

# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## 5.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) discusses the potential impacts to the visual character of the plan area associated with the proposed project. This section includes a discussion of the qualitative aesthetic characteristics of the existing environment that would be potentially altered by the project's implementation and the consistency of the project with established relevant policies.

### 5.1.1 Environmental Setting

#### 5.1.1.1 REGULATORY SETTING

Local laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines related to aesthetics that are potentially applicable to the proposed project are summarized below.

#### State

##### *California Scenic Highway Program*

Caltrans's California Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963, and it maps and describes all scenic highways within the state. The program protects these state scenic highway and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. There are no Caltrans-designated scenic highways within the City of Clovis.

##### *California Building Energy Efficiency Standards*

Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations outlines mandatory provisions for lighting control devices and luminaires for all new developments. This code encourages buildings (both residential and nonresidential) to engage in energy-efficient development strategies.

#### Local

##### *County of Fresno Code of Ordinances*

The County of Fresno Code of Ordinances identifies land use categories, development standards, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the county's general plan and proposed development projects. The following provisions address aesthetics:

- **Title 17, Chapter 17.48 (Design and Development Standards):** Outlines design and improvement standards for roads, lots, easements, and waterways in the county to provide for adequate traffic circulation and extension of aesthetic values.

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- **Title 17, Chapter 17.72, Part IV (Design Principles):** Provides details to size and configuration of parcels upon division of land to maintain land use compatibility and to efficiently utilize adjacent parcels for future development.

#### *City of Clovis Design Guidelines*

The City of Clovis maintains multiple design guidelines and standards to assist developers and project designers in understanding the City's goals and objectives for achieving, enhancing, and maintaining high-quality development in various areas of the City. The design guidelines are area-specific and include the following:

- Clovis Old Town Design Guidelines,
- Commercial Design Standards, and
- Central Valley Research and Technology Business Park Design Standards.

The Clovis Old Town Design Guidelines outline design concepts in Clovis' central business district (primarily Clovis and Woodworth Avenues between Sierra and Jefferson Avenues) to maintain consistency with existing architecture, lighting, materials, facades, and landscape. The Commercial Design Standards require new commercial projects constructed in C-1 and C-2 designated zones to comply with specific standards related to setbacks, parking, landscaping, architectural elevation, lighting, walls and fencing, utilities, and security. The Central Valley Research and Technology Business Park Design Standards guides architectural development in the northeast region of the City along State Route 168 (SR-168) between Armstrong Avenue and Owens Mountain Parkway. In addition to area-specific design guidelines, the City also has a list of approved drought-tolerant and noninvasive plants for citywide residential, commercial, and municipal landscaping purposes.

#### *City of Clovis Specific Plans*

Aesthetics are addressed in four specific plans governing certain areas of the City:

- Central Clovis
- Herndon-Shepherd
- Loma Vista
- Shaw Avenue

Each specific plan acts as a regulatory document that the City uses as a development guide within that area. Some of these specific plans, like the Central Clovis Specific Plan, include detailed development standards and design guidelines. Others are less detailed and defer to the City's municipal code for design criteria. In addition to these specific plans, the Harlan Ranch Master Plan addresses design and aesthetic issues in the Harlan Ranch neighborhood in northeast Clovis.

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#### 5.1.1.2 VISUAL SETTING

##### Visual Character

Clovis is in California's San Joaquin Valley, and like most communities in the region, features a flat landscape organized around an orthogonal system of roadways. Due to its rapid growth in recent years and its adjacency to the city of Fresno, Clovis has a largely suburban character. A majority of the City's land area is devoted to low-density residential neighborhoods. However, because the community has grown from a small farming town and is still surrounded by agricultural land uses on three sides, it retains a rural atmosphere. The suburban/rural interface is most prominent on the City's eastern, southeastern, and southern edges. In these locations, new housing subdivisions are sited between working farms and large residential estate lots of two to five acres. The Plan Area beyond the City's boundaries to the east, northeast, and north is dominated by agricultural uses and undeveloped open spaces.

##### Natural Resources

Suspended above the centerline of Clovis Avenue between 4th and 5th Streets, the City's motto, "Gateway to the Sierras," is displayed on an antique neon sign that is more than 70 years old (see Figure 5.1-1, *Natural Resources and Landforms*). The City's greatest natural resource, though outside the City's boundaries, is commonly considered to be the Sierra Nevada. The mountains' foothills begin just beyond the northeast boundary of the Plan Area, and views of the mountains are visible from Clovis on clear days (see Figure 5.1-1, *Natural Resources and Landforms*). The foothills extend to an elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level at the United States Forest Service (USFS) Sierra National Forest boundary. Within the Sierra National Forest, the mountains climb to a maximum elevation of 14,000 feet. The foothills and the mountains of the Sierra include forests, meadows, lakes, rivers, and wildlife scenic backdrops for the City. The Sierra Nevada also provides a broad array of recreational opportunities to residents of Clovis and is directly accessible from the City via SR-168 or the "Sierra Freeway," which is a limited access roadway in urbanized Fresno and Clovis that bisects the Plan Area. Natural resources in the Sierra Nevada foothills near the Plan Area include Millerton Lake State Recreation Area 14 miles to the north and Pine Flat Lake 30 miles to the east.

The Plan Area itself contains no substantial, undeveloped natural resources other than the grasslands in its northeastern quadrant, north of Shepard Avenue and Tollhouse Road/SR-168. Outside of this area are only remnants of native habitats and vegetation communities. However, irrigation canals throughout the City provide a scenic water quality to the rural character of the Plan Area (see Figure 5.1-1, *Natural Resources and Landforms*). Clovis also features numerous improved parks and green space areas that offer greenery and recreational opportunities to residents, such as the botanical gardens and a network of multipurpose trails. These open spaces also provide visual buffers that break up the monotony of the built environment.

##### Landforms

As shown in Figure 5.1-1, *Natural Resources and Landforms*, rolling grassy hills are in the Plan Area's northeastern quadrant, north of Shepard Avenue and Tollhouse Road/SR-168 near the Friant-Kern Canal. These hills are outside the City and SOI boundaries. Grade separations along the Sierra Highway (SR-168), generally located at major interchanges, create some artificial changes in topography that offer limited views of the Sierra Nevada to

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the east. However, the remainder of the non-SOI Plan Area is relatively flat and provides clear views of the Sierra Nevada.

#### 5.1.1.3 SCENIC VISTAS AND CORRIDORS

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no state-designated scenic highways in or near the Plan Area (Caltrans 2007). However, SR-168 bisects the Plan Area in a southwest to northeast direction (see Figure 3-1, *Regional Location*) and is considered an Eligible State Scenic Highway–Not Officially Designated by Caltrans.

The adopted 1993 Clovis General Plan discusses scenic “landscape features” in its Open Space and Conservation Element. The element identifies Clovis, Shaw, and Herndon Avenues as gateways to the community and important visual links to Old Town Clovis from the greater Fresno area. The element states that “the identity of the gateways will be established through landscape design and features reflecting the historic and ‘small town’ atmosphere.” Although the three identified corridors are quite long and contain substantial segments that do not provide scenic vistas, the corridors physically and visually tie the community together. Other arterial roadways that travel east-to-west through the Plan Area, such as Shepard, Bullard, and Ashlan Avenues, span the community’s suburban/rural interface and therefore can also be construed as scenic corridors. These roadways provide a scenic and character transition through the nearly built-out core of Central Clovis into its pastoral agrarian areas to the north, east, and south. The aesthetic and community value of the City’s central district and major corridors are explained further below.

#### Old Town Clovis

The rural nature of Clovis is celebrated in the architecture of its central district. Old Town Clovis includes a number of restored historic buildings and new developments that preserve and highlight the center’s western American, frontier-era architectural style (see Figure 5.1-2, *Scenic Vistas and Corridors*). The uniqueness of Old Town Clovis is a defining element of the community’s character and visually sets it apart from its larger neighbor to the west.

Old Town is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike for its small-town character in the large City of Clovis. The area has undergone revitalization and redevelopment efforts and is a successful example of an appealing and inviting Old Town in a modernizing city. Renovations to the Old Town area include cobblestone intersections, old fashioned street lamps, and picturesque storefronts. The area is also home to multiple historic structures, such as the Tarpey Depot, the last remnant of the Minarets and Western Railroad, and the 1912 First State Bank Building, which now houses the Clovis Museum, maintained by the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society. Old Town Clovis is also the main location for the City’s many large community events, including Big Hat Days, the Clovis Rodeo, and ClovisFest, which draw tens of thousands of visitors from throughout the state and country. The preservation and revitalization of Old Town Clovis is a visible reason why Clovis enjoys a reputation as a fast-growing city with a strong, small-town character.

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Figure 5.1-1

## Natural Resources and Landforms



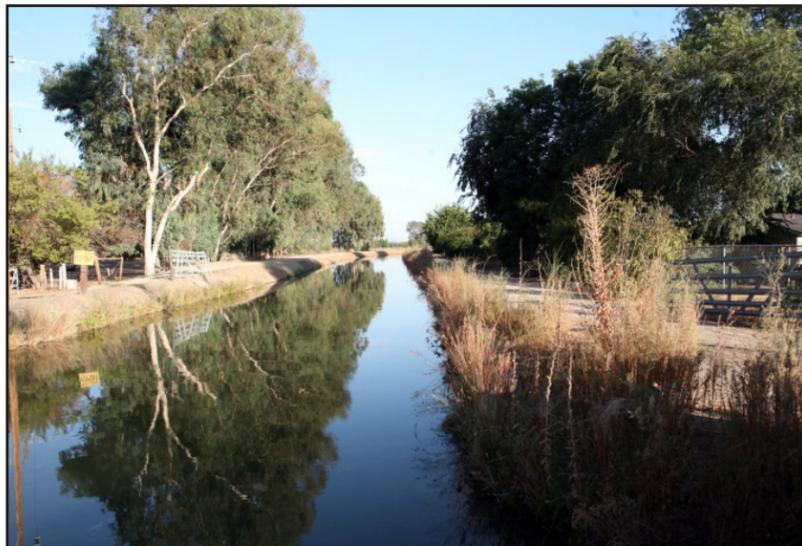
"Gateway to the Sierras" sign in Old Town Clovis



Sierra Nevada



Clovis Botanical Gardens



Irrigation canals



Grassy hills north of Sheperd Avenue and Tollhouse Road/SR-168



Hills near Tollhouse Road/SR-168 and the Friant-Kern Canal



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Figure 5.1-2

## Scenic Vistas and Corridors



Commercial uses in Old Town Clovis.



Tarpey Depot Visitor Center and historical site of Old Town Clovis.



Streetscape of Old Town Clovis.



Storefronts and pedestrian paths in Old Town Clovis.



Commercial uses along Shaw Avenue.



Shopping center on Shaw Avenue.



Commercial uses along Clovis Avenue.



Pedestrian path along Clovis Avenue.



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#### Shaw Avenue

Shaw Avenue is one of the principal traffic arteries in the City's central business district—a main east-west street for traffic travelling toward the foothills of the Sierra (see Figure 5.1-2, *Scenic Vistas and Corridors*). The corridor provides residents with a mixture of neighborhood commercial, office, and residential uses. From east to west, the street transitions from agricultural and rural residential uses to more developed and urbanized uses, with mixed use and commercial areas scattered in between. From Clovis Avenue to Temperance Avenue, Shaw Avenue is governed by provisions detailed in the Shaw Avenue Specific Plan, adopted in 1994. With regard to the aesthetics of this heavily travelled corridor, the Shaw Avenue Specific Plan reserves the street for compatible land uses that fit into the existing landscaped boulevard concept in order to maintain a consistent level of design, signing, and landscaping. The specific plan also encourages concentrating residential uses in the eastern portion, preserving the western end of the corridor for commercial uses.

Farther west along Shaw Avenue, the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan covers a 2.5-mile stretch from SR-168 on the west to Clovis Avenue on the east. The plan is currently being prepared by the City and will focus on creating a more livable and vibrant corridor, particularly due to its importance as a major commercial corridor linking CSU Fresno and older economically disadvantaged neighborhoods on the west to Central Clovis.

#### Clovis Avenue

The Clovis Avenue corridor is considered the main street of Clovis. It is a heavily traveled north-south street that cuts through much of the more developed areas of Clovis on the west side of the City (see Figure 5.1-2, *Scenic Vistas and Corridors*). Clovis Avenue is governed by two specific plans, the Clovis Avenue Railroad Corridor Area Plan (from Shaw Avenue to Sierra Avenue) and the Clovis Corridor Specific Plan (from Sierra Avenue to Herndon Avenue). These specific plans supplement the General Plan with additional guidance and design controls for Clovis Avenue in order to revitalize the linkage between Old Town, the Civic Center to the south of Old Town, and the regional commercial shopping centers even farther south on Shaw Avenue. The plans outline design features to improve the aesthetic quality of North Clovis Avenue as the major northern gateway into the City and its central business district immediately south.

In particular, the Clovis Avenue Railroad Corridor Area Plan is intended to complement the revitalization efforts of Old Town by providing architectural design guidelines to improve appearances of the streets, storefronts, and houses to establish a more unifying urban design theme. The specific plan calls for aesthetic enhancements of Clovis Avenue by forming distinct gateways with strong building edges, signs, and landscaping; street wall edges with unifying building facades, street trees, and sidewalks; and pedestrian-scale landscaping, such as trees, grass, and ground cover to contribute to the City's small-town character and create a more unifying sense of place for its residents.

Furthermore, Clovis Avenue is also part of Clovis's extensive network of pedestrian and bicycle trails. The Old Town Trail is a multiuse trail that runs parallel to Clovis Avenue and has several public art statues designed by local artists and inspired by Clovis's historically important people.

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#### 5.1.1.4 THE THREE URBAN CENTERS

The 1993 General Plan envisioned three urban centers for growth: Loma Vista (formerly known as the Southeast Urban Center), the Northwest Urban Center, and the Northeast Urban Center (see Figure 3-3, *Existing Land Use*). The intent is to focus the City's growth into these three urban centers, each of which would be designed as clusters of villages interconnected via multipurpose corridors. Each urban center would comprise a network of self-sustaining urban villages and their supporting village centers; transit centers; school facilities; open space; parks and recreation areas; and residential neighborhoods of varying densities. The urban villages together would provide housing, employment, agricultural, industrial, educational, health care, and recreational opportunities for residents of the urban center.

#### Loma Vista

Loma Vista, formerly the Southeast Urban Center, is in the southeast corner of the City and extends into areas immediately east of the City limits in unincorporated Fresno County. It is bounded by Locan Avenue to the west, McCall Avenue to the east, portions of Bullard Avenue and Shaw Avenue to the north, and the Gould Canal to the south. The Loma Vista Specific Plan details the community's four master-planned communities: Community Center South, Community Center North, Gettysburg/Ashlan, and the Eastern Village. These distinct communities form the network of urban villages within Loma Vista. The specific plan also outlines architectural design elements pertaining to building design, signage, lighting fixtures, streets, and other public elements within Loma Vista.

#### Northwest and Northeast Urban Centers

The Northwest and Northeast areas of the City are mainly undeveloped and are now used primarily for agricultural and rural residential uses. A majority of the Northwest Urban Center is located in the City's SOI, while the entire Northeast Urban Center is located in the non-SOI Plan Area (see Figure 3-2, *Aerial Photograph*). The open space landscape is most apparent in these two urban centers where existing land uses are primarily rural residential or agricultural. The Northeast Urban Center is also relatively flat and offers the most direct and unobstructed views of the Sierra Nevada and foothills toward the northeast along SR-168.

#### 5.1.1.5 LIGHT AND GLARE

Sources of light and glare in the Plan Area include building (interior and exterior), security, sign illumination, and parking-area lighting. Other sources of nighttime light and glare include street lights and vehicular traffic along surrounding roadways. Additionally, a significant amount of ambient lighting comes from surrounding communities and roadways. Because the Plan Area is adjacent to highly urbanized portions of Fresno to the west and south, ambient light in the community is substantially impacted by land uses in Fresno. Large, light-intensive institutions and facilities near the City's boundary include Fresno Yosemite International Airport and CSU Fresno. Nevertheless, areas within the City's SOI and non-SOI Plan Area, which account for nearly half of the entire Plan Area, are mainly rural residential and agricultural land and have very few sources of light and glare, allowing for clear day and nighttime views.

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### 5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- AE-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- AE-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- AE-3 Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- AE-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

### 5.1.3 Environmental Impacts

The evaluation of aesthetics and aesthetic impacts is highly subjective, yet it requires the application of a process that objectively identifies the visual features of the existing environment and their importance. The characterization of aesthetics involves establishing existing visual character, including resources and scenic vistas unique to the project area. Visual resources are determined by identifying existing landforms (e.g. topography and grading), views (e.g. scenic resources such as natural features or urban characteristics), viewing points/locations, and existing light and glare (e.g. nighttime illumination). Changes to the existing aesthetic environment that would result due to implementation of the proposed project are identified and qualitatively evaluated based on the proposed modifications to the existing setting and the viewer's sensitivity. Project-related impacts are compared to the context of the existing setting, using the thresholds listed above.

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the initial study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

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**Impact 5.1-1: Development in accordance with the General Plan Update would not substantially alter or damage scenic vistas or resources in the Plan Area or along a state scenic highway. [Thresholds AE-1 and AE-2]**

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#### *Impact Analysis:*

#### **2035 Scenario**

The Plan Area features a flat and rural landscape offering scenic views of the San Joaquin Valley. Within the City boundaries, rapid urban growth and proximity to the City of Fresno have transformed the southwestern, southern, and western areas of the City into more urban areas. Because these sections of the City are already urbanized, buildout of the 2035 scenario in accordance with the General Plan Update would consist mainly of infill and redevelopment efforts of underutilized parcels and the replacement, expansion, or improvement of existing developments in the City. Therefore, implementation of the General Plan Update would not introduce a

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substantial amount of new development within the City's existing boundaries that would alter or damage scenic vistas of the Clovis landscape or the San Joaquin Valley.

The SOI and non-SOI Plan Area have undergone less development and still maintain a rural, low density, and open space character. New development out toward the three urban growth areas would alter the existing open space and rural scenic vistas of these areas. Nevertheless, the proposed land use plan reflects a plan that can accommodate growth while preserving its viewsheds, landscapes, and natural vistas, which are highly valued by visitors and residents.

For example, the Northwest Urban Center's proposed land uses include multiple neighborhood and area parks scattered throughout the urban center and a linear neighborhood park along the Enterprise Canal that traverses the Northwest Urban Center northwest to southeast and connects to the existing Dry Creek and Enterprise Trails. In addition, mixed-use and medium- to high-density residential uses are designated only in the western third of the Northwest Urban Center, which is adjacent to existing urbanized areas in the City of Fresno, such as Clovis North High School, Willow International Community College Center, and residential developments on the west side of North Willow Avenue. The eastern portion of the Northwest Urban Center is designated mainly as very-low- and low-density residential to provide a gradual transition and buffer between high- and low-density homes as development reaches rural areas to the east of the Northwest Urban Center. Thus, the views toward the Sierra Nevada would be preserved, and scenic vistas would not be significantly impacted even with increased development in the area.

The Northeast Urban Center proposes a much more diverse array of land uses than its existing conditions. The proposed land use plan includes mixed-use areas along the southern boundary of the urban center connecting to the mixed-use/business campus areas proposed for the Sierra Gateway Commerce Center along SR-168. Additionally, the majority of the northern half of the Northeast Urban Center is proposed for open space and parkland. While the plan does consist of substantially different land uses from the existing uses (mainly agriculture and rural residential), the proposed circulation roads are planned in meandering patterns rather than a traditional orthogonal gridline system and include transitional buffers, minimizing urban traffic on rural streets and providing scenic opportunities for drivers along SR-168 and future residents of the Northeast Urban Center. The planned roadway system would protect and enhance the vistas of the rolling grassy hills near the Friant-Kern Canal and the Sierra Nevada and foothills in the distance and allow people to continue enjoying the scenery while allowing for development into the northeast of the City's Plan Area (see Figures 5.1-1, *Natural Resources and Landforms*).

Loma Vista (formerly known as the Southeast Urban Center) is not proposed for any major changes from its current land use plan because it is still being developed as the first of the City's three urban growth areas. Much of the existing area is rural residential and agriculture. However, the current and proposed land use plans both propose low- to medium-density residential areas, scattered parks, mixed-use villages and business parks, and small commercial pockets. Loma Vista and the two other urban centers are designed similarly and are planned to be networks of self-sustaining urban villages. Scenic resources surrounding Loma Vista would not be impacted by the proposed land use plan since it remains predominantly the same as the current land use designations. The remaining SOI and non-SOI Plan Area would remain mostly agricultural and rural residential uses. Therefore, with the strategic placement of more high-density developments closer to already developed and compatible land

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use areas within the three urban growth centers, scenic vistas of Clovis's natural resources and landforms would be preserved and protected.

Furthermore, according to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no state-designated scenic highways in or near Fresno County (Caltrans 2011). SR-168 extends diagonally through the City in a northeast-southwest direction and is considered an "Eligible State Scenic Highway—Not Officially Designated" by Caltrans. State Route 180, which runs approximately two miles south parallel to the southern boundary of the City in an east to west direction, carries the same distinction. The City of Clovis would need to adopt a scenic corridor protection program and apply for scenic approval from Caltrans to designate either highway as an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.

Future development in accordance with the General Plan Update would allow for development of currently undeveloped parcels and intensification of areas along SR-168 (particularly the Sierra Gateway Commerce Center), which have the potential to impact scenic resources in Clovis as the City continues growing toward the undeveloped northeast areas. However, as stated before, the proposed land use plan ensures all medium- or high-density developments would occur in areas that preserve the scenic viewshed of the Sierra Nevada toward the northeast Plan Area for its future residents and visitors.

In addition, Policy 2.3 of the Clovis General Plan Update's Open Space and Conservation Element gives substantial consideration to the preservation of scenic vistas and resources, such as maintaining public views of open spaces, parks, and natural features; enhancing views along roadways and trails; preserving Clovis' viewshed of the surrounding foothills; and orienting new development to capitalize on views of the Sierra Nevada. Division 9 of the proposed Clovis Development Code Update also establishes requirements for fences, walls, and hedges to ensure that these elements minimize screening of scenic views and sunlight by outlining provisions such as height limitations, design and construction materials, site plan review requirements, allowable fencing materials, etc. per Section 9.24.060 (Fences, Walls, and Hedges); and screening and buffering requirements of adjoining land uses, utility equipment, and refuse areas are detailed in Section 9.24.090 (Screening and Buffering).

Thus, implementation of the General Plan Update would not have a substantial adverse impact on scenic vistas or resources in the project area or along a state scenic highway.

### **Full Buildout**

Full buildout in accordance with the General Plan Update assumes further expansion of development into the northwest and northeast areas of the SOI and further out into the non-SOI Plan Area beyond the 2035 scenario. The remaining areas within the non-SOI Plan Area are designated primarily for agricultural and rural residential uses in the proposed land use plan. These designations are very similar to the current land use plan in the 1993 General Plan. Therefore, new development in these areas would not drastically damage the scenic resources or vistas in the Plan Area.

As stated above, new projects would have to comply with the Clovis General Plan and Development Code Update policies and regulations and be subject to subsequent environmental review for development of each individual project. These required provisions would ensure that new developments within the Plan Area continue

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to preserve and enhance the existing scenic resources and vistas of the City's surrounding landscape. Thus, full buildout of the General Plan Update would not result in significant impacts.

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**Impact 5.1-2: Buildout in accordance with the proposed land use plan would alter the visual appearance of the City and its Plan Area, but would not substantially degrade its existing visual character or quality. [Threshold AE-3]**

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#### *Impact Analysis:*

#### **2035 Scenario**

Future development in accordance with the General Plan Update would allow for new development of currently undeveloped parcels and intensification of already developed regions within the City's boundaries and out towards the three urban growth centers in the 2035 scenario. Although new development would alter the visual appearance of the existing conditions, it would not degrade Clovis' visual character or quality.

A large majority of the development potential in the 2035 scenario would occur in areas already developed within the existing City boundaries, with some development going toward the SOI and non-SOI Plan Area into the three urban growth centers. Proposed land use designations within the existing City boundaries include mainly intensification and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. For example, the proposed land use plan expands existing commercial areas to adjacent parcels and designates currently vacant parcels as mixed-use village or business centers. Many of the agricultural, rural, and low-density residential areas remain the same. By intensifying development in already urbanized areas of the City under the 2035 scenario, the implementation of the General Plan Update would not substantially alter or degrade the existing visual appearance of the City. Rather, infill and redevelopment of underutilized areas in the City would help to revitalize and enhance Clovis' visual character and aesthetic quality. For example, the General Plan Update would focus on redeveloping areas along Shaw Avenue, Clovis Avenue, and Herndon Avenue, and in Central Clovis. These streets and areas are heavily traveled by residents and visitors and are the major commercial corridors that provide retail, dining, and entertainment to the City. Development would bring more economic and recreational activity into these areas and corridors, helping to unify the City by redeveloping blighted, vacant, or underutilized areas. More specifically, the proposed project would assist in achieving one of the main goals of the Shaw Avenue Corridor Plan, which is to reimagine and revitalize the City's main commercial corridor by developing major activity nodes and transitional areas to provide a balanced mix of uses and create a connection from CSU Fresno on the west end to the residential uses on the east end. Redevelopment also includes improving pedestrian accessibility, landscaping, signage, and lighting, which would all contribute positively to the aesthetic quality of the major focus areas of the City.

Furthermore, there are other specific plans for areas within the City boundaries—such as the Central Clovis Specific Plan, Southeast Area Specific Plan, Herndon-Shepherd Specific Plan, and the Harlan Ranch Master Plan—that provide development and design standards for various regions of the Plan Area. These specific plans act as regulatory documents to guide development in these areas. Aesthetic concerns are given considerable attention in the specific plans and are guided by the design guidelines and development standards under each specific plan. These standards ensure that new development or intensification of development in accordance with the General Plan Update maintains and enhances the existing aesthetic qualities of the City.

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For example, the Southeast Urban Center Specific Plan, which governs the development of Loma Vista, has design guidelines that are organized around landscape/streetscape elements (e.g. design of roadways, trails, sidewalks, and gateways) and land use designation design character (e.g. design of residential and nonresidential uses). The guidelines discuss landscaping, lighting, fencing, sidewalks, and outdoor furniture to ensure that individual developments within Loma Vista maintain consistency with the overall Loma Vista visual character.

In addition, policies in the proposed General Plan Update also give substantial consideration to aesthetic improvements for the City to maintain and enhance the visual character of Clovis. Policy 3.11 of the Circulation Element suggests designing landscaped parkways, medians, and right-of-ways as aesthetic buffers to improve the community's appearance and encourage non-motorized transportation. Policy 3.2 of the Open Space and Conservation Element highlights the importance of preserving Clovis' viewshed of the Sierra Nevada and foothills, open spaces, parks, natural features, trails, etc.

For the reasons outlined above, future development in the 2035 scenario that would be accommodated under the General Plan Update would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Clovis and its surroundings, and no significant impacts would occur.

### Full Buildout

The full buildout assumes new development farther away from the City's existing boundaries into the further SOI and non-SOI Plan Area, which are currently designated primarily as agriculture and rural residential. Similar to the current land use plan, the proposed land use plan maintains these 1993 General Plan land use designations in substantial portions to the north, east, and southeast areas of the non-SOI Plan Area.

Furthermore, a significant area in the Northeast Urban Center is designated as open space, to be developed into a large regional park in the future that will encompass more than 4,000 acres. The regional park, agricultural, and rural residential land use designations would help maintain the non-SOI Plan Area's existing visual character of a flat, open landscape, and also preserve the City's viewshed of the Sierra Nevada and foothills.

New projects would have to comply with the General Plan Update policies, design guidelines, and development standards. Subsequent environmental review would also be required for development of each individual project. These required provisions would ensure that the altered visual appearance of the City would maintain the existing visual quality and character of the City and its surrounding landscape. Consequently, the full buildout of the General Plan Update would not result in significant adverse impacts to the City's visual quality and character.

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**Impact 5.1-3: Future development in accordance with the General Plan Update would generate additional light and glare in the Plan Area that would impact surrounding existing land uses. [Threshold AE-4].**

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### *Impact Analysis:*

#### 2035 Scenario

Sources of light and glare within the confines of the City include building lighting (interior and exterior), security-lighting, sign illumination, and parking-area lighting. These sources are mostly associated with the residential,

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commercial, and industrial uses in the more developed areas of the City near the south and southwest boundaries adjacent to highly urbanized areas of Fresno. Other sources of nighttime light and glare include street lights and vehicular traffic along surrounding roadways. Additionally, some ambient lighting also exists from surrounding communities and roadways.

Future development in accordance with the General Plan Update would allow for development of currently undeveloped parcels and alterations, intensification, and redistribution of existing land uses. The SOI and non-SOI Plan Area are largely undeveloped, with mainly large parcels designated for rural residential developments and agricultural use; therefore, improvements and future developments in these areas would generate new sources of light and glare that could substantially affect day and nighttime views in the Plan Area. Sources of light and glare from new development would include lighting needed to provide nighttime street and building illumination, security lighting, nighttime traffic, sign illumination, and lighting associated with construction activities. Lighting in the more rural areas of the Plan Area, especially glaring light, would impact the visual quality of the nighttime sky and natural open space areas.

The proposed General Plan and Development Code Update outlines performance standards related to exterior light and glare to reduce impacts from new light sources under Article 3 (Development and Operational Standards), Section 9.22.050 (Exterior Light and Glare). Section 9.22.050 states the following:

A. Exterior Lighting shall be:

- a) Architecturally integrated with the character of on-site and adjacent structure(s);
- b) Directed downward and shielded so that all direct light and glare is confined within the boundaries of the subject parcel;
- c) Installed so that lights not blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness. The blink and flash provision does not apply to allowed seasonal decorations in residential areas, 9.34.060(P). The unusually high intensity or brightness provision shall apply in all instances; and
- d) Appropriate in height, intensity, and scale to the uses they are serving.

B. Exterior lighting shall not:

- a) Exceed 150 watts (or equivalent) or directly illuminate or be visible from adjacent properties.
- b) Result in:
  1. Indirect illumination of adjacent properties in excess of 0.5 foot candles;
  2. A point of overlap between light patterns greater than seven feet for pedestrian lighting systems; or
  3. An intensity of lighting within the physical limits of an area required to be lighted that is greater than seven foot candles.

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C. Security lighting. Security lighting shall be provided at all entrances/exits to structures. The minimum illumination shall be two footcandles at ground level in front of the entrance/exit.

D. Shielded lighting. Light sources shall be shielded to direct light rays onto the subject parcel only. The light source, whether bulb or tube, shall not be directly visible from an adjacent property or public street rights-of-way. This Section does not apply to public street lighting, sign illumination, or traffic safety lighting.

Light standards under Section 9.22.050 of the proposed Development Code Update would prevent excess illumination from new development sites and prevent light and glare spillover to surrounding properties. All future development projects that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would also be required to comply with California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings (Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations), which outlines mandatory provisions for lighting control devices and luminaires.

### Full Buildout

Similar to the 2035 scenario, full buildout in accordance with the proposed land use plan would generate new sources of light and glare that would affect day and nighttime views in the Plan Area. Sources of light include lighting needed to provide nighttime street and building illumination, security lighting, nighttime traffic, and lighting associated with construction activities.

Lighting and glare introduced to undeveloped and open space areas farther north and northeast into the SOI and non-SOI Plan Area would impact the visual quality of the nighttime sky and open space areas. The existing land uses of the SOI and non-SOI Plan Areas are mainly agriculture and rural residential, which after the full buildout would shift the distribution of existing land uses to a variety of housing types, retail, offices, entertainment, schools, and recreational parks or open spaces. These uses would ultimately result in additional sources of light or glare, and the City's SOI and non-SOI Plan Areas would be most impacted by new light and glare sources. As stated above, the Clovis General Plan and Development Code Update outlines policies and performance standards regulating light and glare sources in order to minimize excess illumination onsite and to prevent spillover to surrounding land uses (Section 9.22.050).

By complying with the proposed General Plan and Development Code Update policies and regulations pertaining to light and glare sources from new developments, nighttime lighting and glare impacts and potential spillover caused by the full buildout of the General Plan Update would be minimized and impacts would be less than significant.

### 5.1.4 Relevant General Plan Policies and Development Code Sections

The following are relevant policies of the proposed Clovis General Plan and Development Code Update that would reduce potential aesthetic impacts of future development in the Plan Area.

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#### General Plan

##### *Circulation Element*

**Goal 3:** A multimodal transportation network that is safe and comfortable in the context of adjacent neighborhoods.

- **Policy 3.11 Right-of-way design** - Design landscaped parkways, medians, and right-of-ways as aesthetic buffers to improve the community's appearance and encourage non-motorized transportation.

##### *Open Space and Conservation Element*

**Goal 2:** Natural, agricultural, and historic resources that are preserved and promoted as key features for civic pride and identity.

- **Policy 2.3 Visual resources** - Maintain public views of open spaces, parks, and natural features. Enhance views along roadways and trails. Preserve Clovis' viewshed of the surrounding foothills and orient new development to capitalize on views of the Sierra Nevada.

#### Development Code

- Article 3 (Development and Operational Standards), Division 9.22 (Performance Standards), Section 9.22.050 (Exterior Light and Glare)
- Article 3 (Development and Operational Standards), Division 9.24 (Property Development and Use Standards), Section 9.24.060 (Fences, Walls, and Hedges)
- Article 3 (Development and Operational Standards), Division 9.24 (Property Development and Use Standards), Section 9.24.090 (Screening and Buffering)

### 5.1.5 Existing Regulations

- California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6

### 5.1.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and compliance with the General Plan and Development Code Update policies, the following impacts would be less than significant for the 2035 Scenario and Full Buildout: 5.1-1, 5.1-2, and 5.1-3.

### 5.1.7 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

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### 5.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant for the 2035 Scenario and Full Buildout.

### 5.1.9 References

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