3.2 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

This section describes the aesthetic and visual resources of the Bay Area and assesses the potential of the proposed Plan to affect the region's aesthetic environment. Aesthetic value is subjective, but it is typically used as a criterion for evaluating those elements that contribute to the visual quality that distinguishes an area. Most communities identify scenic resources as an important asset, although what is considered "scenic" may vary according to its environmental setting. It is useful to think of scenic resources in terms of "typical views" seen throughout the Bay Area because scenic resources are rarely encountered in isolation. A typical view may include several types of scenic resources, including both natural elements and built spaces. Typical views seen in the Bay Area are described in the "Physical Setting" section, below.

Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation expressed concerns about impacts on views and vistas in the wildland-urban interface in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Potential impacts on visual resources from the proposed Plan are addressed in this section. Effects of alternatives are addressed in Chapter 4, "Alternatives. "

The CEQA Guidelines note that comments received during the NOP scoping process can be helpful in "identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in an EIR and in eliminating from detailed study issues found not to be important." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15083.) Neither the CEQA Guidelines nor Statutes require a lead agency to respond directly to comments received in response to the NOP, but they do require they be considered. Consistent with these requirements, these comments have been carefully reviewed and considered by MTC in the preparation of impacts in this chapter. Appendix B includes all NOP comments received.

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

PHYSICAL SETTING

The Bay Area is characterized by the diversity of urban development and the combination of rural and agricultural landscapes, as well as the natural beauty and wildlife provided by the surrounding mountain ranges and rich wildlife habitats. It stretches along the central northern Pacific coast of California, with several branches of the Coast Ranges dividing it into valleys, plains, and water bodies. The largest of these valleys contains San Francisco Bay, whereas at the eastern edge of the region is the great Central Valley, a flat plain lying between the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada. The hills of the Coast Ranges provide expansive views of the valleys and plains below, revealing a variety of development types, including urban areas along the bay plains and inland valleys, agricultural lands, and protected open space, and natural areas.

The landscapes of the San Francisco Bay Area are varied, unique, and recognized by many in the region and beyond. The basin formed by the Coast Ranges, East Bay hills, and the Bay itself are prominent physical features of the region. To the west, the Pacific Ocean and the Coast Ranges dominate the visual setting, stretching from Mount Tamalpais in the north to the Santa Cruz Mountains in the south. To the east, the Diablo Range, punctuated by Mount Diablo, provides a view of a different character. In the north, the vineyards of Napa and Sonoma Counties are unique and draw visitors from around the world. Many built features in the Bay Area—the Golden Gate and Bay Bridge and the San Francisco skyline in particular—are also of international renown. Bay Area

residents and tourists alike value the variety and quality of the visual experiences that are found throughout the Bay Area, including urban and rural public spaces, regional parks, and transportation corridors in the region, including heavily traveled freeways, transit lines, and ferries, and narrow country roads through secluded forests and agricultural areas. **Figure 3.2-1** depicts the locations of major scenic resources found in the Bay Area. Major land use and/or transportation projects may affect the visual experiences of travelers and the distinctive visual environment of the region.

Hills and Valleys

The Bay Area contains several distinct mountain ranges and hills. Along the peninsula between the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay lie the coastal hills of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and, north of the Golden Gate, the hills of Marin County. The East Bay hills rise steeply from the urbanized plain along the eastern edge of the Bay, forming a several mile–wide band that also defines the western edge of the Diablo and Livermore Valleys of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. The rolling hills of the Diablo Range separate these valleys from the lowlands of the Central Valley. These hills converge at the south end of the Bay Area in Santa Clara County. To the north, several ranges frame the Napa and Sonoma valleys.

Between these ranges and hills are numerous valleys, both broad and narrow. San Francisco Bay, for example, is bordered along the east and west by a narrow, heavily urbanized plain. This plain widens in the south into the Santa Clara Valley, which, until World War II, was primarily agricultural. The East Bay and coastal hills, which are visible throughout these lowlands, orient viewers and give a sense of scale to the surrounding urban areas. Likewise, to the north, the hills forming the Sonoma and Napa valleys enclose these agricultural areas with urban pockets.

Landmarks and Gateways

Certain features of the Bay Area stand out as symbols and points of orientation (see **Figure 3.2-1**). These landmarks include the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, Alcatraz and Angel Islands, San Francisco skyline, several large buildings in the East Bay hills (the Campanile on the University of California, Berkeley, campus; the Claremont Hotel; and the Mormon Temple in Oakland, for example), and Mount Saint Helena at the northern end of the Napa Valley. These landmarks help visitors and residents locate themselves within the region and, in the case of the Golden Gate Bridge, symbolize the Bay Area for the rest of the world.

Waterways

The Bay Area is home to a number of bodies of water and waterways that flow through or are located in the region. Estuaries, creeks, and built waterways are found throughout the region, as well as the dominant body of water, the San Francisco Bay, which reaches out to the northern and southernmost counties of the Bay Area. Most rivers and streams originating in each of the nine counties of the Bay Area flow into the San Francisco Bay, which provides access to the Pacific Ocean. There are also many smaller built reservoirs in the Bay Area that provide notable landscape features, as well as a few larger reservoirs, notably Lake Berryessa in Napa County and Lake Sonoma in Sonoma County.

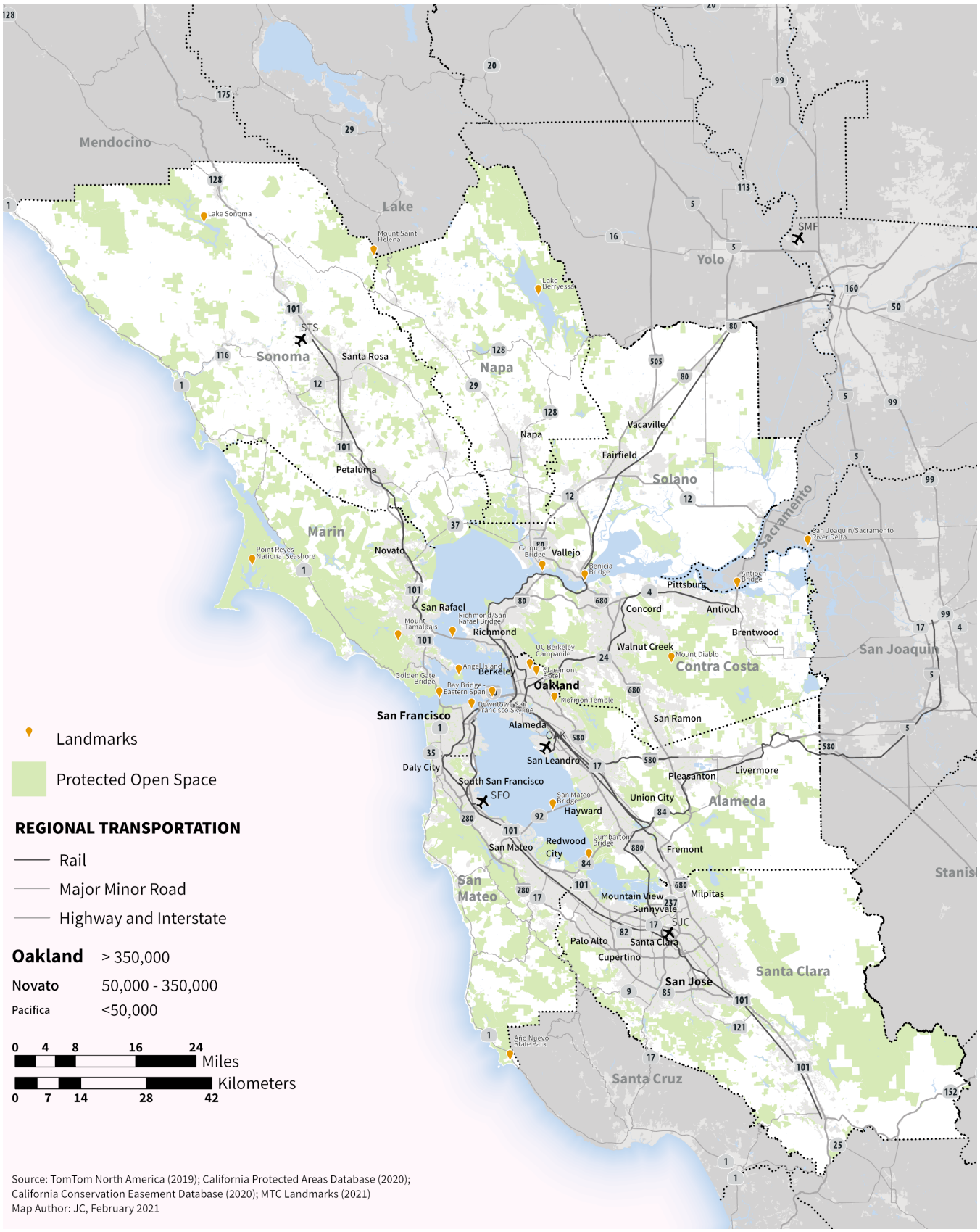

Figure 3.2-1: Major Bay Area Scenic Resources

Views from Travel Corridors

Many roadways and rail lines that intersect the landscapes of the Bay Area provide expansive, regional views of surrounding areas, often because of their wide rights-of-way, location along high points, the elevation of the facilities, or a combination of these factors. Examples include Interstate (I-) 280 along the peninsula, State Route (SR) 92 as it crosses the Coastal Ranges, I-80 near Rodeo, I-580 over the Altamont Pass and above Oakland, and the SR 24 corridor. Similarly, the rest area on I-80 above Vallejo, the west end of the Caldecott Tunnel, southbound U.S. 101 in Marin County, and portions of U.S. 101 in San Francisco offer dramatic views of notable Bay Area landscapes. The bridges crossing San Francisco Bay and the Carquinez Strait offer similar experiences. Both the Bay and Golden Gate Bridges provide world-famous views of San Francisco, whereas the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge provides sweeping views of the North Bay, including Mount Tamalpais and Angel Island. The Antioch Bridge allows views over the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta.

Similarly, rail facilities (including Bay Area Rapid Transit [BART]) can provide travelers with broad views of the region or portions of it. The elevated BART lines through the East Bay, for example, provide views of the East Bay hills and the neighborhoods of Oakland, Berkeley, and El Cerrito. The Amtrak rail lines along San Pablo Bay and the San Joaquin River also provide broad views of the water with the hills beyond.

Roads and rail lines also provide more intimate views of forested hills or narrow valleys. SR 35 (along the crest of the San Mateo Peninsula) and SR 84 (through the narrows of Niles Canyon) are examples of such views. Similarly, SR 1 and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard run through the forests and grasslands of Marin County to the beaches, parks, and open space areas along the coast, up to and through Sonoma County. SR 29 and the Silverado Trail through the Napa Valley and SR 12 through the Sonoma Valley provide dramatic views of enclosing hills, adjoining vineyards, and wineries.

Finally, although carrying only a small proportion of the region's travelers, the Bay ferries provide unique viewing experiences of the Bay Area.

Views of Roads, Rail, and Buildings

Because the Bay Area contains a wide variety of densely populated metropolitan and urban centers, along with more rural communities, roads, buildings, and railways are also a part of the existing aesthetic landscape. Rural and natural landscapes can be dramatically altered by the placement of roads, rail lines, and buildings. Although roads and rail lines can provide access to views for travelers, these facilities can detract from or block public views. A new or expanded roadway along a hillside can be visible from a great distance, changing the impression of the hillside for the viewer, particularly if the hillside is undeveloped. Also, new roads and rail lines are sometimes built at elevations above the level of existing development, which can overshadow nearby homes and businesses and limit views of the surrounding hills and valleys. Similarly, buildings can enhance or detract from the overall visual environment depending on their design, location, and relationship to other structures and natural features.

3.2.2 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

U.S. Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)

The U.S. Department of Transportation Act (DOT Act) (49 U.S. Code Section 303) was enacted to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Section 4(f) of the DOT Act requires a comprehensive evaluation of all environmental impacts resulting from federal-aid transportation projects administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Aviation Administration that involve the use, or interference with use, of the following types of land:

- public park lands;
- recreation areas;
- wildlife and waterfowl refuges; and
- publicly or privately owned historic properties of federal, State, or local significance.

This evaluation, called the Section 4(f) statement, must be sufficiently detailed to permit the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to determine whether:

- there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land or
- the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to any park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site that would result from the use of such lands.

If there is a feasible and prudent alternative, a proposed project using Section 4(f) lands cannot be approved by the Secretary; or if there is no feasible and prudent alternative, the proposed project must include all possible planning to minimize harm to the affected lands.

Detailed inventories of the locations and likely impacts on resources that fall into the Section 4(f) category are required in project-level environmental assessments.

In August 2005, Section 4(f) was amended to simplify the process for approval of projects that have only minimal impacts on lands affected by Section 4(f). Under the new provisions, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation may find such a minimal impact if consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer results in a determination that a transportation project would have no adverse effect on a historic site or that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed action. In that instance, analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required, and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete.

STATE REGULATIONS

California Scenic Highway Program

Recognizing the value of scenic areas and views from roads in such areas, the State Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program in 1963. and is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) This legislation preserves and protects scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The goal of the Scenic Highway Program is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California. Under this program, portions of a number of State highways have been designated as eligible for inclusion as scenic routes. To nominate a scenic highway the local jurisdictions through which the roadway passes must conduct a visual assessment, submit a Scenic Highway Proposal, and prepare

and adopt a corridor protection program (CPP). After Caltrans and the State Scenic Highway Coordinators review the nomination and recommend designation of the roadway., the State may officially designate roadways as scenic routes. Interstate highways, State highways, and county roads may be designated as scenic under the program (Caltrans 2020a).

As noted, a CPP must be adopted by the local governments with land use jurisdiction over the area through which the roadway passes as the first step in moving a road from "eligible" to "designated" status. Each designated corridor is monitored by the State, and designation may be revoked if a local government fails to enforce the provisions of the corridor protection program. Although there are no restrictions on scenic highway projects, local agencies and Caltrans must work together to coordinate transportation and development projects and ensure the protection of the corridor's scenic value to the greatest extent possible, including undergrounding all visible electric distribution and communication utilities within 1,000 feet of a scenic highway. In some cases, local governments have their own land use and site planning regulations in place to protect scenic values along a designated corridor. At a minimum, each corridor protection program must include:

- regulation of land use and density of development,
- detailed land and site planning,
- control of outdoor advertising devices,
- control of earthmoving and landscaping, and
- regulation of the design and appearance of structures and equipment.

The Bay Area includes numerous designated or eligible State scenic highways. Officially designated State scenic highways are illustrated in **Figure 3.2-2**. All officially designated and eligible State scenic highways in the Bay Area are listed in **Table 3.2-1**.

Open Space Easement Act of 1974

Cities and counties can use open space easements as a mechanism to preserve scenic resources if they have adopted open space plans, as provided by the Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Government Code, Sections 51070, 51097). According to this act, a city or county may acquire or approve an open space easement through a variety of means, including use of public money.

California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 6

The California Energy Code (24 CCR 6) creates standards in an effort to reduce energy consumption. The type of luminaries and the allowable wattage of certain outdoor lighting applications are regulated.

Senate Bill 743 (Statutes of 2013)

Senate Bill 743 provides that aesthetics impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site are not considered significant environment impacts if three criteria are met: (1) the project is in a Transit Priority Area (TPA); (2) the project is on an infill site; and (3) the project is residential, mixed-use residential, or an employment center. These statutes are included in CEQA (PRC Section 21099).

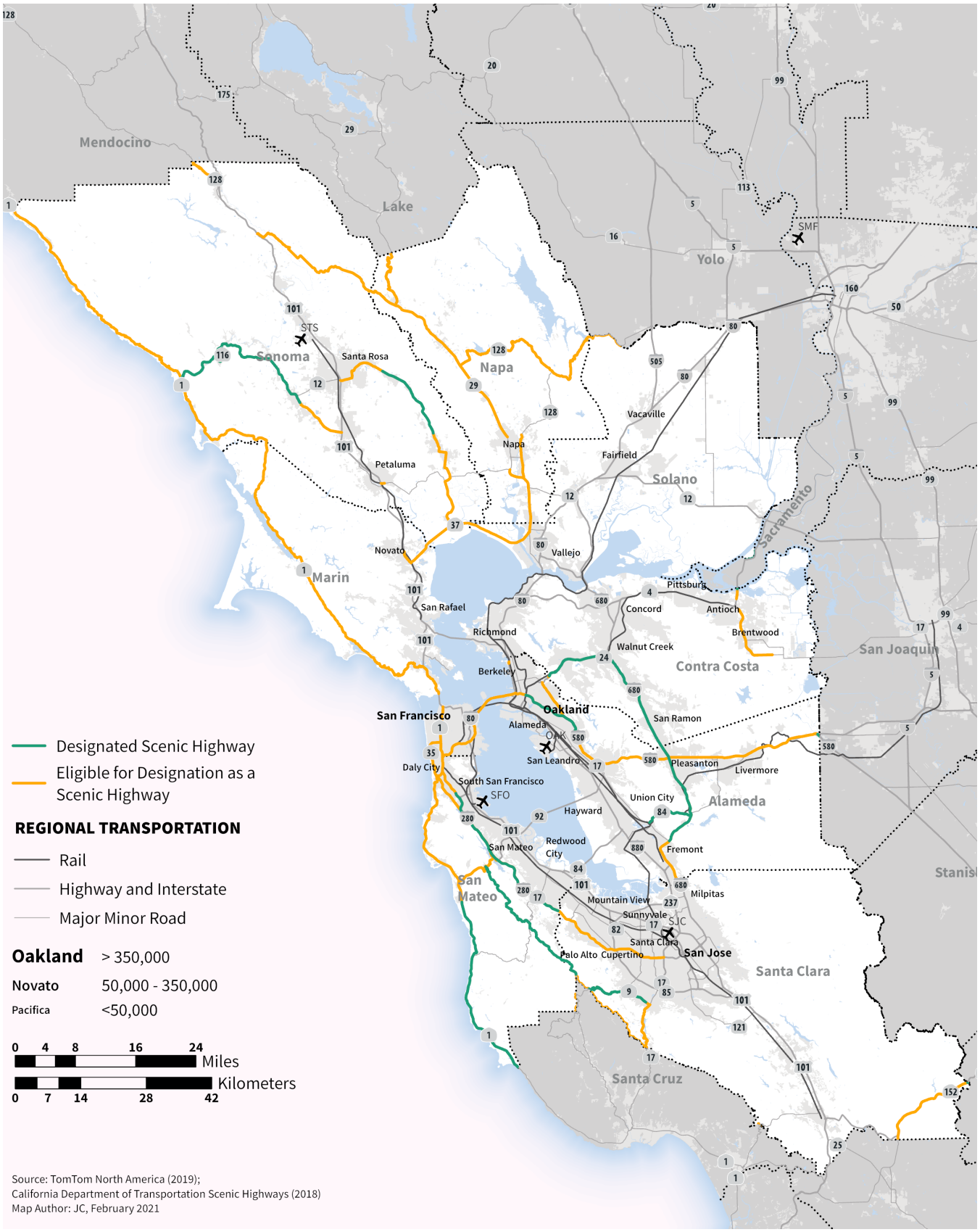
Designated Scenic Highway
Eligible for Designation as a Scenic Highway
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
Rail
Highway and Interstate
Major Minor Road
Oakland > 350,000
Novato 50,000 - 350,000
Pacifica <50,000
0 4 8 16 24 Miles
0 7 14 28 42 Kilometers
Source: TomTom North America (2019);
California Department of Transportation Scenic Highways (2018)
Map Author: JC, February 2021
Mendocino
Lake
Sonoma
Napa
Yolo
Solano
Marin
Contra Costa
Alameda
San Francisco
San Mateo
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
San Joaquin
Sacramento
Santa Rosa
Petaluma
Novato
Vacaville
Fairfield
Vallejo
Pittsburg
Concord
Antioch
Brentwood
San Rafael
Richmond
Walnut Creek
Berkeley
Oakland
Alameda
San Ramon
San Leandro
Pleasanton
Livermore
Daly City
South San Francisco
Union City
Hayward
San Mateo
Redwood City
Fremont
Milpitas
Mountain View
Sunnyvale
Santa Clara
San Jose
Palo Alto
Cupertino
STS
SFO
OAK
SJC
SMF

Figure 3.2-2: State-Designated and Eligible Scenic Highways

Table 3.2-1: California State Scenic Highway System Officially Designated and Eligible Routes in the Bay Area

Designation	Route	County	Location
OD	1	San Mateo	Santa Cruz County line to southern city limit of Half Moon Bay
OD	9	Santa Clara	Santa Cruz County line/Saratoga Gap to Blaney Plaza in Saratoga
OD	9	Santa Clara	Blaney Plaza in Saratoga to Los Gatos city limit
OD	12	Sonoma	Danielli Avenue east of Santa Rosa to London Way north of Agua Caliente
OD	24	Contra Costa	East portal of Caldecott Tunnel to I-680 north of Walnut Creek
OD	35	San Mateo	Santa Cruz County line to Santa Clara County line
OD	35	San Mateo	Santa Clara County line to SR 92 in Half Moon Bay
OD	84	Alameda	SR 238 (Mission Boulevard) to I-680 near Sunol
OD	116	Sonoma	SR 1 to southern city limit of Sebastopol
OD	280	San Mateo	Santa Clara County line to northern city limit of San Bruno
OD	580	Alameda	San Joaquin County line to SR 205
OD	580	Alameda	San Leandro city limit to SR 24 in Oakland
OD	680	Alameda	Mission Boulevard in Fremont to Bernal Avenue near Pleasanton
OD	680	Alameda	Bernal Avenue near Pleasanton to Contra Costa County line
OD	680	Contra Costa	Alameda County line to SR 24
E	1	Marin/ Sonoma/Mendocino	SR 101 near Marin City to SR 101 near Leggett
E	1	San Francisco	SR 35 in San Francisco to SR 101 near Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco
E	1	San Luis Obispo/San Mateo/ San Francisco	SR 101 near San Luis Obispo to SR 35 near Daly City
E	4	Contra Costa	SR 160 near Antioch to SR 84 near Brentwood
E	9	Santa Clara	SR 35 to SR 17 near Los Gatos
E	12	Sonoma	SR 101 near Santa Rosa to SR 121 near Sonoma
E	13	Alameda	SR 24 to I-580
E	17	Santa Cruz/Santa Clara	SR 1 near Santa Cruz to SR 9 near Los Gatos
E	24	Contra Costa	Alameda/Contra Costa County line to I-680 in Walnut Creek
E	29	Napa/Lake	Trancas Street in Napa to SR 20 near Upper Lake
E	29	Solano/Napa	SR 37 near Vallejo to SR 221 near Napa
E	35	Santa Clara/Santa Cruz/ San Mateo/San Francisco	SR 17 to SR 92/I-280/SR 1 in San Francisco
E	37	Marin	SR 251 near Nicasio to SR 101 near Novato
E	37	Marin/ Sonoma/Solano	SR 101 near Ignacio to SR 29 near Vallejo
E	80	San Francisco/Alameda	I-280 near First Street in San Francisco to SR 61 in Oakland
E	84	Alameda	SR 238 to I-680 near Sunol
E	92	San Mateo	SR 1 north of Half Moon Bay to I-280 north of Crystal Springs Lake
E	101	Marin	North of San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge to SR 1 in Marin City
E	101	Marin	SR 37 near Ignacio to SR 37 near Novato
E	116	Sonoma	SR 1 near Jenner to SR 101 near Cotati
E	121	Napa	SR 221 near Napa State Hospital to near Trancas Street in Napa
E	121	Sonoma	SR 37 near Sears Point to SR 12 near Sonoma
E	152	Santa Clara/Merced	SR 156 near San Felipe to I-5
E	156	Monterey/San Benito/Santa Clara	SR 1 near Castroville to SR 152 northeast of Hollister
E	160	Contra Costa/Sacramento	SR 4 near Antioch to Sacramento

Designation	Route	County	Location
E	221	Napa	SR 29 at Suscol Road to SR 121 in Napa
E	239	Alameda/Contra Costa	I-580 west of Tracy to SR 4 near Brentwood
E	251	Marin	SR 37 near Nicasio to SR 1 near Point Reyes
E	280	Santa Clara/San Mateo/ San Francisco	SR 17 to I-80 near First Street in San Francisco
E	580	San Joaquin/Alameda	I-5 southwest of Vernalis to I-80
E	680	Alameda/Contra Costa	Santa Clara County line to SR 24 in Walnut Creek

Notes: E = eligible; OD = officially designated; I- = Interstate; SR = State Route.
Source: Caltrans 2020b

REGIONAL AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

City and County General Plans

City and county general plans may include policies for protecting scenic resources, such as hillsides, natural areas, landmarks, roads, and historic districts. Such policies may restrict new development in areas that maintain scenic vistas or areas that contain important character-defining structures. Additionally, design guidelines established at the local level may establish specific standards for addressing development where local character and/or important visual resources may be affected.

Counties and municipalities also may have scenic route components within their individual general plans. Policies usually encourage the designation of scenic routes as scenic corridors, either by local action or through the State program. Counties and municipalities may also establish regulatory programs or recommend corridor studies to determine the appropriate regulatory program to preserve scenic quality.

Issues pertaining to visual resources are typically addressed in the land use elements of general plans, but policies can also be found in the conservation and open space elements. The *General Plan Guidelines*, prepared by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, recommend that the land use element address an inventory of scenic viewsheds and points of interest, definition of community scenic values, programs for protecting and promoting community aesthetics, and identification of scenic highways and byways (OPR 2017).

3.2.3 Impact Analysis

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The following significance criteria are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, the criteria used in the 2017 Plan Bay Area 2040 EIR, and professional judgment. Under these criteria, implementation of the proposed Plan would have a potentially significant adverse impact if it would:

- have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista (Criterion AES-1);
- substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcropping, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway (Criterion AES-2);
- in nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings and in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. (Criterion AES-3); or

- create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area (Criterion AES-4).

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Pursuant to PRC Section 21099, aesthetic impacts of residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center projects located within TPAs are not considered significant environmental impacts. This program-level EIR evaluates potential impacts on visual resources in non-TPAs based on the location of the footprints associated with the forecasted development pattern (i.e., the land use growth footprint), sea level rise adaptation infrastructure (i.e., sea level rise adaptation footprint), and transportation projects (i.e., transportation projects footprint) relative to the known distribution of visual resources throughout the Bay Area. A brief description of typical views found within the Plan area is provided above in the environmental setting. These typical views are the basis of the impact analysis, and the visual resources baseline. The baseline for the following analysis is the date of the EIR NOP release in September of 2020.

The proposed Plan includes different types of transportation projects that could have different effects on the aesthetic environment. This analysis examines categories of transportation investments for likely impacts. Similarly, future development projects in the land use growth footprint would vary in size and appearance. Generally, with regard to aesthetic impacts, the greater the change from existing conditions, the more noticeable the change to the aesthetic environment. For example, greenfield development usually has a greater visual impact on the surrounding area than infill development that occurs where similar land uses already exist or where long-range views are limited by existing development. The construction of a new roadway generally has a greater impact on scenic resources than the widening of an existing one. Therefore, the general approach in this impact analysis is to characterize how implementation of the proposed Plan could potentially change the aesthetic environment from existing conditions and whether that change would have a potentially significant adverse effect based on the significance criteria. Construction effects related to construction equipment and activity are assumed to be temporary with regard to changes in the visual environment.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact AES-1: Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista (PS)

Land Use Impacts

Effects on scenic vistas associated with changes in land use would relate to changes to views of important landscape features, such as the Golden Gate Bridge, or landforms, such as mountains, which would be experienced regionally. This type of impact would occur as a result of construction and operation of projects that would directly alter a feature or be placed in a location such that the intensity and height of development would obscure views.

Construction

Construction activities in the Bay Area are common, particularly in the urban areas. The presence of construction equipment may cause changes to the existing physical environment by introducing elements that may be seen as visually intrusive (e.g., cranes, backhoes, staging areas, and stockpiling of materials). The use of cranes, backhoes, staging areas, and stockpiling of materials during construction related activities could temporarily affect views of a scenic vista. However, the presence

of construction equipment would be temporary and would be removed following construction; therefore construction would not result in a significant impact to scenic vistas (LTS).

Operation

The proposed Plan includes strategies that address protection of open space lands and concentration of development within already developed areas. Specifically, Strategy EN4 directs new growth to be located within the region's existing urban footprint or growth boundaries. This strategy would confine new development within areas of existing development and areas that are suitable for growth, as established by local jurisdictions. Strategy EN5 would provide funds to help conserve and manage high-priority agricultural and open space lands, including wildland-urban interface areas; lands that support biodiversity and natural resources; and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs), which are regional open space areas for which there is broad consensus for long-term protection. Implementation of Strategies EN4 and EN5 would protect existing scenic resources, including scenic views, located within open space lands, agricultural lands, wildland-urban interface lands, and PCAs. Therefore, these areas are not expected to be subject to proposed Plan-related development.

As summarized in Table 2-5, urbanization—growth on land not designated as urban built-up land as defined by California's Department of Conservation through the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)—is forecasted to occur on approximately 12,300 acres, or 31 percent of the land use growth footprint. The remaining 69 percent of the land use growth footprint would be within land designated as urban built-up—which FMMP defines as "land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel"—reflective of the proposed Plan's core focused growth strategy to leverage existing infrastructure. This indicates that development and redevelopment would occur almost entirely within existing urban built-up lands. Thus, scenic vistas in the region would remain similar to the existing conditions. That is, long-range scenic vistas would not be substantially altered because landforms and areas of development would be similar to the existing conditions.

The potential to affect scenic vistas is related to the specific vantage point of a viewer and the types of development that currently exist. Important public views are protected based on locally adopted land use policies and/or regulations. Future development projects would be subject to the requirements of local policies and regulations. As required under Government Code Section 65302, all jurisdictions are assumed to have policies and regulations in place (e.g., general plan) that protect scenic resources, which can include scenic vistas identified to be important within the jurisdiction. However, denser or more compact development in the proposed Plan's growth geographies may block panoramic views or views of landscape features or landforms from public and individual properties because increasing densities on existing footprints could result in taller buildings and/or buildings placed more closely together. Thus, depending on the location of the viewer, scenic vistas may be substantially altered, and short-range impacts on views of scenic vistas would be potentially significant (PS).

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Impacts

Construction

Implementation of sea level rise adaptation infrastructure could result in development of levees, seawalls, elevated roadways, marsh restoration, and tidal gates. Construction-related activities such as cranes, backhoes, staging areas, and stockpiling of materials could temporarily affect views of a scenic vista. As discussed above under land use impacts, the presence of construction equipment could temporarily affect views of a scenic vista. However, the presence of construction equipment

would be temporary, and the equipment would be removed following construction; therefore, construction would result in a less-than-significant impact to scenic vistas (LTS).

Operation

Development of adaptation infrastructure such as horizontal levees, marsh restoration, seawalls, and tidal gates are unlikely to block or substantially alter views of scenic vistas because these types of structures would be located low to the ground and would not be of substantial height. However, development of adaptation infrastructure such as vertical levees and elevated roadways could be tall enough to alter views of scenic vistas. Thus, depending on the location of the viewer, scenic vistas may be substantially altered, and impacts on views of scenic vistas would be potentially significant (PS).

Transportation System Impacts

Implementation of the proposed Plan would include a variety of major transportation projects such as improvements to interchanges and highway widenings, local roadway widenings, increased transit frequency and capacity, expansion and modernization of passenger rail systems, and expansion of the regional express lane network. Transportation projects would generally be located within densely populated areas that are currently used as existing travel routes (see **Figure 2-4** in Chapter 2, "Project Description"). Not all transportation projects in the proposed Plan would result in substantial construction or operational impacts. For example, projects that involve transit route improvements, road operations and maintenance, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements would not result in physical changes to the environment.

Major transportation projects included in the proposed Plan that would alter approximately 15,100 acres are associated with the following strategies:

- T06. Improve Interchanges & Address Highway Bottlenecks;
- T07. Advance Other Regional Programs & Local Priorities;
- T10. Enhance Local Transit Frequency, Capacity & Reliability;
- T11. Expand and Modernize the Regional Rail Network; and
- T12. Build an Integrate Regional Express Lane and Express Bus Network.

These major transportation projects may include development of new transit centers, train stations, parking structures, rail line extensions, and bus service expansion, which are common throughout the region.

Construction

Construction of transportation projects included in the proposed Plan could take several months to several years, and have the potential to result in long-term effects on scenic views from discrete locations depending on the size of projects. As discussed above for land use projects, construction of projects could directly alter a feature or be placed in a location such that the intensity and height of development would obstruct views. Transportation projects included in the proposed Plan could require the removal of landscaping, temporary traffic changes, temporary signage, and construction staging areas. Larger projects, such as expansion of regional transit lines, and construction of train stations and parking structure could take long periods of time (e.g., several years) to complete, require substantial grading activities, and the prolonged presence of construction equipment and stockpiling of materials. As shown in **Figure 2-4** (see Chapter 2, "Project Description"), projects are clustered in Santa Clara County around the densely populated areas of Santa Clara, downtown San Jose, and Milpitas; in central and western Alameda County; and in San Francisco. Due to the size and duration of some projects, construction may result in significant temporary impacts to scenic vistas (PS).

Operation

Upon completion, the extent to which there would be impacts on scenic vistas from new transportation projects would depend on the type of project and its location relative to specific vantage point of viewers. For example, bicycle and pedestrian projects, such as sidewalk and roadway striping, are unlikely to have adverse impacts on scenic vistas because these types of projects would not require earth moving activities that would result in physical changes to the environment. Similarly, the new in-water Transbay rail crossing between Oakland and San Francisco would not substantially alter views. Many of the other major transportation projects would not substantially alter the Bay Area at a regional scale such that scenic views could be substantially altered because the expected appearance of arterials, highways, and local and regional transit systems would remain generally the same at a regional scale as under the existing conditions. However, new features such as rail lines, large signs, new intersections, and new transit centers could be placed in a location such that the intensity and height of development may block public views of landscape features or landforms. Thus, scenic vistas could be substantially altered because of new transportation infrastructure. This impact would be potentially significant (PS).

Conclusion

As discussed above, future development and infrastructure associated with the proposed Plan's land use growth footprint, sea level rise adaptation footprint, and transportation projects footprint would not substantially change long-range views of scenic vistas in the Bay Area because long-range views of landforms and man-made features would remain similar to the existing conditions. However, impacts to scenic vistas would be substantial from discrete locations because of the introduction of new features or obstruction of views in a localized viewshed. Thus, impacts on scenic views would be **potentially significant (PS)**. Mitigation Measure AES-1 addresses this impact and is described below. Per the requirements set forth in PRC Section 21099, visual impacts would not be considered significant in TPAs if projects are located in an infill site and consist of residential, mixed-use residential, or an employment center.

Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure AES-1: Implementing agencies and/or project sponsors shall implement measures, where feasible and necessary based on project- and site-specific considerations, that include those identified below:

- Reduce the visibility of construction staging areas by fencing and screening these areas with low contrast materials consistent with the surrounding environment, and by revegetating graded slopes and exposed earth surfaces at the earliest opportunity.
- Site or design projects to minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds. Measures to achieve this could include, but are not limited to, requiring that the scale and massing of new development in higher-density areas provide appropriate transitions in building height and bulk that are sensitive to the physical and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods that have lower development intensities and building heights, and ensuring building heights are stepped back from sensitive adjoining uses to maintain appropriate transitions in scale and to protect scenic vistas and scenic resources.
- Design projects to minimize the potential to obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of views from State-designated scenic roadways or scenic highways.
- Use see-through safety barrier designs (e.g., railings rather than walls).
- Develop interchanges and transit lines at the grade of the surrounding land to limit view blockage.

- Design landscaping along State-designated scenic highways and highway corridors in rural and open space areas to add natural elements and visual interest to soften the hard-edged, linear travel experience that would otherwise occur. Retain or replace trees bordering highways so that clear-cutting is not evident.

- Identify, preserve, and enhance scenic vistas to and from hillside areas and other visual resources.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure AES-1 would reduce significant impacts to scenic vistas because it would modify site design and provide development recommendations that would minimize visual intrusion on important viewsheds. Projects taking advantage of the CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 21155.1, 21155.2, and 21159.28) must apply the mitigation measures described above, as applicable, to address site-specific conditions. However, because site conditions are unique, it cannot be concluded with certainty that all significant viewshed impacts could be avoided. Therefore, there may still be instances in which viewshed impacts are substantially altered. This impact would remain **significant and unavoidable (SU)**.

Impact AES-2: Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcropping, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway (PS)

Land Use Impacts

Scenic resources that contribute to the visual character of scenic highways are, by nature, specific to their local context, and as such, impacts on these resources resulting from the development assumed as a part of the proposed Plan would occur at the local level. As shown in **Figure 3.2-2**, there are substantial stretches of roadways in the Bay Area that are designated as scenic highways or eligible for designation. The proposed Plan assumes that housing and employment growth in the region will occur primarily in existing urban areas, some of which are adjacent to designated and eligible scenic highways.

Construction

Development adjacent to scenic highways could cause short-term visual impacts resulting from construction equipment and scaffolding, temporary lighting, and exposed excavation and slope faces. In general, construction-related impacts to scenic highways would be the same as those under Impact AES-1 relating to the blockage of views. Large projects are most likely to have significant impacts on scenic highways, but small projects could have substantial impacts depending on their duration. Generally, construction impacts are less than significant because of their temporary nature, but, as noted, large or long duration projects could have significant impacts (PS).

Operation

Pursuant to PRC Section 21099, aesthetic impacts of residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center projects located within TPAs are not considered significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the potential for visual impacts on scenic highways would result from dense, compact development projects located in non-TPAs, and adjacent to scenic highways, which could damage scenic resources or create visual contrast between the project and existing conditions. The Scenic Highway Program managed by Caltrans to protect scenic highway corridors includes certain limits on land uses adjacent to the roadway, which are implemented at the local level. When nominating a scenic highway, Caltrans requires that the nominating agency adopt a CPP that includes regulation of land use and density of development; detailed land and site planning; control of outdoor advertising; careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping; and the design and appearance of

structures and equipment. These programs are included as part of the scenic highway designation, and Caltrans can revoke the designation if these programs are not followed. Cities and counties also have policies (e.g., general plan), regulations (e.g., zoning), and other guidance (e.g., design guidelines) that control the size and scale of new development to maintain visual compatibility with the natural and built environments. However, development adjacent to scenic highways could result in short-term and long-term impacts on resources along scenic highways. This impact would be potentially significant (PS).

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Impacts

Construction and Operation

The implementation of sea level rise adaptation infrastructure could result in development of levees, seawalls, elevated roadways, marsh restoration, and tidal gates. This adaptation infrastructure would be clustered in Alameda County, followed by Marin, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Solano Counties. Sea level rise adaptation infrastructure would be minimal in Contra Costa, Sonoma, San Francisco, and Napa Counties. As explained above, the presence of construction equipment would be temporary and would be removed following construction. Grading and earthwork for construction of adaptation infrastructure such as horizontal levees, marsh restoration, seawalls, tidal gates, vertical levees, and elevated roadways could result in the removal of trees and other vegetation and topographic disturbance. As noted above, the Scenic Highway Program managed by Caltrans to protect scenic highway corridors includes certain limits on land uses adjacent to the roadway, which are implemented at the local level. When nominating a scenic highway, Caltrans requires that the nominating agency adopt a CPP that includes regulation of land use and density of development; detailed land and site planning; control of outdoor advertising; careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping; and the design and appearance of structures and equipment. These programs are included as part of the scenic highway designation, and Caltrans can revoke the designation if these programs are not followed. Cities and counties also have policies (e.g., general plan), regulations (e.g., zoning), and other guidance (e.g., design guidelines) that control the size and scale of new infrastructure to maintain visual compatibility with the natural and built environments. However, infrastructure placement adjacent to scenic highways could result in short-term and long-term impacts on resources along scenic highways. This impact would be potentially significant (PS).

Transportation System Impacts

Construction and Operation

Scenic resources that contribute to the visual character of scenic highways are, by nature, specific to their local context, and as such, impacts on these resources resulting from the transportation projects assumed as a part of the proposed Plan would occur at the local level. Many of the transportation projects in the proposed Plan would involve transit route improvements, road operations and maintenance, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements, which all involve minimal construction. However, major capital projects that would introduce new structures or facilities have the potential to result in substantial visual impacts during construction. Construction of such projects could take several months to several years.

Proposed transportation projects could impact portions of Bay Area highways that are designated as State scenic highways or that are eligible scenic highways. These projects could have adverse effects on the visual character of land adjacent to designated scenic highways or highways eligible for designation. Transportation projects subject to review by the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, or Federal Highway Administration would be subject to NEPA review and compliance with guidance related to visual resources such as the FHWA Guidelines for the Visual

Impact Assessment of Highway Projects (USDOT 2015). Thus, because existing regulations protect resources along scenic highways, impacts would be less than significant after construction. However, because substantial visual impacts may occur during construction and because construction of some projects may take years, this impact is potentially significant (PS).

Conclusion

As discussed above, because implementation of the proposed Plan's land use development pattern, sea level rise adaptation infrastructure, and transportation projects have the potential to affect visual resources within a State scenic highway impacts on resources along scenic highways would be **potentially significant (PS)**. Mitigation Measure AES-2 addresses this impact and is described below. Per the requirements set forth in PRC Section 21099, visual impacts would not be considered significant in TPAs if projects are located in an infill site and consist of residential development, mixed-use residential development, or an employment center.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure AES-2: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-1.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure AES-2 would reduce significant impacts on visual resources within a State-designated scenic highway because it involves modifying site design and providing development recommendations that would minimize visual intrusion. Projects taking advantage of the CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 21155.1, 21155.2, and 21159.28) must apply the mitigation measures described above, as applicable, to address site-specific conditions. However, because site conditions are unique, it cannot be concluded with certainty that all significant visual resource impacts could be avoided. Therefore, there may still be instances in which visual resources along State-designated scenic highways are substantially altered. This impact would remain **significant and unavoidable (SU)**.

Impact AES-3: In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings and in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality (PS)

Land Use Impacts

Construction and Operation

The proposed Plan's land use growth footprint accommodates the people, households, and jobs identified in the regional growth forecast. The land use growth footprint resulting from the proposed Plan could cause substantial visual impacts by creating or increasing contrasts with the visual character of an existing community. At the regional scale, the greatest impacts would result from high density residential development and high intensity non-residential projects located within existing communities where the visual contrast between the project and existing conditions would be the most apparent. Development outside of urban built-up lands could introduce dense compact development that would contrast with the existing character of the community. However, as summarized in **Table 2-12** (see Chapter 2, "Project Description") development and redevelopment would occur predominately within areas that are currently designated as urban built-up lands. In many cases, the existing visual character within urban built-up lands would not be substantially altered because dense compact development would be similar to existing conditions. Implementation of the proposed Plan's land use growth footprint could cause substantial localized visual impacts by disrupting the local character of the built environment if new development

intensity, densities, and heights are substantially higher than existing development. Local standards and design guidelines (discussed below) would ultimately be the primary tools in shaping neighborhood character.

In growth areas where density, intensity, and heights are anticipated to increase substantially, new development—and in some cases, new *types* of development—would be required to accommodate forecasted regional growth (see **Figures 2-8 and 2-10** in Chapter 2, "Project Description"). Development resulting from the proposed Plan could cast shadows that would substantially degrade the existing visual/aesthetic character or quality of a public place for a sustained period of time. This type of impact would be a tradeoff resulting from increased density and intensity of development in these areas, and is controlled and regulated through local regulations and design review.

As required under State law, all cities and counties have policies (e.g., general plan), regulations (e.g., zoning), and other guidance (e.g., design guidelines) that control the size and scale of new development, which serves to maintain its visual compatibility with the natural and built environments. Local jurisdictions maintain land use and design control over discretionary development projects and would be responsible for approving development plans. Local land use agencies are ultimately responsible for the approval of future urban development and would apply development standards and guidelines to maintain compatibility with existing communities, including site coverage, building height and massing, building materials and color, landscaping, and site grading in visually sensitive areas. However, implementation of the proposed Plan would increase density and intensity of growth in designated growth geographies to a level greater than currently planned, particularly in less urbanized areas. Therefore, the potential for impacts to visual character and quality is considered potentially significant (PS).

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Impacts

Construction

Implementation of sea level rise adaptation infrastructure could result in the construction of levees, seawalls, elevated roadways, marsh restoration, and tidal gates. This infrastructure would be clustered in Alameda County, followed by Marin, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Solano Counties. Adaptation infrastructure would be minimal in Contra Costa, Sonoma, San Francisco, and Napa Counties. Sea level rise adaptation projects would occur primarily in nonurbanized areas but could be located in areas subject to public views where viewer sensitivity is high. As explained above, grading and earthwork for construction of adaptation infrastructure could result in the removal of trees and other vegetation and topographic disturbance, which would alter the existing character of the project sites. Thus, this impact would be potentially significant (PS).

Operation

Development of adaptation infrastructure such as horizontal levees, marsh restoration, seawalls, and tidal gates are unlikely to substantially degrade visual quality because these types of structures would be located low to the ground and would not be of significant height. However, development of adaptation infrastructure such as vertical levees and elevated roadways could require greater tree removal or earthwork and could alter or degrade existing visual quality in the region depending on their location by introducing new built elements in existing natural landscapes or increasing the vertical profile of existing infrastructure. Therefore, the potential for impacts to visual character and quality is considered potentially significant (PS).

Transportation System Impacts

Construction and Operation

The Plan area includes a complex system of roadways and public transit that accommodates existing users. Roadway maintenance and roadway- and transit-related construction activities are common throughout the Plan area. As noted above, implementation of the proposed Plan would include major transportation projects that would include a variety of transportation modifications such as new express lanes, roadway widening, increased transit service and expansion, and other maintenance and rehabilitation projects. Generally, these projects would be located within areas that are currently used as existing travel routes. The majority of the transportation projects in the proposed Plan include operations, maintenance, minor rehabilitation, signal and signage improvements, and local arterial projects, for example. Following construction, the Transbay rail crossing portion that spans the Bay would not be visible. However, development of major above-ground transportation projects could result in substantial effects on the visual character in the region depending on their location and project type. As shown in **Figure 2-4** (see Chapter 2, "Project Description"), new projects span all nine Plan area counties but are especially clustered in Santa Clara County around the densely-populated areas of Santa Clara, Downtown San Jose, and Milpitas; in central and western Alameda County; and in San Francisco. Substantial regional projects that would add travel lanes to freeways, expressways, highways, or add new routes to fixed guideway transit facilities would be located in already developed areas and would not constitute a significant change in visual character. However, the proposed Plan's transportation projects that extend into non-urban areas or that expand existing rights-of-way could impact community character by increasing visual contrast within the community. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Plan's major transportation projects would constitute a potentially significant impact (PS).

Conclusion

As discussed above, implementation of the proposed Plan's land use development pattern, sea level rise adaptation infrastructure, and transportation projects has the potential to produce significant impacts because changes could alter the visual character of a site. Impacts would be **potentially significant (PS).** Mitigation Measure AES-3 addresses this impact and is described below. Per the requirements set forth in PRC Section 21099, visual impacts would not be considered significant in TPAs if projects are located in an infill site and consist of residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center use.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure AES-3: Implementing agencies and/or project sponsors shall implement measures, where feasible and necessary based on project- and site-specific considerations, that include those identified below:

- Require that the scale, massing, and design of new development provide appropriate transitions in building height, bulk, and architectural style that are sensitive to the physical and visual character of surrounding areas.
- Contour the edges of major cut and fill slopes to provide a finished profile that is appropriate to the surrounding context, using shapes, textures, colors, and scale to minimize contrasts between the project and surrounding areas.
- Require project sponsors to conduct shadow studies for four-story high (and higher) buildings and roadway facilities to identify and implement development strategies for reducing the impact of shadows on public open space, where feasible. Study considerations shall include, but are not

limited to, the placement, massing, and height of structures, surrounding land uses, time of day and seasonal variation, and reflectivity of materials. Study recommendations for reducing shadow impacts shall be incorporated into the project design as feasible based on project- and site-specific considerations.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure AES-3 would reduce significant impacts to visual character or quality because it would modify site design and provide development recommendations that would result in projects that would be consistent in appearance to their surroundings. Projects taking advantage of the CEQA streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 21155.1, 21155.2, and 21159.28) must apply the mitigation measures described above, as applicable, to address site-specific conditions. However, because site conditions are unique within urban and non-urban areas, it cannot be concluded with certainty that all significant impacts to existing visual character could be avoided. Therefore, there may still be instances in which impacts to visual character are **significant and unavoidable (SU)**.

Impact AES-4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area (PS)

Land Use Impacts

Construction and Operation

Implementation of the proposed Plan would result in the development of new residential or commercial structures that could create new sources of light and glare from the introduction and addition of indoor and outdoor lighting in new or redeveloped residential and non-residential buildings located in the land use growth footprint. These new structures could result in substantial sources of light at the regional scale that cause a public hazard, disrupt scenic vistas, and brighten the night sky. In portions of the region designated as urban built-up land, increases would not degrade the visual character or quality of the area because existing sources of glare and light are already a dominant feature of the landscape.

Development projects resulting from the proposed Plan could create new substantial sources of light and glare at the local scale. In addition, the introduction of new sources of light and glare could impact local visual resources by altering the local character of the built environment. High density residential and high intensity non-residential development, in particular, could have substantial increases in light and glare at the local level. Overall, the impact of new sources of light and glare would be less than significant (LTS) in urban areas and potentially significant (PS) in rural areas.

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Impacts

Construction and Operation

Implementation of sea level rise adaptation infrastructure could result in the construction of levees, seawalls, elevated roadways, marsh restoration, and tidal gates. This infrastructure would be clustered in Alameda County, followed by Marin, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Solano Counties. Adaptation infrastructure would be minimal in Contra Costa, Sonoma, San Francisco, and Napa Counties. Projects that would involve construction of levees, marsh restoration projects, and tidal gates could include limited lighting necessary for infrastructure maintenance, but would not introduce major new sources of light. The elevation of existing roadways would include similar sources of light as under existing conditions, and the projects would not introduce new sources of light or glare. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant (LTS).

Transportation System Impacts

Construction and Operation

It is not anticipated that transportation projects would substantially increase the amount of light and glare, because most improvements would take place on existing facilities that have existing sources of light and glare (see **Figures 2-8 through 2-10** in Chapter 2, "Project Description"). Transportation projects could result in marginal increases in light and glare from additional vehicle headlights, new reflective signage, new streetlights, new intersection control devices, and other lighting ancillary to transportation projects. As shown in **Figure 2-4** (see Chapter 2, "Project Description"), projects are clustered in Santa Clara County around the densely populated areas of Santa Clara, downtown San Jose, and Milpitas; in central and western Alameda County; and in San Francisco. Therefore, transportation projects that would introduce new sources of light and glare within urban areas would be similar in character to existing light sources. However, transportation projects located within rural areas could introduce light and glare to areas where no sources existed previously, which would constitute a potentially significant impact (PS).

Conclusion

As discussed above, implementation of the proposed Plan's land use development pattern, sea level rise adaptation infrastructure, and transportation projects has the potential to introduce substantial new sources of light and glare. This impact would be **potentially significant (PS)**, primarily in rural areas. Mitigation Measure AES-4 addresses this impact and is described below. Per the requirements set forth in PRC Section 21099, visual impacts would not be considered significant in TPAs if projects are located in an infill site and consist of residential, mixed-use residential, or an employment center.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure AES-4: Implementing agencies and/or project sponsors shall implement measures, where feasible and necessary based on project- and site-specific considerations, that include those identified below:

- Design projects to minimize light and glare from lights, buildings, and roadways facilities.
- Minimize and control glare from transportation projects through the adoption of project design features that reduce glare. These features include:
  - planting trees along transportation corridors to reduce glare from the sun;
  - landscaping off-street parking areas, loading areas, and service areas; and
  - shielding transportation lighting fixtures to minimize off-site light trespass.
- Minimize and control glare from land use and transportation projects through the adoption of project design features that reduce glare. These features include:
  - limiting the use of reflective materials, such as metal;
  - using non-reflective material, such as paint, vegetative screening, matte finish coatings, and masonry;
  - screening parking areas by using vegetation or trees; and
  - using low-reflective glass.

- Impose lighting standards that ensure that minimum safety and security needs are addressed and minimize light trespass and glare associated with land use development. These standards include the following:
  - minimizing incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space;
  - directing luminaries away from habitat and open space areas adjacent to the project site;
  - installing luminaries that provide good color rendering and natural light qualities; and
  - minimizing the potential for sky glow into the nighttime sky and for incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure AES-4 would reduce significant impacts from light and glare because it would result in the modification of site design and would provide standards that would minimize the effects of light and glare. To the extent that a local agency requires an individual project to implement all feasible mitigation measures described above, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation (LTS-M).

Projects taking advantage of CEQA Streamlining provisions of SB 375 (PRC Sections 21155.1, 21155.2, and 21159.28) must apply the mitigation measures described above, to address site-specific conditions. However, MTC/ABAG cannot require local implementing agencies to adopt the above mitigation measures, and it is ultimately the responsibility of a lead agency to determine and adopt mitigation. Therefore, this impact remains **significant and unavoidable (SU)** for purposes of this program level analysis.

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