

## 4.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL QUALITY

### 4.1.1 Introduction

This section describes current visual conditions in and around the City of Newport Beach and evaluates the potential aesthetic and visual impacts of the proposed General Plan Update. Data for this section were taken from the 2004 Technical Background Report, the 2005 Local Coastal Program, and other documents prepared for the City.

During the Initial Study process, it was determined that the proposed project could have potentially significant impacts related to effects on a scenic vista or degradation of existing visual character of the project area. It was also determined during the Initial Study process impacts related to damage to scenic resources within a State scenic highway and creation of new sources of light and glare would be less than significant. However, all CEQA criteria were analyzed in this Draft EIR. Full bibliographic entries for all reference materials are provided in Section 4.1.6 (References) of this section.

One comment letter associated with hazards and hazardous materials was received in response to the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation (IS/NOP) circulated for the proposed General Plan Update. The John Wayne Airport (JWA) requested that the DEIR provide an analysis of obstruction lighting and marking requirements, considering JWA's existing and future airport operations and the proximity of this subarea to this airport.

### 4.1.2 Existing Conditions

Visual resources are an important component of the quality of life of any geographic area. As users experience a place, their primary sensory interaction with that place is visual in nature, and a wide variety of shapes, colors, and textures, composed by topography, structures, roadways, and vegetation, forms the views of and from the City. The City of Newport Beach is sited on a coastal plain and is bounded on three sides by developed urban lands of Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa, and Irvine. The rolling green hills of Crystal Cove State Park create views to the east and form the City boundary at the east, while the Pacific Ocean fills the views to the southwest. Development in Newport Beach has been designed to capture views of the ocean, capitalizing on the ridgelines and hillsides as vantage points. The Upper and Lower Newport Bay, draining an area of 118 square miles via the San Diego Creek and Santa Ana Delhi Channel, bisects the City, and creates a dominant physical land feature that includes estuaries, beaches, the harbor, coastal bluffs, and meandering waterways unique to Newport Beach. From the higher elevations in the City, views to the north include the San Joaquin Hills and, in the distance, the Santa Ana Mountains. This combination of hills, canyons, bluffs, and water features create a visually dynamic landscape.

## ■ Open Space

Open space areas provide visual relief from urbanized areas and scenic view opportunities for motorists, pedestrians, and residents. Open space is distributed throughout Newport Beach including the beach, bay, parks and underdeveloped areas such as Banning Ranch, and canyons, hillsides, and bluffs of Newport Ridge/Coast.

### ***Ocean/Harbor/Bay***

Water bodies constitute a major aesthetic asset as the ocean, creeks, and bay can be seen from many parts of Newport Beach. The Pacific Ocean provides the predominant visual setting for the majority of Newport's scenic attributes. The ocean can be seen from residences atop coastal bluffs and hilltop ridges, from the upper floors of offices and hotel buildings, and can be enjoyed by visitors of the beaches, Fashion Island, and from some of the major north/south corridors. Associated with the ocean, the bay and harbor areas also provide picturesque natural and nautical views. These waterways provide scenic elements such as estuaries, small islands, beaches, coastal bluffs, channels, tide pools, the harbor, etc. At a larger scale, they also provide sweeping views.

Newport Beach includes many areas that are environmentally sensitive in nature. Many of these are water-associated habitats such as marine intertidal and subtidal, riparian, or marsh areas. Intertidal areas consist of platform intertidal reefs and pocket sandy beaches, with conspicuous offshore rocks, stacks, and arches. Undeveloped plant and animal habitat areas provide attractive landscapes that also contribute to the City's visual quality. The habitat areas listed below (partial list) contribute to the City's visual resources, and are also discussed in the Biological Resources Section (Section 4.3):

- Semeniuk Slough (Santa Ana River Marsh)
- North Star Beach
- West Bay
- Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve and DeAnza/Bayside Marsh Peninsula
- San Diego Creek
- Buck Gully

### **Coastal Views**

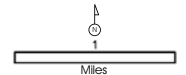
Newport Beach is located in a unique physical setting that provides a variety of spectacular coastal views, including those of the open waters of the ocean and bay, harbor, sandy beaches, rocky shores, wetlands, canyons, and coastal bluffs. The City has historically been sensitive to the need to protect and provide access to these scenic and visual resources and has developed a system of public parks, piers, trails, and viewing areas. Coastal views are also provided from a number of streets and highways and, due to the grid street pattern in West Newport, Balboa Peninsula, Balboa Island, Newport Heights, and Corona del Mar, many north/south-tending streets provide view corridors to the ocean and bay.

Figures 4.1-1 through 4.1-3 show prominent coastal viewing locations throughout the City as identified through public view points and coastal view roads.

CITY of NEWPORT BEACH  
 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE EIR  
**Figure 4.1-1**  
**COASTAL VIEWS MAP 1 OF 3**  
**(WEST NEWPORT AREA)**

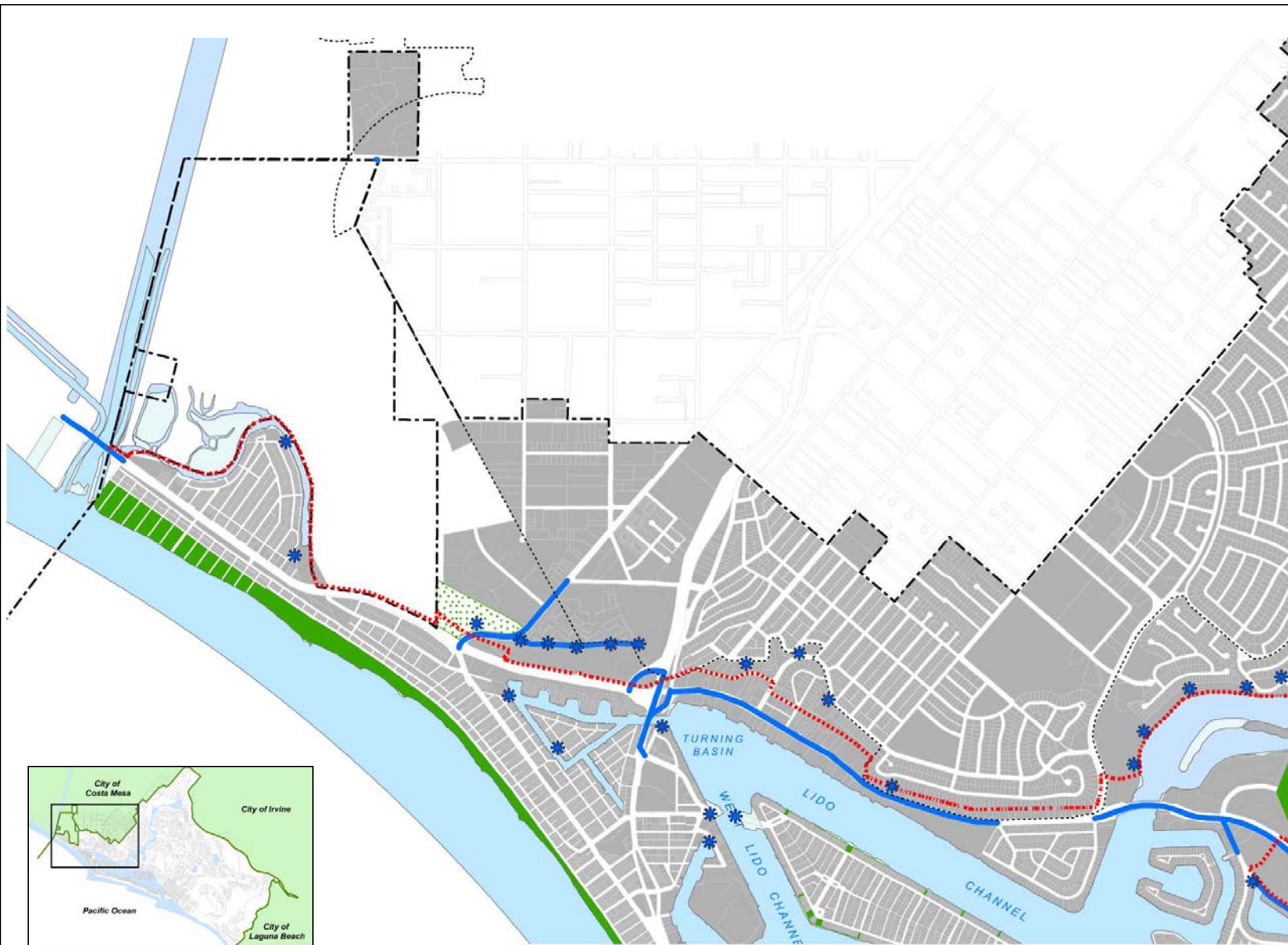
- Legend**
-  Public View Point
  -  Coastal View Road
  -  Coastal Zone Boundary
  -  City Boundary
  -  Shoreline Height Limitation Zone
  -  Proposed Park
  -  Public Beach or Park

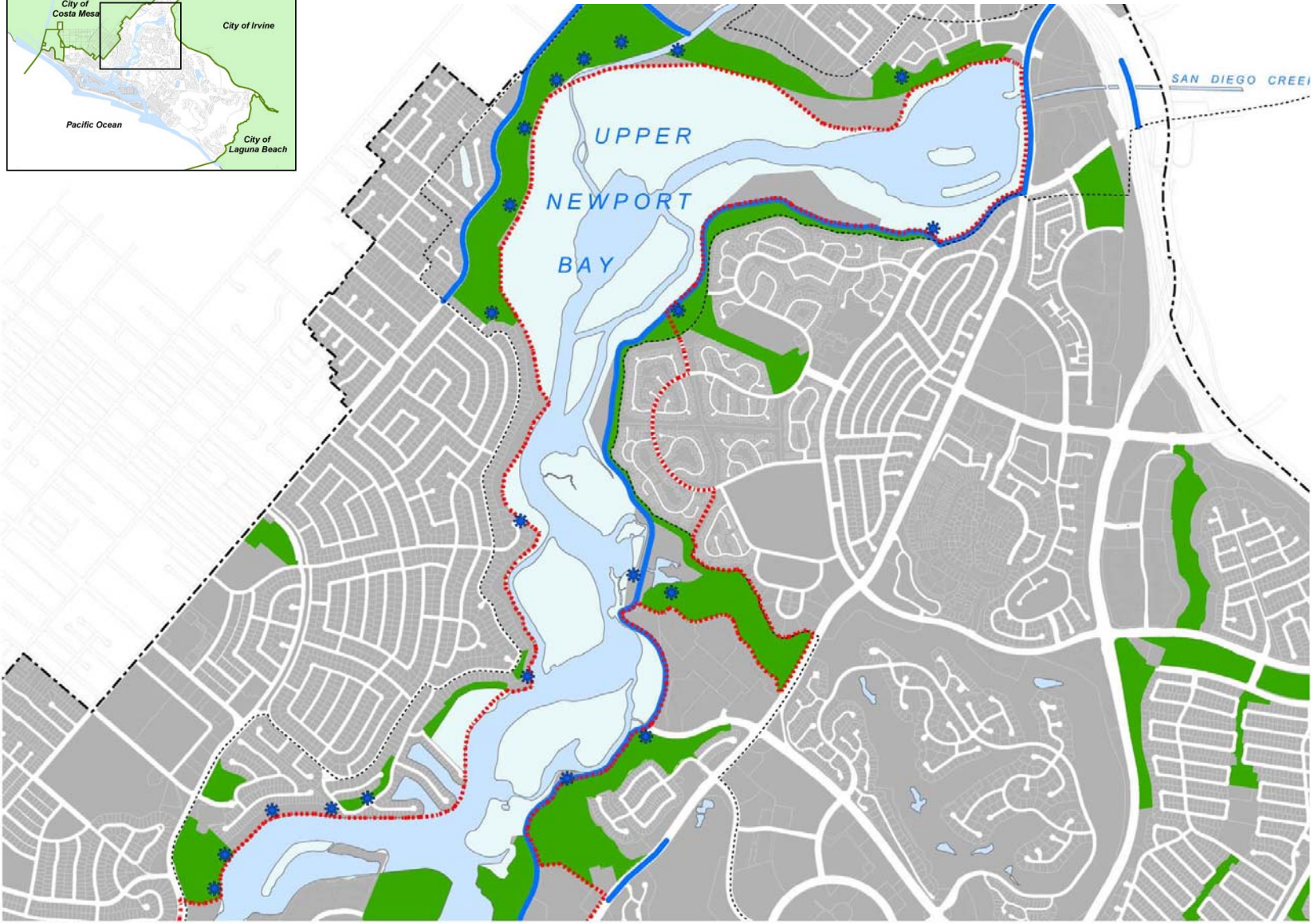
Note: GIS Data Projection - CA State Plane, Zone 6, NAD83, Feet



Source: City of Newport Beach (West Newport Area), August, 2005.

Project No. 10579-03

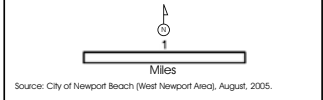




CITY of NEWPORT BEACH  
 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE EIR  
**Figure 4.1-2**  
**COASTAL VIEWS MAP 2 OF 3**  
**(UPPER NEWPORT BAY)**

- Legend**
- Public View Point
  - Coastal View Road
  - Coastal Zone Boundary
  - City Boundary
  - Shoreline Height Limitation Zone
  - Proposed Park
  - Public Beach or Park

Note: GIS Data Projection - CA State Plane, Zone 6, NAD83, Feet



Source: City of Newport Beach (West Newport Area), August, 2005.

Project No. 10579-03

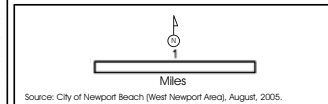


CITY of NEWPORT BEACH  
 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE EIR  
**Figure 4.1-3**  
**COASTAL VIEWS MAP 3 OF 3**  
**(HARBOR AREA)**



- Legend**
- Public View Point
  - Coastal View Road
  - Coastal Zone Boundary
  - City Boundary
  - Shoreline Height Limitation Zone
  - Proposed Park
  - Public Beach or Park

Note: GIS Data Projection - CA State Plane, Zone 6, NAD83, Feet



Source: City of Newport Beach (West Newport Area), August, 2005.

Project No. 10579-03



## Scenic Coastal Vistas

The wide-open vistas in the City of Newport Beach are associated with natural features, such as the ocean and bay, both dominant visual images within the City. Internally, north/south streets provide unique vistas that characterize individual neighborhoods. Significant vistas, as identified in the City's Local Coastal Program, include public coastal views from the following roadway segments:

- Avocado Avenue from San Joaquin Hills Road to Coast Highway
- Back Bay Drive
- Balboa Island Bridge
- Bayside Drive from Coast Highway to Linda Island Drive
- Bayside Drive at Promontory Bay
- Coast Highway/Santa Ana River Bridge
- Coast Highway/Newport Boulevard Bridge and Interchange
- Coast Highway from Newport Boulevard to Marino Drive (Bayshores)
- Coast Highway/Newport Bay Bridge
- Coast Highway from Jamboree Road to Bayside Drive
- Coast Highway from Pelican Point Drive to city limits
- Eastbluff Drive from Jamboree Road to Back Bay Drive
- Irvine Avenue from Santiago Drive to University Drive
- Jamboree Road from Eastbluff Drive/University Drive to Bayview Way
- Jamboree Road in the vicinity of the Big Canyon Park
- Jamboree Road from Coast Highway to Bayside Drive
- Lido Island Bridge
- MacArthur Boulevard from San Joaquin Hills Road to Coast Highway
- Marguerite Avenue from San Joaquin Hills Road to Fifth Avenue
- Newport Boulevard from Hospital Road/Westminster Avenue to Via Lido
- Newport Center Drive from Newport Center Drive E/W to Farallon Drive/Granville Drive
- Newport Coast from Pelican Hill Road North to Coast Highway
- Ocean Boulevard
- Pelican Hills Road South
- San Joaquin Hills Road from Newport Ridge Drive to Spyglass Hill Road
- San Miguel Drive from San Joaquin Hills Road to MacArthur Boulevard
- State Route 73 from Bayview Way to the easterly city limit
- Superior Avenue from Hospital Road to Coast Highway
- University Drive from Irvine Avenue to the Santa Ana—Delhi Channel
- Vista Ridge Road from Ocean Heights to Altezza Drive

## Topographic Features

Newport Beach, particularly the coastal zone, contains distinctive topographic features such as bluffs, cliffs, hillsides, canyons, and other significant natural landforms, which play an important part of the scenic and visual qualities of the City. The central and northwestern portions of the City are situated on a broad mesa that extends southeastward to join the San Joaquin Hills, commonly known as Newport Mesa. This upland has been deeply dissected by stream erosion, resulting in moderate to steep bluffs along the Upper Newport Bay estuary, one of the most striking and biologically diverse natural features in Orange County. The nearly flat-topped mesa rises from about 50 to 75 feet above mean sea level at

the northern end of the estuary in the Santa Ana Heights area, to about 100 feet above sea level in the Newport Heights, Westcliff, and Eastbluff areas.

Along the southwestern margin of the City, sediments flowing from the Santa Ana River and San Diego Creek, the two major drainage courses that transect the mesa, have formed the beaches, sandbars, and mudflats of Newport Bay and West Newport. In the southern part of the City, the San Joaquin Hills rise abruptly from the sea, separated from the present shoreline by a relatively flat, narrow shelf. Originally formed by wave abrasion, this terrace is now elevated well above the water and is bounded by steep bluffs along the shoreline. The coastal platform occupied by Corona Del Mar ranges from about 95 to 100 feet above sea level.

## **Mountains and Canyons**

The Santa Ana Mountains are located northeast of the City. The San Joaquin Hills frame the City's easterly border. The Santa Ana Mountains are within the Cleveland National Forest and provide long-range views, forming the northern backdrop to the City. Views of these mountains are particularly significant from the newer developments on the City's northern side.

Slopes rising up from coastal plains provide a dramatic contrast to the generally flat topography at the coastline and visually dominate the majority of the relatively low-scale urban development at the beachfront. Canyons and gullies formed by water coursing from the mountains to the ocean similarly provide stunning contrast to the coastal tidelands and beaches. The majority of the undeveloped headlands lie in the eastern portion of the City in the area known as Newport Coast/Ridge.

Within the coastal zone, Big Canyon, Buck Gully, and Morning Canyon comprise the three significant canyons with steep slopes and vegetation which provide distinctive features on the shoreline. Big Canyon is protected as a nature park. However, Buck Gully and Morning Canyon are under private ownership and there is extensive residential development on the slopes of both canyons. In addition to these three canyons, Ridge Park, Los Trancos, Muddy Canyon, and Pelican Hill also contribute to the topographic landforms that render spectacular views of the City.

## **Coastal Bluffs**

Coastal bluffs are a prominent landform in Newport Beach and are considered significant scenic and environmental resources. There are ocean facing coastal bluffs along the shoreline of Corona del Mar, Shorecliffs, and Cameo Shores. There are also coastal bluffs facing the wetlands of Upper Newport Bay, Semeniuk Slough, and the degraded wetlands of the Banning Ranch property.

### *Lower Newport Bay*

In addition, coastal bluffs surround Lower Newport Bay. These can be seen along Coast Highway from the Semeniuk Slough to Dover Drive, along Bayside Drive in Irvine Terrace, and in Corona del Mar above the Harbor Entrance. These bluffs faced the open ocean before the Balboa Peninsula formed and are now generally separated from the shoreline.

### *Upper Newport Bay*

Most of the coastal bluff top lands have been subdivided and developed over the years. However, many have been preserved as parkland and other open space. Also, most of the faces of the coastal bluff surrounding the Upper Newport Bay have been protected by dedication to the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve or dedicated as open space as part of planned residential developments. Eastbluff Remnant, Mouth of Big Canyon, Castaways, Newporter North, and Newport Beach Marine Life Refuge are undeveloped open spaces. In other areas, including Newport Heights, Cliff Haven, Irvine Terrace, Corona del Mar, Shorecliffs, and Cameo Shores, the coastal bluffs fall within conventional residential subdivisions.

Development on these lots occurs mainly on a lot-by-lot basis. As a result, some coastal bluffs remain pristine and others are physically or visually obliterated by structures, landform alteration or landscaping. Residential development has begun to affect coastal bluff areas due to the siting and scale of some new and renovated homes. While some development has maintained the natural character of the coastal bluffs, other developments have been larger and more visually prominent, potentially impacting views of those bluffs.

### **Parks and View Parks**

The City currently contains more than forty parks, in addition to ecological preserves and beaches, which together provide more than 441 acres of parkland and passive open space. Recreation and open space are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.12 (Recreation and Open Space) of this EIR. A portion of the Crystal Cove State Park is also within the City and provides open space views for Newport Beach residents.

Much of the built environment within the City is scenic because of its setting, the presence of low-rise buildings that preserve views, and wide landscaped roadways. View parks have been created specifically to take advantage of a significant view. View parks are small, one-half to three acre in size passive parks, and are often located on coastal bluffs to focus upon ocean or bay views. View parks in Newport Beach include the following:

- *West Newport.* The Sunset View Park provides an ocean view trail along the bluff top above the lower campus of Hoag Hospital. This park is accessible from Superior Avenue.
- *Newport Heights/Cliff Haven.* Cliff Drive Park, Ensign Park, and Kings Road Park are located on the bluff top above Mariners' Mile and Coast Highway. These parks provide views of the Lower Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Cliff Drive Park and Ensign Park are accessible from Cliff Drive. Kings Road Park is accessible from Kings Road.
- *Corona del Mar.* The park begins at Lookout Point above Pirate's Cove and runs along Ocean Boulevard to Inspiration Point at the end of Orchid Avenue.
- *Upper Newport Bay.* Castaways Park is a 17.4-acre view park. Castaways Park has bike and hiking trails and overlooks that provide panoramic views of the Newport Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Castaways Park is accessible from Dover Drive and Polaris Drive. Castaways Park contains environmentally sensitive habitats, which are separated and protected from public recreation and viewing areas.



- *Upper Back Bay*. An 11-acre passive open space and view park is located on the bluff above the Newport Dunes. Upper Back Bay View Park is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Coast Highway and Jamboree Road. This park provides views of the bay and serves as a staging area for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- *Westcliff Park, Galaxy Park, and Bayview Park* are bluff-top parks that provide views of the Upper Newport Bay. Westcliff Park is accessible from Polaris Drive. Galaxy Park is accessible from Galaxy Drive. Bayview Park is accessible from Mesa Drive.
- *The Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve* is a 140-acre regional park that surrounds the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Preserve. The park provides hiking, bike, and equestrian trails and is accessible from Irvine Avenue, University Drive, Bayview Way, and Back Bay Drive.
- *Newporter Knoll* is a 12-acre passive open space area located on the bluff above Shellmaker Island. The 4-acre Newporter North View Park is adjacent and provides a bluff top trail and overlook. The Newport North View Park is accessible from San Joaquin Hills Road. Both areas are part of the Newporter North ESA and the provision of additional public access must be consistent with the protection of natural resources in this area.

## **Undeveloped Land**

The Banning Ranch property is located primarily on unincorporated County of Orange land and is surrounded by the City of Newport Beach. For at least 50 years, the site has been used as an oil production field. Today, the site contains the remnants of old wells and pipelines. Some oil production, however, still occurs on site. The site is characterized by a mesa area, coastal bluffs, and lowlands, which are part of the Santa Ana River floodplain. While the site is degraded considerably, its scenic quality as a “natural” area has been identified as contributing to Newport Beach’s scenic resources.

The protected canyons, hills, and bluffs of the eastern portion of the city are also recognized for their scenic quality. As identified previously under Mountains and Ridges, topographic landforms of the Newport Coast and Newport Ridge region contribute significantly to the aesthetic quality that residents value. The canyons and hillsides associated with Buck Gully, Morning Canyon, Ridge Park, Los Trancos, Muddy Canyon, and Pelican Hill provide impressive views for visitors and residents.

The Irvine Ranch Land Reserve contains more than 50,000 acres of permanently protected open space in Orange County. The reserve includes portions of the Upper Newport Bay and large portions of Newport Coast and Newport Ridge. In addition, Crystal Cove State Park is also located within the reserve area, but is publicly-owned as a State Park.

## **■ Urban Visual Character**

While scenic vistas encompass long range views and often emphasize large-scale natural features, viewers are also affected by their more immediate visual surroundings. Local aesthetics, typically found on a neighborhood level, comprise the City’s urban visual character. Development densities and types, distinctive neighborhoods and commercial districts, unique architectural elements, prominent public institutions/landmarks, and other elements all contribute to the City’s unique aesthetic quality.

## **Development Patterns**

The City of Newport Beach ranges in development intensity from highly developed to relatively pristine. Older neighborhoods in the southwestern part of the City, particularly those along the Balboa Peninsula, have small lots and mixed commercial and residential land uses. In the eastern part of the city, development is less dense and is predominantly single-family residential. Compact, highly developed areas are often visually complex, containing many buildings, signs and landscape elements within a small space. Less dense areas contain fewer buildings and due to space between buildings, may provide relatively more views of the surrounding natural areas.

Many of the City's commercial neighborhoods are auto-oriented, with wide streets, and visible parking lots/structures. Pedestrian neighborhoods in Newport Beach tend to have fewer parking lots, smaller scale buildings, and more architectural details than auto-oriented districts. Many of the pedestrian neighborhoods, especially those along the coast, contain older architecture and visually prominent tourist amenities (for example, the Fun Zone in Balboa Village).

As previously noted, many open spaces have been preserved, notably at Newport Coast and Ridge, along the coast, around Newport Bay, and in Crystal Cove State Park. On a neighborhood scale, parks provide greenspace and visual relief from the built environment and are an important element of the City's visual character.

## **■ Scenic Highways**

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. Scenic corridors typically pertain to highways and visible lands outside the highway right-of-way generally described as the view from the road. There are no officially designated scenic vistas or scenic highways within Newport Beach.

However, State Route 1 (SR-1) is identified as Eligible for State Scenic Highway designation. A State scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway. The city must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in local codes.

The City identifies coastal views such as Coastal View Roads and Public View Points. These areas are identified in the Coastal Land Use Plan Coastal Views Figure 4.1-1 through Figure 4.1-3.

## **■ Light and Glare**

The City of Newport Beach is primarily built-out; therefore, a significant amount of ambient light from urban uses already exists. Similar to other developed urban areas, sources of light and glare include neon signs, glass building facades, streetlights, parking lot lighting, automotive headlights, etc.

### 4.1.3 Regulatory Setting

#### ■ Federal

No existing federal regulations pertain to the visual resources within the proposed General Plan Update area.

#### ■ State

##### ***California Coastal Act Policy 30251***

According to the California Coastal Act Policy 30251, the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as resources of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where, feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.<sup>3</sup>

##### ***Caltrans Scenic Highways***

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way, that traverses an area of exceptional scenic quality. Suitability for designation as a State Scenic Highway is based on vividness, intactness, and unity. As discussed previously, there are no officially designated scenic highways within Newport Beach.

#### ■ Local

##### ***Shoreline Height Limitation zone***

Concern over the intensity of development around Lower Newport Bay led to the adoption of a series of ordinances in the early 1970's that established more restrictive height and bulk development standards around the bay. The intent was to regulate the visual and physical mass of structures consistent with the character and visual scale of Newport Beach. As a result, new development within the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone is limited to a height of 35 feet. Residential development is limited to a height of 24 to 28 feet and non-residential development is limited to a height of 26 to 35 feet. Outside of the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone, heights up to 32 feet are permitted within the planned community districts. There is also one property, the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel in Newport Center, which is in the coastal zone and also within the High Rise Height Limitation Zone, which permits heights up to 375 feet.

<sup>3</sup> California Coastal Act of 1976 – Article 6 - Section 30251 PRC, <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/fedcd/cach3.pdf>, Accessed February 2, 2006.

## **Floor Area Ratios**

Floor areas are strictly limited citywide. In the coastal zone, residential development is limited to floor areas ranging from 1.5 to 2.0 times the buildable area of the parcel (the land minus required setback yards), which typically translates to actual floor area ratios of 0.95 to 1.35. Nonresidential development floor area ratios range from 0.30 to 1.25.

## **Signs and Utilities**

The City recently adopted new sign regulations. These sign regulations include limitations on freestanding signs and prohibit roof signs, which have the greatest potential to impact coastal and scenic visual resources.

In some of the older neighborhoods, electrical, telephone, and other utility lines are still located above ground. The City requires utilities to be placed underground in all new developments and has ongoing programs to remove and underground overhead utilities through the establishment of underground utility assessment districts.

### **4.1.4 Thresholds of Significance**

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the 2005 CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project would have a significant adverse impact on aesthetic/visual quality if it would result in any of the following:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views

### **4.1.5 Project Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Proposed Policies**

#### **■ Effects Not Found to Be Significant**

The IS/NOP prepared for the proposed project did not identify any effects not found to be significant associated with Aesthetics and Visual Quality. Therefore, all thresholds are addressed in this section.

## ■ Project Impacts

Threshold	Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
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**Impact 4.1-1      Scenic vistas could potentially be obstructed as the result of new development.**

Although there are no officially designated scenic vistas in the City, many natural features such as the ocean and bay provide open coastal views. As discussed previously, the City has identified particular roadway segments that provide coastal views as significant vistas. In addition, parks and viewing areas throughout the City also provide significant views. While future development within the City would generally consist of infill and intensification of uses within a primarily built-out area, development under the proposed project could affect views to the identified vistas. Specifically, if new developments blocked or obscured views from any of the significant public viewpoints, then impacts would be potentially significant.

However, development projects would undergo further environmental and design review on a project-by-project basis to ensure that scenic vistas and resources are not adversely affected. In addition, policies outlined in the proposed General Plan Update would protect scenic vistas in the City. In particular, Policy NR 22.1 would maintain the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone to protect views of the water, and could consider amending the boundary of this Zone where public views would not be impacted. For example, Policy LU 6.19.13 would consider the modification of the boundary of the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone (26') to accommodate higher mixed use buildings, where these are located adjacent to bluffs and the viewshed “envelope” is maintained. Policy NR 20.3 would protect and enhance public views from the roadway segments identified previously that provide significant vistas. Policy LU 1.1, Policy LU 1.6, and Policy NR 20.1 require that views from public areas be preserved and where, feasible, enhanced. In addition, Policy LU 6.19.9 requires that buildings be located and sites designed to provide adequate and unobstructed views significant visual corridors of the Bay from Coast Highway (Mariners’ Mile). Further, new development would also be required to protect existing scenic areas. For example, under Policy NR 20.2, new development would be required to restore and enhance the visual quality in visually degraded areas, where feasible, and provide view easements or corridors designed to protect public views or to restore public views in developed areas, where appropriate. Policy NR 20.4 would design and site new development, including landscaping, on the edges of public view corridors, including those down public streets, to frame, accent, and minimize impacts to public views. As such, existing and future development would be regulated by the proposed General Plan Update policies, and scenic vistas would not be adversely affected. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas would be *less than significant*.

Threshold	Would the proposed project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?
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**Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would not degrade scenic resources within a state- or locally designated scenic highway or corridor.**

As discussed previously, there are currently no officially designated scenic highways within the City of Newport Beach. However, SR-1 is identified by the City as eligible for State Scenic Highway designation. 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 from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway. The City must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document that such regulation already exists in local codes. If in the future, the City decides to pursue these actions, it would also be required to take actions to preserve views within the corridor. However, these procedures are beyond the scope of the proposed General Plan Update. Consequently, because no scenic highways are currently designated within the City, implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would have *no impact*.

Threshold	Would the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
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**Impact 4.1-2                      Development under the proposed General Plan Update could change the visual character of portions of the City.**

The proposed General Plan Update provides more direct aesthetic guidance compared to the existing General Plan. The proposed land use changes tend to establish the aesthetic character of an area. While all land uses would be required to adhere to appropriate design and height guidelines associated with land use designations, the General Plan Update establishes policies (such as community character) that are area-specific. As discussed below, the proposed General Plan Update clearly defines (both physically and visually) the community character of the City in various subareas, and sets forth urban form policies to ensure that the City retains its unique aesthetic qualities that its residents value.

### **Urban Areas**

The proposed General Plan Update would concentrate infill development and redevelopment in several specified subareas including Newport Center/Fashion Island, Balboa Village, Balboa Peninsula, West Newport Mesa, West Newport Highway, Mariners’ Mile, and the Airport Area as well as in a few smaller areas throughout the remainder of the City. In addition, as discussed further below under the Open Space Areas sub-section of this impact, while the proposed General Plan Update prioritizes the retention of the Banning Ranch property as open space, the proposed project also considers the possible development of a mixed density residential village should the property not be acquired for open space.

### **Visual Quality**

Some of the identified subareas would not be considered areas with existing high visual or scenic quality. Examples of conditions that may currently detract from local visual character include: building facades that are faded and in poor repair, sparse or under-maintained landscaping, poorly maintained mobile homes, and dated or incongruent architecture (which could be historic, though not currently distinguished as such). In areas such as this, which are typically economically underperforming, proposed General Plan Update Policy LU 3.2, aims to enhance existing neighborhoods, districts, and corridors,

allowing for re-use and infill with uses that are complementary in type, form, scale, and character. In addition, the proposed General Plan Update would aim to improve aesthetics in these areas through both redevelopment and incentives for others to improve maintenance. For example, the West Newport Highway area would be subject to Policies LU 6.17.3 and 6.17.4, which would provide redevelopment incentives for commercial properties as well as improved visual image and quality, respectively. Further, Policy NR 20.2 would require new development to restore and enhance the visual quality in visually degraded areas, where feasible, and provide view easements or corridors designed to protect public views or to restore public views in developed areas, where appropriate.

Other subareas are considered to have high existing visual quality. The architecture and landscaping is attractive, the area is visually diverse, and the different land uses in the area are harmoniously arranged so as to complement neighboring uses. Corona del Mar and Newport Center/Fashion Island are areas that might be considered to have high overall visual quality. In these areas, new development allowed under the proposed General Plan Update would be done in such a way as to fit into the existing visual setting. Policy LU 1.1 requires that new development “maintain and enhance” existing development.

## **Proposed New Uses**

### *Mixed Use*

In addition to enhancing existing development, mixed-use development which is relatively new in the City, is a more prominent theme permitted within the identified subareas. Mixed-use developments integrate housing and commercial or office uses in proximity to one another, and tend to unify fragmented areas. While mixed-use developments could represent a change to the existing visual setting of urban areas, the community character and the associated aesthetics of urban infill development could be enhanced by these new districts. For example, Policy LU 5.3.1 requires that mixed-use buildings be designed to convey a high level of architectural and landscape quality and ensures compatibility among their uses in consideration of various principles, including the visual and physical integration of residential and non-residential uses.

### *High-Density Residential*

Another new use proposed under the General Plan Update includes higher density residential development in the Newport Center/Fashion Island area, the Airport Area and West Newport Mesa. Proposed General Plan Update policies would ensure that these new uses would not interrupt the existing aesthetic setting of the City, and instead, would provide for more pedestrian-oriented features. In Newport Center/Fashion Island, Policy LU 6.14.4 would encourage some new development to be located and designed to orient to the inner side of Newport Center Drive, establishing physical and visual continuity that would diminish the dominance of surface parking lots and encourage pedestrian activity. Pedestrian access and connections among uses would also be encouraged and improved through Policy LU 6.14.5, with the provision of additional walkways and streetscape amenities concurrent with the development of expanded and new uses. Further, visual and physical connectivity with adjoining uses would be provided through Policy LU 6.14.6, where new buildings shall be located on axes connecting Newport Center Drive with existing buildings.

In the Airport Area, Policy LU 6.15.7 would encourage and, when subject to redevelopment, require property owners within the Campus Tract to upgrade the street frontages of their properties with landscape, well-designed signage, and other amenities that improve the area's visual quality. Additional General Plan policies (LU 6.15.10 through 6.15.14) guide the minimum size, density, and process of allowed residential development within the Airport Area. Consequently, the higher density residential development that would be permitted in these areas would have policies guiding and regulating the visual and aesthetic character of the development to ensure compatibility. Defining features of both areas would include more buildings and fewer surface parking lots.

## Summary

Proposed General Plan Update policies (both City-wide and area-specific) would establish criteria for the development of cohesive neighborhoods oriented around neighborhood parks and local-serving commercial facilities, interconnected by a network of pedestrian-oriented streets. A citywide policy example includes Policy NR 22.2, which would continue to regulate the visual and physical mass of structures consistent with the unique character and visual scale of Newport Beach. An area-specific policy example includes Policy LU 6.19.6 for Mariners' Mile, which would implement landscape, signage, lighting, sidewalk, pedestrian crossing, and other amenities in order visually define the corridors' identity and quality.

All new developments would undergo a subsequent environmental review consisting of a case-by-case analysis of visual impacts. In addition to policies listed above, the proposed General Plan Update would include policies associated with aesthetic improvements such as landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and design standards for architecture and lighting. Not only would developments be required to conform to General Plan Update standards, they would also be subject to existing building and development standards specified in the City's Municipal Code, and in many areas, to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) design standards authorized by the Local Coastal Plan. Thus, the visual character would change as development intensity increased, but the impact would not be considered significantly adverse.

In general, the proposed General Plan Update would provide development opportunities which would complement and enhance the City's existing visual character. Development would be required to conform to "[a] development pattern that retains and complements the City's residential neighborhood, commercial and industrial districts, open spaces, and natural environment" (Proposed General Plan Update, Goal 3 of the Land Use Element). Therefore the proposed General Plan Update would have a *less-than-significant* impact on the visual character of developed urban areas.

## Open Space Areas

No existing public open space excluding Banning Ranch, which is discussed below, would be converted from its current use to any other land use as a result of the proposed General Plan Update. Citywide Policy NR 17.1 would protect, conserve, and maintain designated open space areas that define the City's urban form, serve as habitat for many species, and provide recreational opportunities. In addition, Policy NR 17.2 considers the conversion of public sites designated for open space to other uses only when the



conversion will meet a significant need, and there are no alternative sites that could feasibly meet that need.

The proposed General Plan Update would protect open spaces through land use and natural resources policies, and thus, the existing aesthetic qualities of the open space areas of the City would be maintained. For example, Policy LU 1.3 would protect the natural setting that contributes to the character and identity of Newport Beach and the sense of place it provides for its residents and visitors. This policy aims to preserve open space resources, beaches, harbor, parks, bluffs, preserves, and estuaries as visual, recreational and habitat resources. Policy LU 1.6 requires public views, including scenic and visual resources such as open space, mountains, canyons, ridges, the ocean, and the harbor, be preserved and where possible, enhanced from public vantage points. In addition, with respect to coastal bluffs, Policy LU 6.19.12 requires that development projects locate and design buildings to maintain the visual quality and maintain the structural integrity of the bluff faces.

There are several policies within the Natural Resources Element that encourage the preservation of natural landforms such as coastal bluffs and, thus, maintain and enhance the open space areas within the City. For example, Policy NR 23.1 would preserve cliffs, canyons, bluffs, significant rock outcroppings, and site buildings to minimize alteration of the site's natural topography and preserve the features as a visual resource. In addition, Policy NR 23.3 requires new planned communities to dedicate or preserve as open space the coastal bluff face and an area inland from the edge of the coastal bluff adequate to avoid or minimize visual impacts. In light of these factors, the proposed General Plan Update would have a *less-than-significant* impact on public open space visual character.

## Banning Ranch

The Banning Ranch property is currently developed with oil production uses and associated structures, including large storage tanks. However, much of Banning Ranch consists of open space. As such, the existing conditions in Banning Ranch contribute to overall natural aesthetics within the City. Development of the Banning Ranch property would only be allowed if the property is not acquired for open space. Policy LU 3.4 prioritizes the retention of Banning Ranch as an open space amenity for the City and region, consolidating oil operations, enhancing wetland and other habitats, and providing parkland amenities to serve nearby neighborhoods. If the property cannot be acquired in a timely manner, the development of a compact residential village that preserves the majority of the site as open space and restores critical habitat is allowed in accordance with Policies LU 6.3.1 through 6.5.5. Under both land use options proposed for Banning Ranch, Policies LU 6.5.1 and 6.5.3 would both apply to the area, and would relocate and cluster oil operations, as well as restore and enhance wetlands and wildlife habitats. Both of these policies would improve the overall aesthetic quality of the area.

While both options (open space and high quality residential development) would protect visually important open space components of the existing area, the visual impacts of retaining the site as open space would be less than if development were to be allowed in the area. Thus, if Banning Ranch is ultimately acquired as open space for the City, visual impacts would be *less than significant*. However, if the site is ultimately developed, new land uses would include residential, limited commercial, overnight accommodations, and community parks designed in such a way as to provide a cohesive urban form that

provides the sense of a complete and identifiable neighborhood (Policy LU 6.4.5). Most importantly, Policy LU 6.5.5 requires that development be located and designed to prevent residences on the property from dominating public views of the bluff faces from Coast Highway, the ocean, wetlands, and surrounding open spaces. In addition, as discussed above, the consolidation of oil operations as well as the restoration of wetlands and habitat areas would improve the visual quality of the area. While new development would represent a change from the existing land uses, with implementation of the proposed General Plan Update policies, the potential visual impacts of new development in the Banning Ranch area would be minimized. Consequently, development in Banning Ranch under the proposed General Plan Update would have *less-than-significant* impacts on the visual quality of the area.

Threshold	Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light and glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views?
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**Impact 4.1-3                      New sources of light and glare would be created in the Banning Ranch subarea by new developments under the proposed General Plan Update.**

The City of Newport Beach is primarily built-out, and a significant amount of ambient light from urban uses already exists. However, new development permitted under the proposed General Plan Update could create new sources of light and glare from any of the following: exterior building lighting, lighted recreation facilities (such as outdoor ball fields), parking lots/structures, glare from reflective building surfaces, or the headlights of vehicular traffic. As a result, these new sources of light or glare could affect the day or nighttime views of adjacent sensitive land uses. These sensitive land uses could generally be considered as undeveloped lands and residential uses adjacent to commercial or industrial areas.

### **Daytime Glare**

Glare could be produced by the increased amount of surface area of proposed commercial and residential structures, which could reflect or concentrate sunlight and result in a potentially significant impact. However, Policy LU 5.5.2 would require that new and renovated buildings be designed to avoid the use of styles, colors, and materials that unusually impact the design character and quality of their location such as the use of reflective surfaces that increase heat gain of adjoining buildings and ambient glare. Implementation of design features required by Policy 5.5.2, including the use of non-reflective textured surfaces on building exteriors, as well as avoidance of the use of reflective glass, would reduce impacts resulting from daytime glare from new development to a *less-than-significant* level.

### **Ambient Nighttime Light Levels and Vehicle Headlights**

As implementation of the project would primarily result in infill of vacant or underutilized parcels, as well as intensification and reuse of existing sites, the majority of new development would be located in areas that commonly experience at least minimal impacts from existing light sources. The only exception to this would be development in the Banning Ranch area, which is currently developed with oil production uses and associated structures and is discussed further below.

There would be some construction of residential uses next to commercial uses. For example, in Balboa Peninsula, the updated General Plan would allow for reductions in the area's commercial and industrial capacity, which would be replaced by opportunities for new housing. For Balboa Village, the General Plan would allow for the consolidation of commercial uses, which would be replaced by medium density housing and mixed-use structures that would integrate housing with ground-level retail uses. As older uses are phased out over time, light conflicts could occur. Another example could include the waterfront development in Mariners' Mile, which could produce light impacts on the existing neighborhood above. Commercial facilities typically involve substantial amounts of lighting for the building exterior and parking lots. Additionally, the potential introduction of new playfields (and associated field lighting) could result in light spillover onto adjacent properties.

However, the proposed General Plan Update contains policies to address these potential nighttime lighting impacts. Most importantly, LU Policy 5.5.3 requires that outdoor lighting be located and designed to prevent spillover onto adjoining properties or significantly increase the overall ambient illumination of their location. In addition, Policy LU 5.1.1 requires the establishment of development regulations that insure compatibility of residential development with other land uses. Policies such as LU 6.1.3 and 6.2.5 allow for the integration of uses to be designed specifically to assure development compatibility by addressing issues such as lighting. Also, existing municipal code regulations require that light be shielded and confined within site boundaries to prevent spillage. Therefore, with implementation of the above-mentioned policies, nighttime lighting impacts and potential spillover would be *less than significant*.

## **Banning Ranch**

While the proposed policies would reduce nighttime lighting impacts in most areas of the City as result of future development opportunities, Banning Ranch could be an exception to this if the area is not acquired for open space. Because Banning Ranch is currently underdeveloped and located adjacent to sensitive residential uses, the introduction of residential and commercial development would also introduce new sources of nighttime lighting, which would affect the existing adjacent uses. In addition, the new sources of nighttime lighting could also affect the sensitive habitat areas within the site as a majority of Banning Ranch would remain open space. While spillover would be minimized by the proposed policies and existing regulations, the substantial increase of lighting alone would present a significant impact to the Banning Ranch area, with no feasible mitigation available to reduce the impacts. Consequently, if Banning Ranch remains open space, lighting impacts would be *less than significant*; however, if development ultimately occurs in Banning Ranch (including the development of an active park with nighttime lighting), the increased light effects caused by new development would be *significant and unavoidable*.

## **■ Cumulative Impacts**

The geographic context for cumulative visual impacts that would occur under the proposed General Plan Update is southwestern Orange County, particularly Newport Beach and adjacent cities, such as Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa, and Irvine.

Development under the proposed General Plan Update, in combination with all other development in the area, could affect scenic resources or viewsheds. However, since proposed General Plan Update policies require that natural landforms and features be preserved and that viewsheds be maintained (proposed General Plan Update Policies LU 1.3 and LU 1.6), contributions to adverse impacts to scenic vistas as a result of the General Plan Update would not be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, in this regard the General Plan's impact would be *less than significant*.

As noted earlier in this analysis, the City of Newport Beach does not contain or adjoin any scenic highways. *No significant impacts* on scenic highways, cumulative or otherwise, would occur as a result of the proposed General Plan Update.

While most of the Newport Beach developments would take place in already urbanized areas, portions of the Banning Ranch area, currently underdeveloped, could be developed as a residential village with some commercial land uses (if the property is not acquired for open space). Although a majority of the site would be preserved as open space if development did occur, the cumulative impacts associated with the loss of open space would still be considered potentially significant. Although development in this portion of the City would convert underdeveloped and vacant lands to urban uses, implementation of proposed General Plan Update policies would minimize the degradation of the visual quality of the area, and the project's contribution to this impact would not be cumulatively considerable. This project impact would be *less than significant*.

Cumulative development within southwestern Orange County could result in some increase in daytime glare or in the creation of new sources of light that could affect nighttime views. Under the proposed General Plan Update, future developments and associated specific building materials and configurations are uncertain. However, LU Policy 5.5.2 requires new and renovated buildings be designed to reduce ambient glare. Further, future projects would in many cases be subject to CEQA review and may require mitigation for these effects, which would likely reduce the impacts to a *less-than-significant* level. Consequently, cumulative daytime glare within the area would be *less than significant*. As implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would not result in a significant daytime glare impact, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this impact. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with daytime glare would not be cumulatively considerable and would be *less than significant*.

Existing commercial and residential uses have resulted in a cumulative increase in nighttime lighting within southwestern Orange County. The cumulative effect of this past development has resulted in a cumulative loss of available nighttime views. Future development would occur among existing urban uses, which would already be subject to lighting from existing development and vehicle headlights. However, minimal nighttime lighting currently exists in the Banning Ranch area. Even though a majority of the site would be preserved as open space if developed, and the direct illumination of adjacent uses would be minimized through requirements designed to prevent spillover light on surrounding areas, ambient nighttime lighting levels in southwestern Orange County would increase due to increased overall development and associated vehicle headlights. Because implementation of the proposed General Plan Update could result in new sources of nighttime lighting within this area, the proposed project would

represent a cumulatively considerable contribution to this impact, and the cumulative nighttime lighting impact would be *significant and unavoidable*.

## ■ Proposed General Plan Update Policies

Policies within the Land Use, Natural Resources, and Harbor and Bay Elements of the proposed Newport Beach General Plan Update would directly or indirectly minimize the visual quality effects of prospective growth within the City. The aesthetics-related policies that are applicable to the project are included below.

### ***Land Use Element***

**Goal LU 1** A unique residential community with diverse coastal and upland neighborhoods, which values its colorful past, high quality of life, and community bonds, and balances the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors through the recognition that Newport Beach is primarily a residential community.

**Policy LU 1.1 Unique Environment**

Maintain and enhance the beneficial and unique character of the different neighborhoods, business districts, and harbor that together identify Newport Beach. Locate and design development to reflect Newport Beach's topography, architectural diversity, and view sheds.

**Policy LU 1.2 Citywide Identity**

While recognizing the qualities that uniquely define its neighborhoods and districts, promote the identity of the entire City that differentiates it as a special place within the Southern California region.

**Policy LU 1.3 Natural Resources**

Protect the natural setting that contributes to the character and identify of Newport Beach and the sense of place it provides for its residents and visitors. Preserve open space resources, beaches, harbor, parks, bluffs, preserves, and estuaries as visual, recreational and habitat resources.

**Policy LU 1.6 Public Views**

Protect and, where feasible, enhance significant scenic and visual resources that include open space, mountains, canyons, ridges, ocean, and harbor from public vantage points.

**Goal LU 3** A development pattern that retains and complements the City’s residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial districts, open spaces, and natural environment.

**Policy LU 3.1 Neighborhoods, Districts, Corridors, and Open Spaces**

Maintain Newport Beach’s pattern of residential neighborhoods, business and employment districts, commercial centers, corridors, and harbor and ocean districts.

**Policy LU 3.2 Growth and Change**

Enhance existing neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, allowing for re-use and infill with uses that are complementary in type, form, scale, and character. Changes in use and/or density/intensity should be considered only in those areas that are economically underperforming, are necessary to accommodate Newport Beach’s share of projected regional population growth, improve the relationship and reduce commuting distance between home and jobs, or enhance the values that distinguish Newport Beach as a special place to live for its residents. The scale of growth and new development shall be coordinated with the provision of adequate infrastructure and public services, including standards for acceptable traffic level of service.

**Policy LU 3.3 Opportunities for Change**

Provide opportunities for improved development and enhanced environments for residents in the following districts and corridors, as specified in Policies 6.3.1 through 6.22.7:

- **West Newport:** consolidation of retail and visitor-serving commercial uses, with remaining areas developed for residential units
- **West Newport Mesa:** re-use of underperforming commercial and industrial properties for offices and other uses that support Hoag Hospital’s medical activities, improvement of remaining industrial properties adjoining the City of Costa Mesa, and development of residential in proximity to jobs and services
- **Santa Ana Heights:** use of properties consistent with the adopted Specific Plan and Redevelopment Plan
- **John Wayne Airport Area:** re-use of underperforming industrial and office properties and development of cohesive residential neighborhoods in proximity to jobs and services
- **Fashion Island/Newport Center:** expanded retail uses and hotel rooms and development of residential in proximity to jobs and services, while limiting increases in office development
- **Balboa Peninsula:** more efficient patterns of use that consolidate the Peninsula’s visitor-serving and mixed uses within the core commercial districts; encourage marine-related uses especially along the bay front; integrate residential with retail uses in Lido Village, McFadden Square, and

Balboa Village; re-use interior parcels in Cannery Village for residential and limited mixed-use and live/work buildings; and redevelop underperforming properties outside of the core commercial districts along the Balboa Boulevard corridor for residential. Infill development shall be designed and sited to preserve the historical and architectural fabric of these districts

- **Mariners' Mile:** re-use of underperforming properties for retail, visitor-serving, and marine-related uses, integrated with residential
- **Corona del Mar:** enhancement of public improvements and parking

**Policy LU 3.4 Banning Ranch**

Prioritize the retention of Banning Ranch as an open space amenity for the City and region, consolidating oil operations, enhancing wetland and other habitats, and providing parkland amenities to serve nearby neighborhoods. If the property cannot be acquired in a timely manner, allow for the development of a compact residential village that preserves the majority of the site as open space and restores critical habitat in accordance with Policies 6.3.1 through 6.5.5.

**Goal 5.1 Residential neighborhoods that are well-planned and designed, contribute to the livability and quality of life of residents, respect the natural environmental setting, and sustain the qualities of place that differentiate Newport Beach as a special place in the Southern California region.**

**Policy LU 5.1.1 Compatible but Diverse Development**

Establish property development regulations for residential projects to create compatible and high quality development that contributes to neighborhood character.

**Policy LU 5.1.2 Compatible Interfaces**

Require that the height of development in nonresidential and higher density residential areas transition as it nears lower density residential areas to minimize conflicts at the interface between the different types of development.

**Policy LU 5.1.3 Neighborhood Identification**

Encourage and support the identification of distinct residential neighborhoods.

**Policy LU 5.1.4 Neighborhood Maintenance**

Promote the maintenance of existing residential units through code enforcement and promotion of County and local rehabilitation programs, and public education. This may include providing information, guidance, and assistance where feasible.

**Policy LU 5.1.5 Character and Quality of Single Family Residential Dwellings**

Require that residential units be designed to sustain the high level of architectural design quality that characterizes Newport Beach's neighborhoods in consideration of the following principles:

- Articulation and modulation of building masses and elevations to avoid the appearance of “box-like” buildings
- Compatibility with neighborhood development in density, scale, and street facing elevations
- Architectural treatment of all elevations visible from public places
- Entries and windows on street facing elevations to visually “open” the house to the neighborhood
- Orientation to desirable sunlight and views

**Policy LU 5.1.6 Character and Quality of Residential Properties**

Require that residential front setbacks and other areas visible from the public street be attractively landscaped, trash containers enclosed, and driveway and parking paving minimized.

**Policy LU 5.1.9 Character and Quality of Multi-Family Residential**

Require that multi-family dwellings be designed to convey a high quality architectural character in accordance with the following principles:

Building Elevations

- Treatment of the elevations of buildings facing public streets and pedestrian ways as the principal façades with respect to architectural treatment to achieve the highest level of urban design and neighborhood quality
- Architectural treatment of building elevations and modulation of mass to convey the character of separate living units or clusters of living units, avoiding the appearance of a singular building volume
- Provide street- and path-facing elevations with high-quality doors, windows, moldings, metalwork, and finishes

Ground Floor Treatment

Where multi-family residential is developed on large parcels such as the Airport Area and West Newport Mesa:

- Set ground-floor residential uses back from the sidewalk or from the right-of-way, whichever yields the greater setback to provide privacy and a sense of security and to leave room for stoops, porches and landscaping
- Raise ground-floor residential uses above the sidewalk for privacy and security but not so much that pedestrians face blank walls or look into utility or parking spaces
- Encourage stoops and porches for ground-floor residential units facing public streets and pedestrian ways



- Where multi-family residential is developed on small parcels, such as the Balboa Peninsula, the unit may be located directly along the sidewalk frontage and entries should be setback or elevated to assure adequate security (as shown below).

Roof Design

- Modulate roof profiles to reduce the apparent scale of large structures and to provide visual interest and variety.

Parking

- Design covered and enclosed parking areas to be integral with the architecture of the residential units' architecture.

Open Space and Amenity

- Incorporate usable and functional private open space for each unit.
- Incorporate common open space that creates a pleasant living environment with opportunities for recreation.

**Goal 5.2 Commercial centers and districts that are well-designed and planned, exhibit a high level of architectural and landscape quality, and are vital places for shopping and socialization.**

**Policy LU 5.2.1 Architecture and Site Design**

Require that new development within existing commercial districts centers and corridors complement existing uses and exhibit a high level of architectural and site design in consideration of the following principles:

- Seamless connections and transitions with existing buildings, except where developed as a free-standing building
- Modulation of building masses, elevations, and rooflines to promote visual interest
- Architectural treatment of all building elevations, including ancillary facilities such as storage, truck loading and unloading, and trash enclosures
- Treatment of the ground floor of buildings to promote pedestrian activity by avoiding long, continuous blank walls, incorporating extensive glazing for transparency, and modulating and articulating elevations to promote visual interest
- Clear identification of storefront entries
- Incorporation of signage that is integrated with the buildings' architectural character
- Architectural treatment of parking structures consistent with commercial buildings, including the incorporation of retail in the ground floors where the parking structure faces a public street or pedestrian way
- Extensive on-site landscaping, including mature vegetation to provide a tree canopy to provide shade for customers

- Incorporation of plazas and expanded sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian, outdoor dining, and other activities
- Clearly delineated pedestrian connections between business areas, parking, and to adjoining neighborhoods and districts (paving treatment, landscape, wayfinding signage, and so on)
- Integration of building design and site planning elements that reduce the consumption of water, energy, and other nonrenewable resources

**Policy LU 5.2.2 Buffering Residential Areas**

Require that residential areas be buffered from adjoining nonresidential uses to the extent feasible, such as retail commercial and industrial, through the establishment of performance-based regulations, the removal of nonconforming uses, and other tools such as landscape screening.

**Policy LU 5.2.3 Alley Design**

Improve and enhance the aesthetic quality of alleys without impacting service access.

**Goal 5.3 Districts where residents and businesses are intermixed that are designed and planned to assure compatibility among the uses, that they are highly livable for residents, and are of high quality design reflecting the traditions of Newport Beach.**

**Policy LU 5.3.1 Mixed Use Buildings**

Require that mixed-use buildings be designed to convey a high level of architectural and landscape quality and ensure compatibility among their uses in consideration of the following principles:

- Design and incorporation of building materials and features to avoid conflicts among uses, such as noise, vibration, lighting, odors, and similar impacts
- Visual and physical integration of residential and nonresidential uses
- Architectural treatment of building elevations and modulation of their massing
- Separate and well-defined entries for residential units and nonresidential businesses
- Design of parking areas and facilities for architectural consistency and integration among uses
- Incorporation of extensive landscape appropriate to its location; urbanized streetscapes, for example, would require less landscape along the street frontage but integrate landscape into interior courtyards and common open spaces

**Policy LU 5.3.3 Parcels Integrating Residential and Non-Residential Uses**

Require that properties developed with a mix of residential and nonresidential uses be designed to achieve high levels of architectural quality in accordance with policies 5.1.8 and 5.2.2 and planned to assure compatibility among the uses and provide adequate circulation and parking. Residential uses should be seamlessly integrated with nonresidential uses through architecture, pedestrian walkways, and landscape. They should not be completely isolated by walls or other design elements.

**Goal 5.5 Neighborhoods, districts, and corridors containing a diversity of uses and buildings that are mutually compatible and enhance the quality of the City's environment**

**Policy LU 5.5.2 Form and Environment**

Require that new and renovated buildings be designed to avoid the use of styles, colors, and materials that unusually impact the design character and quality of their location such as abrupt changes in scale, building form, architectural style, and the use of surface materials that raise local temperatures or adversely modify wind patterns.

**Policy LU 5.5.3 Ambient Lighting**

Require that outdoor lighting be located and designed to prevent spillover onto adjoining properties or significantly increase the overall ambient illumination of their location.

**Goal 6.1 A diversity of governmental service, institutional, educational, cultural, social, religious, and medical facilities that are available for and enhance the quality of life for residents and are located and designed to complement Newport Beach's neighborhoods.**

**Policy LU 6.1.3 Architecture and Planning that Complements Adjoining Uses**

Ensure that the City's public buildings, sites, and infrastructure are designed to be compatible in scale, mass, character, and architecture with the district or neighborhood in which they are located, following the design and development policies for private uses specified by this Plan. Design impacts on adjoining uses shall be carefully considered in development, addressing such issues as lighting spillover, noise, hours of operation, parking, local traffic impacts, and privacy.

**Goal 6.2 Residential neighborhoods that contain a diversity of housing types and supporting uses to meet the needs of Newport Beach’s residents and are designed to sustain livability and a high quality of life.**

**Policy LU 6.2.5 Neighborhood Supporting Uses**

Allow for the integration of uses within residential neighborhoods that support and are complementary to their primary function as a living environment such as schools, parks, community meeting facilities, religious facilities, and comparable uses. These uses shall be designed to assure compatibility with adjoining residential addressing such issues as noise, lighting, and parking.

**Goals 6.3 and 6.4 pertain to the Banning Ranch policies identified below.**

**Goal 6.3 Preferably a protected open space amenity, with restored wetlands and habitat areas, as well as active community parklands to serve adjoining neighborhoods.**

**Policy LU 6.3.1 Primary Use**

Open space, including significant active community parklands that serve adjoining residential neighborhoods if the site is acquired through public funding.

**Goal 6.4 If acquisition for open space is not successful, a high-quality residential community with supporting uses that provides revenue to restore and protect wetlands and important habitats**

**Policy LU 6.5.4 Relationship of Development to Environmental Resources**

Development should be located and designed to preserve and/or mitigate for the loss of wetlands and drainage course habitat. It shall be located to be contiguous and compatible with existing and planned development along its eastern property line, preserving the connectivity of wildlife corridors, and set back from the bluff faces, along which shall be located a linear park to provide public views of the ocean, wetlands, and surrounding open spaces.

**Policy LU 6.5.5 Public Views of the Property**

Development shall be located and designed to prevent residences on the property from dominating public views of the bluff faces from Coast Highway, the ocean, wetlands, and surrounding open spaces.

**Goal 6.13** An economically viable pedestrian oriented village that serves local residents, visitors, and provides residential in proximity to retail uses, entertainment, and recreation

**Policy LU 6.13.4 Streetscapes**

Promote the completion of enhancements to Balboa Village’s streetscapes to enhance the area’s visual quality and character as a pedestrian-oriented environment.

**Goal 6.14** A successful mixed-use district that integrates an economic and commercial centers serving the needs of Newport Beach residents and the sub-region, with expanded opportunities for residents to live close to jobs, commerce, entertainment, and recreation, and is supported by a pedestrian-friendly environment

**Policy LU 6.14.4 Urban Form**

Encourage that some new development be located and designed to orient to the inner side of Newport Center Drive, establishing physical and visual continuity that diminishes the dominance of surface parking lots and encourages pedestrian activity.

**Policy LU 6.14.5 Pedestrian Connectivity and Amenity**

Encourage that pedestrian access and connections among uses within the district be improved with additional walkways and streetscape amenities concurrent with the development of expanded and new uses.

**Policy LU 6.14.6 Fashion Island Architecture and Streetscapes**

Encourage that new development in Fashion Island complement and be of equivalent or higher design quality than existing buildings. Additionally, new buildings shall be located on axes connecting Newport Center Drive with existing buildings to provide visual and physical connectivity with adjoining uses, where practical.

**Goal 6.15** A mixed-use community that provides jobs, residential, and supporting services in close proximity, with pedestrian-oriented amenities that facilitates walking and enhance livability

**Policy LU 6.15.6 Auto-Rental and Supporting Uses**

Work with auto rental and supporting uses to promote the consolidation and visual improvement of auto storage, service, and storage facilities.

**Policy LU 6.15.7 Site Planning and Architecture**

Encourage and, when subject to redevelopment, require property owners within the Campus Tract to upgrade the street frontages of their properties with landscape, well-designed signage, and other amenities that improve the area's visual quality.

**Policy LU 6.15.10 Number and Size of Residential Villages (refer to Figure LU23)**

Allow development of a maximum of four (4) mixed use residential villages, each centered on a neighborhood park and other amenities (as conceptually illustrated in Figure LU23). The first phase of residential development in each neighborhood shall encompass at least 10 gross acres of land, exclusive of existing rights-of-way. The 10 acres may include multiple parcels provided that they are contiguous or face one another across an existing street. The 10 acre requirement may be waived for projects of at least 5 acres if a concept plan is prepared that integrates existing and new uses into a cohesive mixed-use neighborhood and achieves the objectives for the Airport Area.

**Goal 6.17 A corridor that includes a gateway to the City with amenities that support the Orange Coast River Park, as well as commercial clusters that serve local residents and coastal visitors at key intersections, interspersed with compatible residential development**

**Policy LU 6.17.3 Redevelopment Incentives**

Permit commercial properties to be developed at a maximum floor area ratio of 1.0 as an incentive for their redevelopment.

**Policy LU 6.17.4 Improved Visual Image and Quality**

Implement streetscape improvements to enhance the area's character and image as a gateway to Newport Beach and develop a stronger pedestrian environment at the commercial nodes.

**Policy LU 6.17.5 Streetscape**

Require that upgraded and redeveloped properties incorporate landscaped setbacks along arterial streets to improve their visual quality and reduce impacts of the corridor's high traffic volumes.

**Goal 6.18 A corridor of uses and services that support Hoag Hospital and adjoining residential neighborhoods**

**Policy LU 6.18.4 Property Design**

Require that buildings be located and designed to orient to the Old Newport Boulevard frontage, while the rear of parcels on its west side shall incorporate

landscape and design elements that are attractive when viewed from Newport Boulevard.

**Goal 6.19** A corridor that reflects and takes advantage of its location on the Newport Bay waterfront, supports and respects adjacent residential neighborhoods, and exhibits a quality visual image for travelers on Coast Highway

**Policy LU 6.19.6 Corridor Identity and Quality**

Implement landscape, signage, lighting, sidewalk, pedestrian crossing, and other amenities consistent with the Mariner’s Mile Specific Plan District and Mariner’s Mile Strategic Vision and Design Plan.

**Policy LU 6.19.9 Bay Views**

Require that buildings be located and sites designed to provide clear views of and access to the Harbor and Bay from the Coast Highway and Newport Boulevard rights-of-way in accordance with the following principles, as appropriate:

- Clustering of buildings to provide open view and access corridors to the Harbor
- Modulation of building volume and masses
- Variation of building heights
- Inclusion of porticoes, arcades, windows, and other “see-through” elements in addition to the defined open corridor
- Minimization of landscape, fencing, parked cars, and other nonstructural elements that block views and access to the Harbor
- Prevention of the appearance of the public right-of-way being walled off from the Harbor
- Inclusion of setbacks that in combination with setbacks on adjoining parcels cumulatively form functional view corridors
- Encouragement of adjoining properties to combine their view corridors that achieve a larger cumulative corridor than would have been achieved independently
- A site-specific analysis shall be conducted for new development to determine the appropriate size, configuration, and design of the view and access corridor that meets these objectives, which shall be subject to approval in the Development Plan review process.

**Policy LU 6.19.12 Properties Abutting Bluff Faces**

Require that development projects locate and design buildings to maintain the visual quality and maintain the structural integrity of the bluff faces.

**Policy LU 6.19.13 Building Heights**

Consider the modification of the boundary of the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone (26') to accommodate higher mixed use buildings, where these are located adjacent to bluffs and the viewshed “envelope” is maintained.

**Natural Resources Element****Goal NR 17 Maintenance and expansion of designated open space resources.****NR 17.1 Open Space Protection**

Protect, conserve, maintain, designated open space areas that define the City’s urban form, serve as habitat for many species, and provide recreational opportunities.

**NR 17.2 Other Uses of Public Sites Designated for Open Space**

Consider conversion of public sites designated for open space to other uses only when the conversion will meet a significant need, and there are no alternative sites that could feasibly meet that need.

**NR 17.3 New Open Space Areas**

Consider opportunities to expand designated open space areas within the City.

**Goal NR 20 Preservation of significant visual resources.****NR 20.1 Enhancement of Significant Resources**

Protect and, where feasible, enhance significant scenic and visual resources that include open space, mountains, canyons, ridges, ocean, and harbor from public vantage points, as shown in Figure NR3.

**NR 20.2 New Development Requirements**

Require new development to restore and enhance the visual quality in visually degraded areas, where feasible, and provide view easements or corridors designed to protect public views or to restore public views in developed areas, where appropriate.

**NR 20.3 Public Views**

Protect and enhance public views from the following roadway segments (shown in Figure NR3), and other locations may be identified in the future:

- Avocado Avenue from San Joaquin Hills Road to Coast Highway
- Back Bay Drive
- Balboa Island Bridge
- Bayside Drive from Coast Highway to Linda Island Drive



- Bayside Drive at Promontory Bay
- Coast Highway/Santa Ana River Bridge
- Coast Highway/Newport Boulevard Bridge and Interchange
- Coast Highway from Newport Boulevard to Marino Drive (Bayshores)
- Coast Highway/Newport Bay Bridge
- Coast Highway from Jamboree Road to Bayside Drive
- Coast Highway from Pelican Point Drive to city limits
- Eastbluff Drive from Jamboree Road to Backbay Drive
- Irvine Avenue from Santiago Drive to University Drive
- Jamboree Road from Eastbluff Drive/University Drive to Bayview Way
- Jamboree Road in the vicinity of the Big Canyon Park
- Jamboree Road from Coast Highway to Bayside Drive
- Lido Isle Bridge
- MacArthur Boulevard from San Joaquin Hills Road to Coast Highway
- Marguerite Avenue from San Joaquin Hills Road to Fifth Avenue
- Newport Boulevard from Hospital Road/Westminster Avenue to Via Lido
- Newport Center Drive from Newport Center Drive E/W to Farallon Drive/Granville Drive
- Newport Coast from Pelican Hill Road North to Coast Highway
- Ocean Boulevard
- Pelican Hills Road South
- San Joaquin Hills Road from Newport Ridge Drive to Spyglass Hill Road
- San Miguel Drive from San Joaquin Hills Road to MacArthur Boulevard
- State Route 73 from Bayview Way to the easterly City limit
- Superior Avenue from Hospital Road to Coast Highway
- University Drive from Irvine Avenue to the Santa Ana—Delhi Channel
- Vista Ridge Road from Ocean Heights to Altezza Drive

**NR 20.4 Public View Corridor Landscaping**

Design and site new development, including landscaping, on the edges of public view corridors, including those down public streets, to frame, accent, and minimize impacts to public views.

**NR 20.5 Public View Corridor Amenities**

Provide public trails, recreation areas, and viewing areas adjacent to public view corridors, where feasible.

**Goal NR 21 Minimize visual impacts of signs and utilities.****Policy NR 21.1 Signs and Utility Siting and Design**

Design and site signs, utilities, and antennas to minimize visual impacts.

**Policy NR 21.2 Illegal Signs and Legal Nonconforming Signs**

Implement programs to remove illegal signs and amortize legal nonconforming signs.

**Policy NR 21.3 Overhead Utilities**

Support programs to remove and underground overhead utilities, in new development as well as existing neighborhoods.

**Goal NR 22 Maintain the intensity of development around Newport Bay to be consistent with the unique character and visual scale of Newport Beach.****NR 22.1 Shoreline Height Limitation Zone**

Maintain the Shoreline Height Limitation Zone to protect views of the water. Consider amending the boundary of this Zone where public views would not be impacted.

**NR 22.2 Regulation of Structure Mass**

Continue to regulate the visual and physical mass of structures consistent with the unique character and visual scale of Newport Beach.

**Goal NR 23 Development respects natural landforms such as coastal bluffs.****Policy NR 23.1 Maintenance of Natural Topography**

Preserve cliffs, canyons, bluffs, significant rock outcroppings, and site buildings to minimize alteration of the site's natural topography and preserve the features as a visual resource.

**Policy NR 23.2 Bluff Edge Setbacks**

Maintain approved bluff edge setbacks for the coastal bluffs within the communities of Castaways, Eastbluff, Park Newport, Newporter North (Harbor Cove), and Bayview Landing and neighborhoods from Jamboree Road to Corona del Mar, north of Bayside Drive, to ensure the preservation of scenic resources and geologic stability

**Policy NR 23.3 Open Space Dedication or Preservation for New Planned Communities**

Require new planned communities to dedicate or preserve as open space the coastal bluff face and an area inland from the edge of the coastal bluff

adequate to provide safe public access and to avoid or minimize visual impacts.

**Policy NR 23.4 New Development on Blufftops**

Require all new blufftop development located on a bluff subject to marine erosion to be set back based on the predominant line of development. This requirement shall apply to the principal structure and major accessory structures such as guesthouses and pools. The setback shall be increased where necessary to ensure safety and stability of the development.

**Policy NR 23.5 New Accessory Structures on Blufftops**

On bluffs subject to marine erosion, require new accessory structures such as decks, patios and walkways that do not require structural foundations to be sited at least 10 feet from the bluff edge. Require accessory structures to be removed or relocated landward when threatened by erosion, instability or other hazards.

**Policy NR 23.6 Canyon Development Standards**

Establish canyon development setbacks based on the predominant line of existing development for Buck Gully and Morning Canyon. Do not permit development to extend beyond the predominant line of existing development by establishing a development stringline where a line is drawn between nearest adjacent corners of existing structures on either side of the subject property. Establish development stringlines for principle structures and accessory improvements.

**Policy NR 23.7 New Development Design and Siting**

Design and site new development to minimize the removal of native vegetation, preserve rock outcroppings, and protect coastal resources.

***Harbor and Bay Element***

**Goal HB3 Enhanced and updated waterfront commercial areas.**

**Policy HB 3.1 Building Improvements and Programs**

Preserve and/or enhance existing water-enhanced, water-related and water-dependent commercial uses and marine oriented commercial areas through building improvements and programs that preserve the design and character of the Harbor.

**Goal HB4** Preservation of existing commercial uses in the Harbor to maintain and enhance the charm and character of the Harbor and to provide support services for visitors, recreational boaters, and other water-dependent uses.

**Policy HB 4.3** Entertainment and Tour Vessels

Support continued operation of entertainment and tour boats subject to reasonable regulations designed to ensure the operations don't have an adverse impact, such as unsafe navigation, impaired water quality, reduced visual quality, excessive noise, unsafe street traffic conditions, or parking shortages on the environment and land uses surrounding the harbor.

**Goal HB9** A variety of beach/bulkhead profiles that characterize its recreational, residential, and commercial waterfronts.

**Policy HB 9.1** Design of New or Renovated Bulkheads

Balance private property rights, natural harbor tidal and current forces and other coastal processes (such as erosion and accretion) and harbor aesthetics with other policies when considering designs for new or renovated bulkhead permits.

**Policy HB 9.2** Protection of Beach Profile

Permit and design bulkheads and groins to protect the character of the existing beach profiles and to restore eroded beach profiles found around the Harbor and island perimeters, and the safe navigation and berthing of vessels.

**Policy HB 9.3** Structures Impacting Visual Resources

Limit structures bayward of the bulkhead line to piers, floats, groins, appurtenances related to marine activities, and public walkways.

**Policy HB 9.4** Abandoned Vessels

Utilize City, county, state, and federal regulations to remove derelict, abandoned and unseaworthy vessels from City controlled tidelands promptly.

## ■ Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The majority of impacts associated with aesthetics would be *less than significant* after implementation of proposed General Plan Update policies, and no mitigation would be required. However, as discussed above, while light spillover would be minimized by the proposed policies and existing regulations, the substantial increase of lighting alone would present a significant impact to the Banning Ranch area, if the area is ultimately developed, with no feasible mitigation available to reduce the impacts.

## **Level of Significance After Policies/Mitigation Measures**

If Banning Ranch is ultimately developed with new residential and commercial uses, the impact of nighttime lighting would be *significant and unavoidable*, as no additional feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce light impacts. However, all other project impacts associated with aesthetics and visual resources would be *less than significant* under the proposed Newport Beach General Plan Update. Policies in the General Plan would reinforce design standards, protect visual character and views, and enhance the City's existing aesthetic qualities while simultaneously accommodating projected growth.

### **4.1.6 References**

EIP Associates. 2004. *Technical Background Report*.

Newport Beach, City of. 2005. *Local Coastal Program—Coastal Land Use Plan*. Adopted 13 December.

Newport Beach, City of. 2004. *Newport Beach: Current Conditions, Future Choices*.