Chapter 3—Aesthetics

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes existing conditions (environmental and regulatory) and assesses the potential aesthetic impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (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 were considered and prepared at a programmatic level. SACOG did not receive comments on aesthetics in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP). 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 (FWHA 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 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 a focus of this chapter.

It is useful to think of scenic resources in terms of “typical views” seen throughout the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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. CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS, 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) (FHWA 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 regional scale of the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS, generalized landscape units, instead of specific viewsheds, were assessed.

The bulk of the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS is located in the Central Valley, a basin bounded by the Sierra Nevada Range to the east and the Coastal Ranges to the west. Topography in the Central 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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.
Agricultural lands are a dominant visual landscape in the region, with approximately 1.5 million acres of agricultural land in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. 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 annual 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 AND WEST 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 Interstate 80 (I-80) on the Sacramento-Yolo Causeway, from westbound I-80 above the city of Roseville, from northbound Interstate 5 (I-5) between Elk Grove and Sacramento, from westbound U.S. 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 building, the Robert T. Matsui Federal Courthouse, the Capitol Mall building, the U.S. Bank Tower, the U.S. Bank Plaza, the Renaissance Tower, the Golden 1 Center, and, by night, the blue light of the Esquire Plaza. Distinctive features in the West Sacramento skyline include the Ziggurat and the CalSTRS Building. Portions of a few additional buildings within West Sacramento, including the Raley Field baseball stadium, the Habitat and the Parks Modern Buildings are visible from the Sacramento riverfront between the Tower Bridge and Pioneer Bridge (City of Sacramento 2017).

The downtown Sacramento skyline, in particular, is dominated by highly reflective glass buildings, which 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.

These downtown areas are 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. Particularly in the Downtown Sacramento area, strings of white LED market lists were installed in December 2015 to illuminate both sides of K Street (Downtown Sacramento Partnership 2019).

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

Among the most unique topographic features within the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 regulation or policy. Such land uses could include national, state, and local parks and recreation areas, nature preserves, protected habitat, and areas protected by conservation easements. Other land is deemed open space not by design, but because the land is not involved in a commercial use, or in the case of farmed land, the land is consumed by a commercial use that also contributes to the visual quality of the area.

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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS in most counties and cities are residential and commercial landscapes featuring single-family neighborhoods, low-rise multi-family complexes, low-rise office parks, and low-scale shopping areas. As compared to commercial areas, the areas where residential buildings 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 often produce artificial nighttime lighting both in the parking lots and on the storefronts and signs. Many of the storefronts consist primarily of glass or other reflective surfaces that can create glare.

**Transportation Network**

Many views of the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 Nevada. U.S. 50 extends from downtown Sacramento to the Tahoe Basin. The Capital City Freeway extends northeast from downtown Sacramento through Sacramento County, connecting to I-80 just east of Watt Avenue.

Streets in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 includes 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 the California Department of Transportation (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 (Caltrans 2019). It is usually limited by topography and/or jurisdictional boundaries.

Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1 show officially designated and eligible state scenic highways in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. These designations represent recognition of the high scenic and visual qualities of these corridors. Specific design guidelines are required, and the officially 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 Section 3.3.2 – State Regulations. Locally-designated scenic roads and routes are also present throughout the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS and are subject to local laws and regulations as described in Section 3.3.3 – Local Regulations.

<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 East of Placerville to State Route 89</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. 50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Official State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placer</td>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>Countywide State Route 20 to Truckee</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interstate 80</td>
<td>Countywide</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Route 89</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>State Route 16</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>From State Route 20 at north County border to</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR 128</td>
<td>west of Interstate 505 at Capay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Countywide</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuba</td>
<td>State Route 49</td>
<td>From the Yuba County Line to the Yuba Summit</td>
<td>Eligible State Scenic Highway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caltrans 2019

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 on this system 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
Official and Eligible State Scenic Highways in the Plan Area of the Proposed MTP/SCS

*Source: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm)
Sources: Esri, USGS, NDAA
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, typically located in urban downtowns 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 yet fully integrated with, and have not yet significantly influenced, the surrounding development patterns. Refer to Chapter 16 – Transportation for a more thorough discussion and exhibits of the region’s existing transportation network.

**Trees and Forested Lands**

The plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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. The SACOG region includes urban forest areas with extensive tree landscaping throughout significant portions of most communities.

**Waterways**

The plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. See Section 3.3.1 – Federal Regulations for more information about the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Other major rivers in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS also includes a number of small creeks and lakes. Figure 3-2 shows the major waterways in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS.

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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1963.

### 3.3 Regulatory Setting

#### 3.3.1 Federal Regulations

*Fixing America’s Surface Transportation and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Acts*

Under the FAST (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation [Public Law 114-94]) Act and MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act [Public Law 112-141]), the U.S. Department of Transportation requires that metropolitan planning organizations, such as SACOG, prepare long-range regional transportation plans (RTPs) and update them every four years if they are in areas designated as “nonattainment” or “maintenance” for federal air quality standards. Prior to enactment of MAP-21, the primary federal requirements regarding RTPs were included in the metropolitan transportation planning rules—Title 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613. The FAST Act and MAP-21 make a number of changes to the statutes that underpin these regulations. With respect to aesthetics, there are numerous provisions for improvements and changes to the implementation of transportation enhancement activities. These include 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.
Figure 3-2
Waterways in the Plan Area of the Proposed MTP/SCS
**WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S. Code Sections 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, archaeologic, 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 of 1966 (49 U.S. Code Section 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 FHWA, 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 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 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**

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 (Government Code, Sections 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 (14 CCR Section 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 (Government Code Sections 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.
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 n.d.).

**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 AND REGULATIONS**

Policies to preserve and enhance the visual quality and aesthetic resources of developed and natural areas, including scenic roadways and routes, are often established in a jurisdiction’s general plan and its implementing regulations. 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 and its implementing regulations.

Local general plans and implementation regulations may include policies or provisions 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;
- protect or enhance the quality of scenic roads or routes;
- 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 but are not limited to specific plans, area plans, zoning regulations, design requirements, design review programs, design guidelines, and park and open space plans.

### 3.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### 3.4.1 Methods and Assumptions

This program-level analysis generally evaluates potential aesthetic impacts based on the location of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation network relative to the known distribution of existing aesthetic resources. This analysis evaluates impacts to scenic resources including scenic vistas, scenic resources along a state scenic highway, and visual character, as well as light, glare, and shadow impacts. By 2040, 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 refers to conditions in the baseline year of 2016. The proposed MTP/SCS generally uses 2016 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. Exceptions to the 2016 baseline include the following:

- The most recent year for the State Scenic Highway Mapping System is 2019. Thus, 2019 data are used to provide the most accurate picture practically possible of the proposed MTP/SCS’s impacts to state scenic highways.
- The remainder of the existing environmental setting for aesthetics reflects conditions in April 2019 when the NOP was published.
For each impact, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS is assessed on three levels. First, impacts are assessed at the regional level for the entire plan area. Second, impacts are assessed for the plan area’s five Community Types: Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, Rural Residential Communities, and Lands Not Identified for Development. And third, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS is assessed in terms of its impacts to the region’s High Frequency Transit Areas (HFTAs). Refer to Chapter 2 – Project Description for a full description of the Community Types and HFTAs and the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements within these areas.

The analysis of aesthetic impacts associated with the projected land use pattern assesses the amount of growth (population, housing, and employment) projected for the region, in each Community Type, and in the HFTAs by 2040 and how that growth might impact the aesthetic environment. The projected population and housing unit growth for the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 would experience positive or negative impacts.

Although the proposed project sites within the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS 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 impact analyses 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 planned transportation improvements that would have different effects on the aesthetic environment. This analysis examines categories of planned transportation improvements in assessing the likely impacts of implementing the proposed MTP/SCS. For a full description of planned transportation improvements 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 results in a greater amount of change to the existing aesthetic environment than the widening of an existing roadway. Likewise, greenfield development results in a greater amount of change to the existing aesthetic environment than infill development in an established community. 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 would have a potentially significant adverse effect based on the following criteria for determining significance.

The analysis assumes implementing agencies would ensure aesthetic resources are treated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations as part of project planning, design and engineering.

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 would result in significant impacts under CEQA, if any of the following would occur:
AES-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

AES-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway.

AES-3 In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

AES-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

AES-5 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.

AES-6 Result in construction impacts that would substantially adversely affect a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources along a state scenic highway, substantially degrade visual character or quality of public views in non-urban areas or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality in urbanized areas, create a new source of substantial light and glare with adverse effects on views, or cast shadows that cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character.

3.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**IMPACT AES-1: HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA.**

**Regional Impacts**

The valuation of views as scenic is subjective, but there is often agreement within the community about which views are valued and should be protected. Effects on scenic vistas and from public viewing areas from the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements would be experienced regionally when projects directly alter an important built or natural feature or are placed in a location and have bulk and scale such that long-range views of important features are obscured. Examples of regionally important scenic vistas include the downtown Sacramento skyline, the Sierra Nevada Range, agricultural lands and pastures, trees and forested lands, landmarks such as the Capitol Building, and the Sutter Buttes. Development and redevelopment projects that would be similar in size, style or type (e.g., apartment buildings) to surroundings would typically not cause a substantial change to regional views of a scenic vista.

As discussed in Section 2.8.1, the 2040 growth forecast indicates that population in the plan area is expected to grow by 620,520 people, an increase of about 26 percent, between 2016 and 2040. The majority of the projected land use pattern would facilitate infill development, in accordance with the adopted land use plans and zoning ordinances of the cities and counties in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. Compact, infill development proposed within urban areas would be generally consistent with the surrounding landscape and thus would generally not result in adverse effects on scenic vistas. Some proposed development in these areas, specifically tall and large development projects, could add bulk, scale, and massing that affects existing scenic vistas. In addition, the
projected land use pattern would also include development in non-urban and largely undeveloped areas, which would generally consist of new low-to medium-density development on vacant parcels. Such development could be visually prominent from or have an adverse effect on existing scenic vistas. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing scenic vistas and contribute to the area’s overall aesthetic value by introducing new architectural elements or otherwise improving views to the area’s scenic vistas. Thus, the projected land use pattern has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic vistas.

Some scenic vistas or areas, 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 Government Code Sections 8162.5 – 8162.9.

Many local jurisdictions have general plan policies relating to the protection of scenic vistas. 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 scenic vistas are protected differently among the various jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS, it is possible that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would block or have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below.

In urbanized areas, where the majority of planned transportation improvements would occur, roadway and other transportation improvements would not have an impact on scenic vistas at the regional level. Transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the urban landscape, and improvements to existing facilities would not result in a significantly altered viewshed. In developing areas, where transportation infrastructure is less prevalent, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could open up new views of scenic vistas by allowing travelers to gain new vantage points of scenic vistas and landscape features. For instance, bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic views previously unavailable. However, above-grade transportation infrastructure, such as bridges and overpasses in undeveloped areas, could introduce mass and scale that would block existing views from existing roadways, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities. Transit improvements are also proposed under the MTP/SCS, mostly within urban areas. Transit service improvement such as increasing service on existing fixed routes and express bus lines would take place within areas already developed for transit and thus would not block views. Regional transit development such as expansion of light rail is proposed largely within urban areas, surrounded by existing high-density housing and employment development. As such, it is not expected that expansion of rail would result in adverse impacts on scenic vistas. Thus, planned transportation improvements have the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic vistas.

Each jurisdiction addresses the protection of scenic vistas resources differently based on local views and community values. For this reason, it is possible that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS transportation could result in blocked views of scenic vistas.
Therefore, the impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below.

Localized Impacts

Center, Corridor, and Established Communities

Because Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are already urbanized and built out, future development under the projected land use pattern would generally blend in with existing commercial and residential development and would not likely change the typical views found in these areas. However, increased densities planned in these communities means that growth would occur vertically not horizontally. This could block existing public views to scenic vistas. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing scenic vistas and contribute to the area’s overall aesthetic value by introducing new architectural elements or otherwise improving views to the area’s scenic vistas. Development implemented as a result of the proposed MTP/SCS would comply with local policies related to protection of scenic vistas. However, because project-level details, such as height and massing of future development, as well as their locations in relation to scenic vistas, are not known at this time, projects under the proposed MTP/SCS could result in substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic vistas related to implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below.

By 2040 a variety of planned transportation improvements would occur in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, including new transit, non-motorized, and roadway projects in addition to ongoing improvements to transit operations and roadway maintenance. Most of the roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure projects are improvements to existing facilities that would not substantially alter the aesthetic environment or block existing scenic vistas. Transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Planned transportation improvements to existing infrastructure are unlikely to alter views significantly from existing conditions.

However, there are specific projects that could have significant impacts on scenic vistas in Centers and Corridor Communities. These projects involve crossings over the American River, the only river within the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. There are two planned transportation improvements that cross the American River. The first American River crossing would add lanes to the State Route 51 crossing of the river including a new bicycle and pedestrian crossing. The second would construct a multi-modal river crossing over the American River, connecting downtown Sacramento with South Natomas. These projects could open up new views of the river, but these projects have not yet undergone environmental review or design, and it is possible that they would affect existing scenic vistas.

Another consideration is the construction of sound walls, which could block ground-level scenic vistas. Sound walls 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 sound
walls 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 would 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 planned transportation improvements would involve improvements to existing service that operates on existing rights-of-way. Such improvements would not block scenic vistas.

The impacts on scenic vistas related to planned 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-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 are described below. However, because no new river crossings are planned in Established Communities, the impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1.

**Developing Communities**

Developing Communities have some existing development on the fringes of Established Communities, but for the most part, they are presently undeveloped. Development within Developing Communities would consist of predominantly large-lot single-family and small-lot single-family housing, although some attached units would be developed as well. As such, implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land to urban uses in such a way that scenic vistas could likely be affected. Therefore, the impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in various planned transportation improvements throughout Developing Communities. However, Developing Communities would not necessarily see the same mix of planned transportation improvements as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities would have relatively more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that would be built by 2040. These areas would experience road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure under existing condition, these projects would 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 would be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would 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 planned transportation improvements including new transit service could possibly block scenic vistas. Another consideration is the construction of sound walls, which could block ground-level panoramic views. Sound walls are often constructed as a mitigation measure for noise impacts related to freeway and other major roadway improvement projects. They also can buffer surrounding land uses from air pollutants and provide additional
project security. In some cases, well-designed decorative sound walls can improve the aesthetic environment of a freeway or major roadway by adding an element of visual interest to the surrounding transportation infrastructure.

The impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below.

**Rural Residential Communities**

Rural Residential Communities are generally surrounded by open space, forested lands, and agricultural lands. They may have a variety of scenic vistas capturing many different types of typical views. Because the projected land use growth in this community type is modest, it is unlikely that scenic vistas would 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 would be significantly altered from existing conditions.

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

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile and farm traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would 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 would add a new visual element to the landscape, the limited number of anticipated projects would not likely block scenic vistas, as these types of transportation improvements typically occur at-grade.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of roadway improvements within the Rural Residential Communities, with the focus on road maintenance and rehabilitation, safety projects and limited new or widened roadways or freeway improvements. Because most planned transportation improvements would involve improvements to existing service that operates within existing rights-of-way, such improvements would generally not block scenic vistas or views of significant landscape features.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1. 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 2040. For this reason, the impacts on scenic vistas related to implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1. No mitigation is required.
The focus for planned transportation improvements 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 would not likely affect scenic vistas, as these types of planned transportation improvements typically occur at-grade.

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

**High Frequency Transit Area Impacts**

*Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas*

Similar to Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, the HFTAs are already urbanized. The projected land use pattern would facilitate higher-density infill development. The fact that the HFTAs are already urbanized means that future development would blend in with existing commercial and residential development and would not likely change the typical views found in these areas. However, increasing the intensity/density in urbanized areas would mean that the growth would occur vertically rather than horizontally. This could block scenic vistas. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing scenic vistas. Thus, implementation of the projected land use pattern in HFTAs has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic vistas.

The impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation Measure AES-1 is described below. If the project meets the criteria outlined in Senate Bill (SB) 743 it could be exempt from evaluating aesthetic impacts.

The HFTAs would see a variety of transportation improvements by 2040, 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 would 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 would be modifications to existing infrastructure, it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would block scenic vistas or views of other scenic vistas from public viewing areas.

However, there are specific projects that could have significant impacts on scenic vistas in the Sacramento County HFTAs. In general, projects that cross rivers have more potential to block scenic vistas that other types of planned transportation improvements because they occur above-grade, whereas most other planned transportation improvements occur at-grade. There are two planned transportation improvements that involve crossings over the American River, the only river within the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The first American River crossing would add HOV lanes to I-5 from the I-5/I-80 interchange to downtown Sacramento. The second would construct a multi-modal river crossing over the American River, connecting downtown Sacramento with South Natomas. However, a river crossing...
could also open up new views of the river. These projects have not yet undergone environmental or design review, but it is possible that they would have some impact on scenic vistas.

The impacts on scenic vistas from implementation of the planned transportation improvements involving river crossings from implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the Sacramento County HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-1. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 are described below.

The impacts on scenic vistas related to planned transportation improvements that do not include river crossings from the implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS in the Placer County and Yolo County HFTAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-1. No mitigation required.

MITIGATION MEASURES

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 scenic vistas, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures can and should do so (PRC Section 21081).

Mitigation Measure AES-1: Protect public views of important scenic vistas, scenic resources along state scenic highways, and visual character and quality.

The implementing agency shall protect public views of important scenic vistas, scenic resources, and visual character and quality 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 vistas;
- 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 regulations related to the protection of public views of important scenic vistas, scenic resources along a state scenic highway, and visual character and quality.

Mitigation Measure AES-2: Design river crossings to minimize aesthetic and visual impacts to the greatest feasible extent.

The implementing agency shall design river crossings to protect public views of important scenic vistas, scenic resources along a state scenic highway, and visual character and quality. 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 Chapter 1 – Introduction, 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 these mitigation measures, Impact AES-1 would be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. Projects taking advantage of CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 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, 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-1 remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.

**IMPACT AES-2: SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGE SCENIC RESOURCES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, TREES, ROCK OUTCROPPINGS, AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS ALONG A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY.**

**Regional Impacts**

Effects on scenic resources including along a state scenic highway from the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements would be experienced regionally when projects directly alter an important built or natural feature such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway or are placed in a location and have bulk and scale such that views of these features are obscured. As discussed in Section 3.3.2, nearby official state scenic highways include U.S. 50, east of Placerville to State Route 89, and State Route 160 along the Sacramento River. Eligible state scenic highways in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS include State Route 49 throughout the county of El Dorado County, State Route 16, from State Route 20 at the north of the County of Yolo to west of Interstate 505 at Capay, and State Route 49 from the Yuba County line to the Yuba Summit.

As discussed in Section 2.8.1, the 2040 growth forecast indicates that population in the plan area is expected to grow by 620,520 people, an increase of about 26 percent, between 2016 and 2040. The majority of development under the projected land use pattern would occur as infill development, in accordance with the adopted land use plans and zoning ordinances of the cities and counties in the proposed MTP/SCS area. Compact, infill development proposed within urban areas would be generally consistent with the surrounding landscape and thus would generally not result in result in visual changes within a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources. However, in the majority of development proposed in non-urban areas, new low- to medium-
density development would occur on vacant parcels and thus would not result in visual changes within a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources.

Regional development and redevelopment projects that would be located within the viewshed of official state scenic highways or obstruct views from official state scenic highways could result in damage to scenic resources within state scenic highways, if they add significant bulk, mass, and scale to the areas. As such, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in the conversion of previously undeveloped land in such a way that views from state scenic highways could be affected. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along state scenic highways. Thus, the projected land use pattern has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic resources along a scenic highway.

Development along officially designated and eligible state scenic highway corridors is unlikely to result in developmental changes that would damage scenic resources, such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, 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.” (Caltrans 2011).

In addition to Caltrans’ regulations, many local jurisdictions have their own general plan policies relating to the protection of scenic 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 scenic resources are protected differently among the various jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCSs and because two official scenic highways and five eligible scenic highways existing within the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS, it is possible that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could still damage scenic resources, through potential obstruction of views from scenic highways.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

The proposed MTP/SCS contains three projects on official state scenic highways. One project is a bridge replacement, and the other two involve road widening and intersection improvements. These projects would occur along the already-developed highways and this would not result in substantial change to the existing transportation infrastructure. As such, they are unlikely to have significant impacts on the surrounding views. Additional transportation-related projects proposed, such as
bicycle paths and other roadway improvements would not occur within or be visible from state scenic highways. However, bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic resources previously unavailable. Transit improvements are also proposed under the MTP/SCS, mostly within urban areas. Transit service improvement as such as increasing service on existing fixed routes and express bus lines would take place within areas already developed for transit and thus would not result in damage to scenic resources along a state scenic highway.

Regional transit development such as expansion of rail is proposed largely within urban areas, surrounded by high-density housing and employment development. As such, it is not expected that expansion of rail would result in damage to scenic resources along a state scenic highway. Further, as discussed above, most jurisdictions have general plan policies and associated regulations, in addition to Caltrans’ regulations, relating to the protection of scenic resources.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level have the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects. Because the proposed MTP/SCS contains three projects along official state scenic highway with the potential for adverse effects, this impact is considered to be potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor and Established Communities

Similar to localized impacts under Impact AES-2, because Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are already urbanized and built out, future development would blend in with existing commercial and residential development and would not likely result in visual changes along a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources. However, increasing the density in urbanized areas means that growth would occur vertically rather than horizontally. If these projects are located along scenic highways, this could damage scenic resources or create visual contrast between the project and existing conditions. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along state scenic highways. Further, cities and counties in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS also have policies (e.g., General Plan), regulations (e.g., zoning), and other guidance (e.g., design guidelines), that control the size and scale of new development to maintain visual compatibility with the natural and built environments. Developments implemented as a result of the proposed MTP/SCS would need to comply with these local policies. However, because not all scenic resources along a scenic highway are protected by local policies, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway. Thus, the projected land use pattern has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic resources along a scenic highway.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic highways from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities would see a variety of transportation improvements by 2040, 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 result in visual changes along a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources. Further, some planned transportation improvements could result in beneficial effects to scenic resources along scenic highways. For instance, bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic views previously unavailable. 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 along a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources.

Two planned transportation improvements would occur on officially designated state scenic highway corridors within both Established and Developing Communities. One project, in Placer County, would include widening Highway 49 from Luther Road to Nevada Street. The other project involves extending Combellack Road in Placerville near Highway 49. These projects could have substantial adverse effects on scenic resources along a scenic highway through alteration of an important built or natural feature such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway or by being placed in a location and have bulk and scale such that views of these features are obscured. Similar to development under the projected land use pattern, planned transportation improvements would comply with local policies protecting visual resources. However, because not all scenic resources along a scenic highway are protected by local policies, implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS could damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

Developing Communities
The growth described in Chapter 2 – Project Description could damage scenic resources or create visual contrast between the project and existing conditions. 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 views from state scenic highways could be affected. At the same time, constructing taller buildings at higher densities could provide new views of existing trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along state scenic highways. Thus, the projected land use pattern has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic resources along a scenic highway.

Cities and counties in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS also have policies (e.g., General Plan), regulations (e.g., zoning), and other guidance (e.g., design guidelines), that control the size and scale of land development to maintain visual compatibility with the natural and built environments. Nonetheless, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.
Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of various transportation improvement projects throughout Developing Communities. However, Developing Communities would not necessarily see the same mix of planned transportation improvements as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities would see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that would be built by 2040. These areas would see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects would 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 would be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would be similarly phased in over the life of the MTP/SCS. In Developing Communities, where transportation infrastructure is less prevalent, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could open up new views of scenic resources along a scenic highway by allowing travelers to gain new vantage points of these scenic resources. For instance, bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic views previously unavailable. However, above-grade transportation infrastructure, such as bridges and overpasses in undeveloped areas, could introduce mass and scale that would block existing views from existing roadways, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities. As such, transportation improvements have the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic resources along a scenic highway.

Two planned transportation improvements would occur on officially designated state scenic highway corridors within both Established and Developing Communities. One project, in Placer County, would include widening Highway 49 from Luther Road to Nevada Street. The other project involves extending Combellack Road in Placerville near Highway 49.

These projects could have substantial adverse effects on the visual character of land adjacent to designated scenic highways or highways eligible for designation. Similar to the projected land use pattern, planned transportation improvements would need to comply with local policies protecting visual resources. However, because not all scenic resources along a scenic highway are protected by local policies, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a state scenic highway.

The impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway 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 is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

**Rural Residential Communities**

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 would be changed substantially from existing conditions. Nonetheless, if future projects are located along scenic highways, the proposed MTP/SCS has the potential to damage scenic resources or create visual contrast between the project and existing conditions. 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 by introducing new architectural elements or otherwise improving views to the area’s scenic resources, as seen from...
scenic highways. Thus, the projected land use pattern has the potential for both beneficial and adverse effects to scenic resources along a scenic highway.

Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway related to implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile and farm traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of roadway improvements including road maintenance and rehabilitation, roadway widenings, newly constructed roadways, and freeway improvements. In Rural Residential Communities, where transportation infrastructure is less prevalent, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS could open up new views of scenic resources along a scenic highway by allowing travelers to gain new vantage points of these scenic resources. For instance, bicycle improvements, especially Class I bicycle paths, may create new views of scenic resources previously unavailable. However, above-grade transportation infrastructure, such as bridges and overpasses in undeveloped areas, could introduce mass and scale that would block existing views from existing roadways, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities. No planned transportation improvements would occur on officially designated state scenic highway corridors within any Rural Residential Communities. Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the planned transportation improvements 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
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 2040.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern 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 planned transportation improvements 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 would not likely affect scenic resources within scenic highways. No planned transportation improvements would occur on officially designated state scenic highway corridors within Lands Not Identified for Development. Therefore, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway related to implementation of the planned transportation improvements 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.
High Frequency Transit Areas Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas

If located along a scenic highway, the type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could damage scenic resources along a scenic highway. As in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities, the HFTAs are already urbanized. The projected land use pattern would facilitate higher-density infill development. The fact that the HFTAs are already urbanized means that future development would blend in with existing commercial and residential development and would likely not result in visual changes along a state scenic highway that would substantially damage scenic resources. However, increasing the intensity/density in urbanized areas would mean that the growth would occur vertically rather than horizontally. These projects, if located along scenic highways, would potentially damage scenic resources.

Therefore, impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below. If the project meets the criteria outlined in SB 743 it could be exempt from evaluating aesthetic impacts.

The HFTAs would see a variety of transportation improvements by 2040, 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 would 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 would be modifications to existing infrastructure, it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in impacts to scenic resources along a state scenic highway. There are no planned transportation improvement projects on officially designated scenic highway corridors in the Sacramento County HFTAs. However, although unlikely, depending on the location of future projects, impacts to scenic resources along a state scenic highway could occur.

Thus, the impacts on scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-2. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is described below.

Mitigation Measures

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 can and should do so (PRC Section 21081).
Mitigation Measure AES-3: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-1.

**SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

As noted in Chapter 1 – Introduction, 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 would be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. Projects taking advantage of CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 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, 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: IN NON-URBANIZED AREAS, SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS? (PUBLIC VIEWS ARE THOSE THAT ARE EXPERIENCED FROM PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE VANTAGE POINTS.) IF THE PROJECT IS IN AN URBANIZED AREA, WOULD THE PROJECT CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE ZONING AND OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING SCENIC QUALITY?**

**Regional Impacts**

Effects on visual character and quality of public views of project sites and their surroundings from the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements would be experienced regionally when projects directly alter the existing visual character or quality of an area or are placed in a location and add prominent bulk and scale such that existing visual of character is compromised. Development and redevelopment projects that would be similar in size, style or type (e.g., apartment buildings) to surroundings would typically not cause a substantial change to existing visual character and quality of public views of project sites and their surroundings.

As discussed in Section 2.8.1, the 2040 growth forecast indicates that population in the plan area is expected to grow by 620,520 people, an increase of about 26 percent, between 2016 and 2040. The majority of development under the projected land use pattern would occur as infill development, in accordance with the adopted land use plans and zoning ordinances of the cities and counties in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. Infill development is generally aesthetically beneficial at the regional scale, as it occurs in existing urbanized areas already designated for and receiving growth and can reduce pressures for growth in undeveloped and/or agricultural and rural areas. For development within urbanized areas, local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations, including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and approvals to land use projects. Because local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects in urbanized areas comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations, including those governing scenic quality, before issuing permits and, infill development in urban areas is not expected to conflict with zoning for scenic quality. For projects proposing to streamline
environmental review, lead agencies must conduct project-level analysis for each project to analyze whether projects occurring within urbanized areas would be conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The introduction of proposed low- to medium-density development in largely undeveloped, non-urbanized areas would add bulk, scale, and massing in areas that are non-urbanized, which could be visually prominent compared to the existing landscape. Thus, this could degrade existing visual character and/or quality of public views in non-urbanized areas. However, as discussed above, many local jurisdictions have general plan policies and associated regulations governing the protection of visual character and quality. These policies may limit the amount or type of development in public view corridors or require special design guidelines to maintain or enhance existing visual character and quality. Development in less developed, non-urbanized 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 in non-urbanized areas, these new views could potentially result in degradation of existing visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings. For development within urbanized areas, local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations, including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and approvals.

Therefore, in non-urbanized areas the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

In urbanized areas, because jurisdictions would require compliance with applicable zoning and other regulations, impacts to scenic quality would be less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

The proposed MTP/SCS includes planned transportation 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 would 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. Other planned transportation improvements include improvements to the existing transit system and some expansion of rail, and bicycle path improvements.

Substantial road, highway, transit, and bicycle improvements under the proposed MTP/SCS would occur in areas where transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape. Such planned transportation improvements would not likely degrade the existing visual character or quality of the region because transportation infrastructure is already a dominant feature of the landscape in those areas. In less developed, non-urbanized areas of the region, adding new transportation infrastructure would add an element of urban character to previously undeveloped lands. Depending on design and siting details, the planned transportation improvements can result in degradation of existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in non-urbanized areas. In urbanized areas, the planned transportation improvements under the proposed MTP/SCS would be visually consistent with the existing visual environment and are unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
Therefore, in non-urbanized areas, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

In urbanized areas, because jurisdictions would require compliance with applicable zoning and other regulations, impacts at the regional level are less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

**Localized Impacts**

*Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities*

Because Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities are already built out, development would mostly be infill development, increasing the density in downtowns, central business districts, and main streets throughout the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS. These areas are considered urbanized areas. Local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and approvals. As such, it is expected that land use development and redevelopment projects would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Therefore, the impacts on conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality from implementation of the projected land use pattern 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 would see a variety of transportation improvements by 2040, 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 and would be visually consistent with existing aesthetic conditions in urbanized areas. Thus, these projects are unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Transit projects would consist of increased fixed route bus service, new light rail extensions and increased service on existing lines, new streetcar service, increased express bus services, new transit operations’ facilities, and system operational improvements. Most planned transportation improvements would involve improvements to existing service that operates on existing rights-of-way, where transit infrastructure is a dominant feature of the landscape. These projects would be visually consistent with existing aesthetic conditions in urbanized areas and are unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Therefore, the impacts on conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality from implementation of the planned transportation improvements 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**

Currently, typical views in Developing Communities include some developed 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. Developing communities are generally in non-urbanized areas. The type of development described in Chapter 2 - Project Description could significantly 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 would not necessarily be built at the same density as Established Communities or Center and Corridor Communities, but development in Developing Communities would increase the density and intensity of the existing suburban or rural environment. 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 public views of sites and their surroundings for this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of various transportation improvement projects throughout Developing Communities, which are generally existing non-urbanized areas. However, Developing Communities would not necessarily see the same mix of planned transportation improvements as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities would see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that would be built by 2040. These areas would see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects would not be as prevalent as in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities generally are not served by transit under existing conditions, but new transit service would be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would 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 planned transportation improvements would add views of transportation infrastructure to new areas that could degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the sites and their surroundings for this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

**Rural Residential Communities**

Rural Residential Communities are non-urbanized areas 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 would result in minimal growth and development
in Rural Residential Communities relative to other community types. Specifically, these areas are expected to increase by about 2,790 housing units and 1,400 jobs, or around one percent of the regional growth projected in the proposed MTP/SCS. Nonetheless, development in this Community Type, such as housing units and employments centers could result in additional scale, mass, and bulk throughout this Community Type that generally consists of open space, forested lands, and agricultural lands. Therefore, depending on their design and locations, these types of projects could be visually prominent compared to the existing visual landscape of the area and thus could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings related to the projected land use pattern in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially (PS) for Impact AES-3. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-4 is described below.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile and farm traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would 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 the projected land use pattern, planned transportation improvements are anticipated to follow the same pattern as existing transportation infrastructure. Most planned transportation improvements would involve improvements to existing infrastructure, but even the projects that add completely new roadways would not be substantially different from other transportation infrastructure visible throughout this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings related to implementation of the planned transportation improvements 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 non-urbanized Community Type within the MTP/SCS planning period, the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas by 2040.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the projected land use pattern 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 planned transportation improvements 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, non-urbanized makeup of these areas and the limited number of projects being implemented, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are not likely to substantively degrade the visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings in this Community Type at the local-level. These projects would be spread out over the entire region. Most planned transportation improvements would involve improvements to existing infrastructure, however the
projects that add completely new roadways would not be substantially different from other transportation infrastructure visible throughout this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the planned transportation improvements 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.

**High Frequency Transit Area Impacts**

*Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas*

The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description would likely not change the visual character or quality in the HFTAs. The HFTAs are urbanized areas that already contain primarily urban uses and are relatively compact. The additional housing units and jobs would increase the amount of infill development in the areas and increase the density in certain areas as well. However, local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and approvals. As such, it is expected that land use development and redevelopment projects would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Therefore, conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality are unlikely to occur in the HFTAs as a result of implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS such that impacts are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

The HFTAs would see a variety of transportation improvements by 2040, 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 would include increased frequency on local fixed route buses, but the majority of transit service increases would be commuter service to downtown Sacramento. These projects would be visually consistent with existing aesthetic conditions in the urbanized environment of the HFTAs and are unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Therefore, conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality are unlikely to occur in the HFTAs as a result of the transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS so impacts are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-3. No mitigation is required.

**Mitigation Measures**

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 can and should do so (PRC Section 21081).
Mitigation Measure AES-4: 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:

- to the extent feasible, 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 Chapter 1 – Introduction, 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 would be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. Projects taking advantage of CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 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, 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-4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

**Regional Impacts**

Effects of light or glare would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area when land use and transportation improvements introduce additional sources or substantial light and glare in areas where they were not prominent before, such as in non-urban areas. Development and
redevelopment projects within urban areas, where sources of substantial light and glare are already prominent, would not typically adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

As discussed in Section 2.8.1, the 2040 growth forecast indicates that population in the plan area is expected to grow by 620,520 people, an increase of about 26 percent, between 2016 and 2040. The majority of development under the projected land use pattern would occur as infill development, in accordance with the adopted land use plans and zoning ordinances of the cities and counties in the proposed MTP/SCS area. However, in the majority of development proposed in non-urban areas, new low- to medium-density development would occur on vacant parcels. Changes in land use under the proposed MTP/SCS could add additional sources of glare and light within the region. However, in portions of the region that are already built out, such increases would not introduce additional sources of substantial glare and light to 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 and other relevant regulations relating to the protection of night skies and the prevention of obtrusive lighting.

At the regional level, implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in development beyond the existing urban footprint which could create additional sources of glare and light associated with lighting of structures and surrounding grounds. Because at buildout the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS could result in 46,403 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6, and AES-7 are described below.

The planned improvements to existing roadways and highways would not significantly increase the amount of glare and light in an area, as these improvements would 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. Planned transportation improvements would be aligned with planned developments, which would help to reduce aesthetic impacts. However, planned transportation improvements could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, resulting in new sources of substantial light and glare that could be considered substantial.
Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of 457 additional miles of Class I bicycle facilities and 1,130 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 and be unlikely to result in degradation of 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 result in less-than-significant increases in glare and light. However, because these improvements are to be built within existing or future transportation rights-of-way, the roadways would already have existing sources of glare and light. The increases in glare and light from new Class II bicycle lanes would be minimal.

The additional bus and shuttle service described in Chapter 2 – Project Description would 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 significantly 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 Green Line light rail extension and Sacramento-West Sacramento transit connection are along urbanized corridors. 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 glare and light impacts associated with planned improvements to existing roadways and transit services would be minimal, the impacts of glare and light from implementation planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. At buildout the proposed MTP/SCS could result in 11,730 acres of new land converted for new planned transportation improvements, of which 1,323 acres are already addressed as part of the land conversion of the projected land use pattern. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6, and AES-7 are described below.

Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor Communities
Development and redevelopment within 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 generally already contain many existing sources of glare and light. The net increase in glare and light added from new, more compact development would be minimal 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.

Because Center and Corridor Communities are already urbanized, the incremental increases in glare and light associated with implementation of planned transportation improvements 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.

**Established Communities**
Development and redevelopment projects within Established Communities could add to existing glare and light in Established Communities but would 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. 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 planned transportation improvements under the proposed MTP/SCS would 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.

**Developing Communities**
Development and redevelopment projects within Developing Communities could add to existing glare and light. 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 would 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 adversely affect day and nighttime views in this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6 and AES-7 are described below.
Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of transportation improvement projects that could increase the amount of glare and light in the area. However, Developing Communities would not necessarily see the same mix of planned transportation improvements as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities would see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that would be built by 2040. These areas would see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects would 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 would be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would 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 planned transportation improvements including new transit service would result in noticeable increases in glare and light that could adversely affect day and nighttime views in this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6 and AES-7 are described below.

Rural Residential Communities

Increased light and glare in Rural Residential Communities is anticipated to result in greater impacts to daytime and nighttime views 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 would 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 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6 and AES-7 are described below.

Existing transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile and farm traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would 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. Planned transportation improvements would be aligned with planned developments, which would help to reduce aesthetic impacts; however, such improvements could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, which could result in a degradation of the visual environment.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6 and AES-7 are described below.

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 2040.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any land use development in these areas by 2040, the impacts on glare and light from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.

The focus for planned transportation improvements 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. Planned transportation improvements would be aligned with planned developments, which would help to reduce adverse impacts from light and glare; however, such improvements could potentially introduce glare and light to areas where previously no sources of glare and light existed, which could result in adverse effect of day and nighttime views within this Community Type.

Therefore, the impacts on glare and light from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-4. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-5, AES-6 and AES-7 are described below.

High Frequency Transit Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas
Development and redevelopment within HFTAs 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, HFTAs generally already contain many existing sources of glare and light. The net increase in glare and light added from new, more compact development would be minimal 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in HFTAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.
Because HFTAs are already urbanized, the incremental increases in glare and light associated with implementation of planned transportation improvements 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in HFTAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-4. No mitigation is required.

**Mitigation Measures**

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, Section 21081).

**Mitigation Measure AES-5: Reduce sun glare resulting from implementation of planned transportation improvements.**

The implementing agency shall require measures that would minimize and control glare from planned transportation improvements 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-6: Design structures to avoid or reduce impacts resulting from glare.**

The implementing agency shall require measures that would minimize and control glare from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements 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-7: 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 sites;
- 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-4 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 (PRC Section 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-5: 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**

The projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS could increase the amount of shadow in an area, especially in areas that would 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 technique for addressing building glare is to plant trees. 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 would not cause a public hazard or
substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of the region. In developing areas of the region, implementation of the projected land use pattern could result in increases in the amount of shadow. However, because buildings in these areas would not be as compact or tall as in developed areas of the region, the increases in shadow would 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

Some planned transportation improvements, 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 would be less than significant, as the typical views of the region would remain unchanged. Other planned transportation improvements, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, would affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-6) but would not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level would 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 would 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

Localized Impacts

Center and Corridor Communities

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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

By 2040 a variety of planned transportation improvements would occur in Center and Corridor Communities, including new transit, non-motorized, and roadway projects in addition to ongoing improvements to transit operations and roadway maintenance. Center and Corridor Communities would receive new and expanded bus and rail transit, and complete streets that serve supportive land uses with higher density and a mix of uses most likely to generate a mix of travel modes. Road and highway projects concentrate on alleviating major bottlenecks and congestion points.

Some planned transportation improvements, 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 would not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the visual character of the area. Other planned transportation improvements, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, would affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-6) but would not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level would 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 would 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Center and Corridor Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

Established Communities
The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description could add to existing shadow in the Community Type, but would not increase the overall shadow in a significant way or cause a public hazard. This Community Type would 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 would 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

As with Center and Corridor Communities, by 2040 a variety of planned transportation improvements would occur in Established Communities including new transit, non-motorized and roadway projects, and ongoing improvements to transit operations and roadway maintenance.

Some planned transportation improvements, 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 would not cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual character of the area. Other planned transportation improvements, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, could affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-5) but would not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level would 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 would not increase the amount of shadow in Established Communities, as such increases affect service, not 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Established Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

**Developing Communities**

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would 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 would likely be confined to the individual properties and would not create substantial shadow in public spaces or cause a public hazard.
Therefore, the impacts on shadow from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would result in the construction of transportation improvement projects that could increase the amount of shadow in the area. However, Developing Communities would not necessarily see the same mix of planned transportation improvements as Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Developing Communities would see more road widening projects and newly constructed road projects to serve the new residential and employment developments that would be built by 2040. These areas would see road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, but because these areas have less transportation infrastructure to begin with, these projects would 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 would be added incrementally to align with the completion of new housing and employment centers. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would be similarly phased in over the life of the proposed MTP/SCS.

Some planned transportation improvements, 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 planned transportation improvements 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 planned transportation improvements, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, would affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-6) but would not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level would 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 would 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.
Rural Residential Communities
The type of growth outlined in Chapter 2 – Project Description would likely not increase the overall amount of shadow in this Community Type. Development that does occur would 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Residential Communities consists primarily of roads serving automobile and farm traffic with some very limited transit service in a few places in the region. Implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS would 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 would be isolated to the project sites and would be less than significant at the Community Type level.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Rural Residential Communities are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. 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 2040.

Because the proposed MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in these areas, the impacts on shadow from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

The focus for planned transportation improvements 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 would be isolated to the project sites and would be less than significant at the Community Type level.

Therefore, the impacts on shadow from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.
High Frequency Transit Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas

Because the HFTAs 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 HFTAs 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.

By 2040 a variety of planned transportation improvements would occur in the HFTAs including new transit, non-motorized and roadway projects, and ongoing improvements to transit operations and roadway maintenance.

Some planned transportation improvements, such as freeway improvements, overpasses, and bridge infrastructure, could increase the amount of shadow in the HFTAs. 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 would be less than significant when compared to existing levels. Other planned transportation improvements, such as road widenings and routine maintenance, could affect shadow levels during construction (construction impacts are discussed in Impact AES-6) but would not create new shadow upon completion because the improvements are made at ground level to existing infrastructure.

Bicycle paths built at ground level would 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 would not increase the amount of shadow in the HFTAs, 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 from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-5. No mitigation is required.
MITIGATION MEASURES

None required.

IMPACT AES-6: RESULT IN CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS THAT WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY ADVERSELY AFFECT A SCENIC VISTA, SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGE SCENIC RESOURCES ALONG A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY, SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE VISUAL CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF PUBLIC VIEWS IN NON-URBAN AREAS OR CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE ZONING AND OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING SCENIC QUALITY IN URBANIZED AREAS, CREATE A NEW SOURCE OF SUBSTANTIAL LIGHT AND GLARE WITH ADVERSE EFFECTS ON VIEWS, OR CAST SHADOWS THAT CAUSE A PUBLIC HAZARD OR SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE EXISTING VISUAL/AESTHETIC CHARACTER.

Short-term aesthetic impacts could occur during construction of projects included in the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction-related activities could include but are not limited to construction equipment, materials, signage, fencing, barriers, and vehicles that could substantially adversely affect a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources along a state scenic highway, substantially degrade visual character or quality of public views in non-urban areas or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality in urbanized areas, create a new source of substantial light and glare with adverse effects on views, or cast shadows that cause a public hazard or substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character. After construction activities are completed, construction equipment, leftover materials, vehicles, and other temporary fencing and walls, are routinely required to be removed from the site by local regulations and requirements. The aesthetic impacts associated with the operation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements, once completed, are covered in Impacts AES-1 through AES-5.

Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources Along a State Scenic Highway

Regional Impacts

Regional land use development and redevelopment projects, such as housing units and employment centers would include but not be limited to construction equipment, materials, signage, fencing, barriers, and vehicles on and near construction sites that could block views to a scenic vista or scenic resources. For instance, although condensed infill development within an urban area would introduce additional construction materials on site, due to the already developed nature of the existing urban environment aesthetic impacts for short-term associated construction impacts for approved land uses would not be considered significant. However, for projects located within non-urban areas, where development is less dense, the introduction of construction equipment and materials into the generally undeveloped landscape could be visually prominent throughout the existing landscape. As such, if scenic vistas and state scenic highways are located in these areas, potential short-term impacts could occur. As such, although temporary, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

The planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS include roadway, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Typical improvements 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. Similar to regional land use impacts, construction of these projects would introduce construction equipment and materials into the visual landscape. For projects located in urban areas, these components would be less visually prominent; thus, potential impacts would be less likely. However, for projects located in non-urban areas, introduction of construction equipment and materials into the generally undeveloped landscape would likely be visually prominent throughout the existing landscape. As such, if scenic vistas and resources are located in these areas, potential impacts could occur. The proposed MTP/SCS contains three projects on officially designated state scenic highways. One project is a bridge replacement and the other two involve road widening and intersection improvements. Thus, construction-related activities could temporarily block scenic resources proximate to a scenic highway.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 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. Implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements in Center and Corridor Communities, Established Communities, Developing Communities, and Rural Residential Communities has the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block views of scenic vistas, or scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along officially designated state scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements 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-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 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 block views of scenic vistas or scenic resources.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway 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-6. No mitigation is required.
With respect to planned transportation improvements 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. Planned transportation improvements in Lands Not Identified for Development have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block views of scenic vistas or scenic resources.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

**High Frequency Transit Area Impacts**

*Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas*

As with the localized impacts discussed above, the HFTA impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the HFTAs as described in the regional impacts discussion above. The projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements in all of the HFTAs have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would block views of scenic vistas or scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along officially designated and eligible state scenic highways.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on scenic vistas and scenic resources from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

**Visual Character and Quality**

**Regional Impacts**

Short-term impacts to visual character and quality could occur during construction activities associated with implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS. Construction of new land development, such as residential units or employment centers, would result in but not be limited to 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, and construction staging areas.

In non-urbanized areas, where development is less dense, these components could be visually prominent and thus degrade the existing visual character of public views of the site and its surroundings. However, 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, in non-urbanized areas, the construction-related impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered...
potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

For land development within urbanized areas, construction is less likely to degrade the character with existing visual character and quality of project sites and their surroundings. As described above construction impacts are short-term, and limited in scope and location. In urbanized areas construction impacts associated with implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS would be less-than-significant (LS) at the regional level for Impact AES-6. No mitigation is required.

For projects located within urbanized areas, local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that development projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and other approvals. As such, construction activities associated with implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS would not result in conflicts to applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Thus, because construction activities associated with implementation of the projected land use pattern in urbanized areas would be required to comply with applicable zoning, including regulations governing scenic quality, construction would not degrade the character with existing visual character and quality of project sites and their surroundings. As described above construction impacts are short-term, and limited in scope and location. In urbanized areas construction impacts from implementation of the projected land use pattern of the proposed MTP/SCS would be less-than-significant (LS) at the regional level for Impact AES-6. No mitigation is required.

Planned transportation improvements in the proposed MTP/SCS 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. Similar to regional land use impacts, construction of approved projects in urban areas would be unlikely to adversely affect visual character or quality beyond impacts of the project itself which are addressed earlier in this section. For project located in non-urbanized areas, introduction of construction equipment and materials into the generally undeveloped landscape may be visually prominent throughout the existing landscape. As such, construction-related activities could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings. Therefore, construction impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

For projects located within urbanized areas, local jurisdictions in the plan area of the proposed MTP/SCS require that projects comply with existing zoning and other applicable regulations, including those governing scenic quality before issuing permits and other applicable regulations. As such, construction of planned transportation improvements would not result in conflicts to applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
Construction activities associated with planned transportation improvements in urbanized areas could result in short-term changes to the visual environment but because of their finite duration are unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning or other local regulations governing scenic quality. In urbanized areas, construction-related conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality related to the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS are unlikely to occur at the regional level so impacts are less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-6. No mitigation is required.

Localized Impacts

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

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. Specifically, construction-related to land development and transportation improvements would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality within the urbanized Center, Corridor, and Established Communities, but could substantially degrade existing visual character or the quality of public views of sites and their surroundings within Developing and Rural Residential Communities.

Therefore, through compliance with existing zoning, construction-related conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS would occur in Center and Corridor Communities and Established Communities. Thus, impacts are less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-6. No mitigation is required.

However, the construction-related impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Developing and Rural Residential Communities are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

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

Since the MTP/SCS does not forecast any development in non-urbanized 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 public views of sites and their surroundings.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings 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-6. No mitigation is required.

With respect to planned transportation improvements 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. Planned transportation improvements 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 public views of sites and their surroundings.

Therefore, construction-related impacts on visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measures AES-8 through AES-12 are described below.

**High Frequency Transit Area Impacts**

*Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas*

Construction impacts within HFTAs would be the same as those described for urbanized areas in the regional impacts analysis and Center, Corridor, and Established Communities in the localized impacts analysis. Specifically, construction-related to land development and transportation improvements is unlikely to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality within the HFTAs.

Therefore, construction-related conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS are unlikely to occur in HFTAs, which are urbanized areas, so impacts are less than significant (LS) for Impact AES-6. No mitigation is required.

**Light, Glare, and Shadow**

**Regional Impacts**

Short-term visual impacts could occur during construction activities associated with the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS from light introduced from construction equipment. Construction-related activities would 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. For land development and transportation improvements located in urbanized areas, light, glare, and shadow impacts from construction equipment would not be as prominent as for projects located in non-urban areas. This is because urban areas are already developed with uses that emit light or glare or can create shadows. For projects located within non-urban areas, where development is less dense, the introduction of light, glare, and shadow emissions from construction equipment and would likely be visually prominent throughout the existing landscape, as these sources are less prominent in the existing landscape. After construction activities are 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-5.

Therefore, construction-related impacts of substantial glare, light, and shadow from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS at the regional level are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-8 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. Implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements 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 substantial glare, light, or shadow in such a way that could adversely affect day or nighttime views.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements 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-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-8 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 cast substantial glare, light, or shadow in a way that could adversely affect day or nighttime views.

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-6. No mitigation is required.

With respect to planned transportation improvements 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. Planned transportation improvements in Lands Not Identified for Development have the potential to result in construction-related impacts that would cast substantial glare, light, or shadow in such a way that could adversely affect day or nighttime views.

Therefore, the construction-related impacts on glare, light, and shadow from implementation of the planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in Lands Not Identified for Development are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-8 is described below.

High Frequency Transit Area Impacts

Placer County, Sacramento County, and Yolo County High Frequency Transit Areas

As with the localized impacts discussed above, the HFTA impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MTP/SCS are the same in each of the HFTAs as described in the regional impacts discussion above. Implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements in all of the HFTAs has 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 from implementation of the projected land use pattern and planned transportation improvements of the proposed MTP/SCS in the HFTAs are considered potentially significant (PS) for Impact AES-6. Mitigation is required. Mitigation Measure AES-8 is described below.

*Mitigation Measures*

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 scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway, visual character or quality of public views of sites and their surroundings, and substantial glare, light, and shadow, and agencies with jurisdiction to adopt these measures should do so (PRC Section 21081).

**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 adversely 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.

**Mitigation Measure AES-9: 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-10: 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-11: 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.

Mitigation Measure AES-12: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-4

SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

As noted in Chapter 1 – Introduction, 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 these mitigation measures, Impact AES-6 would be reduced to a less than significant (LS) level. Projects taking advantage of CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 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, 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-6 remains significant and unavoidable (SU) for purposes of this program-level review.
This page intentionally left blank.