

4.1 AESTHETICS

Development under the LOCP would introduce new housing and commercial opportunities, and introduce new sources of light and glare in a high quality rural setting. Although the intensity of development would be less than currently envisioned under the Estero Area Plan, impacts to visual resources are still possible. However, the LOCP includes a robust policy framework intended to guide future development, and mitigate potential visual impacts, not only to offsite views of scenic resources, but to improve and enhance the existing urban design character of the community. With the policy framework, most programmatic impacts would be considered less than significant. Impacts related to the protection of scenic corridors are potentially significant but mitigable if more stringent policy language is included in the LOCP.

4.1.1 Setting

a. Physical Setting. The natural setting of Los Osos is a place of unique beauty. The Los Osos urban area is located at the westerly end of the picturesque and agriculturally productive Los Osos Valley and is bound by the environmentally important Los Osos Creek and riparian corridor on the east and southeast, and the older coastal dunes to the north, south, and southwest. The creek and dune-covered hills form a natural edge and greenbelt for the community. Morro Bay and its tidelands towards the north, the scenic Irish Hills towards the south, Montaña de Oro State Park towards the southwest, and Morro Bay State Park towards the northwest form natural, scenic backdrops.

b. Regulatory Setting. Various local regulations set forth criteria and specific requirements for the definition and preservation of visual resources, including (but not limited to) the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan, the Estero Area Plan, the Local Coastal Plan, and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

Federal. There are no federal regulations pertaining to aesthetic resources.

State. The California Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for designating and inventorying scenic highways. A highway may be designated scenic based on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the State Scenic Highway program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 through 263. Nomination of a highway occurs by a city or county. These entities must define the scenic corridor for the candidate highway, and must adopt ordinances, zoning or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor. There are five required elements for scenic corridor protection.

1. Regulation of land use and density of development;
2. Detailed land and site planning;

3. *Control of outdoor advertising;*
4. *Careful attention to and control of earth moving and landscaping; and*
5. *The design and appearance of structures and equipment.*

Highway 1 is designated as a state scenic highway from the City of San Luis Obispo to the Monterey County line and is referred to as the North Coast Scenic Byway. Its designation is based on views from the highway of rocky headlands that appear to tumble into the Pacific Ocean and views of the mountainous coast. There are no discernible views of Highway 1 from the LOCP area.

Local. Local regulations pertaining to protection and management of visual resources are found in the San Luis County General Plan, the Estero Area Plan (updated 2009), the Local Coastal Plan, the Coastal Zone Framework for Planning, and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

Also note that the proposed Los Osos Community Plan is a regulatory document that is intended to expand upon the policy framework of the Estero Area Plan. Because this is not an existing document, but the subject of the EIR analysis, it is not included in the existing Regulatory Setting. However, its policies are analyzed in the Impact Analysis section relative to their adequacy to provide sufficient regulatory protections for visual resources, when considered in combination with the existing regulations described below.

County of San Luis Obispo Conservation and Open Space Element, San Luis Obispo County General Plan (2010)

Scenic Resources

Policy VR 1.1 Adopt Scenic Protection Standards

Protect scenic views and landscapes, especially visual Sensitive Resource Areas (SRAs) from incompatible development and land uses

Implementation Strategy VR 1.1.1 Identify and Designate Scenic Landmarks and Landscapes

After extensive public participation, identify and designate scenic landscapes and important scenic landmarks that define the image of the county in order to conserve highly sensitive areas. This effort will refine and supplement the existing designated scenic areas, such as Sensitive Resource Area combining designations for visual resources, using recognized methods.

Implementation Strategy VR 1.1.2 Amend Plans and Ordinances

Amend the Land Use Ordinance, Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and/or Area Plans, as applicable to enact or revise ordinance standards to protect scenic resources. Adoption and implementation of scenic protection standards shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands consistent with AGP30. Standards for land use permits, including industrial and processing uses, and subdivisions should include visual assessments by qualified experts; visually effective setbacks near highways and roadways; siting in unobtrusive locations; and standards for height, architectural design, landscaping, lighting, and signs. The standards should

emphasize avoiding visual impacts through alternative locations and designs where feasible. Establish consistent Countywide Viewshed Protection Standards.

*Policy VR 2.1 Develop in a manner compatible with Historical and Visual Resources
Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that are compatible with the natural landscape and with recognized historical character, and discourage designs that are clearly out of place within rural areas.*

*Policy VR 2.2 Site Development and Landscaping Sensitively
Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that emphasize native vegetation and conform grading to existing natural forms. Encourage abundant native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping that screens buildings and parking lots and blends development with the natural landscape. Consider fire safety in the selection and placement of plant material, consistent with Biological Resources Policy BR 2.7 regarding fire suppression and sensitive plants and habitats.*

*Policy VR 3.1 Identify and Protect Community Separators
Identify Community Separators and propose land use strategies and development standards to maintain separate, identifiable cities and communities with intervening rural land. Involve landowners and communities in this process. Identification and designation of Community Separators shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands consistent with AGP 30.*

*Policy VR 3.2 Community Involvement
Encourage communities adjacent to Community Separators to maintain a sense of place and separation through education about the importance of separators. Community advisory groups or nonprofit organizations could lead these efforts.*

*Policy VR 3.3 Conservation Tools
Collaborate with community advisory councils, cities, landowners, and non-profit conservation organizations to propose voluntary scenic, agricultural, or conservation easements and/or greenbelt programs that support private landownership while retaining the visual resources within Community Separators.*

*Policy VR 3.4 Community Edges
Maintain clear community edges for urban and village areas with appropriate plan designations when updating community and area plans. Avoid suburban or low-density sprawl at the edges of communities.*

*Policy VR 4.1 Designation of Scenic Corridors
Designate scenic corridors based on the recommendations for Scenic Corridor Studies, for the candidate roads and highways listed in the Conservation and Open Space Element.*

Implementation Strategy VR 4.1.1 Scenic Corridor: Work Plan

Propose a priority list and work program for consideration by the Board of Supervisors to conduct corridor studies and designate the candidate roads and highways listed in this Element. At a minimum, the corridor studies should (a) specify the features that need to be protected through a site-specific analysis of each viewshed; (b) state why it is important to protect those

features; (c) where applicable, establish specific mapped boundaries that define the minimum area necessary to protect the identified features; (d) identify the type of inappropriate development that should be regulated; (e) Involve area property owners; and (f) be accompanied by an economic assessment.

Implementation Strategy VR 4.1.2 Scenic Corridor: Design Standards

Establish scenic corridor design standards in conjunction with scenic corridor and highway designations. Regulations should be modeled after the Highway Corridor Design Standards in place in the Land Use Element. Guidelines and standards should require sensitive siting of development and visually effective setbacks. In addition, the guidelines and standards should address siting and building design below ridgetops, access roads, landscaping, building height, signs, lighting, and outdoor advertising. Any regulations should ensure that there would not be undue restrictions on private property or agricultural operations. In addition, design standards for projects subject to discretionary review should balance the protection of scenic resources with protection of agricultural resources and facilities. Industrial, processing and similar uses should be located outside of scenic viewsheds as the first priority, or if not feasible, requiring unobtrusive designs.

Policy VR 4.2 Balanced Protection

Balance the protection of scenic resources with the protection of biological and agricultural resources that may co-exist within the scenic corridor.

Policy VR 5.1 Retain Existing Scenic Access

Encourage Caltrans to maintain existing scenic vista points. Where vista points and turnouts must be eliminated due to bluff erosion, other hazards, or operational needs, they should be replaced in reasonable proximity if feasible.

Policy VR 5.2 Create New Scenic Access

The County and Caltrans, as applicable, should identify, construct, and maintain additional scenic overlooks, turnouts, or vista points along designated scenic corridors. Vista points, overlooks, and turnouts should include parking, support facilities, and interpretive features as appropriate.

Policy VR 5.3 Sale of Public Lands

Seek to assure, through required General Plan conformity reports and the disposal of County-owned lands, that the sale of publicly owned land is consistent with the goals and policies in this Element to protect the county's visual resources.

Policy VR 6.1 Urban Design

Ensure that new multi-family residential, mixed-use, and commercial or other non-residential development in the urban and village areas is consistent with local character, identity, and sense of place.

Policy VR 7.1 Nighttime Light Pollution

Protect the clarity and visibility of the night sky within communities and rural areas, by ensuring that exterior lighting, including streetlight projects, is designed to minimize nighttime light pollution.

Policy VR 9.1 Underground Utilities

Encourage all existing areas with overhead lines, particularly the candidate Scenic Corridors listed in this Element, to be placed underground through special districts, supplementing existing funding through Rule 20A utility fees. The County Undergrounding Coordinating Committee should give high priority to these critical areas, as well as central business districts and urban corridors. Government agencies should set an example by ensuring that utilities serving public properties are relocated underground as part of the construction or remodeling of public facilities.

Policy VR 9.2 Utility Service Lines

Utility companies should prepare long-range corridor plans for service lines in consultation with local organizations and government agencies. New transmission lines that would be visually damaging should be designed to minimize visual effects. In addition, access roads and right-of-way clearing should be kept to the minimum necessary where new installation or repair of existing installations occurs.

Open Space Policies (OSP)

Policy OS 1.1 Future Open Space Protection

Continue to identify and protect open space resources with the following characteristics:

- Recreation areas*
- Ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources such as natural area preserves, streams and riparian vegetation, unique, sensitive habitat, natural communities; significant marine resources*
- Archaeological, cultural, and historical resources*
- Scenic areas*
- Hazard areas*
- Rural character*

Policy OS 1.8 Land Divisions and Development

Encourage the use of cluster land divisions and cluster development that will locate residential clusters on the least environmentally sensitive portions of properties.

OSP25 Development and Land Divisions Within Scenic Corridors

- a. Proposed discretionary development and land divisions within scenic corridors shall address the protection of scenic vistas as follows:*
 - 1. Balance the protection of the scenic resources with the protection of biological resources that may co-exist within the scenic corridor.*
 - 2. Locate structures, roads, and grading on portions of a site that minimize visual impact. Locate structures below prominent ridgelines and hilltops so they are not silhouetted against the sky. Encourage architectural/structural solutions that achieve in the least obtrusive manner the property owner's desire to enjoy scenic views.*

County of San Luis Obispo Agriculture Element, San Luis Obispo County General Plan (1998)

Agriculture Policies (AGP)

AGP30 Scenic Resources

- a. *Designation of a scenic corridor through the public hearing process as described under OSP24, and its subsequent management as described in OSP25, shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands.*
- b. *In designated scenic corridors, new development requiring a discretionary permit and land divisions shall address the protection of scenic vistas as follows:*
 1. *Balance the protection of the scenic resources with the protection of agricultural resources and facilities. When selecting locations for structures, access roads, or grading, the preferred locations will minimize visibility from the scenic corridor and be compatible with agricultural operations.*
 3. *Use natural landforms and vegetation to screen development whenever possible.*
 4. *In prominent locations, encourage structures that blend with the natural landscape or are traditional for agriculture.*

Estero Area Plan, Revised 2009

Chapter 6 Environmental and Cultural Resource Protection Policies and Programs Section III, Combining and Other Designations

E. Sensitive Resources Areas (SRA)

Although no SRAs are identified within the Los Osos urban area relative to the protection of visually sensitive areas, the Morros are designated as an SRA with the rural portion of the Estero Area. Portions of these, including Hollister Peak and Cerro Cabrillo are visible from within the Los Osos Community Plan area. For this reason, the applicable SRA is included here:

Other Rural Areas

16. The Morros SRA and Critical Viewshed, Including Cerro Cabrillo, Hollister Peak and Associated Hills (SRA). *These unique volcanic peaks stretch from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay and separate the Chorro and Los Osos Valleys. This chain of peaks forms spectacular scenic backdrops and natural landmarks that rise above the valley floor and help define the character of the area.*

The SRA covers Cerro Cabrillo, Hollister Peak and associated hills from the tops of these peaks, hills and connecting ridges down to the 300-foot elevation. These areas correspond to the visually prominent peaks and backdrops that are visible from Highway 1, Los Osos Valley Road, Turri Road, and South Bay Blvd. The SRA standards in this plan are intended to protect scenic vistas from those roads.

Chapter 7 Planning Area Standards

Section IV, Rural Area Standards, Areawide

Although the Los Osos Community Plan is not within the rural portion of the Estero Area Plan, there are protected scenic views within the rural area that are visible from portions of Los Osos. For that reason, these resources are sensitive to development within Los Osos, and are described below.

B. Irish Hills Scenic Backdrop Critical Viewshed and Los Osos Valley Road Scenic Corridor. The Irish Hills Scenic Backdrop Critical Viewshed and the Los Osos Valley Road Scenic Corridor (see Figure 7-8 of the Estero Area Plan) are established with the primary purpose of protecting the following: important views of scenic backdrops, background vistas and foreground areas from Los Osos Valley Road; important plant and animal habitats; and watershed resources. All applicable standards in the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance apply within this area (e.g., those in Chapter 23.04).

Section VI, Los Osos Urban Area Standards

This section of the Estero Area Plan includes a variety of zoning standards that pertain to new development in each land use designation within the Los Osos Urban Area. These related to building heights, setbacks, and urban design, including the form and massing of commercial and residential development. There are also sign regulations, and other provisions to minimize visual impacts, such as the requirement to underground utilities within the Baywood Village area. Key highlights from this section are described below:

Communitywide

D. Bayfront Development

- 1. Height. Proposed structures are limited to the maximum heights shown on Figures 7-41 and 7-42. [ranges from 14 to 22 feet, depending on location]*
- 2. Fences. Fences shall not be constructed that would restrict public views of the bay from public roads or preclude lateral public access.*
- 3. Vegetation Protection. On-site vegetation shall be preserved whenever possible. Grading shall be minimized and limited to the building pad and driveway, road and other required improvements.*

Commercial Retail

A. Baywood Park Commercial Area

- 2. Baywood Village. New commercial development shall meet the following standards:*
 - a. Height shall be limited to 25-feet.*
 - b. Low monument signs (maximum 8 feet in height not to exceed 20 square feet) shall be used.*
 - c. All utility lines shall be undergrounded from property lines to the commercial structure.*

Residential Multi-Family

The following standards apply only to lands within the Residential Multi-Family land use category.

B. Height Limitation. Maximum height shall be 28 feet except for bayfront areas (see Figures 7-41 and 7-42).

Residential Single Family

The following standards apply only to lands within the Residential Single Family land use category.

A. Height Limitations. Maximum height shall be 28 feet except where other applicable planning area standards establish other specific height limits (see Figures 7-41 and 7-42).

F. Highland Area - Cabrillo Estates

1. Architectural Control Committee. No grading or building permit is to be issued until the applicant has filed with the Planning Department certification that the Architectural Control Committee for Cabrillo Estates, as it then exists and functions: 1) has reviewed pertinent plans and specifications and any applicable land use permit and 2) recommends approval or disapproval of such plans and specifications. If the Architectural Control Committee recommends disapproval of the plans and specifications, the certification is to set forth the reasons for such disapproval. The county approval body (as determined by Sections 23.02.030 through 23.02.034 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance) is to review the reasons for disapproval of the plans and specifications by the committee. In the event the committee fails to make its recommendation within thirty (30) days after the plans and specifications have been submitted to it, no recommendations will be required and the proposed plans and specifications shall be deemed to be favorably recommended. The approval body is not bound by any decision of the committee, and may grant permits and approvals under these provisions.

6. Height Limitation. The maximum height of all buildings and structures shall be 15 feet above the highest point of the lot when measured from the highest point of the roof.

Residential Suburban

The following standards apply only to lands within the Residential Suburban land use category.

G. Heights - West of Pecho Valley Road. Maximum height shall be 22 feet.

K. Highland Area - Design. The following shall apply to development within this area: (This does not include the Morro Palisades property.)

1. Site selection shall be such as to preserve significant areas of ecological or public visual importance. All development shall be clustered to preserve a maximum of 60 percent of each parcel in undeveloped open space.

2. No development shall be permitted on slopes exceeding 20%.

3. Building exteriors shall be principally composed of native materials and textures (such as wood siding and shingles). Extensions, including roofs, shall be of subdued natural hues and tones harmonizing with the colors of the natural environment.

Chapter 8: Coastal Access

Section VI. Estero Area Plan Goals; Policies And Standards

C. Standards: Los Osos

3. Fences. Fences shall not be constructed that would restrict public views of the bay from public roads or preclude lateral public access. (Chapter 7: VI., Los Osos Urban Area Standards, Communitywide, Bayfront Development)

Local Coastal Plan: Coastal Plan Policy Document

Chapter 4. Energy & Industrial Development

Policy 16: Siting within Viewsheds

Transmission line rights-of-way shall be routed to minimize impacts on viewsheds in the coastal zone, especially in scenic rural areas, and to avoid locations in or adjacent to significant or unique habitat, recreational, or archaeological resources, whenever feasible. Scarring, grading, or other vegetation removal shall be minimized and disturbed areas shall be revegetated with plants similar to those in the area. [This policy shall be implemented as a standard.]

Policy 17: Undergrounding Requirements

Where above-ground transmission line placement would unavoidably affect views, undergrounding shall be required where it is technically and economically feasible unless it can be shown that other alternatives are less environmentally damaging. When above-ground facilities are necessary, design and color of the support towers shall be compatible with the surroundings to the extent safety and economic considerations allow. Above-ground pipeline or transmission facilities should be sited outside view corridors of scenic areas where alternate corridors are feasible.

Where above-ground pipeline or transmission facilities must be sited within a scenic corridor, the pipelines and/or utility lines should not be located along the road right-of-way for continuous extended distances unless the alternative routes are technically or economically infeasible.

Siting of transmission lines should avoid the crests of roadways to minimize their visibility on distant views. Lines should cross roadways at a downhill low elevation site or a curve in the road unless the alternative routes are technically or economically infeasible.

Chapter 10. Visual and Scenic Resources

Policy 1: Protection of Visual and Scenic Resources

Unique and attractive features of the landscape, including but not limited to unusual landforms, scenic vistas and sensitive habitats are to be preserved protected, and in visually degraded areas restored where feasible. [Also referenced in the Draft LOCP]

Policy 2: Site Selection for New Development

Permitted development shall be sited so as to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas. Wherever possible, site selection for new development is to emphasize locations not visible from major public view corridors. In particular, new development should utilize slope created “pockets” to shield development and minimize visual intrusion.

Policy 6: Visual Compatibility

Within the urbanized areas defined as small-scale neighborhoods or special communities, new development shall be designed and sited to complement and be visually compatible with existing characteristics of the community. [Also referenced in the Draft LOCP]

Policy 8: Utility Lines within View Corridors

Where feasible, utility lines within public view corridors should be placed underground whenever their aboveground placement would inhibit or detract from ocean views. In all other cases, where feasible, they shall be placed in such a manner as to minimize their visibility from the road.

Coastal Zone Framework for Planning

Several portions of the Coastal Zone Framework for Planning apply to visual resources.

Chapter 5: Circulation Element

C. Goals and Objectives for Circulation

1. Developing and enhancing a system of scenic roads and highways through areas of scenic beauty without imposing undue restrictions on private property, or unnecessarily restricting the placement of agricultural support facilities.

G. Scenic Highways

1. Identify scenic areas and features within view of state highways, city streets, and county roads in the open space plan and incorporate them into the applicable Land Use Element Area plan, designating them within sensitive resource areas.
2. Adopt programs and standards in the Land Use Element Area Plans to protect scenic quality of identified areas and to maintain views from designated scenic roads and highways. Provide special attention to the location, siting, and design of visible structures, access roads, and outdoor advertising, while ensuring that there will not be undue restriction on

- private property or agricultural operations. Encourage area native plants in landscaping. Promote placing utilities underground where feasible.
3. Ensure that the location, design, and construction of each scenic road or highway blends into and complements the scenic corridor, by coordinating among involved agencies for the integrated design of the project.
 4. Promote special scenic treatment and design within scenic road and highway rights-of-way, to include highway directional signs, guardrails and fences, lighting, provisions of scenic outlooks, frontage roads, grading vegetation and highway structures.

Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance

Applicable sections include the following: 23.03.186-Landscape plans, 23.04.021-Parcel size standards, 23.05.034-Grading standards, and 23.05.064-Tree Removal standards and 23.04.210 Visual Resources.

The proposed LOCP is not part of the existing regulatory framework. Applicable policies, programs and standards included in the proposed LOCP are evaluated in the Impact Analysis, to the extent they would adequately guide future development, and thus mitigate potential programmatic impacts related to this issue.

4.1.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds.

Methodology. The analysis is based on an evaluation of whether the LOCP would accommodate new development in visually sensitive areas, and the extent to which its policy framework would adequately address potential impacts from specific development projects that might occur under the LOCP.

The assessment of aesthetic impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective in nature. Different viewers react to viewsheds and aesthetic conditions differently. This evaluation measures the existing visual environment against the anticipated level of development under the proposed LOCP. For this analysis, the community has been observed and photographically documented in the surrounding context. Primary view corridors, typically major public roadways, were used as a basis for classifying impacts, because they define the primary public vantage points for the largest number of viewers within the community.

It should be noted that project-level details for individual development projects are not known at this time. Therefore, this analysis is programmatic in nature and uses a “reasonable worst case scenario” to assess potential impacts regarding the appearance of future development in the context of existing regulations and design standards pertaining to aesthetics.

Significance Thresholds. The following criteria are based on the County’s Initial Study and Initial Study checklist, and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. An impact is considered significant if development facilitated by the Community Plan would:

- *Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view;*
- *Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view;*
- *Change the visual character of an area;*
- *Create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas; or*
- *Impact unique geologic or physical features.*

b. Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

Threshold: Would the Community Plan create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view?

Impact AES-1 Development under the Community Plan would not result in aesthetically incompatible site open to public views. Development would be required to comply with Community Plan design standards, which would reduce impacts to a Class III, less than significant, level.

As part of the Community Plan, design guidelines and standards were established for the community as a whole, as well as for new commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential projects. Guidelines are measures that projects should endeavor to undertake, where possible. Standards are requirements that must be met. Together, the guidelines and standards are meant to cultivate aesthetically compatible development in the community of Los Osos. Applicable guidelines and standards include, but are not limited to: height restrictions, prohibition of certain building materials and encouragement for others, tree planting requirements, use of compatible building massing and architectural style, inclusion of pedestrian-scale details, and massing to avoid the appearance of large, continuous building facades.

Compliance with proposed design guidelines and standards would ensure that future development would not be aesthetically incompatible with the existing community. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures would be required.

Residual Impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold: *Would the Community Plan introduce a use within a scenic vista open to public view?*

Impact AES-2 The Community Plan would introduce development within a scenic public view. However, design guidelines and standards included in the Community Plan that address the appearance of future development projects in these areas would ensure that impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

A scenic vista for purposes of CEQA can be defined as a viewing point that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape available to the general public. Although the proposed LOCP does not define “scenic vista”, for the purposes of this analysis, a scenic vista will be views of these features from public places (e.g., roadways) that may be altered by future development within the LOCP. The Estero Area Plan identifies several scenic vistas outside the LOCP area that are visible from within the Los Osos Community area, which should therefore be considered in the project analysis. These include:

- Irish Hills Scenic Backdrop Critical Viewshed and Los Osos Valley Road Scenic Corridor. These are established to protect important views of scenic backdrops, background vistas and foreground areas from Los Osos Valley Road. Note that the protected portion of Los Osos Valley Road begins eastward from the eastern boundary of the Los Osos Valley Memorial Park, and is thus outside the LOCP area.
- The Morros SRA. The SRA covers Cerro Cabrillo, Hollister Peak and associated hills from the tops of these peaks, hills and connecting ridges down to the 300-foot elevation. These areas correspond to the visually prominent peaks and backdrops that are visible from Highway 1, Los Osos Valley Road, Turri Road, and South Bay Blvd. The SRA standards are intended to protect scenic vistas from those roads.

The Estero Area Plan also contains policies and programs regarding the protection of scenic hillsides, ridgelines, native trees, coastal views and open space. The degree to which the existing regulatory framework, in combination with the proposed LOCP policy framework, provides adequate protection of these resources will be the basis for determining the significance of the potential impact.

The proposed LOCP envisions urban development throughout the community, generally similar to what is currently allowed in the Estero Area Plan, but with important differences, in that some areas previously designated for development will now remain in Open Space. Other areas will still be developed, but with less intensive land uses, or at lower residential densities. In general, these changes will reduce potential long-term impacts on nearby scenic vistas compared to what might have otherwise occurred under the existing Estero Area Plan. Nevertheless, future development in currently undeveloped areas could have an adverse effect on scenic vistas, if not properly designed, especially with respect to setbacks and building heights as visible from public roadways, including South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road, which are identified as important view corridors.

Proposed LOCP Policies to Address Potential Impacts. The proposed LOCP includes the following policy framework to address potential impacts, which would be applied to future development within the area as appropriate:

2.5.3 Land Use

LU-1. Maintain a hard urban edge around the community of Los Osos, surrounded by a well-managed community greenbelt.

- A. Do not expand the Urban Reserve Line (URL) beyond what has been delineated in this plan.*
- B. Do not expand existing Residential land use categories or increase residential densities outside the Urban Service Line beyond what is delineated in this plan.*

Program LU-1.1. Los Osos Greenbelt. The County should support expansion, conservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the greenbelt as shown in Figure 4-1. The County should support efforts of public agencies, conservation organizations, and others to acquire easements and properties in fee within and outside of the URL to expand the greenbelt along the eastern and southern fringe of the community. Easements could be acquired through means such as purchase, approval of land use permits for development projects, and mitigation banking.

LU-3. Maintain a small-town atmosphere, while increasing opportunities for businesses and employment.

- A. Encourage new development to provide variety in appearance of housing in new neighborhoods and street-facing entrances that are less dominated by garages.*
- Program LU-3.1. Gateways. The County should work with the community to enhance and landscape entryways to the community along Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard in a way that reflects community identity. One preferred location for an entryway is a portion of the right-of-way at the northeast corner of Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard.*

Chapter 7, Planning Area Standards.

7.3 Communitywide Standards

E.2.c. Visual Resources. If applicable, building sites shall not be located on slopes or ridgetops so that structures are silhouetted against the night sky as viewed from public roads, public beaches, the ocean, or the Morro Bay estuary.

M. Coastal Access and Bayfront Development.

1. *Height.* Proposed structures on sites that are bayward of a line shown in Figure 7.3 [of the LOCP] are limited to a maximum height of 14 feet, except where a greater height is noted.

3. *Fences.* Fences shall not be constructed that would restrict public views of the bay from public roads or preclude lateral public access. Fences on the bayfront side of development shall not interfere with movement or migration of native wildlife.

N. *Building Height.* Exceptions to height limitation pursuant to Chapter 23.04 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance shall not apply to any planning area standards that specify maximum building height or building face height. Solar panels may extend 2 feet above the ridgeline.

Q. *Residential Development and Design Guidelines.* [This section provides a variety of guidelines intended to encourage diversity of appearance, discourage gated communities, provide for visually compatible fencing, and appropriate setback requirements. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

7.5 Land Use Category Standards

A.5. Baywood Commercial Area (Special Community)

b. *Height.* Maximum building height shall be 25 feet, except where a lower height limit is established.

j. *Baywood Design Guidelines.* [This section provides a variety of standards intended to improve the architectural character of development within the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

G. Recreation (REC)

4.b. *Portion of Tract 16436 West of Pecho Road, Lodging Design and Height Limitation.* All buildings shall be residential in scale and have a maximum height of 28 feet.

I. Residential Multi-Family (RMF)

1.b.2. *Height Limitation.* Maximum height shall be 28 feet, except for bayfront areas [which are less, per LOCP Figure 7-3].

J. Morro Shores Mixed Use Area (RMF, RSF, CS)

1. *Height.* Maximum height for residential, transient lodgings, and accessory uses shall be 28 feet.

5. Multi-Use Business/Commerce Park Standards

b. *Character.* The multi-use business park shall have landscaped open spaces in a campus-like character that provides an attractive environment and respects the natural environment. It shall be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and the community.

j. Height. Maximum building height shall be 30 feet.

k. Other Criteria. [This section includes a variety of design criteria intended to address potential compatibility and visual impacts. Refer to the draft LOCP for the complete description.]

8.a.(iii). Low Density Residential, Area 2: 8.8-acre property fronting on Ramona Avenue. Compatibility. Non-residential development shall be sited, designed, and landscaped to be compatible with surrounding residential areas. Several smaller buildings are preferred to fewer, more massive ones.

K. West of South Bay Boulevard RMF, REC

4. Design Guidelines. [This section provides a variety of guidelines intended to improve the character of development that recognize the visual sensitivity of this area. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

L. Residential Single-Family (RSF)

1. Height. Maximum height shall be 28 feet, except where other applicable planning area standards establish other specific height limits. [Draft LOCP describes modified limits within Cabrillo Estates]

M. Residential Suburban (RS)

3.b.(i). West of Pecho Area, South of Monarch Grove. Height. Maximum building height shall be 22 feet.

These policies and standards address a variety of design-related issues throughout the community, especially as they relate to building heights, setbacks, and land use compatibility. In the aggregate, they build on the existing framework of the Estero Area Plan, and protect visual resources, including those associated with the nearby Irish Hills and Morros, as well as those associated with the bay and estuary. In the aggregate, they provide a high level of programmatic protection, and serve as a clear basis for protecting these resources when applied to future development through the entitlement process associated with that development.

Impacts to nearby scenic vistas are therefore considered to be **less than significant (Class III)**.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are required, because the impact is less than significant. Although not identified as an impact, it is recommended that the LOCP identify the Morros and Irish Hills as protected resources within its policy framework (carried forward from the Estero Area Plan), in order to provide a clear basis for their protection. It is also recommended that views of the bay and across the bay be identified as potentially scenic resources in the LOCP, again to provide the basis for the policies already included in the plan to protect those resources.

Residual Impacts. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Threshold: *Would the Community Plan introduce a use within a scenic vista open to public view?*

Impact AES-3 Buildout under the LOCP would not impair views from currently designated scenic corridors. However, the LOCP does not address the evaluation of Pecho Valley Road, which is identified in the COSE as a potentially scenic corridor. In addition, both Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard could potentially qualify as critical viewsheds, which should be considered in the LOCP. This is a significant but mitigable (Class II) impact.

There are no designated scenic roadways within the Community Plan area. Los Osos Valley Road outside the LOCP area is designated as a scenic corridor, eastward of the Los Osos Valley Memorial Park. Within this corridor, there are views of the Irish Hills critical viewshed to the south, and views of hills subject to agricultural land uses to the north.

Although not designated as scenic corridors within the LOCP area, Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard provide scenic views of nearby natural resources, as described in Impact AES-2. Similarly, these corridors are also not identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element as “suggested scenic corridors” pursuant to COSE Policy VR 4.1. Although the proposed policy framework included in the LOCP to address potential aesthetic impacts is generally considered sufficient to address potential visual impacts along these corridors, they may warrant special protection under the County’s Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

Similarly, views from many other roadways within the community, including Pecho Road, Bayview Heights Drive and other collectors and/or local roads, may be considered to be generally scenic, largely because the overall setting of the community itself, in its location adjacent to the Morro Bay estuary, Pacific Ocean, Morro Bay sandspit, and nearby hillsides. The regulations included in the LOCP recognize this fact, and place adequate protections to protect public views of these resources from community roadways. However, because these roads are not as heavily used as the two major arterials identified above, it is not recommended that additional scenic roadways be identified in the LOCP for the purpose of putting additional regulations in place.

The County’s Conservation and Open Space Element designates Pecho Valley Road west of Rodman Drive through Montana de Oro State Park as a “suggested scenic corridor”, which means it is a candidate for potential evaluation under that document’s Policy VR 4.1, Designation of Scenic Corridors. Pursuant to that policy, a corridor study would include the following components:

- (a) specify the features that need to be protected through a site-specific analysis of each viewshed;

- (b) state why it is important to protect those features;
- (c) where applicable, establish specific mapped boundaries that define the minimum area necessary to protect the identified features;
- (d) identify the type of inappropriate development that should be regulated;
- (e) involve area property owners; and
- (f) be accompanied by an economic assessment.

The proposed LOCP does not include policies or programs to address the evaluation of this potentially scenic roadway.

Proposed LOCP Policies to Address Potential Impacts. The proposed LOCP includes the following policy framework to address potential impacts, which would be applied to future development within the area as appropriate:

2.5.3 Land Use

LU-1. Maintain a hard urban edge around the community of Los Osos, surrounded by a well-managed community greenbelt.

- C. Do not expand the Urban Reserve Line (URL) beyond what has been delineated in this plan.*
- D. Do not expand existing Residential land use categories or increase residential densities outside the Urban Service Line beyond what is delineated in this plan.*

Program LU-1.1. Los Osos Greenbelt. The County should support expansion, conservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the greenbelt as shown in Figure 4-1. The County should support efforts of public agencies, conservation organizations, and others to acquire easements and properties in fee within and outside of the URL to expand the greenbelt along the eastern and southern fringe of the community. Easements could be acquired through means such as purchase, approval of land use permits for development projects, and mitigation banking.

These policies and standards require a hard urban edge and protective greenbelt around the community. This will collectively have the effect of protecting the designated scenic corridor of Los Osos Valley Road outside the community. However, the proposed LOCP does not include policies or programs to address the evaluation of Pecho Valley Road, which is identified as a potentially scenic roadway under the Conservation and Open Space Element. Similarly, neither the COSE nor the LOCP include similarly protective policies for Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard where they traverse the community. This is considered a potentially **significant (Class II) impact** requiring mitigation.

Mitigation Measures. In addition to the policies discussed above, the following mitigation measures are required to reduce Impact AES-3 to a less than significant level.

AES-3(a) Pecho Valley Road Scenic Corridor Policy. The table under Section 2.4.1 of the LOCP shall be modified to include the following under the heading “Conservation and Open Space Element”:

Policy VR 4.1 Designation of Scenic Corridors. Designate scenic corridors based on the recommendations for Scenic Corridor Studies, for the candidate roads and highways listed in Table VR-2. Pecho Valley Road from Rodman Drive through Montana de Oro State Park is identified as a candidate scenic corridor.

In addition, the following language shall be added as a new policy in Section 2.5.5 of the LOCP:

Pecho Valley Road from Rodman Drive to the boundary of Montana de Oro State Park shall be designated as a Critical Viewshed. Development along this corridor shall be subject to the Visual Resource standards included in the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.04.210.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The Planning and Building Department shall add the recommended policy to the LOCP prior to Plan adoption.

Monitoring. Planning and Building shall ensure that the above language is included in the LOCP prior to adopting the plan.

AES-3(b) Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard Policy Modification. The following language shall be added as a new policy in Section 2.5.5 of the LOCP:

South Bay Boulevard, and Los Osos Valley Road east of South Bay Boulevard, shall be designated as a Critical Viewshed. Development along these corridors shall be subject to the Visual Resource standards included in the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.04.210.:

Plan Requirements and Timing. The Planning and Building Department shall add the recommended policy to the LOCP prior to Plan adoption.

Monitoring. Planning and Building shall ensure that the above language is included in the LOCP prior to adopting the plan.

Residual Impacts. With proposed mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold: Would the Community Plan change the visual character of the area?

Impact AES-4 Buildout under the LOCP would not degrade the visual character of the Community Plan area and its surroundings, because the proposed LOCP provides adequate protection of these resources in its policy framework. This is a less than significant (Class III) impact.

This impact addresses the potential for development under the proposed LOCP to substantially degrade the visual character within the community and the surrounding area.

Within the community itself, the urban design quality is highly variable. Residential buildings vary in age and style, and lack architectural cohesiveness. The visual quality of homes varies greatly, although many would regard this characteristic as a distinctive part of the Los Osos community character, which in the aggregate is recognizable as a semi-rural coastal community, similar to what might be found elsewhere in rural coastal California or on the Pacific coast in general.

The commercial core of the community west of South Bay Boulevard on Los Osos Valley Road is recognizable as such, but not visually distinctive. With large building setbacks and parking lots between the road and buildings, it tends to provide the feeling it is auto-oriented, and not conducive to pedestrian circulation. Visually, it tends to lack cohesiveness that are essential to developing and enhancing a community's character.

The community's partially-paved circulation system is part of the distinctive character of the community. While most roadways are paved, some are not, and many lack curbs gutters and sidewalks. Again, many people feel these features contribute to the overall character of the community, but others might feel that roadway improvements would be warranted to improve the overall visual quality of the town.

In contrast to the variable urban design quality of Los Osos, the edges of the community are visually striking. The existing visual character of the surrounding area is generally considered to be of very high quality, in a semi-rural setting, surrounded by distinctive visual resources such as the bay, estuary, Irish Hills and the Morros. The Estero Area Plan recognizes the value of these resources through extensive resource protection policies.

The Estero Area Plan also contains policies and programs regarding the community's overall character, including the protection of scenic hillsides, ridgelines, native trees, coastal views and open space. The degree to which the existing regulatory framework, in combination with the proposed LOCP policy framework, provides adequately protection of these resources will be the basis for determining the significance of the potential impact.

The proposed LOCP envisions urban development throughout the community, generally similar to what is currently allowed in the Estero Area Plan, but with important differences, in that some areas

previously designated for development will now remain in Open Space. Other areas will still be developed, but with less intensive land uses, or at lower residential densities.

With respect to community character, the proposed LOCP includes many policies that focus not only on the protection of scenic resources, but also on urban design. These include creating a more inviting commercial core (Central Business District) that enhances the existing community character.

Proposed LOCP Policies to Address Potential Impacts. The proposed LOCP includes the following policy framework to address potential community character related impacts, which would be applied to future development within the area as appropriate:

2.5.3 Land Use

LU-1. Maintain a hard urban edge around the community of Los Osos, surrounded by a well-managed community greenbelt.

- E. Do not expand the Urban Reserve Line (URL) beyond what has been delineated in this plan.*
- F. Do not expand existing Residential land use categories or increase residential densities outside the Urban Service Line beyond what is delineated in this plan.*

Program LU-1.1. Los Osos Greenbelt. The County should support expansion, conservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the greenbelt as shown in Figure 4-1. The County should support efforts of public agencies, conservation organizations, and others to acquire easements and properties in fee within and outside of the URL to expand the greenbelt along the eastern and southern fringe of the community. Easements could be acquired through means such as purchase, approval of land use permits for development projects, and mitigation banking.

LU-2. Concentrate of cluster development to protect contiguous environmentally sensitive areas, including the habitat of rare, endangered and other sensitive species, and other biologically important communities.

LU-3. Maintain a small-town atmosphere, while increasing opportunities for businesses and employment.

- B. Encourage new development to provide variety in appearance of housing in new neighborhoods and street-facing entrances that are less dominated by garages.*
- C. Street trees and landscaping. Require street tree planting and substantial native, drought-tolerant landscaping with new development.*
- D. Consider neighborhood compatibility when reviewing discretionary development proposals. In particular, ensure consistency with the following principles:*
 - Integrate new development with the adjacent neighborhood*
 - Prevent development that is isolated by perimeter walls and fences*

- *Design new development to conserve energy and consider use of passive solar energy design.*
- *Protect sensitive habitat areas by locating development away from environmentally sensitive areas. Provide options, incentives and flexibility to accomplish this.*

Program LU-3.1. Gateways. The County should work with the community to enhance and landscape entryways to the community along Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard in a way that reflects community identity. One preferred location for an entryway is a portion of the right-of-way at the northeast corner of Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard.

Program LU-3.2. CBD Design and Enhancement. If there is property owner interest, the County should facilitate development of a design plan and possible accompanying standards and guidelines for the central business district the implement the following design principles, in addition to the design standards and guidelines listed for the central business district in Chapter 7, Planning Area Standards.

- A. Design streets, streetscapes, landscaping, parking lots, and buildings to encourage pedestrian use and activities.*
- B. Promote a mixture of commercial and residential uses.*
- C. Emphasize the importance of public spaces.*

The design plan should be developed together with property and business owners, with participation by surrounding neighborhoods. Also, if there is property owner interest, facilitate formation of a business improvement district or other entity in order to finance, implement and maintain improvements.

LU-6. Maintain and enhance the unique character of the Baywood Commercial area.

Program LU-6.1. Baywood Commercial Area Design and Enhancement. If there is property owner interest, the County should facilitate development of a design plan and possible accompanying standards and guidelines for the central business district the implement the following design principles, in addition to the design standards and guidelines listed for the Baywood Commercial in Chapter 7, Planning Area Standards.

- A. Design streets, streetscapes, landscaping, parking lots, and buildings to encourage pedestrian use and activities.*
- B. Emphasize the importance of public spaces.*
- C. Provide landscaped pedestrian spaces that are inter-connected by a network of walkways and plazas.*
- D. Provide traffic calming measures on 2nd Street.*
- E. Provide for a balance of neighborhood and visitor-serving uses.*

- F. *Provide access to the bay, and promote visitor-serving or tourist-oriented recreation focused on the bay.*
- G. *Encourage use of sidewalks and public spaces for restaurant seating, arts and crafts displays and other uses that encourage pedestrian activity.*
- H. *Encourage mixed residential and commercial/office uses throughout the Baywood Commercial area, as well as bed and breakfast accommodations on 3rd Street.*

The design plan should be developed together with property and business owners, with participation by surrounding neighborhoods. Also, if there is property owner interest, facilitate formation of a business improvement district or other entity in order to finance, implement and maintain improvements.

LU-8. Maintain a suburban character for specific Residential Single Family projects that will not be served by the communitywide wastewater project.

- A. *Retain a more suburban character in the Martin Tract and minimize removal of trees in the eucalyptus grove.*
- B. *Maintain a more suburban character in a portion of the Vista de Oro Area between the Vista de Oro development and Redfield Woods.*

2.5.4 Circulation

CIR-4. Design the Los Osos community circulation system to be compatible with the community's character and responsive to local environmental needs.

Program CIR-4.3. Commercial Streetscape. In commercial areas, require curbs, gutters, wide sidewalks, street lights, gathering areas, and undergrounded utilities. Maintenance responsibility for improvements in gathering areas, including tree planters, street lights and pedestrian amenities, rest with the fronting property owner, an established maintenance entity or as defined with the encroachment permit.

Chapter 7, Planning Area Standards

7.3 Communitywide Standards

E.2.h. Visual Resources. If applicable, building sites shall not be located on slopes or ridgetops so that structures are silhouetted against the night sky as viewed from public roads, public beaches, the ocean, or the Morro Bay estuary.

G. Light and Glare. At the time of application for any land divisions, land use permit or coastal development permit, the applicant shall provide details on any proposed exterior lighting, if applicable. Except as necessary to support agricultural operations, all lighting fixtures shall be

shielded so that neither the lamp nor the related reflector interior surface is visible from adjacent properties. Light hoods shall be dark-colored.

L.1.d. Streets and Circulation, Trees, Characteristics [relevant portion]. Trees [for planting in the streetscape] shall meet the following requirements...: Drought tolerant, appropriate to the climate, resistant to disease, compatible with the character of the area, consistent with the scale of the roadway, and of a size that will not impair major public view corridors to and along the coast.

M. Coastal Access and Bayfront Development.

- 1. Height. Proposed structures on sites that are bayward of a line shown in Figure 7.3 [of the LOCP] are limited to a maximum height of 14 feet, except where a greater height is noted.*
- 3. Fences. Fences shall not be constructed that would restrict public views of the bay from public roads or preclude lateral public access. Fences on the bayfront side of development shall not interfere with movement or migration of native wildlife.*

N. Building Height. Exceptions to height limitation pursuant to Chapter 23.04 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance shall not apply to any planning area standards that specify maximum building height or building face height. Solar panels may extend 2 feet above the ridgeline.

Q. Residential Development and Design Guidelines. [This section provides a variety of guidelines intended to encourage diversity of appearance, discourage gated communities, provide for visually compatible fencing, and appropriate setback requirements. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

7.5 Land Use Category Standards

A.4. Commercial Retail, Central Business District

- a. Height. Maximum building height shall be 30 feet.*
- b.(vii). Mixed Use Development, Site Design. [This section provides a variety of standards intended to promote appropriate scale and enhance the visual quality of the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]*
- c. Design Guidelines. [This section provides a variety of standards intended to improve the architectural character of development within the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]*

A.5. Baywood Commercial Area (Special Community)

- b. Height. Maximum building height shall be 25 feet, except where a lower height limit is established.*

j. Baywood Design Guidelines. [This section provides a variety of standards intended to improve the architectural character of development within the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

B. Commercial Service (CS)

- 1. Height. Maximum building height shall be 30 feet.*
- 2. Compatibility. All commercial development subject to discretionary approval shall incorporate measures to assure compatibility with nearby residences (including onsite caretaker units), with regard to impacts associated with, but not limited to, noise, vibration, odor, light, glare, hazardous materials, truck traffic, exhaust, unsightliness, or hours of operation. Land use permit applications shall include a description of activities that may be incompatible with residential neighbors and measures to avoid or mitigate those incompatibilities. This may require the applicant to submit special studies, such as a noise study, to address these issues.*

C. Office and Professional (OP)

- 2. Height, Central Business District. Maximum building height in the CBD shall be 30 feet.*
- 3.b. Site Design Criteria. All new development shall resemble the size, character and scale of the surrounding residences, and shall provide landscaping between new development and the frontage of the nearest public road. Pedestrian sidewalks shall be provided between new development and the nearest public road. All outdoor lighting, play areas, and new parking spaces shall be located away from residential property lines or shall be separated by a minimum 10-foot wide landscaping screen.*

G. Recreation (REC)

- 4.b. Portion of Tract 1646 West of Pecho Road, Lodging Design and Height Limitation. All buildings shall be residential in scale and have a maximum height of 28 feet.*

I. Residential Multi-Family (RMF)

- 1.b.2. Height Limitation. Maximum height shall be 28 feet, except for bayfront areas [which are less, per LOCP Figure 7-3].*

J. Morro Shores Mixed Use Area (RMF, RSF, CS)

- 1. Height. Maximum height for residential, transient lodgings, and accessory uses shall be 28 feet.*
- 5. Multi-Use Business/Commerce Park Standards*
 - b. Character. The multi-use business park shall have landscaped open spaces in a campus-like character that provides an attractive environment and respects the natural*

environment. It shall be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and the community.

j. Height. Maximum building height shall be 30 feet.

k. Other Criteria. [This section includes a variety of design criteria intended to address potential compatibility and visual impacts. Refer to the draft LOCP for the complete description.]

8.a.(iii). Low Density Residential, Area 2: 8.8-acre property fronting on Ramona Avenue. Compatibility. Non-residential development shall be sited, designed, and landscaped to be compatible with surrounding residential areas. Several smaller buildings are preferred to fewer, more massive ones.

L. Residential Single-Family (RSF)

1. Height. Maximum height shall be 28 feet, except where other applicable planning area standards establish other specific height limits. [Draft LOCP describes modified limits within Cabrillo Estates]

M. Residential Suburban (RS)

3.b.(i). West of Pecho Area, South of Monarch Grove. Height. Maximum building height shall be 22 feet.

3.c.(i). West of Pecho Area, 17-acre Property North of Seascape Plan. Building Design, All Areas. In the entire Southwestern Hillsides [as shown on Figure 7-34 of the LOCP], all buildings shall have 1) low profiles that architecturally follow and adapt to the natural slope and 2) subdued colors that blend with the natural environment.

These policies and standards address a variety of design-related and character-related issues throughout the community, especially as they relate to building heights, setbacks, and land use compatibility. In the aggregate, they build on the existing framework of the Estero Area Plan, and protect and enhance the community's character, especially as it relates to enhancing the community's urban center, and providing a more visually attractive setting for future urban development in its high quality rural setting.

Impacts to the community's overall visual character are therefore considered to be **less than significant (Class III)**.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are required, because the impact is less than significant.

Residual Impacts. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Threshold: Would the Community Plan create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas?

Impact AES-5 Buildout under the LOCP could introduce new sources of light and glare, but potential impacts would be generally addressed by the proposed policy framework set forth in the LOCP. This is considered a less than significant (Class III) impact.

The Los Osos community is in a rural setting, and apart from existing low intensity lighting of its streets, businesses and homes, is a relatively dark place at night, with little light spillover into the surrounding rural area.

Future development within the LOCP area would introduce new housing and commercial uses, which will increase the opportunities for new lighting and glare that could potentially result in impacts. Street improvements will also include new street lights. Overall, continued development would gradually increase the potential for new sources of light and glare throughout the community. This is especially important, not only in the context of land use compatibility and community character, but from a habitat protection perspective. Without proper regulatory protections, new lighting could result in potential impacts.

Proposed LOCP Policies to Address Potential Impacts. The proposed LOCP includes the following policy framework to address potential light and glare related impacts, which would be applied to future development within the area as appropriate:

Chapter 7, Planning Area Standards

7.3 Communitywide Standards

G. Light and Glare. At the time of application for any land divisions, land use permit or coastal development permit, the applicant shall provide details on any proposed exterior lighting, if applicable. Except as necessary to support agricultural operations, all lighting fixtures shall be shielded so that neither the lamp nor the related reflector interior surface is visible from adjacent properties. Light hoods shall be dark-colored.

7.5 Land Use Category Standards

A.4. Commercial Retail, Central Business District

b.(vii). Mixed Use Development, Site Design. [This section provides a variety of standards intended to promote appropriate scale and enhance the visual quality of the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

c. Design Guidelines. [This section provides a variety of standards intended to improve the architectural character of development within the CBD. Refer to the Draft LOCP for a complete description of standards.]

B. Commercial Service (CS)

2. Compatibility. All commercial development subject to discretionary approval shall incorporate measures to assure compatibility with nearby residences (including onsite caretaker units), with regard to impacts associated with, but not limited to, noise, vibration, odor, light, glare, hazardous materials, truck traffic, exhaust, unsightliness, or hours of operation. Land use permit applications shall include a description of activities that may be incompatible with residential neighbors and measures to avoid or mitigate those incompatibilities. This may require the applicant to submit special studies, such as a noise study, to address these issues.

C. Office and Professional (OP)

3.b. Site Design Criteria. All new development shall resemble the size, character and scale of the surrounding residences, and shall provide landscaping between new development and the frontage of the nearest public road. Pedestrian sidewalks shall be provided between new development and the nearest public road. All outdoor lighting, play areas, and new parking spaces shall be located away from residential property lines or shall be separated by a minimum 10-foot wide landscaping screen.

These policies and standards address a variety of design-related throughout the community, especially as they relate to light and glare. In the aggregate, they build on the existing framework of the Estero Area Plan, and protect and enhance the community’s character, especially as it relates to reducing potential impacts with respect to light and glare.

As the street lighting authority, Los Osos Community Services District could expand or increase the density of street lighting within the district. The community considers adequate exterior lighting to be desirable, as it helps to promote safety. However, the introduction of new lighting sources could reduce visibility of the nighttime views in the area. Additionally, new sources of glare may result from materials used for new development within the community. However, compliance with exterior lighting regulations in Section 23.04 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance and the proposed design-related guidelines included in the LOCP would ensure that impacts are **less than significant (Class III)**.

Mitigation Measures. Impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impacts. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Threshold: Would the Community Plan impact a unique geologic or physical feature?

Impact AES-6 Buildout under the LOCP would not damage any identified unique geologic or physical feature. Potential impacts would be adequately addressed by the proposed policy framework set forth in the LOCP. This is considered a less than significant (Class III) impact.

All development under the LOCP would occur either within previously identified or partially developed urban areas, or in certain cases, within undeveloped lands that are generally flat and suitable for development. There are no identified unique geologic or physical features that would be removed or damaged as a result of such development. Therefore, impacts to such features within Los Osos would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. Impacts would be less than significant.

Residual Impacts. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

c. Cumulative Impacts. The evaluation of the LOCP in this EIR, which includes buildout of the Los Osos community, accounts for all of the expected and foreseeable growth in the Los Osos area. As described above, this includes less than significant impacts related to aesthetic compatibility, introducing a use within a scenic view open to public view, changes in visual character, glare and night lighting, and unique geologic or physical features. Regional growth in the project vicinity, including in the City of Morro Bay and nearby rural areas between Los Osos and the City of San Luis Obispo, while expected to be relatively minor over the life of the proposed LOCP, may impact regional aesthetics and visual resources. However, buildout of the proposed LOCP would not contribute to these cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts were evaluated comprehensively in this EIR at a programmatic level based on available information, and are considered ***Class III, Less Than Significant***. As future applications for individual projects are submitted at a project level of detail, the precise evaluation of future project-related impacts would be coordinated through individual project-level environmental review.

d. Subsequent Environmental Review for Future Development Projects in the Community Plan Area. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, additional CEQA review is not required for projects that are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. **Table 4.1-1** describes conditions under which future development in the study area would require additional CEQA review, pursuant to Section 15183.

Table 4.1-1. Conditions Under Which Future Development in the Community Plan Area Would Require Additional CEQA Review	
Condition	Impact to Address
<i>The future project is inconsistent with underlying General Plan and zoning designations.</i>	AES-1 through AES-6
<i>The future project is inconsistent with Community Plan policies or design guidelines.</i>	AES-1 through AES-6
<i>The future project would result in an impact peculiar to the project or parcel in any issue area. An effect is not considered peculiar if uniformly applied development policies or standards previously adopted by the County would substantially mitigate the environmental effect.</i>	Impact that is peculiar to the project or parcel
<i>The future project would result in an impact or impacts not analyzed above, including off-site or cumulative effects.</i>	Impact other than AES-1 through AES-6
<i>The future project would result in an impact or impacts analyzed above, but at a higher level of severity as a result of substantial new information not known at the time the EIR was certified.</i>	Worsened AES-1 through AES-6, as applicable