

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

This section of the Draft EIR ("Draft EIR"; "DEIR") describes the existing visual features and characteristics of the Planning Area including significant visual resources such as waterways (especially Sutter and Mule Creeks), trees, and agricultural lands; sources of light and glare; scenic vistas; and scenic highways. This section also discusses the impacts associated with implementing the various components of the proposed project. The analysis focuses on the anticipated alteration of the visual landscape characteristics and visual resources within the Planning Area. Visual impacts were evaluated using a combination of site reconnaissance, aerial photos, and geographic information system (GIS) maps.

4.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL SETTING

The Planning Area is located in western Amador County (County) at the juncture of the Sierra Nevada foothills and the Central Valley. Agricultural and grazing land, the rolling terrain of the Sierra Nevada foothills, and the backdrop of the Sierra Nevada generally characterize the visual resources of Amador County. Land uses in the region include urban development within cities and unincorporated communities, orchards, pastures, vineyards, surface mining operations, and dispersed rural residential development.

LOCAL SETTING

The City of Ione is a small rural community (about five square miles) comprising a commercial core in the downtown area divided along a north-south axis by State Routes (SR) 104 and 124 and on the east-west axis by Sutter Creek. The commercial core is made up of a variety of shops, restaurants, and government offices and features several historic structures. The major architectural styles featured in the downtown area are Simplified Classical Revival, Italianate, Mission Revival, and Commercial Vernacular. These architectural styles are defined as follows:

- **Simplified Classical Revival:** This style best describes the style common to the Sierra Nevada foothills, the Mother Lode style. The Simplified Classical Revival style consists of simplicity and dignity of design with an emphasis on symmetrical forms. Originally popular from 1770 to 1830, it reemerged in popularity from 1895 to 1940. Similar to the Neoclassical style, it relies on symmetrical facades and full building width porticos. In the Mother Lode area, this style of architecture utilized local and available materials, including metal roofing and siding, wood siding, split faced block, and stone.
- **Italianate:** This style is defined by a symmetrical façade, often adorned with columns, balustraded balconies, and other decorative architectural features. For commercial structures, Italianate structures often have a raised pediment above the roof line at the center of the façade, often with the name of the building and/or the date of its completion.
- **Mission Revival:** This style flourished from approximately 1890 to 1930 and is a simpler version of the earlier, more ornate Spanish Mission architecture. The Mission Revival style is defined by thick, stucco-finished walls, large balconies, arcaded walkways, low pitched roofs, and one primary entrance with a recessed porch.
- **Commercial Vernacular:** This style is similar in appearance to the Simplified Classical Revival style and flourished from 1863 to 1920. It consists primarily of two- to four-story structures with more transparent first floors devoted to the display of goods, and upper stories used for residential, office, or storage space. Later versions of the Commercial

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

Vernacular style included one-story structures that had either a false front gable roof with horizontal wood siding or were of brick construction with patterned brick work for ornamentation and cornices (City of Lone, 2009).

A grid street network connects the downtown area to the immediate surrounding residential neighborhoods. Though the city's residential neighborhoods consist of a variety of housing densities, they are dominated by detached single-family residential units. Scattered throughout the city are the Castle Oaks Golf Course and a number of public parks including Oak Ridge Park, Schmidt Park, Train Park at City Hall, Pioneer Park, the largest being Howard Park, at a size of approximately 90-acres. Howard Park is located southeast of the city core and features sports fields and courts, play equipment, and equestrian facilities including stables, corrals, an arena, and a racetrack.

Beyond the city's commercial core, to the north, are several state facilities including the Mule Creek State Prison, the California Department of Forestry (CAL FIRE) Fire Protection Training Academy, and the Preston Youth Correctional Facility. These facilities generally consist of numerous sprawling industrial-style buildings and large expanses of concrete and turf. Within the site of the Preston Youth Correctional Facility, the Preston Castle is a dominant feature of the landscape and can be seen clearly from SR 104 and SR 124 as one approaches the city. The castle was built between 1890 and 1894, is four stories consisting of 46,000 square feet, and features Romanesque Revival architecture (Preston Castle Foundation, 2009).

Northwest of the city core, the Castle Oaks Planned Community has been under development since the 1990s and includes both residential and commercial development as well as the 18-hole championship Castle Oaks Golf Course. The development is composed of winding residential streets ending in cul-de-sacs and features modern architectural styling including stucco treatments. Numerous vacant building pads sit ready for development. The golf course provides views of large green fairways, portions of Sutter and Mule creeks and associated wetlands and riparian habitat as well as naturally vegetated upland areas.

West of the city's commercial core and the Castle Oaks community is the City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) facilities and ponds. Beyond the urban development that makes up the city are agricultural lands, natural open space areas, an active railroad line, and scattered surface mining operations, the largest of which is located just south of the city.

The topography of the Planning Area consists of rolling hills that range in elevation from 600 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the northeast to approximately 260 feet above msl in the southwest with moderately steep to steep mountains and hills at the western foot of the Sierra Nevada. Characteristic natural communities within the Planning Area include forests and woodlands, shrublands, grasslands, and vernal pools. Predominant tree species include blue oak and valley oak. The reader is referred to Section 4.8, Biological Resources, for a full description of the vegetative communities and wildlife species present within the Planning Area.

Significant Visual Features

Rivers and Waterways

As noted above, the two main water features that flow intermittently through the Planning Area are Sutter Creek, which meanders through the center of town from east to west, and Mule Creek, which flows north to south along the western boundary of the city. These two creeks converge into Dry Creek, west of the city. The creeks and their associated riparian habitat provide views of the most prominent natural communities within the city.

Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands comprise a major portion of the Planning Area outside the existing city limits. The agricultural landscape can be considered a scenic resource (see CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G) and primarily includes grazing land, pasture, orchards, and vineyards. These agricultural lands are an important visual aspect of the lone landscape.

Tree Resources

Residential and agricultural vegetative buffers also can be considered a scenic resource within the Planning Area. The city contains a large number of native and non-native tree species. The majority of the native trees include Valley Oak and Blue Oak, among others. The non-native species are generally in use for ornamental values, shade protection, resistance to particular pests, or proven adaptation to the urban environment of the city. The reader is referred to Section 4.8, Biological Resources, for a further description of tree resources in the Planning Area.

Light and Glare

Lands outside the existing city limits, but within the Planning Area, are currently used for agriculture, mining, and scattered residences or remain in a natural, undeveloped state. These rural land uses typically do not generate substantial amounts of glare, lighting, or illumination, and their ambient nighttime lighting and illumination levels are very low. The urbanized areas of the Planning Area include existing sources of daytime glare and nighttime lighting and illumination. Sources of daytime glare include direct beam sunlight and reflections from windows, architectural coatings, glass, and other shiny reflective surfaces. Nighttime lighting and associated glare can be divided into stationary and mobile sources. Stationary lighting sources include structure illumination, ball-field lights, decorative landscape lighting, lighted signs, and streetlights. The major source of mobile nighttime light is the headlights of motor vehicles. However, due to the relatively small and compact size of the city, this lighting is not as pronounced as other larger cities in the region. The agricultural and open space lands surrounding lone serve as a buffer between the city and surrounding urban areas and reduce the impact of lighting on nighttime sky views.

Scenic Roadways

There are no officially designated roadways or roadways that are eligible for such designation by the California Department of Transportation Scenic Highways Program within Amador County (Caltrans, 2008).

Railroads

The Union Pacific freight railroad line runs through the Planning Area just south and west of the city. The line extends west to the City of Galt and east to the community of Martell. From this freight line, there are several spur lines that connect to industrial properties south of the City of lone, many of which are privately owned and maintained. These railways represent the historic nature of the area, having contributed to the development of the City of lone and are therefore an important visual feature of the landscape.

Mining Operations

There are a number of active and inactive mining operations within and near the Planning Area. Clay, Montan wax, and sand and gravel are the primarily materials currently mined in the area.

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

The Unimin sand mine and the lone Minerals clay mine are both located just south of the city limits within the Planning Area. The International Specialty Productions (ISP) Granule Products mine is located just northwest of the city along SR 104. These facilities are characterized by large expanses of exposed earth, ponds, industrial-type buildings, and unpaved roads. While views of these facilities are not generally considered scenic, they are a prominent feature of the area's visual landscape.

4.12.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

LOCAL

Amador County General Plan

The County of Amador General Plan was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 1973 and is currently undergoing an update. The County General Plan is a policy document designed to give long-range guidance regarding the growth and resources of the unincorporated Amador County jurisdiction. It includes policies and implementation measures that apply to development within the Planning Area that are outside of the city limits, until such time those areas are annexed into the City as part of the ultimate development under the City's updated General Plan development potential. The Amador County General Plan does not contain any goals or policies related to visual resources and the proposed project.

City of Lone Zoning Code

Chapter 17.28 of the City's Zoning Code establishes a Historic Overlay (H) District that is intended to protect, enhance, and preserve the unique character of the historic downtown area. The chapter outlines an Architectural Design Review process for new development and redevelopment within the district and provides design standards and guidelines for such development. The review process ensures that development within the downtown area would be consistent with the design standards and guidelines and would exhibit and be consistent with one of the four architectural styles established in the area (Simplified Classical Revival, Commercial Vernacular, Italianate, and Mission Revival). The design standards and guidelines address all exterior features including entries and front façades, storefronts, back and side façades, roofs and parapets, windows and doors, detail features, materials and colors, canopies, outdoor storage and loading areas, signage, and lighting.

City of Lone Downtown Revitalization Plan

The Downtown Revitalization Plan was signed into effect in May 1994. The intent of the plan is to examine the business climate, land use and infrastructure issues, and to provide a retail and tourism market analysis as part of the development of a comprehensive strategy for implementing downtown revitalization. The goals of the plan include creating a framework for future efforts, to include the City government, private businesses, and interested citizens, and to make the performance of the business sector a priority. While the general goals of this plan, including revitalization of downtown, and creation of a framework including all interested parties is still relevant, other plans including the updated General Plan will take precedence in order to more accurately address the current efforts to enhance downtown lone.

4.12.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The following significance thresholds are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A project is considered to have a significant visual impact if it would result in any of the following:

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

With regard to utilizing the above thresholds of significance, the analysis focused on whether the project would result in such an alteration of the natural landscape characteristics and/or views of the area that the scale or degree of the change appears as a substantial obvious and disharmonious modification of the overall scene to the extent it clearly dominates the view.

METHODOLOGY

The following visual resources analysis is based on field observations, aerial photography, and review of the topographic conditions from GIS maps for the Planning Area. It should be noted that any analysis of impacts to visual character is subjective by nature since the qualities that create an aesthetically pleasing setting will vary from person to person. For the purposes of this analysis, the results of the observations and field reviews were analyzed in order to consider the existing community character and to determine the consistency of visual changes resulting from the proposed project with the surrounding setting. The analysis also considers whether the alteration of visual character anticipated from the proposed project would constitute a significant adverse effect to existing views and scenic resources. Proposed GPU policies and actions that contain specific enforceable requirements or restrictions and corresponding performance standards that address an impact have been included under each impact discussion below.

The City of Lone General Plan is intended to be a "self-mitigating" document, in that the General Plan polices are designed to mitigate or avoid impacts on the environment resulting from implementation of the proposed project. To that end, the relevant updated General Plan policies providing mitigation have been identified for each significant impact in this section. If the applicable General Plan polices were determined not to fully mitigate or avoid impacts, then additional mitigation measures have been provided. These additional mitigation measures have been written as policy statements that can be incorporated into the final General Plan. Each impact discussion includes a determination as to whether the impacts would be mitigated to a less than significant level or would remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of the updated General Plan policies.

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Alteration of Scenic Resources within a Scenic Highway

Impact 4.12.1 Implementation of the proposed General Plan update and other project components would not result in substantial damage to scenic resources within a state or county scenic highway. There is **no impact**.

There are no officially designated state or county scenic highways or any highways eligible for such designation within or proximate to the Planning Area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed General Plan update and other project components would not have the potential to affect scenic resources within a scenic highway, and there is **no impact**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Degradation of Scenic Vistas

Impact 4.12.2 Implementation of the proposed General Plan update and associated project components would encourage new development and redevelopment activities that could potentially degrade existing scenic vistas. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

Although there are no officially designated scenic vistas surrounding the Planning Area, there are views of the nearby Sierra Nevada to the east and natural rolling terrain and agricultural lands to the north, west, and south, all of which are important components of the region's visual character.

General Plan Land Use Map

Areas Within and Outside Existing City Limits

Implementation of the proposed General Plan would allow for development of previously undeveloped areas within the Planning Area and redevelopment or infill development within the existing urbanized core of the city. However, the proposed Land Use Map indicates that the area east of the city, in the direction of the mountain views, would largely be designated as Open Space and would remain in its natural state. Similarly, areas north, west, and south of the city limits and SOI would primarily be designated as General Agriculture and Open Space and would remain largely undeveloped, allowing the surrounding natural views to remain unobscured.

Some areas located northwest and south of the city are designated as Surface Mining (SM). As described previously in this section, these uses are generally characterized by large expanses of exposed earth, ponds, industrial-type buildings, and unpaved roads. The areas proposed for designation as SM are already at least partially developed as mineral extraction operations. Expansion of these uses or the development of new mining operations could significantly change the character of these areas but would not be expected to block long-range views because new structures would be subject to the height restrictions contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 of the Municipal Code) which are intended in part to protect views from surrounding parcels. This impact is therefore considered to be **less than significant**.

Sphere of Influence Amendment/Annexations

As part of the proposed project, the City plans to amend its Sphere of Influence (SOI) to include the site of the Castle Oaks Water Reclamation Plant (COWRP), the City Corporation Yard and adjacent land and to expand the Old Stockton Road and Industrial Park Special Planning Areas. In addition, the City is proposing to annex three areas currently located outside the city limits. These areas are identified on **Figure 3.0-6** in Section 3.0 and are referred to as (1) the Collins Road Annexation Area consisting of about 1 acre; (2) the Wastewater Treatment Plant Annexation Area consisting of about 9.7 acres; and (3) the State Property Annexation Area consisting of about 3.7 acres. The northwest parcel (Collins Road Annexation Area) will be rezoned C-3 Heavy Commercial, while the 3.7-acre parcel to the northeast (State Property Annexation Area) will be rezoned PF Public Facilities.

The proposed SOI amendments and annexations are policy actions that would allow for the future development of the annexation areas and land proposed under the SOI amendments with various urban uses according to their individual General Plan land use and zoning designations. Such development would be subject to the height restrictions contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 of the Municipal Code) and all other development standards and design guidelines adopted by the City. Implementation of this portion of the proposed project would not result in the degradation of any scenic vistas beyond that addressed under the General Plan update. This impact for all proposed SOI amendments and annexations is therefore considered to be **less than significant**.

Zoning Code Update

The proposed Zoning Code updates would be largely administrative, adding new zoning districts and amending development standards for some existing zoning districts. These updates would not fundamentally change the type or form of development permitted the proposed land use designations in a way that would obscure scenic vistas. Therefore, this impact is considered to be **less than significant**.

West Lone Roadway Improvement Strategy

The proposed project would also lead to the development of the Western Lone Roadway Improvement Strategy (WIRIS) or the "lone bypass project" that would introduce a large roadway to a largely undeveloped, agricultural portion of the Planning Area (see **Figure 3.0-11**). A roadway would not be expected to significantly obscure long-range views of the surrounding natural environment. This impact is considered to be **less than significant**.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items that Provide Mitigation

The proposed General Plan update contains several goals, policies, and action items that would assist in reducing this impact to scenic vistas. The following list contains those policies and action items that contain specific, enforceable requirements and/or restrictions and corresponding performance standards that assist in reducing this impact.

Conservation Element

Policy CO 3.4:	Improve overall landscaping quality and sustainability in all areas visible to the public through the creation of development guidelines and/or standards that establish minimum planting provisions for landscaped areas within new developments.
----------------	--

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

- Action CO 3.4.1: Create landscaping guidelines which address the appropriate species to be utilized, spacing and location of plantings and reduction of water required for irrigation and to ensure the long-term viability of planted areas.
- Action CO-5.1.1: Regulate surface mining operations within the City limits as required by California's Surface Mining and reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA), Public Resources Code Section 2207 (relating to annual reporting requirements), and State Mining and Geology Board regulations for surface mining and reclamation practice.
- Action CO-5.2.1: Establish and require minimum setbacks of future and reauthorized surface mining from adjoining residential land uses.
- Action CO-9.2.1: As part of the tentative subdivision map, Planned Development, or Specific Plan process in newly developing areas, encourage projects to accomplish the following:
- i. Align roads, trails, and public spaces to take advantage of vistas over open space; and locate trails through open spaces where possible, to maximize these areas as passive recreational uses, and to minimize the destruction of open space areas.
 - ii. Locate public parks adjacent to open space lands to create a greater sense of open space and to take advantage of opportunities for scenic vistas and trail connections.
- Action CO-9.2.2: Through the development review process, incorporate design features that increase visual access to natural resources.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan policies and actions listed above would reduce impacts to scenic vistas by requiring setbacks at mining operations which are and will be located well outside the city limits and within foreground views from the city and by encouraging the preservation of open space and agricultural areas and views of such areas during the development review process. This impact is **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Alteration of Visual Character

Impact 4.12.3 Conversion of existing agricultural lands and undeveloped lands to urban uses from implementation of the proposed project would result in a substantial visual change and **significant** impact to the visual character of the Planning Area.

General Plan Land Use Map

Implementation of the proposed General Plan update would change the visual character of the Planning Area through intensification of urban uses within the existing city limits and introduction of urban uses outside the city limits.

Areas Within Existing City Limits

Implementation of the proposed General Plan update would allow for new infill development and redevelopment within the lone city limits. In the downtown area, proposed General Plan policies would primarily provide for commercial, office, and public uses but would also provide the opportunity for a mixed land use category (Downtown Transition) that combines residential, commercial, and office uses. Outside of the downtown area, the proposed land use designations would primarily allow for low-density residential development and associated parks and recreation uses as well as clusters of higher-density residential uses and commercial and industrial uses.

Adoption of the proposed General Plan would establish land use development standards for all land use designations including maximum allowable densities and structure heights. The exception would be the Special Planning Areas, which will require the preparation of Specific Plans or Master Development Plans that will establish design guidelines and development standards specific to each planning area. These standards and guidelines would protect the existing character of the city and implement the City's vision for the design and character of new development.

The City recently established a Historic Overlay (H) District as part of its Zoning Code (Chapter 17.28). This zoning district is intended to protect, enhance, and preserve the unique character of lone's historic downtown area. Development and redevelopment of property within this overlay district would require Architectural Design Review by the City. The City's review would ensure that development within the downtown area would be consistent with the design standards and guidelines adopted for the overlay district and would exhibit and be consistent with one of the four architectural styles established in the area (Simplified Classical Revival, Commercial Vernacular, Italianate, and Mission Revival). The design standards and guidelines address all exterior features including entries and front façades, storefronts, back and side façades, roofs and parapets, windows and doors, detail features, materials and colors, canopies, outdoor storage and loading areas, signage, and lighting. Compliance with the various requirements of the City's Historic Overlay District would ensure that future development within the downtown area would be similar in character to the existing surrounding development and would be consistent with the City's vision for the area.

Similarly, the preparation of Specific Plans or Master Development Plans for the Special Planning Areas within the city would ensure that these areas are developed in a manner that would be consistent with the City's visual character and the City's vision for those areas. However, development outside the downtown and Special Planning Areas would not be subject to these requirements and could therefore result in a substantial alteration of the city's existing visual character. This impact is considered to be **significant**.

Areas Outside of Existing City Limits

Implementation of the proposed General Plan update would allow new development to occur in the largely undeveloped areas of the Planning Area surrounding the city. In particular, this would include development of the Triangle Policy Area southeast of the city proposed for designation as Special Planning Area (SPA), the Silva Policy Area located west of the city also proposed for designation as SPA, and the State Route 124 Corridor Policy Area located northeast of the city proposed for designation as Low Density Residential (RL). In addition, areas northwest and south of the city are designated as Surface Mining (SM). The remaining areas outside the city limits are primarily proposed for designation as Open Space (OS) or General

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

Agriculture (AG). These proposed designations would largely allow for a continuation of the existing uses and would not allow for significant development to occur in these areas.

The introduction and expansion of urban uses into the areas described above has the potential to interrupt views of existing agricultural and natural resources and convert agricultural and open space lands to urban development, thereby reducing the aesthetic value of these resources. Current views would be replaced by more extensive residential, commercial, public, and industrial development which would vary in size, mass, and scale depending on the specific use. Existing trees and other vegetation, rock outcroppings, and other natural features, as well as agricultural areas, would need to be removed in order to allow for such development. In addition, the construction of parking, recreation, and other areas associated with such development would further alter views in the Planning Area.

Therefore, development that would be allowed under the proposed General Plan update could result in the conversion of existing agricultural lands and open space to urban uses. This would substantially alter the visual character of these areas and is considered to have **significant** impacts.

Sphere of Influence Amendment/Annexations

As described previously in this section, the City plans to annex areas currently located outside the city limits. The Collins Road Annexation Area is currently undeveloped and would be rezoned for heavy commercial uses. Future development of this area with such uses would dramatically change its existing visual character from a vacant lot with natural vegetation to a retail center with large parking lots, numerous structures, lighting, and heavy traffic. This would be considered a **significant** impact. Additional environmental review would be required prior to development of this site.

The State Property Annexation Area is located adjacent to the Preston Youth Correctional Facility and utilized by the State as part of this facility. Annexation of this parcel is a policy action that would not result in any changes of use or visual character of the area. This impact is considered to be **less than significant**.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant SOI amendment area consists of the City's existing WWTP, the Castle Oaks Water Reclamation Plant, a corporation yard, and two residences as well as an undeveloped area. These properties would be zoned for public facility, residential, and parks/recreational uses to accommodate expansion of the City's WWTP and development of a new park. The residences would remain unchanged. Expansion of the WWTP would include development that would be similar to the existing facilities and would not represent a significant alteration to the existing visual character of that property. Similarly, development of a park would not represent a significant alteration of the existing visual character of the undeveloped portion of this area. This impact is considered to be **less than significant**.

The Old Stockton Road and Industrial Park SOI amendment areas would expand the Old Stockton Road and Industrial Park Special Planning Areas and allow for increased development with various urban uses. This would be considered a **significant** impact.

Zoning Code Update

The City is also considering several updates to its Zoning Code as part of the proposed project. These updates involve the addition of new zoning districts as well as amendments to development standards for several existing zoning districts (see Section 3.0, Project Description,

for further details). The proposed updates are largely administrative to further implement and clarify the types and forms of uses that are permitted under a particular General Plan land use designation and would not significantly affect the visual character of the Planning Area beyond those changes addressed for the General Plan update. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

West Lone Roadway Improvement Strategy

The proposed WIRIS would consist of various improvements to existing roadways and the construction of new roadway segments in order to create a bypass to provide traffic relief through downtown. The general alignment of the proposed bypass is shown in **Figure 3.0-11**. As shown in this figure, the bypass will run through undeveloped open space and agricultural land. The bypass will typically have a 68-foot-wide right-of-way and consist of multiple traffic lanes, signage, and lighting. The introduction of a major roadway to this undeveloped area would be considered a **significant** impact.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items that Provide Mitigation

The proposed General Plan update contains several goals, policies, and action items that would assist in reducing this visual resources impact. The following list contains those policies and action items that contain specific, enforceable requirements and/or restrictions and corresponding performance standards that assist in reducing (though not eliminating) this impact.

Land Use Element

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Policy LU-1.9: | Implement the Downtown Policy Area Land Use Vision and Policy. |
| Policy LU-1.15: | Implement the Silva Policy Area Land Use Vision and Policy. |
| Policy LU-1.16: | Implement the State Route 124 Corridor Policy Area Land Use Vision. |
| Policy LU-1.17: | Implement the Triangle Policy Area Land Use Vision and Policy. |
| Action LU-2.4.1: | Establish development standards in the Zoning Code to address compatibility between existing and proposed development. |
| Action LU-2.4.2: | Minimize impacts between urban and agricultural uses through the use of buffers, increased setbacks, roadways, decreased densities, landscaping, and/or other appropriate methods to avoid conflicts. |
| Action LU-3.1.3: | Establish a Downtown Master Plan, Area Plan, or Specific Plan to ensure the long-term vibrancy of Downtown, protect its historic architecture, intensify land uses, enhance walkability, and develop bicycle and pedestrian linkages to surrounding areas. Include a Parking Plan as part of the Downtown Plan. |

Economic Development Element

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Action ED-1.2.1: | Offer incentives to business owners and property owners for facade improvements, historic rehabilitation, and other building improvement programs in the downtown. |
|------------------|--|

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

- Action ED-1.3.3: Require heavy industrial uses and mining to include transitions in intensity, buffers, or other methods to reduce potential impacts on residential uses. Buffers may include land designated for other uses, such as agriculture, commercial, or open spaces.
- Action ED-5.2.1: Identify programs such as historic tax credits which could provide support to the City's preservation efforts.
- Action ED-5.2.2: Seek out grants and participate in federal and state historic preservation programs, including Main Street USA and Preserve America, in order to provide funding and resources for downtown redevelopment and improvement.
- Action ED-5.2.3: Develop historic preservation and sign ordinances that allow flexibility to property owners to maintain and enhance their buildings downtown while preserving their historic character.
- Action ED-5.2.4: Develop pattern books and other design manuals to assist property owners in developing effective and cost efficient façade enhancements of existing buildings.

Conservation Element

- Policy CO-2.4: Require the preservation of existing creek locations, topography, and meandering alignment.
- Action CO-2.4.3: Establish standards for private projects allowing public access in the floodplain and buffers along creek corridors and preserves, where not precluded by habitat preservation requirements. Require open-view fencing for all residential development adjacent to creeks and wetlands.
- Policy CO-3.2: The City shall require preservation of all trees of 36" dbh or greater on development sites, unless health, safety, or access requirements do not allow for preservation of such trees. All development is required to fully mitigate the removal of any trees by replanting.
- Policy CO-3.4: Improve overall landscaping quality and sustainability in all areas visible to the public through the creation of development guidelines and/or standards that establish minimum planting provisions for landscaped areas within new developments.
- Action CO-3.4.1: Create landscaping guidelines which address the appropriate species to be utilized, spacing and location of plantings and reduction of water required for irrigation and to ensure the long-term viability of planted areas.
- Action CO-5.2.1: Establish and require minimum setbacks of future and reauthorized surface mining from adjoining residential land uses.
- Action CO-9.2.2: Through the development review process, incorporate design features that increase visual access to natural resources.

Housing Element

Action H-3.2.1: lone Beautification (Code Enforcement) Program. The City currently handles violations of its Municipal Code on a demand-driven basis. Staff responds to housing code complaints initiated by lone tenants. The City plans to sponsor debris hauling and clean-up programs and plans to limit the number of garage sales permitted during the year.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan policies listed above would assist in reducing impacts associated with large-scale land use changes that have the potential to change the overall visual character of the Planning Area. These policies would require new development to comply with development standards and incorporate certain design features to minimize their visual impacts, would encourage the redevelopment and improvement of existing blighted development, and would help to protect the existing historic characteristics of the downtown area. In addition, these policies would preserve scenic natural features such as large trees, farmland, and creek corridors and would enhance access and views of these features. Furthermore, these policies would encourage the cleanup of existing neighborhoods and the continued enforcement of the City's Municipal Code related to the general maintenance of properties. New development would also be subject to the development standards contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance, including the newly adopted Historic Overlay District, which would ensure that the scale, massing, and height of all new development would be appropriate for its location and type of use.

However, implementation of these existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies would not fully mitigate this impact as the proposed project would allow for the conversion of the existing rural and open space character of the Planning Area to a more urban character. This conversion would result in the irrevocable change in the existing character of the Planning Area; therefore, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

Mitigation Measures

Even with the adoption of the above policies and actions, future development within the city limits will irrevocably alter the visual character of lone. Similarly, the proposed project would allow for development in areas outside the current city boundaries, thus allowing for the conversion of existing rural environment to a more urban character. Implementation of the proposed project would therefore still result in **significant and unavoidable** impacts to the existing visual character of the Planning Area.

Daytime Glare and Nighttime Lighting

Impact 4.12.4 Implementation of the proposed project would result in the intensification of land uses within the Planning Area, which has the potential to create new sources of daytime glare and nighttime illumination. This impact is considered **potentially significant**.

General Plan Land Use Map

Development associated with the proposed General Plan update would convert agricultural and/or vacant land to urbanized uses and would intensify existing developed areas through infill and redevelopment. These new and intensified urbanized uses would create additional sources of light and glare in the Planning Area. Lighting nuisances are typically characterized by the following:

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

- Glare: Intense light that shines directly or is reflected from a surface into a person's eyes
- Sky Glow/Nighttime Illumination: Artificial lighting from urbanized sources that alters the rural landscape in sufficient intensity to cause lighting of the nighttime sky and reduction of visibility of stars and other astronomical features
- Spillover Lighting: Artificial lighting that spills over into adjacent properties, which could interrupt sleeping patterns or cause other nuisances to neighboring residents

Areas Within Existing City Limits

The primary source of daytime glare in the Planning Area would be from sunlight reflecting off of structures and motor vehicles with reflective surfaces such as metal and window glass. The typical land uses that would be permitted under the proposed General Plan include various densities of residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreation and other public uses. These uses would include structures and other potential sources of glare and would result in greater traffic volumes. The amount of glare from these surfaces depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight, which is more acute at sunrise, sunset, and during the winter season because the angle of the sun is lower during those periods.

Sources of new and increased nighttime lighting and illumination include, but are not limited to, internal and exterior lighting at residential and non-residential structures, lights associated with vehicular traffic (i.e., car headlights), street lighting, and parking lot and security-related lighting for non-residential uses. Increased nighttime lighting and illumination could result in adverse effects to adjacent land uses through the "spilling over" of light into these areas and "sky glow" conditions, as described above.

Areas Outside of Existing City Limits

Implementation of the proposed General Plan update would increase the amount of daytime glare and nighttime lighting in previously developed areas through the intensification of urban uses. Daytime glare impacts, intensification of lighting, and increased potential for spillover lighting to adjacent areas could therefore be substantially increased in developed areas, particularly if the intensification of uses increases horizontally. Residential and non-residential structures higher than a single story are visible to a wider surrounding area and frequently contain a high ratio of window surface area.

In the currently undeveloped areas of the Planning Area, implementation of the proposed General Plan update could result in the introduction of new sources of daytime glare into areas that currently have few sources of glare. Development would also introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and illumination into the undeveloped portions of the Planning Area. Therefore, this impact is considered to be **potentially significant**.

Sphere of Influence Amendment/Annexations

As part of the proposed project, the City plans to amend its Sphere of Influence (SOI) to include the site of the Castle Oaks Water Reclamation Plant (COWRP), the City Corporation Yard and adjacent land and to expand the Old Stockton Road and Industrial Park Special Planning Areas. In addition, the City is proposing to annex three areas currently located outside the city limits. These areas are identified on **Figure 3.0-6** in Section 3.0 and are referred to as (1) the Collins Road Annexation Area consisting of about 1 acre; (2) the Wastewater Treatment Plant Annexation Area consisting of about 9.7 acres; and (3) the State Property Annexation Area

consisting of about 3.7 acres. The northwest parcel (Collins Road Annexation Area) will be rezoned C-3 Heavy Commercial, while the 3.7-acre parcel to the northeast (State Property Annexation Area), and the 9.7 acre Wastewater Treatment Plant Annexation Area will be rezoned PF Public Facilities.

The proposed SOI amendment and annexations are policy actions that would not directly have the potential to create new sources of light and glare within the Planning Area. However, these actions would allow for the future development of these areas, which in turn could result in new and additional sources of light and glare. However, implementation of this portion of the proposed project would not result in light and glare impacts beyond that addressed under the proposed project. This impact for all proposed SOI amendments and annexations is therefore considered to be **less than significant**.

Zoning Code Update

The proposed Zoning Code updates are largely administrative, creating new zoning districts and amending development standards for some existing zoning districts. These changes are intended to further clarify the types and forms of uses that are permitted under certain General Plan land use designations. These changes would not result in any additional development and would have **no impact** related to daytime glare or nighttime lighting.

West Lone Roadway Improvement Strategy

The proposed WIRIS bypass project would not be expected to contain reflective building materials. The bypass would, however, substantially increase the number of vehicles traveling through a currently rural, agricultural area. Such vehicle traffic would result in daytime glare from vehicle windows and nighttime lighting from headlights. The bypass would also likely be lit by numerous new streetlights, potentially contributing to sky glow and/or affecting nearby residences. This impact is considered to be **potentially significant**.

Proposed General Plan Policies That Provide Mitigation

The proposed General Plan update does not contain any goals, policies, or action items that would assist in reducing impacts from daytime glare and nighttime lighting.

Mitigation Measures

MM 4.12.4a The following policy shall be added to the Conservation Element of the lone General Plan:

As part of planned major roadway improvements identified in the Circulation Element, and particularly for the WIRIS bypass, the City shall require the installation of landscaping in areas identified where vehicle headlights could generate glare on existing residences or areas designated in the General Plan for future residential development.

MM 4.12.4b The following policy shall be added to the Conservation Element of the lone General Plan:

Street lighting on City roadways shall be limited to the minimum amount needed for public safety and shall be designed to focus light where it is needed (e.g., intersections). Streetlights shall consist of fixtures that are

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

designed to block illumination of adjoining properties and prohibit light rays emitted from the fixture at angles above the horizontal plane.

MM 4.12.4c The following policy shall be added to the Conservation Element of the lone General Plan:

As part of the development review process, the City shall require that all nighttime lighting associated with new development be designed to limit upward and sideways spillover of light. Lighting standards shall be developed to be consistent with the most recent update of the “Nonresidential Compliance Manual for California’s 2005 Energy Efficiency Standards” or the “Residential Compliance Manual for California’s 2005 Energy Efficiency Standards” published by the State of California.

MM 4.12.4d The following policy shall be added to the Conservation Element of the lone General Plan:

As part of the development review process, the City shall restrict the use of reflective building materials that could cause glare.

Implementation of mitigation measures **MM 4.12.4a, b, c** and **d** would minimize the potential for new sources of light and glare in the Planning Area to result in a significant impact by utilizing landscaping buffers, by requiring new lighting to be designed in a way to minimize light spillover, and by restricting the use of reflective building materials in new development. This impact is **less than significant**.

4.12.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CUMULATIVE SETTING

The land use policies in the proposed City of lone General Plan update would provide direction for growth within the city limits, while the Amador County General Plan policies provides direction for growth outside the city limits, but within the Planning Area boundaries (until land areas are annexed into the City). Thus, the setting for this cumulative analysis includes existing, proposed, approved, and planned projects in the City of lone General Plan Planning Area and surrounding portions of unincorporated Amador County as well as full buildout of the City of lone General Plan Planning Area as proposed in the General Plan update (occurring after year 2030). Development in the region identified in Section 4.0 would change the intensity of land uses in the region. In particular, this cumulative development scenario would provide additional housing, employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Cumulative Visual Resources Impacts

Impact 4.12.5 Implementation of the proposed General Plan update and other project components in combination with other reasonably foreseeable development projects within Amador County would result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character and scenic vistas of the region. This impact is considered to be **cumulatively considerable** impact.

Increased urbanization of the communities within Amador County would result in cumulatively considerable changes in the visual character of the region. As discussed in Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources, of this Draft EIR, conversion of agricultural lands is of a significant scale within Amador County. As undeveloped areas transition from a rural to an urban character, existing viewsheds within the county and incorporated cities would be affected, existing views of orchards and vineyards would be changed to urban uses, and views of the Sierra Nevada and foothills may be obstructed. Important visual resources such as mature trees, rock outcroppings, and rural structures would be lost. The land uses proposed by the proposed project would contribute to this trend in alteration of the visual character of the area by converting rural uses to urban development.

Furthermore, under cumulative conditions, the proposed project would contribute to daytime glare and nighttime lighting impacts through the development of a range of uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, and public, within the Planning Area. This cumulative development would introduce new sources of daytime glare and substantially change nighttime lighting and illumination levels in the region. One adverse impact resulting from increased cumulative development would be increased “sky glow” conditions in the region that would reduce visibility of the nighttime sky.

The conversion of the Planning Area from its current rural visual character to a more urbanized character, in combination with the increased urbanization throughout the county, would result in a cumulatively considerable change in the visual character of the area.

Proposed General Plan Policies and Action Items that Provide Mitigation

The proposed General Plan update contains several goals, policies, and action items that would assist in reducing this visual resources impact. The following list contains those policies and action items that contain specific, enforceable requirements and/or restrictions and corresponding performance standards that assist in reducing (though not eliminating) this impact. Since these policies and action items have been described in detail in prior impact discussions for this section, the following is limited to only listing the policy and action item numbers.

Conservation Element

Policy CO-2.4, Action CO-2.4.3, Policy CO-3.2, Policy CO 3.4, Action CO 3.4.1, Action CO-5.1.1, Action CO-5.2.1, Action CO-9.2.1, Action CO-9.2.2, Policy CO-9.3

Land Use Element

Policy LU-1.9, Policy LU-1.15, Policy LU-1.16, Policy LU-1.17, Action LU-2.4.1, Action LU-2.4.2, Action LU-4.1.3

Economic Development Element

Action ED-1.2.1, Action ED-1.3.3, Action ED-5.2.1, Action ED-5.2.2, Action ED-5.2.3, Action ED-5.2.4

Housing Element

Action H-3.2.1

4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

Implementation of the proposed General Plan policies listed above and mitigation measures **MM 4.12.4a-d** would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative alteration of the visual character of the county and the cumulative creation of new sources of light and glare within the county. These policies would protect views of the county's scenic vistas by requiring increased setbacks/buffers at mining operations and commercial and industrial development and by encouraging the preservation of open space and agricultural areas and views of such areas during the development review process. These policies would also help preserve the existing visual character of the Planning Area by requiring new development to comply with certain development standards, by encouraging the redevelopment and improvement of existing blighted development, and by helping to protect the existing historic characteristics of the downtown area. Furthermore, these policies would preserve scenic natural features such as large trees, farmland, and creek corridors and would enhance access to and views of these features. Additionally, these policies would encourage the cleanup of existing neighborhoods and the continued enforcement of the City's Municipal Code related to the general maintenance of properties. Finally, mitigation measures **MM 4.12.4a-d** would minimize impacts resulting from the introduction of new sources of light and glare in the Planning Area by requiring the use of landscaping as buffers along major new roadways, by requiring new lighting to be designed in a way to minimize light spillover, and by discouraging the use of reflective building materials in new development.

As described under **Impact 4.12.3**, new development would also be subject to the development standards contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance that would ensure that the scale, massing, and height of all new development would be appropriate for its location and type of use. In addition, the newly adopted Historic Overlay District would ensure that new development within the downtown area is consistent with the existing historic architecture of downtown lone.

Regardless of the mitigation provided by these policies and mitigation measure, the change in the visual character of the region from implementation of the proposed General Plan update and other project components, in addition to other anticipated development in the county, would remain significant and the project's contribution to this cumulative impact would be considerable. Therefore, the proposed project would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to the **significant and unavoidable** cumulative impact on visual character and scenic vistas.

Mitigation Measures

No further feasible mitigation is available.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

City of Ione. 2009. *Municipal Code Title 17: Zoning Code*.

WEBSITES

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). May 2008. *Scenic Highway Program, Eligible and Officially Designated Routes*. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/cahisys.htm> (accessed February 4, 2009).

Preston Castle Foundation. 2009. *Preston Castle Foundation Website*. <http://www.prestoncastle.com/volunteering.html> (accessed February 4, 2009).

