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space;
- directing luminaries away from habitat and open space areas adjacent to the project site;
- installing luminaries that provide good color rendering and natural light qualities; and
- minimizing the potential for back scatter into the nighttime sky and for incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space.

Significance After Mitigation

If the implementing agency adopts these mitigation measures, Impact AES-1a would be reduced to less than significant (LS). As noted in section 3.3.2 State Regulations above, SB 743 eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project; 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area.; and 3) does not impact historic or cultural resources. For projects that meet these criteria the impacts to the aesthetic environment would be considered exempt from this analysis.

Projects taking advantage of CEQA Streamlining provisions of SB 375 (Pub. Resources Code § 21155.1, 21155.2, and 21159.28) must apply the mitigation measure described above to address site-specific conditions, resulting in impacts that are less than significant (LS). However, because SACOG cannot require the implementing agency to adopt this mitigation measure, and it is ultimately the responsibility of a lead agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation, this impact remains significant and unavoidable (SU).

Impact AES-1b: Cast shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

Regional Impacts

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the MTP/SCS plan area is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.
New development could increase the amount of shadow in an area, especially in areas that will develop more compactly. Compact development is likely to create more shadows than other types of development as a result of the height and spacing of buildings. However, shadow is not necessarily a negative impact of compact development. Shadow has beneficial cooling effects that can be particularly welcome in the Sacramento region where summer temperatures can exceed 100 degrees. Additionally, shadow can mitigate the effects of glare. In city centers and central business district areas, buildings are often constructed with reflective materials that can create glare. A common mitigation measure is to plant trees to reduce the impacts of glare. In the same way that trees cast a shadow to prevent glare, shadows from tall buildings also reduce glare and light.

Developed areas already have a significant amount of shadow from existing uses. Within these areas, the marginal increases in shadow from new infill development will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the region. In developing areas of the region, new development could result in increases in the amount of shadow. However, because buildings in these areas will not be as compact or tall as in developed areas of the region, the increases in shadow will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Some transportation projects, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in the region. However, because these types of projects occur in areas where a significant amount of shadow already exists, the impacts at the regional scale will be less than significant, as the typical views of the region will remain unchanged. Other transportation projects, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, will affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4a) but will not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level will not increase the amount of shadow in the region. Bicycle and pedestrian bridges or overpasses have the potential to increase the amount of shadow in the area. Typically, such projects are included with a roadway project and are thus covered under the impacts discussion in the previous paragraph.

Increasing the frequency of transit service as described in Chapter 2 – Project Description will not increase the amount of shadow in an area, as such increases only demand more transit vehicles, not transit infrastructure. However, increasing the service area of transit by adding additional bus routes or rail lines could increase the amount of shadow in an area, as new routes would require light rail stations, bus stops, and bus shelters. This would be seen as a positive impact because providing shade is one of the main reasons transit operators provide shelters for passengers. Constructing new transit facilities like bus maintenance facilities and administration buildings could also increase the amount of shadow in the region. These facilities are typically located away from incompatible land uses, where shadows are confined to the transit property.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.
Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Center and Corridor Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Because Center and Corridor Communities are built out, they already have a significant amount of shadow. Shadow is a likely result of compact development because of the size and proximity of buildings. Infill development in Center and Corridor Communities could increase the amount of shadow in these areas, but such increases would not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character. As discussed in the regional analysis, shadow has numerous benefits in dense, downtown areas, which counteracts the effects of glare and light created by reflective surfaces of buildings. Shadow also provides shade for pedestrians and cyclists.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Center and Corridor Communities will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036 including new freeway HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

Some transportation projects, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in Center and Corridor Communities. However, because these projects occur in areas where there is already a significant amount of shadow from existing uses, the marginal increases from transportation infrastructure will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the visual character of the area. Other transportation projects, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, will affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4a) but will not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level will not increase the amount of shadow in the region. Bicycle and pedestrian bridges or overpasses have the potential to increase the amount of shadow in the area. Typically, such projects are included with a roadway project and are thus covered under the impacts discussion in the previous paragraph. As with roadway projects, the limited number of bicycle or pedestrian bridge projects makes their impact on shadow less than significant.

Increasing the frequency of transit service will not increase the amount of shadow in Center and Corridor Communities, as such increases only demand more transit vehicles, not transit infrastructure. However, increasing the service area of transit by adding additional bus routes or rail lines could increase the amount of shadow in an area, as new routes would require light rail stations, bus stops, and bus shelters. This would be seen as a positive impact because providing shade is one of the main reasons transit operators provide shelters for passengers. Constructing new transit facilities like bus maintenance facilities and administration buildings could also increase the amount of shadow in the region. These facilities are typically located away from incompatible land uses, where shadows are confined to the transit property.
Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Established Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Established Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could add to existing shadow in the Community Type, but will not increase the overall shadow in a significant way or cause a public hazard. This Community Type will see more compact development as a result of implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS, which could increase the amount of shadow in the Community Type, as discussed above in the Center and Corridor Community analysis. Established Communities already have a significant amount of shadow from existing uses. The relatively modest growth expected in this Community Type will not likely increase the amount of shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character of the Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

As with Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036 including new freeway HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

Some transportation projects, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in Established Communities. However, because these projects occur in areas where there is already a significant amount of shadow from existing uses, the marginal increases from transportation infrastructure will not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character of the area. Other transportation projects, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, could affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4a) but will not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level will not increase the amount of shadow in the region. Bicycle and pedestrian bridges or overpasses have the potential to increase the amount of shadow in the area. Typically, such projects are included with a roadway project and are thus covered under the impacts discussion in the previous paragraph. As with roadway projects, the limited number of bicycle or pedestrian bridge projects makes their impact on shadow less than significant.

Increasing the frequency of transit service will not increase the amount of shadow in Established Communities, as such increases only demand more transit vehicles, not transit infrastructure. However, increasing the service area of transit by adding additional bus routes or rail lines could increase the amount of shadow in an area, as new routes would require light rail stations, bus stops, and bus shelters. This would be seen as a positive impact because providing shade is one of the main reasons transit operators provide shelters for passengers. Constructing new transit facilities like bus maintenance facilities and administration buildings could also increase the amount of shadow in the
These facilities are typically located away from incompatible land uses, where shadows are confined to the transit property.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Developing Communities

A summary of land use and transportation changes for Developing Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could add to existing shadow in the area. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in such a way as to cause increases in the amount of shadow in the Community Type. Because this Community Type is not very dense or compact, the shadow created from development will likely be confined to the individual properties and will not create substantial shadow in public spaces or cause a public hazard.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of transportation improvement projects that could increase the amount of shadow in the area. However, Developing Communities will not necessarily see the same mix of transportation projects as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities will see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that will be built by 2036. These areas will see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects will not be as prevalent as in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities generally are not served by transit today, but new transit service will be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be similarly phased in over the life of the proposed MTP/SCS.

Some transportation projects, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in Developing Communities. However, because Developing Communities are not as dense or compact as other Community Types, the shadow created from such transportation projects is unlikely to affect surrounding land uses in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character. Other transportation projects, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, will affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4a) but will not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level will not increase the amount of shadow in the region. Bicycle and pedestrian bridges or overpasses have the potential to increase the amount of shadow in the area. Typically, such projects are included with a roadway project and are thus covered under the impacts.
discussion in the previous paragraph. As with roadway projects, the limited number of bicycle or pedestrian bridge projects makes their impact on shadow less than significant.

Developing Communities will begin to see transit service implemented as the population grows to levels that can sustain transit service. Increasing the service area of transit by adding additional bus routes could increase the amount of shadow in an area, as new routes would require bus stops and shelters. This would be seen as a positive impact because providing shade is one of the main reasons transit operators provide shelters for passengers. Constructing new transit facilities like bus maintenance facilities and administration buildings could also increase the amount of shadow in the region. These facilities are typically located away from incompatible land uses, where shadows are confined to the transit property.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Rural Residential Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Rural Residential Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description will likely not increase the overall amount of shadow in this Community Type. Development that does occur will be similar to development that already exists. The low-density makeup of Rural Residential Communities generally prevents shadow from spilling onto surrounding uses in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the area.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of roadway improvements, including road maintenance and rehabilitation, roadway widenings, newly constructed roadways, and freeway improvements. There may also be limited improvements to transit service.

Because of the low-density makeup of Rural Residential Communities, shadow created from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will be isolated to the project sites and will be less than significant at the Community Type level.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS
A summary of land use and transportation changes for Lands Not Identified for Development is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.
Although some housing and employment growth, consistent with historical trends, may occur in this Community Type within the MTP/SCS planning period, the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas by 2036.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

The focus for investments in these areas is on road maintenance, safety enhancements, other roadway operational improvements, and targeted capacity improvements to existing facilities that accommodate increased travel between urban areas. Because of the low-density makeup of these areas and the limited number of projects being implemented, shadow created from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will be isolated to the project sites and will be less than significant at the Community Type level.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

**Transit Priority Area Impacts**

*Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County Transit Priority Areas*

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the TPAs is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Because the TPAs are built out, they already have a significant amount of shadow. Shadow is a likely result of compact development because of the size and proximity of buildings. Infill development in the TPAs could increase the amount of shadow in these areas, but such increases would not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character. As discussed in the regional analysis, shadow has numerous benefits in dense, downtown areas. Shadow counteracts the effects of glare and light created by reflective surfaces of buildings. Shadow also provides shade for pedestrians and cyclists, which is particularly welcome in the Sacramento region, where summer temperatures are often in excess of 100 degrees.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

The TPAs will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

Some transportation projects, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in the TPAs. However, because these projects occur in areas where there is already a significant amount of shadow from existing uses, the marginal increases from transportation infrastructure will be less than significant when compared to existing levels. Other transportation projects, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, could affect shadow
levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4a) but will not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level will not increase the amount of shadow in the region. Bicycle and pedestrian bridges or overpasses have the potential to increase the amount of shadow in the area. Typically, such projects are included with a roadway project and are thus covered under the impacts discussion in the previous paragraph. As with roadway projects, the limited number of bicycle or pedestrian bridge projects makes their impact on shadow less than significant.

Increasing the frequency of transit service will not increase the amount of shadow in the TPAs, as such increases only demand more transit vehicles, not transit infrastructure. However, increasing the service area of transit by adding additional bus routes or rail lines could increase the amount of shadow in an area, as new routes would require light rail stations, bus stops, and bus shelters. This would be seen as a positive impact because providing shade is one of the main reasons transit operators provide shelters for passengers. Constructing new transit facilities like bus maintenance facilities and administration buildings could also increase the amount of shadow in the region. These facilities are typically located away from incompatible land uses, where shadows are confined to the transit property.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1b. No mitigation is required.

**MITIGATION MEASURES**

None required.

**IMPACT AES-2: BLOCK PANORAMIC VIEWS OR VIEWS OF SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES OR LANDFORMS (MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, BAYS, OR IMPORTANT MAN-MADE STRUCTURES), AS SEEN FROM PUBLIC VIEWING AREAS, INCLUDING STATE-DESIGNATED SCENIC HIGHWAYS.**

**Regional Impacts**

Growth in and of itself does not necessarily translate into adverse outcomes for the aesthetic environment. It is the siting and design of new development, in relation to existing development, that determines if the aesthetic environment will experience positive or negative impacts.

Denser or more compact development in some parts of the region may block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms as seen from individual properties. However, these private views are protected only to the extent that local land use policies and/or regulations address this matter and the projects of the MTP/SCS would be subject to these same regulations. As explained in the settings section above, this impact is concerned with public views as seen from public viewing areas. Most jurisdictions have specific general plan policies to protect important scenic vistas and views of other scenic resources. The valuation of features as “scenic” is subjective, but there is often agreement within the community about which features are valued and protected as scenic resources. Some scenic resources, such as the American River or State Capitol, enjoy additional protections. Portions of the American River are protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which protects the “aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeologic, and scientific features” of...
the River. Views of the State Capitol are protected by the Capitol View Protection Ordinance of the City of Sacramento and Capitol View Protection Act in Cal. Gov. Code §§ 8162.5 – 8162.9.

Development near state-designated scenic highway corridors is unlikely to experience developmental changes that would block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms, largely due to Corridor Protection Programs that safeguard scenic corridors from encroaching development. The following text from the Caltrans Scenic Highway Program website illustrates the protections provided by a Corridor Protection Program.

“When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. Scenic corridors consist of land that is visible from the highway right of way, and is comprised primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the corridor boundaries. The city or county must also adopt ordinances, zoning and/or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. They should be written in sufficient detail to avoid broad discretionary interpretation and demonstrate a concise strategy to effectively maintain the scenic character of the corridor. These ordinances and/or policies make up the Corridor Protection Program.” (California Department of Transportation, 2011).

In addition to Caltrans’ regulations, many local jurisdictions have their own general plan policies relating to the protection of visual resources. These policies may limit the amount or type of development in designated scenic corridors or require special design guidelines when developing in certain areas. However, because panoramic views are protected differently among the various jurisdictions in the MTP/SCS plan areas, it is possible that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

In urbanized areas, where the majority of proposed MTP/SCS roadway investments will occur, roadway improvements will not have an impact on panoramic views at the regional level. Roadway infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the urban landscape, and improvements to existing facilities will not result in a significantly altered viewshed. There may be localized exceptions, which are discussed at the Community Type and TPA level. In developing areas, where transportation infrastructure is less prevalent, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could open up new views of scenic resources by allowing travelers to gain new vantage points of scenic vistas and landscape features, but it could also block panoramic views by constructing new transportation infrastructure in areas that were previously undeveloped. Bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic resources previously unavailable.

The additional vehicle service hours of existing bus service or the addition of new bus service would not block panoramic views because the buses operate on existing infrastructure. Light rail projects, unlike bus routes, add permanent infrastructure to the landscape, which could block panoramic views, depending on the siting and design of rail projects. Similar to roadway projects, light rail projects could also open up new views by allowing travelers to view scenic resources from a different vantage point.
The proposed MTP/SCS contains three projects on state-designated scenic highways. One project is a bridge replacement, and the other two involve road widening and intersection improvements. These projects will likely block panoramic views or views of significant landforms during the construction phase (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-4b). However, because these projects are not substantially changing the existing transportation infrastructure, they are unlikely to have significant impacts on the surrounding views following construction.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level have the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects. Overall, this impact is conservatively considered to be potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor and Established Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Because Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are already urbanized and built out, future development will blend in with existing commercial and residential development and will not likely change the typical views found in these areas. However, increasing the density in urbanized areas means that buildings will need to grow up, not out. This could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing scenic resources and contribute to the area’s overall aesthetic value introducing new architectural elements or otherwise improving the area’s visual character. As discussed in the regional analysis above, important landscape features, landforms, and landmarks (such as the State Capitol) are protected by local policies and ordinances. Developments implemented as a result of the proposed MTP/SCS would need to comply with these local policies. However, because not all panoramic views are protected by local policies, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Most of the roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure projects are improvements to existing facilities that would not substantially alter the aesthetic environment or block panoramic views of the region. Transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Making improvements to that infrastructure is unlikely to alter views significantly from existing conditions.
However, there are specific projects that could have significant impacts on panoramic views in Centers and Corridor Communities. These projects involve crossings over the American River, the only river within the MTP/SCS plan area protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In general, projects that cross rivers have more potential to block panoramic views than other types of transportation projects because they occur above-grade, whereas most other transportation projects occur at-grade. There are three transportation projects that cross the American River. The first American River crossing will add HOV lanes to I-5 from the I-5/I-80 interchange to downtown Sacramento. The second will construct a multi-modal river crossing over the American River, connecting downtown Sacramento with South Natomas. The third is a bicycle/pedestrian bridge at Sutter Landing Park. Projects that cross the American River could potentially block panoramic views or views of the river seen from public viewing areas. However, a river crossing could also open up new views of the river. These projects have not yet undergone environmental review, but it is likely that they will impact panoramic views.

Another consideration is the construction of soundwalls, which could block ground-level panoramic views. Soundwalls are often constructed as a mitigation measure for noise impacts related to freeway and other major roadway improvement projects. They also can mitigate for toxic air contaminants and provide additional project security. In some cases, well-designed decorative soundwalls can improve the aesthetic environment of a freeway or major roadway by adding an element of visual interest to the surrounding transportation infrastructure.

Transit projects will consist of increased fixed route bus service, new light rail extensions and increased service on existing lines, new streetcar service, increased express bus service to downtown Sacramento, new transit operations’ facilities, and system operational improvements. Most of these projects will make improvements to existing service that operates on existing rights-of-way. Such improvements will not block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features.

Two transportation improvements are slated to be completed on state-designated scenic highway corridors within both Established and Developing Communities. One project, near Diamond Springs in El Dorado County, will include road realignment, shoulder widening, signal modification and residential frontage road improvements along SR-49/Diamond Road. The other project involves adding wider shoulders and a two-way left turn lane at west end of Pleasant Valley Road. Because these projects are making improvements to existing structures, completion of these projects will not block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.

The impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements near river crossings from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measures AES-4 and AES-5 are described below. However, because no river crossings are planned in Established Communities, the impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered potentially significant (LS) for Impact AES-2.

*Developing Communities*
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Developing Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.
The growth described in Chapter 2 – Project Description may block panoramic views or views of significant landscapes or landforms. Developing Communities have some existing development on the fringes of Established Communities, but for the most part, they are presently undeveloped. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in such a way that panoramic views and views of significant landscapes or landforms are likely to be affected.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of various transportation improvement projects throughout Developing Communities. However, Developing Communities will not necessarily see the same mix of transportation projects as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities will see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that will be built by 2036. These areas will see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects will not be as prevalent as in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities generally are not served by transit today, but new transit service will be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be similarly phased in over the life of the MTP/SCS.

Because Developing Communities do not have as much existing transportation infrastructure as other Community Types, the construction of new transportation projects or the implementation of new transit service could possibly block panoramic views or views of significant landscapes or landforms. Another consideration is the construction of soundwalls, which could block ground-level panoramic views. Soundwalls are often constructed as a mitigation measure for noise impacts related to freeway and other major roadway improvement projects. They also can mitigate for toxic air contaminants and provide additional project security. In some cases, well-designed decorative soundwalls can improve the aesthetic environment of a freeway or major roadway by adding an element of visual interest to the surrounding transportation infrastructure.

Two transportation improvements are slated to be completed on state-designated scenic highway corridors within both Established and Developing Communities. One project, near Diamond Springs in El Dorado County, will include road realignment, shoulder widening, signal modification and residential frontage road improvements along SR-49/Diamond Road. The other project involves adding wider shoulders and a two-way left turn lane at west end of Pleasant Valley Road. Because these projects are making improvements to existing structures, completion of these projects will not block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.

The impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements near river crossings from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

**Rural Residential Communities**
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Rural Residential Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.
Rural Residential Communities are surrounded by open space, forested lands, and agricultural lands. They have a variety of panoramic views capturing many different types of typical views. Because the growth in this community type is modest, it is unlikely that panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms will be changed substantially from existing conditions. Views from individual properties may be blocked, but because of the low-density makeup of Rural Residential Communities, it is unlikely that public views will be significantly altered from existing conditions.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-2. No mitigation is required.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of roadway improvements including road maintenance and rehabilitation, roadway widenings, newly constructed roadways, and freeway improvements. There may also be limited improvements to transit service. Although these projects will add a new visual element to the landscape, the limited number of projects anticipated will not likely block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms, as these types of transportation projects typically occur at-grade.

There are no transportation projects slated to be completed on state-designated scenic highway corridors within a Rural Residential Communities.

Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-2. No mitigation is required.

*Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS*

A summary of land use and transportation changes for Lands Not Identified for Development in the MTP/SCS is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Although some housing and employment growth, consistent with historical trends, may occur in this Community Type within the MTP/SCS planning period, the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas by 2036.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas, the impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-2. No mitigation is required.

The focus for investments in these areas is on road maintenance, safety enhancements, other roadway operational improvements, and targeted capacity improvements to existing facilities that accommodate increased travel between urban areas. Because of the low-density makeup of these areas and the limited number of projects, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will not likely block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features, as these types of transportation projects typically occur at-grade.

There are no transportation projects projected to be completed on state-designated scenic highway corridors within Lands Not Identified for Development.
Therefore, the impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-2. No mitigation is required.

Transit Priority Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County Transit Priority Areas

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the TPAs is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms. As in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, the TPAs are already urbanized. New development would likely take the form of higher-density infill development. The fact that the TPAs are already urbanized means that future development will blend in with existing commercial and residential development and will not likely change the typical views found in these areas. However, increasing the intensity/density in urbanized areas will mean that the growth will occur vertically rather than horizontally. This could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing scenic resources and contribute to the area’s overall aesthetic value introducing new architectural elements or otherwise improving the area’s visual character.

The impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below. If the project meets the criteria outlined in SB 743 it could be exempt from evaluating aesthetic impacts.

The TPAs will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Transit service will include increased frequency on local fixed route buses, major increases in light rail service, new streetcar service, and more express bus service. Because most of these transportation improvements will be modifications to existing infrastructure, it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.

However, there are specific projects that could have significant impacts on panoramic views in the Sacramento County TPAs. In general, projects that cross rivers have more potential to block panoramic views that other types of transportation projects because they occur above-grade, whereas most other transportation projects occur at-grade. There are three transportation projects that involve crossings over the American River, the only river within the MTP/SCS plan area protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The first American River crossing will add HOV lanes to I-5 from the I-5/I-80 interchange to downtown Sacramento. The second will construct a multi-modal river crossing over the American River, connecting downtown Sacramento with South Natomas. The third is a bicycle/pedestrian bridge at Sutter Landing Park. Projects that cross the American River could potentially block panoramic views or views of the river seen from public viewing areas. However, a river crossing could also open up new views of the river. These projects
have not yet undergone environmental review, but it is likely that they will have some impact on panoramic views.

There are no planned transportation improvement projects on state-designated scenic highway corridors in the Sacramento County TPAs.

The impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements involving river crossings from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the Sacramento County TPAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation Measures AES-4 and AES-5 are described below.

The impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements that do not include river crossings from the implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the Placer County and Yolo County TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-2. No mitigation required.

**MITIGATION MEASURES**

As part of planning, design and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following mitigation measures at a project-level would reduce the impacts on panoramic views, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

**Mitigation Measure AES-4: Protect panoramic views and views of significant landscape features or landforms.**

The implementing agency shall protect panoramic views and views of significant landscape features or landforms by taking the following (or equivalent) actions:

- requiring that the scale and massing of new development in higher-density areas provide appropriate transitions in building height and bulk that are sensitive to the physical and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods that have lower development intensities and building heights;
- ensuring building heights stepped back from sensitive adjoining uses to maintain appropriate transitions in scale and to protect scenic views;
- avoiding electric towers, solar power facilities, wind power facilities, communication transmission facilities and/or above ground lines along scenic roadways and routes, to the maximum feasible extent;
- prohibiting projects and activities that would obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of views from designated scenic roadways or scenic highways; and
- complying with other local general plan policies and local control related to the protection of panoramic or scenic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.
Mitigation Measure AES-5: Design river crossings to minimize aesthetic and visual impacts and to protect scenic and panoramic views of significant landscape features and landforms to the greatest feasible extent.

The implementing agency shall design river crossings to protect the important elements of scenic vistas, including panoramic views and views of significant landscape features or landforms. Such design elements could include:

- designing the facility with aesthetics and dimensions which are architecturally pleasing and contextually appropriate for the adjacent neighborhoods;
- designing the facility to not exceed or expand the capacity of the approach roadway; and
- prohibiting design features that obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of views from public viewing areas.

**Significance After Mitigation**

As noted in section 3.3.2 State Regulations above, SB 743 eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project; 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area.; and 3) does not impact historic or cultural resources. For projects that meet these criteria the impacts to the aesthetic environment would be considered exempt from this analysis.

If the implementing agency adopts this mitigation measure, Impact AES-2 may be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. For projects proposing to streamline environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether, based on substantial evidence in the record, the proposed mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant. However, SACOG cannot require the implementing agency to adopt this mitigation measure, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the implementing agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation. Therefore, Impact AES-2 remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.

**Impact AES-3: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.**

**Regional Impacts**

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Region/Plan Area is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Growth in and of itself does not necessarily translate into adverse outcomes for the aesthetic environment. It is the siting and design of new development, in relation to existing development, that determines if the aesthetic environment will experience positive or negative impacts.

Infill development is beneficial at the regional scale, as it occurs in areas already designated for and receiving growth and precludes growth in undeveloped and/or agricultural and rural areas. Such infill development does not change the existing visual character or quality at the regional level but rather adds to it while preserving the undeveloped character and quality in the agricultural and rural areas. Development in less developed areas in the region is likely to introduce new typical views to
areas that were previously undeveloped. Depending on the design and siting of new developments, these new views could potentially be seen as a degradation of the visual character or quality of the region.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation Measure AES-6 is described below.

The proposed MTP/SCS includes improvements to existing facilities such as road widenings, intersection or interchange improvements, intelligent transportation system upgrades, turn pockets, HOV lanes, auxiliary and transition lanes, and other improvements. The remainder of the budget will pay for new road and highway facilities such as roads serving new development or high-growth areas, new interchanges, road extensions, and new river crossings to connect development across the region’s major rivers.

More than two-thirds of road and highway investment will occur in areas where transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape. Such transportation projects will not likely degrade the existing visual character of the region because transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape in those areas. In less developed areas of the region, adding new transportation infrastructure will add an element of urban character to previously undeveloped lands. Depending on the design and siting of transportation projects, this could be considered a degradation of the visual character or quality of an area.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation Measure AES-6 is described below.

**Localized Impacts**

*Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities*

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Center and Corridor Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Because Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are already built out, development will mostly be infill development, increasing the density in downtowns, central business districts, and main streets throughout the MTP/SCS plan area. These areas are already denser and more compact than other Community Types in the region, and while increasing the density will have some impact of the visual character and quality of these areas, the typical views in these areas will not be altered substantially. These communities will still have views of transportation infrastructure, commercial buildings, residential neighborhoods, landmarks, and other features typical in historic downtowns, central business districts, commercial corridors, and town centers, including localized views of natural scenic resources.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.
Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Most of the roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure projects are improvements to existing facilities that would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area. Transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Making improvements to that infrastructure is unlikely to alter existing typical views significantly.

Transit projects will consist of increased fixed route bus service, new light rail extensions and increased service on existing lines, new streetcar service, increased express bus service to downtown Sacramento, new transit operations’ facilities, and system operational improvements. Most of these projects will make improvements to existing service that operates on existing rights-of-way, where transit infrastructure is a dominant feature of the landscape. The two notable exceptions are light rail extensions and new streetcar service. Streetcar service may actually enhance the visual character or quality of the project area, as it will add an element of nostalgic charm and create a visual transportation element unique to the urbanized environment. Similarly, new light rail lines may also add a unique visual element to Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. At the very least, these projects will not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, as these projects would blend in with and complement surrounding urban land uses.

By 2036, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in land use changes and changes to the transportation network that could change the visual character or quality of Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Increased density and new transit infrastructure will add man-made “urban” elements to the landscape. However, because these areas are already urbanized, it is unlikely that such projects would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Center and Corridor Communities and Established.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

Developing Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Developing Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Currently, typical views in Developing Communities include some urbanized features like low-density office and commercial development and some transportation infrastructure, but views in this Community Type are still largely dominated by residential uses, and often look out over vacant land and open space. The type of development described in Chapter 2 - Project Description could dramatically change typical views in this Community Type by adding a visual element of urban character to an existing rural or open space. New employment centers and housing units will not necessarily be built at the same density as Established Communities or Center and Corridor Communities, but development in Developing Communities will add an element of density and urbanized growth not commonly seen in existing developments. Therefore, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in
such a way as to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Community Type and its surroundings.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation Measure AES-6 is described below.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of various transportation improvement projects throughout Developing Communities. However, Developing Communities will not necessarily see the same mix of transportation projects as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities will see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that will be built by 2036. These areas will see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects will not be as prevalent as in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities generally are not served by transit today but new transit service will be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be similarly phased in over the life of the proposed MTP/SCS.

Because Developing Communities do not have as much existing transportation infrastructure as other Community Types, the construction of new transportation projects or the implementation of new transit service will add views of transportation infrastructure to new areas that could degrade the visual character or quality of the Community Type and its surroundings.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation Measure AES-6 is described below.

Rural Residential Communities
A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Rural Residential Communities is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Rural Residential Communities are surrounded by open space, forested lands, and agricultural lands. Their typical views include mostly natural elements with some views of residential and low-scale commercial areas and the transportation infrastructure serving those land uses. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in growth and development in Rural Residential Communities. However, because this growth is anticipated to be modest and in the same pattern as existing development, it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in substantial degradation of existing visual character or quality in this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will result in the construction of roadway improvements including road maintenance and rehabilitation, roadway widenings, newly constructed
roadways, and freeway improvements. There may also be limited improvements to transit service. As with new development, these transportation projects are anticipated to follow the same pattern as existing transportation infrastructure. Most of these projects will make improvements to existing infrastructure, but even the projects that add completely new roadways will not be substantially different from other transportation infrastructure visible throughout this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS

Although some housing and employment growth, consistent with historical trends, may occur in this Community Type within the MTP/SCS planning period, the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas by 2036.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

The focus for investments in these areas is on road maintenance, safety enhancements, other roadway operational improvements, and targeted capacity improvements to existing facilities that accommodate increased travel between urban areas. Because of the low-density makeup of these areas and the limited number of projects being implemented, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will not degrade the visual character or quality of the Community Type, as the projects that occur will be spread out over the entire region. Most of these projects will make improvements to existing infrastructure, but even the projects that add completely new roadways will not be substantially different from other transportation infrastructure visible throughout this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

Transit Priority Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County Transit Priority Areas

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the TPAs is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description will likely not change the visual character or quality in the TPAs. The TPAs already contain mostly urban uses and are relatively compact. The additional housing units and jobs will increase the amount of infill development in the areas and increase the density in certain areas as well. However, these changes are considered minor because new development will blend in with existing development and not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area.
Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

The TPAs will see a variety of transportation improvements by 2036, including new HOV lanes, auxiliary lanes, roadway widenings, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transit facilities, increased transit service, and roadway maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Transit service will include increased frequency on local fixed route buses, but the majority of transit service increases will be commuter service to downtown Sacramento.

Because the TPAs already have a significant amount of transportation infrastructure, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS will not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

**MITIGATION MEASURES**

As part of planning, design and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following measures at a project-level would reduce the impacts to aesthetic resources related to visual character, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

**Mitigation Measure AES-6: Design projects to be visually compatible with surrounding areas.**

The implementing agency shall require measures that minimize contrasts in scale and massing between the project and surrounding natural forms and developments. Strategies to achieve this include:

- avoiding large cuts and fills when the visual environment (natural or urban) would be substantially disrupted;
- siting or designing projects to minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds;
- using contour grading to match surrounding terrain;
- developing transportation systems to be compatible with the surrounding environments (e.g., colors and materials of construction material; scale of improvements);
- avoiding the use of non-native landscaping; if exotic vegetation is used, it should be used as screening and landscaping that blends in and complements the natural landscape;
- protecting or replacing trees in the project area;
- using grading that blends with the adjacent landforms and topography;
- landscaping new slopes and embankments with compatible grasses, shrubs, and trees to soften cuts and edges; and
- designing new structures to be compatible in scale, mass, character, and architecture with existing structures.

**Significance After Mitigation**

As noted in section 3.3.2 State Regulations above, SB 743 eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project; 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area.; and 3) does not impact historic or cultural resources. For projects that meet these criteria the impacts to the aesthetic environment would be considered exempt from this analysis.

If the implementing agency adopts this mitigation measure, Impact AES-3 may be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. For projects proposing to streamline environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether, based on substantial evidence in the record, the proposed mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant. However, SACOG cannot require the implementing agency to adopt this mitigation measure, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the implementing agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation. Therefore, Impact AES-3 remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.

**Impact AES-4a: Result in construction-related impacts that would cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.**

**Regional Impacts**

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the MTP/SCS plan area is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction-related activities will require the use of construction equipment, construction materials, construction signage, and construction vehicles, which could increase the amount of glare, light, or shadow in the region. After the development is completed, all construction equipment, leftover materials, vehicles, and other reflective items are removed from the site. Any impacts associated with the structure itself, once completed, are covered in Impacts AES-1 through AES-3.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4a. Mitigation Measures AES-7 and AES-8 are described below.

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction-related activities will require the use of construction equipment, construction materials, construction signage, and construction vehicles, which could increase the amount of glare, light, or shadow in the region.
Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4a. Mitigation Measures AES-7 and AES-8 are described below.

Localized Impacts

_Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities_

Except as provided below, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the Community Types as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4a. Mitigation Measures AES-7 and AES-8 are described below.

_Lands Not Identified for Development in the MTP/SCS_

Since the MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in Lands Not Identified for Development, there is no potential to result in land-use-related construction impacts that would cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to the land uses changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4a. No mitigation is required.

With respect to transportation changes in Lands Not Identified for Development, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Transportation projects in Lands Not Identified for Development have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4a. Mitigation Measures AES-7 and AES-8 are described below.
Transit Priority Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County TPAs

As with the localized impacts discussed above, the Transit Priority Area impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the TPAs as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in all of the TPAs have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would cast glare, light, or shadow in such a way as to cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a site or place for a sustained period of time.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4a. Mitigation Measures AES-7 and AES-8 are described below.

MITIGATION MEASURES

As part of planning, design and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following measures at a project-level would reduce the impacts to construction related impacts on glare, light and shadow, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

Mitigation Measure AES-7: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-3.

Mitigation Measure AES-8: Reduce the visibility of construction-related activities.

The implementing agency shall reduce the visibility of construction-related activities by taking the following (or equivalent) actions:

- restricting construction activities to permitted hours in accordance with local jurisdiction regulations;
- locating materials and stationary equipment such as generators, compressors, rock crushers, cement mixers, etc. as far from sensitive receptors as possible;
- locating materials and stationary equipment in such a way as to prevent glare, light, or shadow from impacting surrounding uses and minimize blockage of scenic resources; and
- reducing the visibility of construction staging areas by fencing or screening these areas with low-contrast materials consistent with the surrounding environment.

SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

If the implementing agency adopts these mitigation measures, Impact AES-4a may be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. As noted in section 3.3.2 State Regulations above, SB 743 eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or
employment center project; 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area.; and 3) does not impact historic or cultural resources. For projects that meet these criteria the impacts to the aesthetic environment would be considered exempt from this analysis.

For projects proposing to streamline environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether, based on substantial evidence in the record, the proposed mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant. However, SACOG cannot require implementing agencies to adopt mitigation, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the implementing agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation. Therefore, Impact AES-4a remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of program-level review.

**IMPACT AES-4b: RESULT IN CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS THAT WOULD BLOCK PANORAMIC VIEWS OR VIEWS OF SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES OR LANDFORMS (MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, BAYS, OR IMPORTANT MAN-MADE STRUCTURES) AS SEEN FROM PUBLIC VIEWING AREAS, INCLUDING STATE-DESIGNATED SCENIC HIGHWAYS.**

**Regional Impacts**

A summary of land use and transportation changes for the Region/Plan Area is provided in Chapter 2 – Project Description.

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction-related activities will require the use of construction equipment, materials, signage, fencing, barriers, vehicles, etc. that could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms. After the development is completed, all construction equipment, leftover materials, vehicles, and other temporary fencing and walls, are removed from the site. Any impacts associated with the structure itself, once completed, are covered in Impacts AES-1 through AES-3.

While temporary, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4b. Mitigation Measure AES-9 is described below.

The proposed MTP/SCS will invest $35.2 billion current year dollars on roadway, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Typical projects include road widenings, freeway HOV lanes, freeway auxiliary lanes, turn pockets, intelligent transportation infrastructure projects, roadway maintenance projects, interchange improvements, new road and interchanges, Class I, II, and III bicycle facilities, bicycle and pedestrian bridges, complete streets projects, increased frequency on transit, new transit routes, new streetcar and light rail lines, transit facilities, and transit operational improvements.

The proposed MTP/SCS contains three projects on state-designated scenic highways. One project is a bridge replacement and the other two involve road widening and intersection improvements.

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction-related activities will require the use of construction equipment, materials, signage, fencing, barriers, vehicles, etc. that could block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms.
Therefore, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4b. Mitigation Measure AES-9 is described below.

**Localized Impacts**

*Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities*

Except as provided below, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the Community Types as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms (mountains, rivers, bays, or important man-made structures) as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4b. Mitigation Measure AES-9 is described below.

*Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS*

Since the MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in Lands Not Identified for Development, there is no potential to result in land-use-related construction impacts that would block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms (mountains, rivers, bays, or important man-made structures) as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to the land uses changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4b. No mitigation is required.

With respect to transportation changes in Lands Not Identified for Development, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Transportation projects in Lands Not Identified for Development have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms (mountains, rivers, bays, or important man-made structures) as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4b. Mitigation Measure AES-9 is described below.
Transit Priority Area Impacts

*Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County TPAs*

As with the localized impacts discussed above, the Transit Priority Area impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the TPAs as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in all of the TPAs have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block panoramic views or views of significant landscape features or landforms (mountains, rivers, bays, or important man-made structures) as seen from public viewing areas, including state-designated scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on panoramic views related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4b. Mitigation Measure AES-9 is described below.

**Mitigation Measures**

As part of planning, design and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following mitigation measure at a project-level would reduce the impacts to construction-related impacts on panoramic views, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

Mitigation Measure AES-9: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-8.

**Significance After Mitigation**

As noted in section 3.3.2 State Regulations above, SB 743 eliminates the need to evaluate aesthetic impacts of a project if it is 1) a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project; 2) located on an infill site within a transit priority area.; and 3) does not impact historic or cultural resources. For projects that meet these criteria the impacts to the aesthetic environment would be considered exempt from this analysis.

If an implementing agency adopts this mitigation measure, Impact AES-4b may be reduced to less than significant (LS). For projects proposing to streamline environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether, based on substantial evidence in the record, the proposed mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant. However, SACOG cannot require the implementing agency to adopt this mitigation measure, and it is ultimately the responsibility of a lead agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation. Therefore, Impact AES-4b remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.
IMPACT AES-4C: RESULT IN CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS THAT WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS, INCLUDING ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS.

Regional Impacts

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction of new developments could result in view blockage by construction equipment and scaffolding, removal of landscaping, temporary route changes, temporary signage, exposed excavation and slope faces with contrasting soil colors, temporary fencing and walls, construction staging areas, etc. Most of these impacts are considered temporary as the associated impacts are limited to the time during which the development is being constructed. After construction is complete, scaffolding, fencing, temporary walls, construction equipment, leftover materials, construction signage, and other related job-site items are removed. However, if landscaping is not restored and slopes are not revegetated after construction, the visual character or quality of the site could be permanently altered.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4c. Mitigation Measures AES-10, AES-11, AES-12, and AES-13 are described below.

The proposed MTP/SCS will invest $35 billion current year dollars on roadway, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Typical projects include road widenings, freeway HOV lanes, freeway auxiliary lanes, turn pockets, intelligent transportation infrastructure projects, roadway maintenance projects, interchange improvements, new road and interchanges, Class I, II, and III bicycle facilities, bicycle and pedestrian bridges, complete streets projects, increased frequency on transit, new transit routes, new streetcar and light rail lines, transit facilities, and transit operational improvements.

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction of new transportation infrastructure could result in view blockage by construction equipment and scaffolding, removal of landscaping, temporary route changes, temporary signage, exposed excavation and slope faces with contrasting soil colors, temporary fencing and walls, construction staging areas, etc. Most of these impacts are considered temporary as the associated impacts are limited to the time during which the development is being constructed. After construction is complete, scaffolding, fencing, temporary walls, construction equipment, leftover materials, construction signage, and other related job-site items are removed. However, if landscaping is not restored and slopes are not revegetated after construction, the visual character or quality of the site could be permanently altered.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4c. Mitigation Measures AES-10, AES-11, AES-12, and AES-13 are described below.
Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities

Except as provided below, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the Community Types as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4c. Mitigation Measures AES-10, AES-11, AES-12, and AES-13 are described below.

Lands Not Identified for Development in the proposed MTP/SCS

Since the MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in Lands Not Identified for Development, there is no potential to result in land-use-related construction impacts that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character related to the land use changes from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4c. No mitigation is required.

With respect to transportation changes in Lands Not Identified for Development, the localized impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Transportation projects in Lands Not Identified for Development have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.

Therefore, construction-related impacts on visual character related to transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4c. Mitigation Measures AES-10, AES-11, AES-12, and AES-13 are described below.

Transit Priority Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County TPAs

As with the localized impacts discussed above, the Transit Priority Area impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the TPAs as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Land use and transportation projects in all of the TPAs have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including established neighborhoods.
Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character related to the land use changes and transportation improvements from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the TPAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4c. Mitigation Measures AES-10, AES-11, AES-12, and AES-13 are described below.

**Mitigation Measures**

As part of planning, design, and engineering for projects that result from the proposed MTP/SCS, the implementing agency shall ensure that aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. SACOG does not have authority to require the implementing agencies to adopt the identified mitigation measures; the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency. However, implementation of the following mitigation measures at a project-level would reduce the impacts from construction-related impacts on visual character, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081).

**Mitigation Measure AES-10: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-8.**

**Mitigation Measure AES-11: Re-vegetate exposed earth surfaces.**

The implementing agency shall minimize short-term visual impacts of construction by requiring project sponsors to re-vegetate slopes and exposed earth surfaces at the earliest opportunity during construction.

**Mitigation Measure AES-12: Minimize contrasts between the project and surrounding areas.**

The implementing agency shall ensure that projects use natural landscaping to minimize contrasts between the projects and surrounding areas. Wherever possible, the implementing agency shall develop interchanges and transit lines at the grade of the surrounding land to limit view blockage. Project designs shall contour the edges of major cut-and-fill slopes to provide a more natural-looking finished profile.

**Mitigation Measure AES-13: Replace and renew landscaping along roadway corridors and development sites.**

The implementing agency shall ensure that project sponsors replace and renew landscaping to the greatest extent possible along corridors with transportation improvements and at development sites. The implementing agency shall ensure that landscaping is planned in new corridors and developments to respect existing natural and man-made features and to complement the dominant landscaping of surrounding areas.

**Significance after Mitigation**

If the implementing agency adopts these mitigation measures, Impact AES-4c may be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. For projects proposing to streamline environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether, based on substantial evidence in the record, the proposed mitigation will reduce the impact to less than significant. However, SACOG cannot require the implementing agency to adopt this mitigation
measure, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the implementing agency to determine and adopt project-specific mitigation. Therefore, Impact AES-4c remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.