

5.1 AESTHETICS

The six components of the project analyzed herein are:

- 1) Adoption and implementation of the General Plan;
- 2) Adoption and implementation of the revised Zoning Code;
- 3) Adoption and implementation of the revised Subdivision Code;
- 4) Adoption and implementation of an amendment to the Noise Code;
- 5) Adoption and implementation of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan (MASP); and
- 6) Adoption and implementation of the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines.

Of the six project components, the Noise Code addresses impacts related to noise standards and, rather than physical and aesthetic changes to land and were created for compatibility with the proposed General Plan Update, and is not considered to have impacts related to aesthetic resources. Thus, this analysis focuses on five of the project's components listed above, including implementation of the General Plan, revised Zoning Code, revised Subdivision Code, the MASP, and the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines and their subsequent potential impacts related to aesthetics. Since an initial study was not prepared with the issuance of the Notice of Preparation, the focus of the following discussion is related to the potential impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, the visual character, and from new sources of light and glare.

The Aesthetics Section of this EIR has been changed from the previously circulated EIR. In addition to the overall changes listed in the Project Description Section of this EIR, background information and analysis was added for the Planning Area. Information for all topics within this Section was verified and updated as necessary.

In addition to other reference documents, the following references were used in the preparation of this section of the EIR:

- Applied EarthWorks, *Cultural Resources Study for the City of Riverside General Plan Update Program EIR*, updated January 2007.
- Architectural Preservation Planning Services (APPS), *Historic Preservation Element of the City of Riverside General Plan*, report prepared by Architectural Preservation Planning Services, Pasadena, CA, report submitted to the City of Riverside Planning Department, Riverside, CA, 2003
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Scenic Highway Program, *California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Riverside County*, updated December 28, 1999. (Available at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/Land_Arch/scenic_highways/index.htm) accessed July 14, 2004.
- City of Riverside, *City of Riverside Park and Recreation Master Plan Update 2003*.
- City of Riverside, *General Plan*, 1994.
- Southern California Association of Governments, *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide* (RCPG), March 1996.

- City of Riverside, *Urban Forest Policy*, December 17, 2002.

Setting

Scenic Vistas, Resources, and Visual Character

Although the majority of Riverside is urbanized, the hills and ridgelines that surround the City provide scenic vistas to residents of Riverside where they can experience long distance views of natural terrain. Vista points can be found throughout the City, both as viewed from urban areas toward the hills and from wilderness areas toward Riverside. The most notable scenic vistas in the City include the La Sierra/Norco Hills, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, and Box Springs Mountain Regional Park. The peaks of Box Springs Mountain, Mt. Rubidoux, Arlington Mountain, Alessandro Heights and the La Sierra/Norco Hills provide scenic views of the City and the region.

The City has defined the Arlington Heights Neighborhood as Riverside's greenbelt. Public parts of the greenbelt include the California Citrus State Historic Park and Victoria Avenue (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), a mile-long scenic drive in the heart of the City. Other portions of the greenbelt consist largely of private lands protected by Proposition R and Measure C, currently in use as citrus groves, plant nurseries and very-low-density residential development.

Another prominent scenic resource in the City is the Santa Ana River watercourse and riverbed, extending along the City's northern edge. The Santa Ana River is a place of natural beauty, and is a place of significant natural habitat for many species of birds and other animals, as well as being a prominent visual landmark for visitors and residents.

The higher elevation hills shape the visual outline and drainage area of the City's viewshed. Specifically, the La Sierra/Norco Hills, Mt. Rubidoux, Box Springs Mountains, Sycamore Canyon, and the many smaller ranges south of the City provide a visual backdrop as viewed from streets, buildings, and open spaces. Nearly every neighborhood in Riverside features some areas of local hills, from southern Arlanza to Hawarden Ridge. These create vistas from many of Riverside's neighborhoods, its local streets and even residents' back yards.

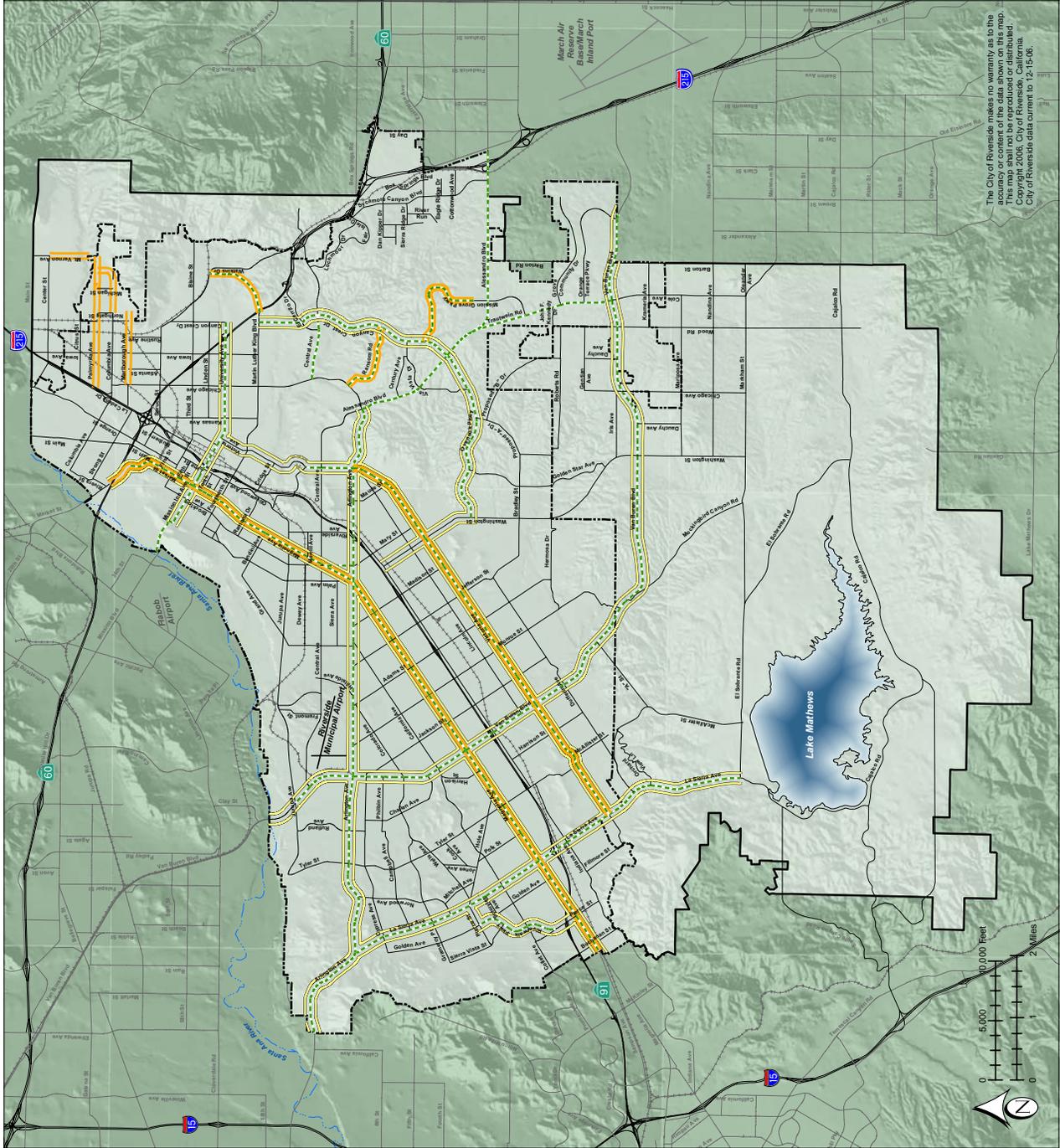
According to the City of Riverside's 1994 General Plan, the City has designated several scenic and special boulevards within the City that meet local criteria for designation as scenic routes. These scenic and special boulevards are listed in **Table 5.1-A, Scenic and Special Boulevards** and shown on **Figure 5.1-1, Scenic and Special Boulevards and Parkways**. As part of the General Plan 2025 the City has designated several streets as scenic parkways as listed in **Table 5.1-B, Scenic Parkways** and shown on **Figure 5.1-1, Scenic and Special Boulevards and Parkways**.



LEGEND

- SCENIC BOULEVARD
- SPECIAL BOULEVARD
- PARKWAYS
- RIVERSIDE CITY BOUNDARY
- RIVERSIDE PROPOSED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

SOURCE: MEYER, MOHADDES ASSOCIATES INC



**Figure 5.1-1
SCENIC AND SPECIAL
BOULEVARDS
AND PARKWAYS**

**Table 5.1-A
 Scenic & Special Boulevards**

Scenic Boulevards	
Arlington Avenue	Canyon Crest Drive
Van Buren Boulevard	Overlook Parkway
La Sierra Avenue	Central Avenue
Riverwalk Parkway	Ransom Road
Magnolia Avenue	Mission Grove Parkway
University Avenue	Alessandro Boulevard
Victoria Avenue	Trautwein Road
Mission Inn Avenue	
Special Boulevards	
Mt. Vernon Avenue	Palmyrita Avenue
Columbia Avenue	Marlborough Avenue
Canyon Crest Drive (through UCR only)	Magnolia Avenue
Ransom Road	Victoria Avenue
Mission Grove Parkway	

Source: Riverside General Plan, 1994.

No officially designated State scenic highways or any eligible State scenic highways traverse the City or its Sphere of Influence. Interstate 15 (I-15) is an eligible state scenic highway that runs as close as one mile west of the Planning Area in Riverside County.

Cultural Resources

An important part of what makes the City of Riverside a special place to live is its abundance of cultural resources. These cultural resources form a rich backdrop of both familiar and pleasing streetscapes experienced by Riverside’s citizens on a daily basis. Additionally, these resources enrich the City’s character and form cornerstones of successful revitalization and preservation efforts. The City of Riverside’s historic neighborhoods are recognized through their designation as Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Areas. These geographically defined areas have a significant concentration of cultural resources that represent themes important to local history. Individually recognized cultural resources include structures ranging from single-family residences to commercial, religious, and civic buildings as well as bridges, City parks, and trees. A listing of designated City Landmarks, Historic Districts, and Neighborhood Conservation Areas is included in the City of Riverside’s website and Appendix D. A discussion of cultural resources can also be found in Section 5.5 (Cultural Resources).

Light and Glare

Riverside is primarily urbanized, with significant existing sources of light and glare, such as streetlights along roadways, parking lots and walkways, lighted recreation facilities, and light emitted from residential and non-residential buildings. Buildings and structures made with glass,

metal and polished exterior or roofing materials exist throughout the Planning Area; combined with existing natural and manmade light sources, these can constitute a source of localized glare.

The Mount Palomar Observatory, located south of the City of Temecula in San Diego County, has identified that the continued urbanization of southwestern Riverside County contributes to reducing the nighttime usefulness of the Observatory due to the emission of lighting from street lights, automobiles, residences and businesses. This type of lighting condition is called “skyglow.” It occurs when glare from improperly aimed and unshielded light fixtures cause uninvited illumination to cross property lines. The affected portion of the Planning Area falling within a 45-mile radius of the Mount Palomar Observatory is depicted on **Figure 5.1-2, Mount Palomar Lighting Area**. The Observatory requires unique nighttime lighting standards in order to allow the night sky to be viewed clearly. Both the Counties of San Diego and Riverside have adopted ordinances to regulate nighttime or “dark-sky” lighting.

The City of Riverside approved in 1996, street light levels for new street lighting systems. These requirements can be found in the ANSI/IESNA RP-8-00 handbook for Roadway Lighting. Lighting that is above the horizontal of the light source does not benefit lighting the roadways. The City currently uses luminaires, which are equipped with reflectors and/or refractors to direct most of the light down on the roadway. The majority of the luminaires in the City are equipped with semi or full cutoff optics limiting the amount of light above the luminaire to < 5% of the rated lumens. The non-cutoff optics, which has no limits on the light distribution above the luminaire, is no longer approved by the City and is rarely used now as communities become more aware of light pollution.

Thresholds of Significance

City of Riverside has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, significance determinations utilized in this Section are from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact will occur if implementation of the Project:

- has an adverse effect on a scenic vista,
- substantially damages scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway,
- substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area, or
- creates a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views.

Related Regulations

The California Scenic Highways program was established in 1963 to “preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways.” The State laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 *et seq.* No state-designated or eligible scenic highways exist within the Planning Area.

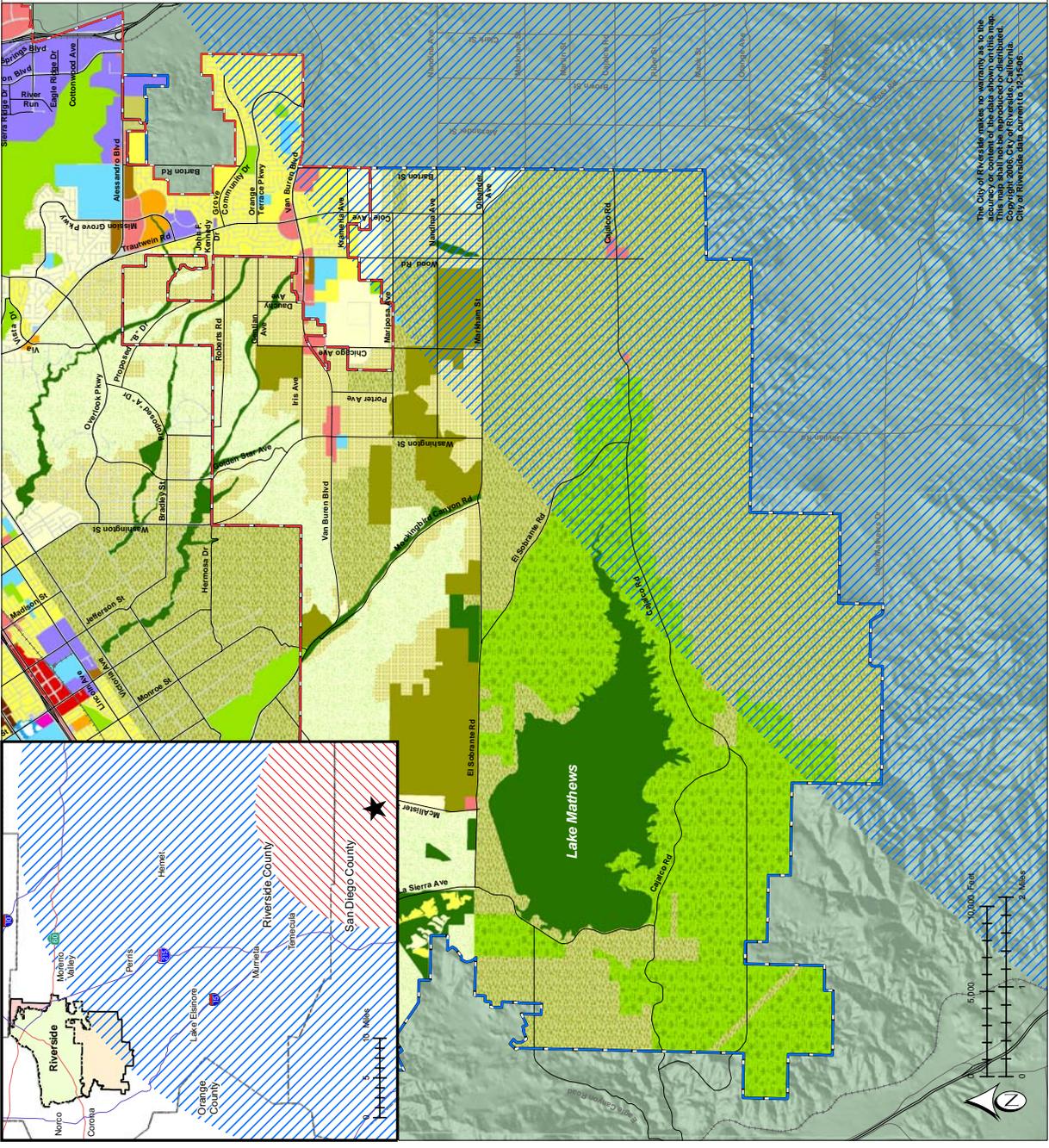


LEGEND

- RIVERSIDE CITY BOUNDARIES
- RIVERSIDE PROPOSED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- MT. PALOMAR OBSERVATORY
- ZONE A (15 mi RADIUS)
- ZONE B (45 mi RADIUS)
- GENERAL PLAN 2025 DRAFT LAND USE ELEMENT**
- A - AGRICULTURAL
- APRR - AGRICULTURAL/RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- HR - HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL
- SRR - SEMI RURAL RESIDENTIAL
- VLDR - VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LDR - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MDR - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MHDR - MEDIUM HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HDR - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- VHDR - VERY HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- C - COMMERCIAL
- CRC - COMMERCIAL REGIONAL CENTER
- DSP - DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN
- OSP - ORANGECREST SPECIFIC PLAN
- O - OFFICE
- B/OP - BUSINESS/OFFICE PARK
- I - INDUSTRIAL
- MU-N - MIXED USE-NEIGHBORHOOD
- MU-V - MIXED USE-VILLAGE
- MU-U - MIXED USE-URBAN
- PF - PUBLIC FACILITIES/INSTITUTIONAL
- PR - PRIVATE RECREATION
- P - PUBLIC PARK
- OS - OPEN SPACE/NATURAL RESOURCES
- RAT - KANGAROO RAT HABITAT
- * SEE TABLE LU-3 (LAND USE DESIGNATIONS) IN GENERAL PLAN

Figure 5.1-2

MT. PALOMAR NIGHTTIME LIGHTING POLICY AREA



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In 1979, City of Riverside voters passed Proposition R: “Taxpayer’s Initiative to Reduce Costly Urban Sprawl by Preserving the City of Riverside’s Citrus and Agricultural Lands, Its Unique Hills, Arroyos and Victoria Avenue.” The two main features of Proposition R relate to: 1) preservation of agriculture through application of the RA-5-Residential Agricultural Zone to two specific areas of the City; and 2) protection of hillside areas through application of the RC-Residential Conservation Zone to areas of the City based on slopes over 15 percent. The two areas of the City which were zoned to RA-5 are: 1) the Arlington Heights Greenbelt, in the south and central portion of the City; and 2) an area commonly known as the La Sierra Lands, a bluff top area above the Santa Ana River bordered by Tyler Street on the east and Arlington Avenue on the west.

Proposition R and Measure C are designed to protect the Arlington Heights Greenbelt area, which is an aesthetic resource for the City. In addition the RC Zone, established under Proposition R and Measure C, has development standards to protect the City’s hillsides and ridgelines. The City values its ridgelines and hillsides as significant natural and visual resources.

The City of Riverside is known as a “City of Trees.” Trees beautify the landscape and enhance the quality of life for all residents. The National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized the City as a “Tree City, USA” since 1987. Thus, a Tree Policy Manual was created to provide guidelines for the preservation and protection of the tree heritage and the Urban Forest of Riverside. The document creates guidelines for the planting, pruning, preservation, and removal of all trees in City right-of-ways. According to the manual and as updated by Parks, Recreation and Community Services staff, there are 100,000 street trees and 43,000 park and open space trees throughout Riverside.

In 1988, the County of Riverside adopted Ordinance No. 655 regulating light pollution. Ordinance No. 655 establishes standards to limit light leakage in order to reduce interference with nighttime astrological observation and research conducted at the Mount Palomar Observatory. Ordinance No. 655 established two zones based on radial distance from the Mount Palomar Observatory, which is located in northern San Diego County. Zone A is defined as a circular area within a 15-mile radius of the observatory. Zone B includes a circular ring area defined by two circles, one forty-five (45) miles in radius centered on Palomar Observatory, and the other the perimeter of Zone A. The southeastern portion of the Planning Area is located within Zone B of Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy.

Related General Plan Policies

Implementation of the following General Plan policies will limit indirect impacts on aesthetic resources by limiting the location of development, preserving historic structures, designing street and neighborhood improvements with the purpose of preserving the visual character of the City and neighborhoods therein and preventing new sources of light and glare. The policies may be implemented individually or jointly, as appropriate.

Any combination of the following policies limits impacts on scenic vistas in the Planning Area:

Greenbelt and Agricultural Uses

- Policy LU-6.1: Enforce and adhere to the special protections for agricultural areas set forth in Proposition R and Measure C.
- Policy LU-6.2: Preserve the viability of the Gage Canal to enable continued agricultural and citricultural uses within the City.
- Policy LU-6.3: Protect and maintain the Arlington Heights Greenbelt agricultural character through adherence with applicable provisions of the Subdivision and Zoning Codes in addition to Proposition R and Measure C.
- Policy LU-6.4: Review development within agricultural areas to encourage efficient land use and facilitate long-term perpetuation of citrus stock.
- Policy LU-6.5: Encourage the potential relocation of the University of California, Riverside's experimental citrus groves to one or more locations within the Arlington Heights neighborhood to help the neighborhood retain its agricultural character.

Open Space Element – Overarching Objectives

- Policy OS-2.2: Limit the extent and intensity of uses and development in areas of unstable terrain, steep terrain, scenic vistas, arroyos and other critical environmental areas.
- Policy OS-2.3: Control the grading of land, pursuant to the City's Grading Code, to minimize the potential for erosion, landsliding, and other forms of land failure, as well as to limit the potential negative aesthetic impact of excessive modification of natural landforms.
- Policy OS-2.4: Recognize the value of ridgelines, hillsides, and arroyos as significant natural and visual resources and strengthen their role as features, which define the character of the City and its individual neighborhoods.

Specifically related to the preservation of hillsides, the General Plan includes the Hillside Residential land use designation and applies it to properties to limit development of Riverside's ecologically sensitive and visually prominent hillside areas. This designation has been applied to most hillside areas where slopes exceed 15 percent and allows a maximum residential density of 0.63 dwelling units per acre. This designation applies to numerous hillside areas such as the La Sierra Hills, Alessandro Heights, and Hawarden Hills neighborhoods. The following policies limit impacts to hillsides within the Planning Area:

Hillsides

- Policy LU-3.1: Pursue methods to preserve hillside open space and natural habitat.
- Policy LU-3.2: Seek annexation of properties that will reduce ridgeline/hillside development on the City's periphery.
- Policy LU-4.1: Adhere to the protections for hillside development set forth in Proposition R and Measure C.
- Policy LU-4.2: Enforce the hillside grading provisions of the City's Grading Code (Title 17) to minimize ground disturbance associated with hillside development; respect existing land contours to maximum feasible extent.
- Policy LU-4.3: Work closely with the County of Riverside, emphasizing the City's need to participate in the development review of projects proposed in surrounding unincorporated areas. Work to ensure that such developments proceed in concert with City of Riverside standards.
- Policy LU-4.4: Ensure that the City provides comments to Riverside County on proposed new hillside development in the City's Sphere of Influence, include recommendations for compliance with the provisions of Proposition R and Measure C, the RC Zone, the Hillside Residential land use designation, and the City's Grading Code (Title 17).
- Policy LU-4.5: Seek opportunities for new or enhanced trail/pedestrian linkages between hillside areas and other components of Riverside Park.

Hawarden Hills Neighborhood

- Policy LU-54.1: Adhere to density limits set forth in Proposition R and Measure C.
- Policy LU-54.2: Minimize the visual impact of new development, particularly along ridgelines or on hillsides.
- Policy LU-54.3: Structures shall be sited below the Hawarden Hills Ridgeline. Hillside grading provisions of the City's Grading Code (Title 17) and the provisions of Proposition R and Measure C and the RC Zone shall be enforced.

La Sierra Neighborhood

- Policy LU-59.1: Preserve La Sierra's hillside areas in the natural state as much as feasible, consistent with Proposition R and Measure C.

La Sierra Acres Neighborhood

Policy LU-63.5: Implement the Rancho La Sierra Specific Plan pursuant to Proposition R and Measure C with the following criteria:

- Housing shall be clustered to protect the river bottom wildlife refuge, the agricultural lands along the river bluffs and the open-space character of the areas;
- Natural open space areas shall be preserved to protect the natural features of the site such as significant natural hills, steep slopes, rock outcroppings, and arroyos;
- The wildlife refuge, agricultural land, and open space character of the river shall be preserved;
- Any future roads or utility service shall be located so as to protect the wildlife refuge; and
- Public trail access along the river corridor compatible with protection of the wildlife refuge shall be maintained and provide for hiking, bicycling and equestrian use.

La Sierra Hills Neighborhood

Policy LU-64.1: Ensure that the neighborhood’s western hillsides are developed in a sensitive manner consistent with Proposition R and Measure C, preserving the landscape’s natural, hilly character to the maximum feasible extent.

Overarching Objectives (Open Space Element)

Policy OS-2.1: Continue to require hillside development to be consistent with Proposition R and Measure C through the provisions of the RC Zone.

Agricultural Preservation – Proposition R and Measure C

Policy OS-4.1: Continue to implement Proposition R and Measure C.

The General Plan also includes policies to enhance the City’s scenic resources and visual character.

Gateways

Policy LU-21.1: Define the City’s major gateways, and update the list periodically to reflect changing traffic patterns.

Policy LU-21.2: Develop a tool kit of gateway enhancements, including landscaping, signage, sculpture and other elements that simultaneously provide a

unified sense of City identity yet are flexible enough for use in diverse geographical settings.

Policy: LU-21.3: Create a new gateway on Arlington Avenue when the Schliesman connection to Interstate 15 is completed.

Parkways

Policy LU-11.1: Recognize parkways as distinctive elements of the City's circulation network.

Policy LU-11.2: Recognize Victoria Avenue, Magnolia Avenue/Market Street, University Avenue, Van Buren Boulevard, Riverwalk Parkway, La Sierra Avenue, Arlington Avenue, Canyon Crest Drive, and Overlook Parkway as the fundamental elements of the City's parkway landscape network, and components of Riverside Park.

Policy LU-11.3: Seek opportunities to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian usage along parkways through the development process.

Magnolia Avenue/Market Street

Policy LU-12.1: Through the Specific Plan process further implement the Polizoides Plan for the corridor, identify appropriate land uses, development opportunities and streetscape improvements along the Corridor that support the vision as a scenic roadway with distinct districts. Reinforce the desired land uses within the context of each district through development provisions and regulations.

Policy LU-12.2: Maintain the existing mature heritage landscaping and infill landscaping as appropriate to return the Corridor to being a grand tree-lined parkway.

Policy LU-12.3: Enhance the setting for key historic sites along the Corridor, including landmark buildings and landscape, such as the Arlington Library and Parent Navel Orange Tree; cultural landmarks, such as the Heritage House; and historic districts, such as the Wood Streets.

Policy LU-12.4: Expand and update the function of the Magnolia/Market Corridor as a key transit corridor to accommodate growth.

Policy LU-12.5: Focus commercial development at identified commercial nodes, avoiding disconnected commercial strips along the corridor.

Victoria Avenue

- Policy LU-13.1: Provide for sensitive development of private properties along Victoria Avenue through measures such as an overlay zone.
- Policy LU-13.2: Intersection improvements on Victoria Avenue related to the extension of Overlook Parkway shall be determined in conjunction with a specific plan for Overlook Parkway between Alessandro Boulevard and the 91 Freeway. The specific plan shall address the crossing of the Alessandro Arroyo, traffic-calming measures necessary to protect local streets in the area and the extension of Overlook Parkway westerly of the Washington Street/Overlook Parkway intersection. Acceptable levels of service of intersection(s) on Victoria Avenue related to the extension of Overlook Parkway shall be determined as a part of the specific plan process. In any event, all improvements shall be designed to sensitively reflect Victoria Avenue’s historic character.
- Policy LU-13.3: Adopt strong measures to protect Victoria Avenue’s signature landscaping.
- Policy LU-13.4: Ensure that the design and development standards for Victoria Avenue encourage pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrian users in addition to automobiles.
- Policy LU-13.5: Establish an overlay zone on Victoria Avenue with specific development standards to protect the historic visual character of the corridor.
- Policy LU-13.6: Establish Victoria Avenue as a linear park.

University Avenue

- Policy LU-14.1: Revise the University Avenue Specific Plan to better reflect the expanded role of this thoroughfare, providing for completion of appropriate streetscape improvements and adjoining land uses.

Van Buren Boulevard

- Policy LU-15.1: Utilize the intersection of Van Buren Boulevard and Victoria Avenue as a highly landscaped, visual gateway into the City.
- Policy LU-15.2: Enhance connections between Santa Ana River trails and Van Buren Boulevard.
- Policy LU-15.3: Balance the traffic carrying function of Van Buren Boulevard with goals to enhance neighborhood aesthetics, pedestrian/bicycle safety and the

historic environments of Arlington Village and the Arlington Heights Greenbelt. Keep Van Buren Boulevard's width as small as possible.

Riverwalk Parkway

Policy LU-16.1: Retain and/or expand landscape treatment consistent with the road's parkway character.

Policy LU-16.2: Develop pedestrian, bicyclist and driver amenities consistent with Riverwalk Parkway's roles.

Overlook Parkway

Policy LU-17-1: Develop appropriate streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Canyon Crest Drive

Policy LU-18.1: Develop streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian improvements that will solidify Canyon Crest Drive's role as a parkway.

La Sierra Avenue

Policy LU-19.1: Develop pedestrian, bicyclist and driver amenities that will enhance La Sierra Avenue's potential as a parkway.

Arlington Avenue

Policy LU-20.1: Develop a landscaped parkway with distinctive signage that promotes the function of Arlington Avenue as a roadway that connects and links many neighborhoods and business centers.

Street Trees

Policy LU-27.1: Require appropriately sized landscaped parkways in all new development. Parkway areas shall be of sufficient width to allow planting of trees that will become large canopy trees.

Policy LU-27.2: Utilize neighborhood and expert input to develop and periodically update a palette of acceptable street tree species structured around Riverside's natural environment and its neighborhoods.

Policy LU-27.3: Seek ongoing cooperation from residents in the maintenance, conservation, and protection of street trees.

Policy LU-27.4: Encourage trees on private property to add to the City's urban forest.

Policy LU-27.5: Develop a program to ensure adequate tree trimming cycles as well as to replace any lost trees.

Code Enforcement

Policy LU-28.1: Provide equitable, consistent and effective code enforcement services citywide, focusing first upon areas where Code Enforcement will have beneficial life safety and neighborhood-improving impacts.

Policy LU-28.2: Encourage the rehabilitation or replacement of dilapidated housing units and buildings, discouraging further deterioration. Where necessary, seek to remove unsafe structures.

Policy LU-28.3: Address the legal and technical barriers that inhibit greater code enforcement.

Policy LU-28.4: Ensure adequate staffing of the Code Enforcement Division to maintain and streamline enforcement efforts.

Linear Aerial Facilities

Policy LU-29.1: Promote the formation of districts for the undergrounding of utilities.

Policy LU-29.2: Investigate the feasibility of a citywide undergrounding of utilities ordinance.

Policy LU-29.3: Investigate funding sources to underground existing City-owned utility facilities.

Special Consideration for Historic Resources

Policy PS-11.1: Protect resources listed in the Historical Resources Inventory from premature or inadvertent demolition and encourage retrofitting of these resources to protect them from damage caused by a disaster episode.

Policy PS-11.2: Take reasonable steps to prevent the loss of historic buildings without endangering public safety or contributing to additional property damage.

General Plan Roadway System

Policy CCM-2.2: Balance the need for free traffic flow with economic realities and environmental and aesthetic considerations, such that streets are designed to handle normal traffic flows with tolerances to allow for potential short-term delays at peak-flow hours.

- Policy CCM-2.8: Design street improvements considering the effect on aesthetic character and livability of residential neighborhoods, along with traffic engineering criteria.
- Policy CCM-2.10: Emphasize the landscaping of parkways and boulevards.
- Policy CCM-2.11: Consider the use of special design traffic control devices which reflect the historic or aesthetic character of the neighborhoods in which they are located.
- Policy CCM-2.14: Ensure that intersection improvements on Victoria Avenue are limited to areas where Level of Service is below the City standard of D. Allow only the minimum necessary improvements in recognition of Victoria Avenue’s historic character.

Overarching Objectives (Open Space Element)

- Policy OS-1.6: Ensure that any new development that does occur is effectively integrated through convenient street and/or pedestrian connections, as well as through visual connections.
- Policy OS-1.15: Recognize the value of major institutional passive open spaces, particularly cemeteries, as important components of the total open space systems and protect their visual character.

Celebrating Our Cultural Diversity

- Policy AC-3.3: Use public art and the proposed Art in Public Places Program, in coordination with landscaping, lighting, paving and signage to create gateways upon entering a Cultural Village.
- Policy AC-4.3: Promote the inclusion of artistic/aesthetic considerations in local decision-making.

Arts, Culture and the Economy

- Policy AC-4.4: Build a City government culture that supports art by ensuring implementation measures related to arts and aesthetics are a part of all City functions (i.e., City Council, Public Works, Planning, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, etc.).
- Policy AC-4.5: Use City policies, incentives, land use regulations and design guidelines to weave art into every aspect of life in the community. Encourage inclusion of works of art and cultural events into education, government, health, shopping and business.

- Policy AC-4.10: Encourage the expansion of the location of visual and performing art into employment areas, such as the City’s business parks and Justice Center.
- Policy AC-4.12: Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of existing cultural facilities in Riverside, such as the Fox Theater.
- Policy AC-4.15: Use art in public places to enhance the image of Riverside and emphasize its distinctive character.
- Policy AC-4.16: Encourage the development of a coordinated flexible citywide “Art in Public Places” program for new development to provide public art or spaces for art as part of the development project.
- Policy AC-4.17: Encourage the development of arts program objectives, and provide standards and guidelines for the installation of public art. Address issues of artist selection, project siting, funding, etc.
- Policy AC-4.18: Prepare a Master Plan for Art in Public Places.
- Policy AC-4.19: Include art spaces in new public construction when appropriate and create opportunities and incentives for private developers to include art spaces in private development.
- Policy AC-4.20: Use art in public places, in coordination with landscaping, lighting, paving and signage, at the City’s regional and local gateways, freeway corridors and Metrolink Stations to strengthen Riverside’s identity as a cultural and arts center for regional visitors.
- Policy AC-4.21: Promote the establishment of a committee or board to implement City gateways that would further refine and identify location, funding, design, scale, and artist selection.

Objectives and Policies for Historic Preservation in Riverside

- Policy HP-1.4: The City shall protect natural resources such as geological features, heritage trees, and landscapes in the planning and development review process and in park and open space planning.
- Policy HP-2.1: The City shall actively pursue a comprehensive program to document and preserve historic buildings, structures, districts, sites (including archaeological sites), objects, landscapes, and natural resources.
- Policy HP-5.2: The City shall use its design and plot plan review processes to encourage the compatibility of street design, public improvements, and utility infrastructure with cultural resources and historic districts.

The General Plan includes policies that may facilitate new sources of light and glare that will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area:

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

- Policy PS-5.2: Develop objectives and detailed standards and guidelines for the treatment of public streetscapes to improve safety and walkability. Recommendations should address street trees, street lighting, street furniture, traffic calming and other pertinent issues. Establish funding sources and priorities and set forth a phased improvement program.
- Policy PS-5.3: Prioritize locations for potential pedestrian safety enhancements, including modified signage, lighted crosswalks and other similar facilities.
- Policy PS-5.4: Require that new development provide adequate safety lighting in pedestrian areas and parking lots.

Overarching Objectives (Open Space Element)

- Policy OS-2.5: Review the feasibility of creating a “night-time sky” ordinance to reduce light pollution.

Environmental Impacts Before Mitigation

Threshold: *The project will have an adverse effect on a scenic vista.*

General Plan

The General Plan area of the City of Riverside is characterized by the unique natural landforms that circle the City and create natural division of land uses. The northwest portion of the City is the floodplain of the Santa Ana River. To the east, southeast and west, the uplands and low mountains include the Box Springs Mountain, Alessandro Heights, Arlington Mountain and the La Sierra/Norco Hills. Scattered throughout the Planning Area are a variety of prominent natural features: Mount Rubidoux, Pachappa Hill, Sycamore Canyon, Hawarden Hills, distinctive arroyos and isolated hills. Figure LU-3 – Riverside Park in the General Plan’s Land Use and Urban Design Element shows natural and scenic vistas within the Planning Area.

Six major areas within the Planning Area serve as open space: the Santa Ana River Corridor, Box Springs Mountain Regional Park, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, Fairmount Park, Mt. Rubidoux Park, and California Citrus State Historic Park. Lake Evens and Mockingbird Canyon Reservoir are aesthetically significant water features that offer varying levels of active recreational use. As stated in the General Plan, the City is committed to preserving its natural resources and open spaces of the highest quality and in a cost-effective manner to enhance the living environment of all residents. The City believes that individual interests must be balanced against the general public interest and particularly the conservation of natural resources. The

City's proposed General Plan policies aim at balancing development interests with broader community preservation objectives. Through compliance and implementation of its General Plan policies listed above, related to scenic vistas, impacts to scenic vistas are considered **less than significant**.

Zoning Code

The Zoning Code update requires all site plans to come under review to prevent unlawful nonconforming uses and structures. The Zoning Code regulates building setbacks, building heights, land uses, landscaping, parking, etc. Article V (*Base Zones and Related Use and Development Provisions*) establishes clear standards for use and development of all properties. The Residential Conservation Zone (RC) works to protect prominent ridges and hillsides, slopes, arroyos, ravines and canyons, and other areas with high visibility or unique topographic conditions from adverse development practices for consistency with General Plan objectives and voter-approved initiatives. Article VIII (*Site Planning and General Development Provisions*) provides standards for fences and walls, landscaping, screening of exterior mechanical equipment, treatment of trash enclosures, and similar features that affect the visual integrity of a development site. Therefore, the Zoning Code supports the preservation of scenic resources, and implementation of the Zoning Code itself will reduce negative impacts related to scenic resources to **less than significant** levels.

Subdivision Code

The Subdivision Code requires that all new subdivisions conform to the proposed General Plan and the Zoning Code. The regulations encourage quality design, which is sensitive and preserves prominent scenic resources. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Noise Code

The Noise Code amendment will bring the Noise Code into consistency with the proposed Noise Element of the General Plan and State regulations. These regulations do not affect the quality of design or the aesthetics. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan (MASP)

The area encompassed by the MASP is mainly flat and is urbanized. There are no prominent hills or other topographic qualities, which would be negatively impacted by implementation of the MASP. Instead, the MASP affects the built environment, which contains buildings and local landmarks (such as the Parent Navel Orange Tree) that could be considered scenic. The MASP promotes scenic beautification, historic preservation, and provision of pedestrian and bike facilities, along the Magnolia Avenue Corridor. The MASP identifies and sets forth policies, which aim at protecting and promoting existing scenic vistas and resources along the Magnolia Avenue corridor. Impacts related to scenic resources from implementation of the MASP, is considered **less than significant**.

Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines

The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines limit impacts to aesthetic resources by first defining, then reducing interruptions of scenic vistas, maintaining and enhancing scenic resources and visual character, and reducing light and glare. The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines encourage high-quality design, and implementation of the Guidelines will reduce any potential impacts to less than significant.

Threshold: *Substantially damages scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway.*

General Plan

An integral part of the Project is to protect and enhance the visual character of Riverside. To avoid or minimize indirect aesthetic impacts, the General Plan includes policies as listed above that will limit aesthetic impacts and impacts on visual resources. **Table 5.1-B, Scenic Parkways**, lists the Parkways that are proposed as part of the General Plan 2025 (refer to **Figure 5.1-1**). These parkways will enhance the visual character of the Planning Area and protect scenic resources.

Table 5.1-B Scenic Parkways	
Parkway	Description
Victoria Avenue	A historic parkway lined with many species of trees, long recognized as an important local and regional scenic resource and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The lush landscaping and quiet surroundings make Victoria Avenue feel like a linear park.
Magnolia Avenue/Market Street	A seventeen-mile-long historic parkway, which was once Riverside's grandest street, this street has the potential to be restored to much of its former stature.
University Avenue	This major connector between Downtown, the Eastside neighborhood and UCR will support a symbiotic mix of uses along a visually pleasing road corridor.
Van Buren Boulevard	With a dramatic crossing of the Santa Ana River at the City's northern edge and the City's greenbelt at its southern end, Van Buren already provides connections to key elements of Riverside Park.
Riverwalk Parkway	Located near La Sierra University, this new drive will provide a water-lined parkway connection between neighborhoods through a portion of the La Sierra community.

**Table 5.1-B
Scenic Parkway**

Parkway	Description
La Sierra Avenue	Stretching from near the Santa Ana River in the north to the Lake Mathews area in the south, La Sierra Avenue is the prime thoroughfare for western Riverside.
Overlook Parkway	The connection of the two ends of Overlook across the Alessandro Arroyo poses an opportunity to create a beautiful and dramatic new parkway.
Canyon Crest Drive	This lushly landscaped drive traverses rolling, scenic terrain in connecting the Eastside/University neighborhoods with open space amenities to the south.
Arlington Avenue	A major connector between the east and west sides of the City, this Avenue supports a symbiotic mix of uses and will provide connections to key elements of Riverside Park.

With implementation of the above policies and designation of the parkways, and implementation of existing policies and the Tree Policy Manual, scenic resources will be protected and enhanced throughout the City. Additionally, there are no scenic highways within the City that could potentially be impacted. Therefore, any potential adverse impacts from General Plan build-out to scenic resources will be less than significant, and any potential aesthetic impacts are anticipated to be beneficial as a result of implementation of the General Plan.

Zoning Code

The Zoning Code requires all site plans to come under review to prevent unlawful nonconforming uses and structures. The Zoning Code regulates building setbacks, building heights, land uses, landscaping, parking, etc. Article V (*Base Zones and Related Use and Development Provisions*) establishes clear standards for use and development of all properties. The Residential Conservation Zone (RC) works to protect prominent ridges and hillsides, slopes, arroyos, ravines and canyons, and other areas with high visibility or unique topographic conditions from adverse development practices for consistency with General Plan objectives and voter-approved initiatives. Negative impacts will be **less than significant** and impacts are anticipated to be beneficial.

Subdivision Code

The Subdivision Code requires that all new subdivisions conform to the proposed General Plan and the Zoning Code. The regulations encourage quality design. Negative impacts will be **less than significant**.

Noise Code

The Noise Code amendment will bring the Noise Code into consistency with the proposed Noise Element of the General Plan and State regulations. These regulations do not affect the quality of design or the aesthetics. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Over the years, the Magnolia Avenue/Market Street corridor has sometimes been referred to as Riverside’s scenic “17-mile drive.” The scenic corridor has, unfortunately, experienced some degradation over time. Thus, the MASP promotes scenic beautification, historic preservation, and provision of pedestrian and bike facilities. The purpose and goal of the MASP is to identify appropriate land uses, development opportunities, and streetscape improvements along the corridor that support the vision as a scenic roadway. Therefore, as the intent of the MASP is to improve, and preserve scenic resources along the Magnolia Avenue Corridor, negative impacts to scenic resources are considered **less than significant**.

Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines

The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines limit impacts to aesthetic resources by reducing interruptions of scenic vistas, maintaining and enhancing scenic resources and visual character, and reducing light and glare. The Guidelines will also serve to enhance Riverside’s visual character and avoid negative impacts by promoting and maintaining design continuity in the City’s neighborhoods. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Threshold: *Substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area.*

General Plan

The City’s General Plan sets forth proposed Scenic Parkways (**Table 5.2-A**, above), as well as policies, which set forth goals to not only preserve, but improve existing visual resources of the City and its Sphere. The City has a long-standing history, which is reflected in its historic buildings, parkways, and local landmarks. The topographic characteristics of the City also make it rich in visual character. The General Plan preserves and enhances these qualities. With regard to specific future development projects in the City, development will be required to implement the General Plan’s goals and policies set forth above and will be subject to design review consistent with established Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines. Due to all these factors, impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Zoning Code

The Zoning Code requires all site plans to come under review to prevent unlawful or nonconforming uses and structures. Article VIII (*Site Planning and General Development Provisions*) provides standards for fences and walls, landscaping, screening of exterior mechanical equipment, treatment of trash enclosures, and similar features that affect the visual integrity of a development site. As the Zoning Code encourages high-quality design, which sets

forth requirements, which preserve visual character, rather than reduce it, negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Subdivision Code

The Subdivision Code requires that all new subdivisions conform to the proposed General Plan and the Zoning Code. The Subdivision Code requires landscaped medians in larger arterial streets and landscaped parkways on local streets in all new subdivisions; creating visual character. The Subdivision Code also encourages continuation of the City's existing grid of streets and maintaining the City's urban design integrity. The regulations encourage quality design and actually add visual character. Adverse impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Noise Code

The Noise Code amendment will bring the Noise Code into consistency with the proposed Noise Element of the General Plan and State regulations. These regulations do not affect the quality of design or the aesthetics. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

The MASP has been prepared to create a comprehensive and detailed framework to guide growth and change along the City's most prominent local thoroughfare. As a means of ensuring the coordinated development of the City's major local transportation backbone, this plan will provide detailed implementation tools and design standards consistent with but more specific than the General Plan. The MASP also includes detailed land use regulations and design standards for each of the corridor's six districts and facilitates transit usage along Riverside's principal arterial roadway. As the MASP encourages high-quality design, negative impacts will be reduced to **less than significant** levels.

Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines

The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines provide pictorial guidance on building treatments, façade articulation, site planning, sign guidelines and other matters in an effort to improve the overall visual quality of new development citywide. The Guidelines prevent large windowless blank walls through building articulation, vegetation screening and establishing appropriate landscape areas along walls. The Guidelines also provide requirements for façade and signage treatments to prevent the use of highly reflective surfaces, large, blank, unarticulated wall surfaces, exposed, untreated precision block walls, chain link fencing, barbed wire, and materials requiring high maintenance such as stained wood, shingles, or metal siding. The Design and Sign Guidelines also encourage the use of neutral paint colors, subtle lighting, and courtyard entrances where feasible. The Design and Sign Guidelines limit impacts to aesthetic resources by reducing interruptions of scenic vistas, maintaining and enhancing scenic resources and visual character, and reducing light and glare. The Design and Sign Guidelines will also serve to enhance Riverside's visual character and avoid negative impacts by promoting and maintaining design continuity in the City's neighborhoods. As the Guidelines encourage high-quality design, negative impacts will be **less than significant** and are anticipated to be beneficial.

Threshold: *Creates a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views.*

General Plan

The Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area covers the southeastern portion of the Planning Area. This Policy Area represents a radius of 45 miles from the observatory and restricts nighttime lighting hours, types, and techniques of lighting. This places a portion of the City and the Riverside City Sphere area with “Zone B” of County Ordinance 655. The Ordinance requires the use of low-pressure sodium fixtures, limits hours of use, prohibits certain types of lights, and requires hooded fixtures. The majority of the Planning Area located within Zone B is in the southern Sphere Area south of Mariposa Avenue. City General Plan land use designations located within this portion of Zone B are uses that will not generate significant light and glare; the land use designations are Agriculture, Agriculture/Rural Residential, Hillside Residential, Very Low Density Residential, Public Facilities, Open Space/Natural Resources, Kangaroo Rat Habitat, and Commercial. The commercial uses in this area are existing and located along Cajalco Road. The portion of the Planning Area located within Zone B and north of Mariposa Avenue includes both existing and planned uses, which are General Plan, designated as Very Low Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Commercial, Public Facilities, and Public Parks. New sources of light within the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area that would contribute to light and glare and affect the nighttime sky include streetlights, park lighting, commercial parking lots, and residential/other outdoor security lighting.

New sources of light, both inside the Mount Palomar Policy Area and other areas of the project, from street lights, commercial parking lots, parks, office buildings, residential security lighting and industrial areas all will contribute to light and glare and affect the nighttime sky. Mitigation measure **MM Aes 1** will reduce this impact to less than significant levels. Additionally, General Plan Policy **OS 2.5** was created to review the feasibility of creating a “nighttime sky” ordinance to reduce light pollution further.

The City of Riverside approved in 1996, street light levels for new street lighting systems. These requirements can be found in the ANSI/IESNA RP-8-00 handbook for Roadway Lighting. Lighting that is above the horizontal of the light source does not benefit lighting the roadways. The City currently uses luminaires, which are equipped with reflectors and/or refractors to direct most of the light down on the roadway. The majority of the luminaires in the City are equipped with semi or full cutoff optics limiting the amount of light above the luminaire to < 5% of the rated lumens. The non-cutoff optics, which has no limits on the light distribution above the luminaire, is no longer approved by the City and is rarely used now as communities become more aware of light pollution. **With the implementation of the above standards for street lights, and MM Aes 1, potential impacts related to light and glare will be reduced to less than significant levels.**

Zoning Code

Performance standards in the Code regulating site lighting will work to avoid light and glare impacts. The Zoning Code also contains regulations for lighting within each land use type, including requiring shielding to avoid spillage onto any surrounding properties. Zoning Ordinance 19.590.070 Light and Glare, regulates light issues as in maximum heights of light standards, regulating candle-power of lights, and prohibiting the use of flickering and strobe lights, along with requiring all lighting plans for parking lots be submitted and reviewed by City staff. With the implementation of the Zoning Code and the lighting requirements set in the Roadway Lighting Handbook, impacts are **less than significant**.

Subdivision Code

The purpose of this Subdivision Code is to regulate and control the design and improvement of subdivisions, including providing adequate systems of water supply, sanitary sewage disposal, storm drainage, street lighting, and other utilities needed for the public health, safety, and convenience. Installation or provision for the installation of street lights needs approval of design, location, and illumination intensity by the Public Utilities Director. With the implementation of the Subdivision Code, and prior approval by the Public Utilities Director, impacts will be **less than significant**.

Noise Code

The Noise Code amendment will bring the Noise Code into consistency with the proposed Noise Element of the General Plan and State regulations. These regulations do not affect the quality of design or the aesthetics. Negative impacts are considered to be **less than significant**.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

The Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan promotes pedestrian and vehicular lighting within the project area. The proposed lighting is at a smaller scale than existing lighting, thus not creating additional light pollution sources. Impacts from the Specific Plan are **less than significant**.

Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines

All new development will be required to comply with the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines to make sure that individual development projects do not include materials that would create adverse glare effects. The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines also include lighting guidance regarding illumination for security purposes to insure that it is adequate, not overly bright and that light sources are shielded to confine light spread within site boundaries. The Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines also strongly encourage that signs consist of backlit individually cut letter signs instead of signs that are illuminated with spotlights. Lighting guidance and restrictions on use of reflective material on buildings will avoid potentially significant light and glare impacts.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

An Environmental Impact Report is required to describe feasible mitigation measures, which could minimize significant adverse impacts (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.4). Mitigation measures were evaluated for their ability to eliminate or reduce the potential significant adverse impacts related to aesthetics below the level of significance.

MM Aes 1: To further reduce impacts related to light pollution, the City shall require at the time of issuance of building permits all development which introduces light sources, or modifications to existing light sources, to have shielding devices or other light pollution limiting characteristics such as hoods or lumen restrictions.

Summary of Environmental Effects after Mitigation Measures are Implemented

With adherence to and implementation of the above General Plan policies, **MM Aes 1**, and City standards related to streetlights, the Project's potential aesthetic impacts will be reduced to **below a level of significance**.

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