

3.9 Visual Resources

This section describes the existing visual resources in Pacifica and the potential impacts of the proposed Pacifica General Plan on those resources. Visual resources evaluated for impact include scenic hillsides, corridors, and neighborhoods with historic or scenic character.

Environmental Setting

PHYSICAL SETTING

Pacifica's visual quality is determined by attributes such as the colors and forms of specific landscape features, and the patterns and views that have resulted from natural and/or cultural processes.

Site Location, Landforms, and Spatial Organization

Pacifica has a strong physical identity as a stretch of dramatic coastline punctuated by ridges. Its boundaries are very distinct on three sides, with the Ocean on the west, the crest of Sweeney Ridge on the east, and San Pedro Mountain on the south. The northern edge narrows almost to a gateway entered along Highway 1. Pacifica presents itself as a collection of valley and coastal neighborhoods nestled in the topography.

Pacifica is introduced to southbound travelers with the experience of coming over the hill and seeing the expansive coastal vista. Northbound travelers come through the Devils Slide Tunnel, wind around the forested Pedro Point Headlands, and arrive at the active intersection with Linda Mar Boulevard. Skyline Boulevard acts as a coherent eastern boundary for the City, as it travels along the crest of the ridge with mature trees along its edges. From Skyline, Pacifica is entered via Sharp Park Road, Manor Drive, and Hickey Boulevard. These "gateways" into Pacifica form clear entry points; however, they are lacking a consistent signage theme.

Regional Scenic Features

Pacifica's visual resources are striking, with a high proportion of parks and undeveloped land, which comprise two-thirds of the Planning Area. The City's neighborhoods alternate with rugged, open ridges alternate along the length of the City.

The crest of the Coast Range forms Pacifica's eastern boundary. This crest rises toward the south as Sweeney Ridge. Five lateral ridges extend westward from Sweeney Ridge to the ocean. From north to south, these are Milagra Ridge, Gypsy Hill, Mori Ridge, Cattle Hill, and Fassler Ridge. At the south end, San Pedro Mountain extends to the coast at Pedro Point Headlands. This dramatic terrain is a defining feature of the city. The Pacific coastline is the Planning Area's most distinctive scenic feature. Mori Point, Rockaway Headlands, and Pedro Point Headlands, as well as Pacifica State Beach, Rockaway Beach, Sharp Park Beach, and the Northern Coastal Bluffs, are dramatic coastal features.

Scenic Routes

Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road in Pacifica have been identified by the State and County as eligible for scenic highway status. Local scenic roadway designation requires a corridor study, a program to enhance the scenic qualities, and adoption of the scenic roadway designation and its protection plan. Such a plan may be prepared in the future.

Highway 1 plays an important role in defining the image of Pacifica, creating a visual narrative for the traveler from one end of the City to the other. Sharp Park Road also represents an important visual summary of Pacifica, drawing travelers from the ridgeline at Skyline Boulevard to the coast, with views out to the Ocean and over the Sharp Park neighborhood and Golf Course. Other defining views include the view over the West Sharp Park district and Pacifica Pier from Highway 1; views toward Cattle Hill and Fassler Ridge from Highway 1; and the view to the ocean from Grace McCarthy Vista Point on Sharp Park Road. **Figure 3.9-1** shows these scenic routes and visual resources.

Figure 3.9-1:
Visual Resources

-  Gateways
-  Prominent Landforms
-  Coastal View Corridors
-  Scenic Routes
-  Prominent Ridges
-  City Limits
-  Planning Area



Source: US Geological Survey, 2009; City of Pacifica, 2008; San Mateo County, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.

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Physical Characteristics

Pacifica's physical characteristics are described in detail below, by general area and type of use.

Residential

The various stages of Pacifica's development produced different street patterns, lot dimensions, typical housing types and densities. In West Sharp Park, single-family houses on narrow lots and multi-family housing are intermixed, and a grid street pattern prevails. Other early communities, including Pedro Point, Vallemar, and Rockaway/Rockaway Beach, developed in narrow valleys and on hillsides, with a mixture of lot sizes and irregular street patterns.

The early postwar neighborhoods of Fairmont, Fairmont West, Westview-Pacific Highlands, Fairway Park, and West Linda Mar, are typified by 5,000 square foot single-family lots, and curvilinear street patterns. A suburban street pattern with larger lots and lower densities is typical in the later development of Linda Mar and Park Pacifica.

West Edgemar-Pacific Manor has evolved to contain a high concentration of multi-family housing along Esplanade Avenue. Multi-family housing is also clustered around Hickey Boulevard and Gateway Drive; along Oddstad and Terra Nova Boulevards; and mixed in with single-family houses in West Sharp Park.

Pacifica's neighborhoods are largely built out, with a scattering of vacant lots providing limited opportunities for infill development. The proposed General Plan supports continued investment in existing neighborhoods and development of a greater variety of housing types, while ensuring that new development is compatible in scale and density and respectful of neighbors.

Non-residential

Pacifica has no downtown but rather an assortment of activity centers. West Sharp Park has a concentration of public uses and a small business district, which is balanced by the shopping centers at West Linda Mar to the south and Pacific Manor to the north, while a tourist atmosphere is captured more clearly at Rockaway Beach. Other small activity centers are at Fairmont Shopping Center, Park Mall, and small business districts at Crespi Drive, Adobe Drive, and Vallemar.

Citywide

Views to the ocean and along the panoramic coastline are an integral part of Pacifica's character. Of primary importance are views of the ocean, landforms, and special coastal communities from public roadways, trails, and vista points.

REGULATORY SETTING

State Regulations

California Scenic Highways Program

Recognizing the value of scenic areas and the value of views from roads in such areas, the State Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program in 1963. This legislation sees scenic highways as "a vital part of the all-encompassing effort...to protect and enhance California's beauty, amenity and quality of life." Under this program, a number of State highways have been designated as eligible for inclusion as scenic routes. Once the local jurisdictions through which the roadway passes have established a corridor protection program and the Departmental Transportation Advisory Committee recommends designation of the roadway, the State may officially designate roadways as scenic routes. Interstate highways, state highways, and county roads may be designated as scenic under the program. The Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official Scenic Highway Designation maps show designated highway segments, as well as those that are eligible for designation. Changes to the map require an act of the legislature.

Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road in Pacifica have been identified by the State and County as eligible for scenic highway status. Local Scenic roadway designation requires a corridor study, a program to enhance the scenic qualities, and adoption of the scenic roadway designation and its protection plan. Such a plan has not been adopted for either roadway in Pacifica.

Regional Regulations

San Mateo County General Plan

San Mateo County has regulations that attempt to preserve the County's scenic resources. The 1986 San Mateo County General Plan includes the Visual Quality Chapter, which describes the visual character of San Mateo County's topography, natural vegetation, water bodies, developed areas and scenic roads and corridors. The Plan also explains the existing visual controls, analyzes relevant issues, as well as provides statements of policy to guide decision-makers in managing the preservation and modification of these resources.¹

¹ San Mateo County General Plan 1986, page 4.1.

Figure 3.9-2: Pacifica Visual Resources



Views of the ocean and along the panoramic coastline are an integral part of the visual character of Pacifica. The City is also characterized by natural landforms and coastal bluffs.

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Local Regulations

Pacifica General Plan Community Design Element

The current General Plan's Community Design Element recognizes the value of Pacifica's natural features and distinctive communities, and also the potential for a more cohesive overall identity. It recommends that the City designate planning districts, and establish development rules which preserve and enhance the character of each area. The Element's policies include the following:

- Preserve the unique qualities of the City's neighborhoods.
- Encourage the upgrading and maintenance of existing neighborhoods.
- Protect the City's irreplaceable scenic and visual amenities.
- Establish development standards that would keep open the steep slopes and visually prominent ridgelines.
- Require underground utilities in all new development.
- Establish design review standards to be employed early in the planning process.
- When determining level of development, the City shall consider views of the ridgelines from the Bay side of the Peninsula, as well as from the Pacifica side.

Pacifica Zoning Code

Hillside Preservation District

To protect important views from public areas and the sensitive terrain of hillside areas, the City has special development regulations for the Hillside Preservation District (HPD), which requires submission of development plans, grading plans, and other documentation. Hillside development also receives special consideration in the City's Design Guidelines, which are used to evaluate proposed projects. The key issues for hillside development are slope stability, grading, and visual impact. Prominent ridgelines are identified based on their visual importance or scenic quality. Owners must focus development on suitable portions of their property off the ridges, to protect the scenic quality of ridgelines.

Coastal Zone Combining District

The Coastal Zone Combining District provides special regulations to ensure appropriate protection of the undeveloped coastal bluffs and promontories, as well as to developed coastal areas. The City's Coastal Zone Combining District ensures that the goals and policies of the California Coastal Act are followed. These goals include the protection and enhancement of the coastal environment, including its visual resources.

Pacifica Design Guidelines

Pacifica's Design Guidelines are to be used by staff when reviewing the design of all new developments and additions, and are meant to encourage high-quality and context-sensitive buildings, without stifling creativity in design. The document's guidance on site planning, building design, and landscaping issues includes the following:

- Site plans should incorporate advantageous natural features, and should take into account solar orientation, privacy, and impact on adjacent places;
- Buildings should complement the character of surrounding neighborhoods, including being scaled appropriately even where zoning allows for more;
- The purpose of landscaping should be to have interplay with good buildings, not to hide bad ones.

Landscaping should be designed to conserve water; the guidelines seek to enable small, green backyards, but discourage large expanses of turf or water-requiring plants unless they are programmatically needed.

Impact Analysis

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Implementation of the proposed General Plan would have a potentially significant adverse impact if it would:

- Criterion 1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Criterion 2:** Substantially damage scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) visible from state- or county-designated or eligible scenic highways.
- Criterion 3:** Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area and its surroundings.
- Criterion 4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS

A programmatic visual assessment was conducted through multiple windshield surveys of the planning area and photographs taken of views from representative locations throughout the city. To evaluate potential impacts on visual resources in Pacifica, this analysis considered potential degradation to existing views and scenic resources, and existing visual character of the city. As aesthetics and visual resources are subjective by nature, the impacts are qualitatively evaluated.

IMPACT SUMMARY

Adoption of the land use designations in the Land Use Element of the proposed General Plan could result in higher density or intensity development that could partially obstruct views currently available to the public. However, implementation of policies in the proposed General Plan would reduce the impacts of this development on visual resources. Proposed policies would strengthen design guidance in developed areas, and facilitate the preservation of the hillsides, open space, beaches, and other natural areas, which are important visual features. While the proposed General Plan eliminates the existing single height limit in the city with height limits that vary by zone, future development will be subject to regulation and review mechanisms to ensure there is no substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas.

Scenic resources are integral to Pacifica's identity as a city, and preserving them is an important part of these proposed Plans. The proposed General Plan would not substantially damage scenic resources that are visible from state- or county-designated or eligible scenic highways (particularly Highway 1). A number of the proposed Plan's policies provide protections for scenic resources, including trees, historic buildings, and ridgelines, to ensure that they remain visible from scenic roadways.

The land use changes in the proposed General Plan will not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Pacifica. All existing open space areas are preserved and scenic resources are protected under the proposed General Plan. Future development in Pacifica may occur at a higher density than currently exists in the city. Policies, zoning designations and design guidelines included in the proposed General Plan will sensitively govern the formal characteristics of new development to ensure they are compatible with existing neighborhood character and quality. The proposed General Plan would create a more unified, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing streetscape that maintains existing scenic vistas. It is expected that the proposed General Plan will have a beneficial impact on the visual character in many parts of Pacifica.

New development under the proposed General Plan is not expected to create new sources of light or glare that could substantially affect day or nighttime views in the area.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact

3.9-1 Implementation of the proposed General Plan would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. (*Less than Significant*)

The proposed General Plan recognizes that scenic vistas along the panoramic coastline and views to the ocean, beaches, and hillsides are an integral part of Pacifica's character and must be preserved for the future. Of primary importance are views of the ocean, landforms, and special coastal communities from public roadways, trails, and vista points. A number of the proposed Plan's policies provide long-term protections for scenic vistas in Pacifica while also creating opportunities for development in already-developed areas of the city; these policies include the

continuation of the Hillside Preservation District program and Design Guidelines and Review for development projects.

The land use designations included in the proposed Plan continue to preserve open spaces in Pacifica, including hillside land, beaches, and bluffs, for conservation and recreation, and in doing so preserve the potential for views of those open spaces. The proposed Plan eliminates the existing single height limit in the city with height limits that may vary by zone, allowing taller buildings in the Visitor-Serving Commercial and Mixed Use Center districts. Over time, this higher height limit may result in concentrations of buildings in the 3- to 5-story range in very specific locations: in Rockaway Beach and the Quarry site, the old Wastewater Treatment Plant site, the Eureka Square site, and on lower Crespi Drive. Future redevelopment projects and development of vacant lots within and adjacent to already-developed neighborhoods will be subject to regulation and review mechanisms to ensure there is no substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas.

The construction of new projects in the Planning Area could potentially result in short-term visual impacts including blockage or disruption of views by construction equipment and scaffolding, the removal of landscaping, temporary route changes, temporary signage, exposed excavation, and construction staging areas. However, these visual impacts will be short-term and will last intermittently during actual phased periods of construction at specific locations within the Planning Area. The final built condition of the projects will include landscaping and other design features to enhance the visual character and preserve view corridors of Pacifica's scenic vistas. As such, the proposed Plan would not significantly affect scenic vistas in Pacifica.

Proposed General Plan Policies that Reduce the Impact

Economic Sustainability Element:

- ES-I-20 **Create Gateways.** Create visually notable “gateways” to Pacifica, following the same design theme as the signage and wayfinding program, at major roadways where they enter the city (SR 1 at the northern and southern ends of the city, and Sharp Park Road and Hickey Boulevard at SR 35).
- ES-I-33 **Preserve the Experience of the Natural Environment.** Ensure that new development projects do not disrupt view corridors from prominent points or otherwise interfere with residents' and visitors' experience of Pacifica's natural areas and amenities.
- ES-I-34 **Appropriate Site Design.** Ensure that development projects adjacent to protected natural areas are designed to minimize impacts on those areas by employing low impact development techniques for stormwater management, using native/non-invasive landscaping, and minimizing nighttime lighting and glare.

Land Use Element

- LU-I-17 **Height Limit.** Replace a single citywide height limit with height limits that vary by zone, based on community input. These may allow greater heights for buildings in the Mixed Use Center and Visitor-Serving Commercial designations.

Community Design Element

CD-I-3 **Support Infill and Redevelopment.** Support compatible residential infill on vacant lots, and redevelopment of under-utilized commercial properties, and continue to use the Design Guidelines in evaluation of proposals that don't meet all development standards in residential districts.

Pacifica's Design Guidelines identify building form strategies including locating higher portions of the house to be less visible, "stepping down" the house toward adjoining lots, and breaking up the building mass into smaller sections. Good site planning should accommodate necessary parking without allowing parking to dominate the house frontage or front yard.

CD-G-5 **Hillsides and Prominent Ridgelines.** Maintain development standards that ensure that new development does not detract from the visual qualities of Pacifica's hillsides and visually prominent ridgelines.

CD-G-6 **Scenic and Visual Amenities of the Coastal Zone.** Protect the City's irreplaceable scenic and visual amenities in the Coastal Zone by protecting landforms, vegetation, special communities, and important viewsheds.

CD-I-9 **Minimize Visual Impacts of Hillside Development.** Require new development to employ innovative site planning, engineering and design techniques that:

- Seek first to avoid impacts to scenic resources through site planning and design;
- Minimize grading and conform with natural landforms to the greatest extent possible;
- Design structures so that they follow contours and limit their downslope exposure; and
- Use landscaping to screen and integrate buildings with the natural environment.

CD-I-10 **Protection of Ridgelines.** Protect visually prominent ridgelines from residential and commercial development.

Local access roads and trails may be allowed on visually prominent ridgelines provided they follow contours, minimize grading, and are unobtrusive in their design.

CD-I-11 **Hillside Preservation District Requirements.** Continue to implement the requirements of the Hillside Preservation District (HPD), including submission of siting and grading plans. Update the HPD to ensure that all steep slopes are covered and that sites on other terrain are not included.

CD-I-12 **Design Review.** Continue to use Design Guidelines to evaluate proposed projects in Planned Development, Hillside Development, and Special districts.

- CD-I-13 **Minimize Impacts of Coastal Development on Landforms.** Ensure that negative visual impacts resulting from new development in the Coastal Zone are minimized in areas characterized by bluffs and landforms. Strategies to implement this policy include:
- Prohibiting development on slopes in excess of 35 percent and highly visible tops of prominent landforms;
 - Requiring blufftop development to minimize impacts on the view from the ocean and beach below by implementing a setback from the bluff edge;
 - Requiring that development be clustered and contoured into the existing slope; and
 - Requiring that new development be scaled and designed to be subordinate to landforms in the Coastal Zone.
- CD-I-15 **Headlands Special Area.** In the zoning code, update the Headlands Special Area for the Rockaway Headlands, to specify very low-intensity visitor-serving use such as hikers' huts and kiosks. A view restaurant may be appropriate if access can be created without harming biological or scenic resources.
- CD-I-18 **Underground Utilities.** Continue to require underground utilities in all new development. Within scenic corridors, place lines underground or located there so they do not break the viewline of a roadway vista.
- CD-G-7 **Views from Scenic Routes.** Ensure that viewsheds from Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road are preserved and enhanced. These views are an essential part of Pacifica's identity.
- CD-G-8 **Gateways.** Create strong entrances and preserve the quality of experience of movement along primary travel routes, in particular along the coast.
- CD-I-20 **Scenic Corridor Plans.** Seek grant funding to develop local scenic corridor plans for Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road.
- CD-I-24 **Roadway Design.** Ensure that any proposed new roads or modification to existing roads which traverse scenic areas minimize visual impacts to views from scenic routes.

Where possible, the physical form of structures, grading and alignment should be integrated into the natural setting. Views to and from ridges should be protected.

Land Use Element

- LU-I-12 **Hillside Preservation.** Update the Hillside Preservation District and the zoning map to ensure that all steep and sensitive terrain is subject to these regulations. The Hillside Preservation map (Figure 4-4 of the proposed General Plan) should be used as a guide.

- LU-I-21 **Esplanade.** Establish appropriate zoning for privately-owned, undeveloped land on the west side of Esplanade Avenue to ensure minimal development consistent with the General Plan classification. Require an adequate setback from the bluff to ensure that any proposed development could withstand erosion resulting from a 100-year seismic or storm event, and preserve the view corridor to the ocean along Bill Drake Way.
- LU-I-37 **Cattle Hill and Fassler Ridge.** Establish zoning consistent with the Residential/Open Space/Agriculture designation on Cattle Hill and Fassler Ridge, as shown on the General Plan Land Use diagram, to ensure that new development is appropriate to the physical conditions and high scenic value of the ridge.

Certain locations are designated for Low Density Residential development; site planning in these areas should be subject to the Hillside Preservation District to provide clustered development. The Royce water tank site will retain a Utilities designation. Trail easements should be negotiated with land owners based on the Open Space and Recreation map (Figure 6-1 of the proposed General Plan).

Open Space and Community Facilities Element

- OC-G-5 **Open Space Preservation.** Preserve open space that protects natural resources, visual amenities, and public health and safety.

The top priority areas for conservation are beaches, oceanfront bluffs, ridgelines, hillsides areas adjacent to existing open space, and areas that support critical wildlife habitat and endangered species. See Figure 6-1 of the proposed General Plan.

- OC-I-22 **Open Space Restoration.** Continue to support local volunteer or community service organizations in implementing revegetation programs on the City's greenbelts or elsewhere to reduce erosion potential and enhance the visual quality of these areas for adjacent neighborhoods.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Impact

- 3.9-2 Implementation of the proposed General Plan would not substantially damage scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) visible from state- or county-designated or eligible scenic highways. (Less than Significant)**

Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road have been identified by the State and County as eligible for scenic highway status. Pacifica's scenic resources are an important part of its identity, and the proposed Plan intends to protect the city's scenic resources from substantial damage, particularly when visible from scenic highways. A number of the policies in the proposed Plan provide protection for the city's scenic resources, including trees, historic buildings, and ridgelines, to ensure that they remain visible from scenic roadways. Given that the proposed Plans are not

expected to substantially damage scenic resources visible from scenic highways, this potential impact is less than significant.

Proposed General Plan Policies that Reduce the Impact

Economic Sustainability Element

See ES-I-33 above.

Community Design Element

- CD-I-14 **Minimize Impacts of Coastal Development on Vegetation.** Continue to require that disturbance to vegetation be minimized in new development and that graded areas be promptly replanted with native vegetation.
- CD-I-19 **Roadway Enhancements.** Coordinate with Caltrans in an effort to ensure that future changes to the Coast Highway will also upgrade the appearance of the right-of-way.
Improvements should include landscaping and roadway design, as well as trails and visually-appealing pedestrian over-crossings.
- CD-I-21 **Parallel Trails for Non-Motorized Travel.** Improve walking, riding, and biking trails along roadways with the State scenic highway designation.
- CD-I-22 **Other Scenic Trails.** Improve pedestrian routes along corridors that provide access to locations of significant scenic quality, recreation, historic and cultural importance in Pacifica.
- CD-I-23 **Vehicle Access Points.** Maintain and improve existing scenic turnouts, public parking areas, access to regional parks, beaches and other recreation areas.
- CD-I-25 **High-Quality Design at Key Points.** Ensure that new development directly adjacent to Highway 1 in West and East Sharp Park helps to create a strong image of Pacifica's cultural and civic core, and that new development in the Rockaway Quarry site has a visual quality that enhances the natural setting and draws travelers in from the highway.
- CD-I-26 **Highway Frontage Design Guidelines.** Update the Design Guidelines to provide direction on how new buildings relate to Highway 1, both in its freeway and highway configuration.
- CD-I-27 **Gateway Signage.** Create unified gateway signage, for entrances along Highway 1, Sharp Park Road, Manor Drive, and Hickey Boulevard.

In addition, CD-G-5, CD-G-6, CD-G-7, CD-I-9, CD-I-10, CD-I-11, CD-I-12, CD-I-13, CD-G-8, CD-I-20, CD-I-24 listed above.

Conservation Element

- CO-G-10 **Trees.** Conserve trees and encourage native forestation and planting of appropriate trees and vegetation.
- CO-I-42 **Heritage Trees.** Protect trees designated by the City Council as having special value, according to the terms of the Heritage Tree Ordinance.
- CO-G-18 **Historic and Cultural Sites.** Conserve designated historic and cultural sites and structures that help define Pacifica's identity and character and increase public awareness and appreciation them.
- CO-I-71 **Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Continue to evaluate development projects for their historical significance and preservation value, using the criteria in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- CO-G-10 **Trees.** Conserve trees and encourage native forestation and planting of appropriate trees and vegetation.
- CO-I-42 **Heritage Trees.** Protect trees designated by the City Council as having special value, according to the terms of the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

.Land Use Element

See LU-I-12 listed above.

Open Space and Community Facilities Element

See OC-G-5 listed above.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Impact

3.9-3 Implementation of the proposed General Plan would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area and its surroundings. (*Less than Significant*)

As the majority of the Planning Area for Pacifica is protected open space or already-developed neighborhoods, most future development will be infill development. The proposed Plan establishes a comprehensive approach towards diverse types of development projects through policies that protect the character of existing neighborhoods while providing guidance for future development, such as ensuring compatibility with existing development and protecting natural and scenic resources.

The policies in the proposed General Plan provide guidelines for street, community design, and public realm improvements, which are intended to improve the existing visual character and quality of Pacifica. For instance, the proposals focus on the design of the public realm, focusing on fostering active corridors and vibrant activity centers. Streetscape improvements will foster pedestrian comfort and may include pedestrian amenities such as wider sidewalks, bulb-outs and additional pedestrian crossings. These improvements aim to enhance pedestrian access to transit, services, and recreation opportunities in the City.

In those areas where the proposed Plan calls for changes in land use and physical design, it is expected that the impact will be less than significant because the proposed changes in land use and physical design are intended to increase the visual quality of corridor, create a more unified visual experience, and fill in vacant and undesirable visual areas with attractive and economically vibrant new development.

The proposed General Plan will minimize aesthetic impacts, ensure harmony with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods, and foster livable neighborhoods along existing corridors. Therefore, the proposed Plan will not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the City, resulting in a less than significant impact.

Proposed General Plan Policies that Reduce the Impact

Economic Sustainability Element

ES-I-1 **Town Center.** Through a combination of mixed use land use designations/zoning, streetscape improvements, targeted public investment, and marketing strategies, promote Palmetto Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented destination with shops and services for residents and visitors alike.

ES-I-2 **Business Improvement District.** Work with property owners and the Palmetto Business Association to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) to finance local public improvements in the corridor.

ES-I-3 **City-Owned Catalyst Projects.** Use city-owned properties as catalysts for new development in the Palmetto area and elsewhere in the city.

For key opportunity sites such as the Old Wastewater Treatment Plant site on Beach Boulevard, the City may issue Request for Proposals for development.

ES-I-17 **Signage and Wayfinding.** Implement a unified, unique signage and wayfinding program for the City's distinct commercial and attractions.

Particular attention should be paid to providing clear visual linkages between separate, but proximate, areas of the city that would benefit from clearer connections. Signage and way finding could identify and link Palmetto Avenue; Sharp Park Golf Course; the future GGNRA visitors' center; Rockaway Beach; and Pacifica State Beach.

ES-I-18 **Public Realm Improvements.** Invest in streetscape and public space improvements to attract visitor-oriented development and improve Pacifica's image and the quality of life for residents.

Public realm improvement priority areas are: Palmetto Avenue; new public space adjacent to the Pier associated with redevelopment of the Beach Boulevard site; the Rockaway Beach oceanfront; new public space and streetscape associated with development in the Quarry site; the Pacific Manor shopping area and Esplanade Avenue overlooking the ocean; the Pedro Point shopping area; lower Linda Mar Boulevard and lower Crespi Drive.

- ES-I-21 **Shopping Center Upgrades.** Support upgrading existing centers to create an environment more conducive to attracting a broader base of customers and tenants.

In addition, see ES-I-20, ES-I-33, and ES-I-34 listed above.

Community Design Element

- CD-G-2 **Distinct Activity Centers.** Create primary activity centers at West Sharp Park, Rockaway Beach, and Linda Mar, and neighborhood centers in Pacific Manor and Park Pacifica (at and around the Park Mall site).

- CD-I-1 **Primary Activity Centers.** Create primary activity centers, each distinguished through land use, built form, public realm enhancements, and signage.

- ***West Sharp Park will be the City's civic and cultural core.*** Palmetto Avenue between Paloma Avenue and Clarendon Road is a vibrant, mixed-use main street, and the grid provides regular view corridors to the Ocean. Sharp Park's character will be signaled by higher-intensity buildings along the Highway 1 corridor, including at the Eureka Square site.
- ***Rockaway Beach will be the visitor-oriented center.*** Its charming coastal character will be strengthened by new development and the district will be extended with a connective street pattern onto the flat portion of the Quarry site. It may gain a new, defining feature such as a destination hotel or conference center.
- ***Linda Mar will be a center for recreation and community.*** Crespi Drive, in particular, will become a more diverse center of activity, including visitors to the beaches and trail system; seniors, youth, and families at an expanded community center park; and mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Linda Mar and Pedro Point Shopping Centers are also part of this center.

- CD-I-2 **Neighborhood Activity Centers.** Support smaller-scale neighborhood centers at Pacific Manor and around the Park Mall, enabling them to become walkable, mixed use districts catering primarily to Pacifica residents.

- CD-G-3 **Neighborhood Conservation.** Preserve the unique qualities of each of Pacifica's residential neighborhoods.

- CD-I-4 **High-Quality Multi-Family and Senior Housing.** Support attached, multi-family, and senior housing that relates positively to the street and surrounding areas, is accessible on foot to community amenities including transit, shopping and services,

and offers residents a range of amenities, and provide updated, illustrated Design Guidelines.

Larger buildings should vary in form, setback, height, color, and materials. Landscaping plays a role in defining spaces, creating interplay with building forms, and screening parking and utilities. Access and parking should be designed to minimize traffic impacts on residential streets. Buildings and open spaces should be oriented to maximize sunlight.

CD-I-5 **Second Units.** Facilitate the creation of second units that contribute to the variety of available housing and do not disrupt neighborhood character. Update the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines to address the integration of second units into the neighborhood fabric.

CD-I-6 **Commercial and Mixed Use Building Form.** Seek to ensure that new commercial and mixed use development creates an attractive and human-scaled built environment. Update the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines to address mixed use access, building form, the building-sidewalk relationship.

- Buildings should be varied to provide visual interest, while having a unified theme within each project.
- Building form should be responsive to context, including stepping down to adjacent, lower-scale uses, and establishing a fine-grained scale at street level.
- Commercial buildings and ground-floor commercial uses in mixed-use areas should have active frontages characterized by building windows and entrances supporting activity on the sidewalk.

Illustrated Design Guidelines should show how a fine grain of development offers more opportunities for public spaces, greater visual interest at the street level, a feeling of safety, and a diverse character. Chapter 4: Land Use discusses the need to update the zoning code to create new zoning districts and provide development standards corresponding to each commercial and mixed use General Plan land use classification.

CD-I-7 **Parking in Higher-Intensity Mixed Use Areas.** Update parking standards to require parking areas to be located behind buildings, in the center of blocks, or tucked under development, and update the Design Guidelines to cover parking issues in higher-intensity, mixed-use areas.

If development of above-grade structures is economically viable, the interaction of the parking structure with the street is a key element of design. The design and location of parking directly affects the viability of commercial areas, safety for all road users, and the quality and character of the street and pedestrian environment.

CD-I-8 **New Public Spaces as Part of Redevelopment.** Incorporate into the redevelopment of the City's Beach Boulevard property; Eureka Square Shopping Center; and Park Mall and/or the Sanchez Branch Library site small new plazas or public gathering spaces.

The role and character of public spaces in new development should be addressed in updated Design Guidelines.

In addition, see CD-I-3, CD-I-9, CD-I-11, CD-I-12, CD-I-13, CD-I-18, CD-I-19, CD-G-7, CD-G-8, CD-I-24, CD-I-25, CD-I-26, and CD-I-26 listed above.

Land Use Element

LU-G-1 **Coastal Development.** Ensure that development maximizes beach and coastal open space access and is oriented as much as possible to each particular coastal environment in use, design, and intensity.

Policies related to coastal access are provided in Chapter 6 of the proposed General Plan.

LU-G-2 **Concentrated Development.** Focus new development in or directly adjacent to already-developed areas, where it can be served by existing public services and where it will not have significant impacts on coastal or other resources.

LU-G-3 **Future Residential Development.** Limit development to sites that are not critical for open space connections or habitat preservation, and will be in harmony with the surrounding natural setting.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Impact

3.9-4 Implementation of the proposed General plan would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. (Less than Significant)

The construction of new buildings in the Planning Area may result in nighttime light or daytime glare. However, the impacts of these new buildings are likely to be insignificant. There are a number of circumstances that mitigate the potential for new or substantial sources of light pollution in Pacifica. To the extent that new development will occur under the proposed Plan, it will mainly occur as redevelopment of existing built sites or infill development of unused parcels between existing built sites. When facilities such as parking lots are replaced with buildings, these replacements may reduce nighttime sources of light. Similarly, infill development of underutilized or vacant parcels would result in new light sources that are congruous with nearby light sources (e.g., lighting from shop windows, or upper story residential windows). For projects on vacant or undeveloped land in the city, the policies of the proposed Plan help to ensure that lighting for new development is held to high design standards for light pollution and glare reduction. This potential impact will be less than significant.

Proposed General Plan Policies that Reduce the Impact

Conservation Element

CO-I-65 **Outdoor Lighting.** Establish outdoor lighting performance standards to minimize energy use while ensuring appropriate light levels. These can be met by:

- Greater use of photocells or astronomical time switches;
- Directional and shielded LED lights;
- Security lights with motion detectors; and
- Prohibitions against continuous all-night outdoor lighting unless required for security reasons.

Economic Sustainability Element

See ES-I-34 listed above.

Mitigation Measure

None required.