

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section evaluates impacts to aesthetic conditions on and around the project area. The impacts evaluated include view corridors, scenic resources, the aesthetic character of the site and surrounding area, and light and glare conditions.

4.1.1 Setting

a. Visual Character of the Project Area. The Zone 2 Landslide Moratorium Ordinance Revisions project area encompasses approximately 112 acres north of the intersection of Palos Verdes Drive South and Narcissa Drive within the Portuguese Bend community in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. This area, located in the hills above the south-central coastline of the City, is within the City's larger (approximately 1,200-acre) Landslide Moratorium Area (LMA). Of the 111 lots within Zone 2, 69 are developed with residences and accessory structures, owners of 11 lots have obtained planning entitlements for development via Exception "P", and 31 are undeveloped parcels. Of the undeveloped Zone 2 lots, those in the southern and eastern portion of the project area are generally interspersed among the developed parcels, while those in the northern and western portion of the project area are generally in groups along Narcissa Drive, Plumtree Road and Cinnamon Lane, as shown in Figure 2-2, Site Area, in Section 2.0, *Project Description*.

Lots within the Portuguese Bend community are generally ¼-acre to one or more acres in size. Developed lots contain mainly one-story single-family homes constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, although several homes were renovated or constructed more recently under various existing exception categories in Section 15.20.040 of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code (RPVMC). Homes generally range from approximately 1,200 square feet to 3,500 square feet in size. Many lots also contain accessory structures, including equestrian facilities. Vacant lots in the project area are characterized by highly variable topography ranging from relatively flat to steeply sloping land, vegetated with scrub, grasses, and trees, most of which are pepper, eucalyptus, pine and other ornamental trees. Structural development on underdeveloped lots is mostly limited to small, non-habitable structures (e.g., sheds, stables, corrals) for equestrian or horticultural uses. The community is connected through several winding, two-lane private roads maintained by the Portuguese Bend Community Association (PBCA). The overall visual character and scenic quality of the project area are defined primarily by its varied topography, mature trees and vegetation, and small rock outcroppings. Figure 2-3 (a-c) in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, illustrates representative existing visual conditions on several developed and undeveloped lots in the project area.

b. Public and Private Views. Due to the varying topography, intervening vegetation and winding street layout, views of individual lots within the project area are limited from most perspectives. There are no state designated scenic roadways in the vicinity of the project area. Of the nearest public roadways, the City's 2018 General Plan designates Palos Verdes Drive South, East, and West, Western Avenue, Hawthorne Boulevard, Crest Road, Highridge Road, and Silverspur Road as vehicular view corridors. The project area is generally obscured from views from Palos Verdes Drive South, located one quarter-mile downslope from the southern project boundary, by sloping hills of vegetated open space and single family houses. Public views of portions of the project area are visible from Hawthorne Boulevard, Crest Road and Del



Cerro Park, located approximately one half-mile from the northern project boundary, and from trails located with the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and the City's segment of the California Coastal Trail. Views of the project area from these locations consist primarily of existing single-family residences amid native and non-native vegetation. Figure 4.1-1 shows existing public views of the project area from these locations.

Lots in the project area are visible from a number of private properties in the community. These private views are primarily limited to properties adjacent to those that would be affected by the ordinance revisions due to the winding roads, varying topography and mature vegetation.

Views of portions of the project area are also visible from the private Portuguese Bend Residential Community Trail System, which includes collector and radial trails that connect to the larger Palos Verdes Trail Loop and Top-of-the-Hill Trail System. This extensive public trails system spans the Palos Verdes peninsula and is outlined in the City's 1993 Conceptual Trails Plan.

c. Light and Glare. Existing lighting in the project area is limited. Primary nighttime light sources include the headlights of cars traveling along the communities' private roads, residential outdoor lighting (e.g. porch lights, security lights, landscaping accent lights), and light emanating from the residence interiors within the project area. Some daytime glare is generated by light-colored building materials and windows of existing single-family residences and accessory structures, and by cars traveling or parked along private roads.

Land uses in the vicinity that would be most sensitive to night lighting are the residences located within the project area and residences, public roads and parks on the hillsides above the site to the north. Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, shows an aerial view of adjacent land uses.

d. Regulatory Setting. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan and Municipal Code include a number of goals, policies and regulations intended to protect and enhance the aesthetic resources and visual character of the City. Selected policies and regulations that are applicable to the project's potential visual and aesthetic impacts are discussed below.

General Plan. The Visual Resources Element of the Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan (2018) generally describes visual and aesthetic resources in the City and sets forth goals and policies to ensure the continued preservation, restoration, and enhancement of significant visual resources in the City (General Plan Page V-2). The Visual Resources map (General Plan Visual Resources Element Figure 1) identifies the project area as containing portions of "Natural Visual Resources" and "Urban Design Visual Resources." Natural Visual Resources are defined as "natural features that provide viewers with a feeling for the rural atmosphere in the City." Natural Visual Resources include rural areas, sea cliffs, major canyons, major ridges, and significant tree groupings. Urban Design Visual Resources refer to the style and character of structures, landscaping, and signage. Figure 3 of the Visual Resources Element, *Preservation and Enhancement*, shows portions of the project area coinciding with "Natural Areas to be Preserved." Vistas are indicated on the Visual Resources map toward the Pacific Ocean from areas north and upslope of the project area. These features from the Visual Resources map are shown on Figure 4.1-2.



Figure 4.1-1



Figure 4.1-2



The following selected policies related to aesthetics and visual resources may be considered applicable to the project area:

- Policy 2. Enhance views and vistas where appropriate through various visual accents.*
- Policy 3. Preserve and enhance existing positive visual elements and restore those that have been lost.*
- Policy 7. For developments proposed within areas which impact the visual character of a corridor, require developers to incorporate treatments into their projects that enhance a corridor's imagery.*
- Policy 8. Require developments within areas which will impact corridor-related views to mitigate their impact.*

Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code. The RPVMC, specifically Title 17 (Zoning Code), provides land development and regulatory standards.

Section 17.02.030 of the RPVMC provides the following general residential development standards in the project area as it relates to the allowed height, setback, and lot coverage, for development within the Single Family Residential (one and two acres zoning) Zoning Districts:

- A. Building Height. Maximum building height of 16 feet for residences and 12 feet for detached accessory structures for pad lots. Height Variation permits for structures exceeding 16 feet up to 26 feet may be granted for pad lots.*
- B. Setbacks. Minimum front setbacks of 20 feet, minimum rear setbacks of 15 feet, minimum street-side setbacks of 10 feet, and minimum interior side setbacks of 5 feet, with setbacks along private street rights-of-way measured from the easement line rather than the property line.*
- C. Lot Coverage. Maximum 25% (RS-1) or 40% (RS-2) net lot coverage.*

Section 17.56.030 of the RPVMC provides standards for outdoor lighting:

No outdoor lighting shall hereafter be installed or used in the single-family residential (RS) or multiple-family residential (RM) zones, except in accordance with the provisions of this section.

- A. No outdoor lighting shall be permitted where the light source is directed toward or results in direct illumination of a parcel of property or properties other than that upon which such light source is physically located. Individual, non-reflector, incandescent light bulbs, not exceeding 150 watts each, or an aggregate of 1,000 for each lot or parcel shall be permitted. On lots exceeding 15,000 square feet, an additional 100 watts in the aggregate shall be permitted for each 1,500 square feet of area or major fraction thereof, by which the lot or parcel exceeds 15,000 square feet; provided, that in no event shall the aggregate exceed 2,000 watts. Wattage for non-incandescent lighting shall be calculated using the multiplier values described in Section 17.56.040(A) of this chapter.*



- B. *No outdoor lighting shall be permitted where the light source or fixture, if located on a building, above the line of the eaves, or if located on a standard or pole, [is] more than ten feet above grade.*
- C. *Notwithstanding the requirements of this section, outdoor lighting may be installed and used in a manner not permitted by this section upon the issuance of a conditional use permit pursuant to Chapter 17.60 (Conditional Use Permits).*

Section 17.02.040 of the RPVMC includes the following requirements aimed at view preservation and restoration:

1. *Preservation of Views Where Structures are Involved.*
 - a. *Any person proposing to construct a structure above sixteen feet shall submit a height variation permit application to the city. A determination on the application shall be made by the director, who shall refer a height variation application directly to the planning commission for consideration under certain circumstances.*
 - b. *The applicant shall take reasonable steps established by the city council to consult with owners of property located within five hundred feet of the applicant's property.*
 - c. *The director shall, by written notice, notify property owners within a five-hundred-foot radius of the subject property and the affected homeowners' association, if any, of the application and inform them that any objections to the proposed construction must be submitted to the director within thirty calendar days of the date of the notice.*
 - d. *The applicant shall construct on the site at the applicant's expense, as a visual aid, a temporary frame of the proposed structure.*
 - e. *A height variation application to build a new structure or an addition to an existing structure, either of which exceeds sixteen feet in height up to the maximum height permitted in subsection (B)(1) of this section, may be granted with or without conditions if the following findings can be made:*
 - i. *The applicant has complied with the early neighbor consultation process established by the city;*
 - ii. *The proposed new structure that is above sixteen feet in height or addition to an existing structure that is above sixteen feet in height does not significantly impair a view from public property (parks, major thoroughfares, bike ways, walkways or equestrian trails) which has been identified in the city's general plan or coastal specific plan, as city-designated viewing areas;*
 - iii. *The proposed new structure is not located on a ridge or a promontory;*
 - iv. *The area of a proposed new structure that is above sixteen feet in height or addition to an existing structure that is above sixteen feet in height, as defined in subsection B of this section, when considered exclusive of existing foliage, does not significantly impair a view from the viewing area of another*



parcel. If the viewing area is located in a structure, the viewing area shall be located in a portion of a structure which was constructed without a height variation permit or variance, or which would not have required a height variation or variance when originally constructed had this section, as approved by the voters on November 7, 1989, been in effect at the time the structure was constructed, unless the viewing area located in the portion of the existing structure which required a height variation permit or variance constitutes the primary living area (living room, family room, dining room or kitchen) of the residence;

- v. If view impairment exists from the viewing area of another parcel but it is determined not to be significant, as described in subsection (C)(1)(e)(vi) of this section, the proposed new structure that is above sixteen feet in height or addition to an existing structure that is above sixteen feet in height is designed and situated in such a manner as to reasonably minimize the impairment of a view;*
- vi. There is no significant cumulative view impairment caused by granting the application. Cumulative view impairment shall be determined by: (a) considering the amount of view impairment that would be caused by the proposed new structure that is above sixteen feet in height or addition to a structure that is above sixteen feet in height; and (b) considering the amount of view impairment that would be caused by the construction on other parcels of similar new structures or additions that exceed sixteen feet in height;*
- vii. The proposed structure complies with all other code requirements;*
- viii. The proposed structure is compatible with the immediate neighborhood character;*
- ix. The proposed new structure that is above sixteen feet in height or addition to an existing structure that is above sixteen feet in height does not result in an unreasonable infringement of the privacy of the occupants of abutting residences.*

Section 17.54 of the RPVMC provides standards for undergrounding of utilities, screening of mechanical equipment, and trash receptacle enclosures. The purpose of the regulations are to ensure “that, in conjunction with new developments, all utility service lines are placed underground and that certain areas and types of equipment are screened from public view. The provisions of this chapter are deemed necessary for the protection of property values and the general welfare.”

Section 17.76.040 of the RPVMC includes the following criteria for grading permits:

- 1. A minor grading permit shall be used for those projects which meet all of the following criteria:*
 - a. An excavation, fill or combination thereof, in excess of twenty cubic yards, but less than fifty cubic yards, in any two-year period, on a slope of less than thirty-five percent, or*



- b. An excavation three feet or more, but less than five feet, below natural grade or a fill three feet or more, but less than five feet, above natural grade on a slope of less than thirty-five percent;*
2. *A major grading permit shall be used for those projects which result in any of the following:*
 - a. An excavation, fill or combination thereof, in excess of fifty cubic yards in any two-year period,*
 - b. An excavation five feet or more below natural grade or a fill five feet or more above natural grade,*
 - c. Notwithstanding exemptions (C)(1) and (C)(2) of this section, any excavation or fill which encroaches on or alters a natural drainage channel or watercourse, and*
 - d. Unless otherwise exempted by subsection C of this section, an excavation or fill on an extreme slope (thirty-five percent or more);*
3. *A remedial grading permit shall be used for excavations, fill or any redistribution of earth materials for the purpose of enhancing soil stability and reducing geotechnical hazards due to natural land movement or the presence of natural hazards.*

The following grading shall be exempt from the above:

1. *An excavation, fill or combination thereof, less than twenty cubic yards in any two-year period;*
2. *An excavation less than three feet below natural grade, or a fill less than three feet above natural grade;*
3. *Grading pursuant to a permit for excavation in public streets;*
4. *Grading in connection with a public improvement or other public works project for which inspection is provided by the city or another public agency, as approved by the city engineer;*
5. *Grading in private easements by a public utility, cable franchisee or a mutual water company;*
6. *An excavation or fill on private property made by an individual to repair or replace a sewer line, water line or other underground utility line;*
7. *An excavation less than ten feet below existing grade for the foundation or footings of a structure or a swimming pool located on a slope less than thirty-five percent and not involving a caisson foundation. Caisson foundations or any excavation for a footing or foundation ten feet or more below existing grade shall require the approval of a minor grading permit. This exemption shall not affect the applicability of this section to, nor the requirement of a grading approval for, any fill made with the material from such excavation; and*
8. *Tilling of the soil for agricultural and horticultural purposes; and discing the soil for fire hazard abatement purposes.*

The General Plan Safety Element and Municipal Code Section 8.08.010 also provide guidelines for fire protection and indicate that the City of Rancho Palos Verdes adheres to the standards set forth in the County of Los Angeles Fire Code and Uniform Building Codes. These codes outline construction and design provisions, as well as fuel modification plan requirements that could affect visual resources and would apply to any new development that could result from the proposed ordinance revisions.

Portuguese Bend Community Association Architectural Standards. The PBCA has adopted architectural standards that apply to project area development. Topics covered in the PBCA standards include:



- *Equestrian criteria – rules to follow for keeping horses*
- *Fencing – placement and types allowed*
- *Setbacks and layout plans*
- *Landscaping*
- *What a property owner must do if he/she wishes to make modifications to his/her property*

No property owner in Portuguese Bend may make visible modifications to his/her property without first seeking and obtaining approval of the Architecture Committee. This approval is separate from, and in addition to, approvals required by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.

4.1.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds. Different viewers react to views and aesthetic conditions differently. Consequently, the assessment of aesthetic impacts is inherently subjective in nature. This evaluation measures the existing visual resource against the proposed actions, analyzing the nature of the anticipated change.

An aesthetic impact is considered significant if the project would:

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

Although this analysis considers potential impacts to both public and private views, changes to private views generally are not considered significant unless a substantial number of private views are affected. Private views are those that can be seen from vantage points located on private property and private roads. Public views are those that can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as public streets, freeways, parks, trails, and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of persons than are private views.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact AES-1 The project area is located in a scenic public viewshed of the Pacific Ocean and the Palos Verdes hillsides and coastline. Individual lots and some private roads in the project area also have views of the ocean, hillsides and open space. However, with compliance with applicable standards of the RPVMC, the potential development of up to 31 new single-family residences would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact would be Class II, *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

The proposed Zone 2 Landslide Moratorium Ordinance revisions would apply to a project area located within the Portuguese Bend community, an area near the scenic Rancho Palos Verdes



coast. There are no public views from within the project area because the roads serving the area are private roads accessible only to residents and their guests through gated entries. Limited public views of the project area are available from public roads and parks to the north and from the public trails along the hillsides to the north and east of the site. Private views of and through the site are available from existing residences and roads within the community, as well as from individual residential properties to the north of the site on the hillsides overlooking the coast. Figures 2-2 and 2-3 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, and Figure 4.1-1 above show existing conditions and views throughout the project area.

Public Views. As noted under *Setting*, the primary public viewpoints offering views of the project area are from Hawthorne Boulevard, Del Cerro Park, and the hillside trails to the north of the Portuguese Bend community in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. Representative views as seen from Hawthorne Boulevard and Del Cerro Park are shown on Figure 4.1-1. Driving east or west along Hawthorne Boulevard, all or part of the project area is often obscured by variable topography or vegetation; however, views of the Pacific Ocean and the Rancho Palos Verdes coastline are more fully visible over the site and vegetation. When the site is visible, it appears as individual structures interspersed with areas of open spaces of scattered vegetation, and the coastal bluffs and ocean beyond, as illustrated in Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, and Figure 4.1-1. Scenic features available from the north include the ocean, the sky, mature vegetation, and the hillsides sloping down towards the coastline. On clear days and depending on the view angle, the Malibu coastline to the northwest or Santa Catalina Island to the south may also be visible in the distance.

The potential development of 31 single-family residences with Zone 2 could slightly alter the foreground view of the project area from the public roads, parks and surrounding trails to the north. However, as indicated by observations from points along Hawthorne Boulevard north of the site, the project area is substantially lower in elevation than the hills to the north. Due to this varying topography and down sloping elevation, residential development that could result from the proposed ordinance revisions would not block any scenic views, including views of the ocean, coastline, islands, and hillsides currently available from these public viewpoints. This would be further ensured by residential zoning height limitations set forth in Section 17.02.030 and 17.02.040 of the RPVMC applying to any development that may be approved following the proposed ordinance revisions. The project area itself as seen from the public viewpoints listed above would change incrementally with the removal of vegetation and new construction on individual lots throughout Zone 2. However, the visual character would remain generally the same, as the existing land use pattern of medium to large-lot residential development, as well as the existing topography and overall vegetation pattern, would be maintained. Thus, view impacts from these vantage points would be less than significant.

Private Views. As noted above, the primary private viewpoints offering views through the project area are the residences and roads directly adjacent to the 31 individual undeveloped lots within the project area. These residences have varying degrees of views of and through the affected lots, depending on the specific topography of the properties and the height and density of vegetation on and adjacent to the lots.

Similar to the diversity of specific views from these homes, project implementation would affect existing private views in a range of ways and degrees. For several residences, portions of ocean



and hillside views could be partially obstructed by development on adjacent properties. However, it is unlikely that these private views would be fully obstructed by development resulting from the proposed ordinance revisions. Full or partial views of the hillsides, coastline, or ocean would remain for the majority of existing lots, so that a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista would not occur.

There are two important considerations to factor into the determination of the level of impacts to private views from development resulting from the proposed ordinance revisions. First, each residence developed in the project area would be required to adhere to architectural standards developed by the Portuguese Bend Community Association and the lot coverage, and height and grading limits allowed for areas zoned RS-1 and RS-2 per Municipal Code Section 17.02.030 and 17.760.040. Additionally, the design and size of new development that could be facilitated by the proposed ordinance revisions would be required to maintain consistency with the existing neighborhood character pursuant to the Section 17.02.030 of the RPVMC (see Mitigation Measure AES-3 in Impact AES-3), which requires that new residences “shall be compatible with the character of the immediate neighborhood.” Based on standards contained in RPVMC Section 17.02.030, future Zone 2 development resulting from the proposed ordinance revisions is expected to consist of:

- *Single-story, ranch-style residences with attached or detached three-car garages, with minimum living area of 1,500 square feet and maximum living area of 4,000 square feet or 15% of gross lot area, whichever is less;*
- *Less than 1,000 cubic yards of grading (cut and fill combined) per lot, with no more than 50 cubic yards of imported fill and up to 1,000 cubic yards of export per lot;*
- *Maximum 25% (RS-1) or 40% (RS-2) net lot coverage;*
- *Maximum building height of 16 feet for residences and 12 feet for detached accessory structures;*
- *Minimum front setbacks of 20 feet, minimum rear setbacks of 15 feet, minimum street-side setbacks of 10 feet, and minimum interior side setbacks of five feet, with setbacks along private street rights-of-way measured from the easement line rather than the property line; and,*
- *No subdivision of existing lots within Zone 2.*

Second, in CEQA analysis, impacts to private views are not typically considered significant unless the number of properties significantly affected is relatively high. As noted by the California Court of Appeal in *Ocean View Homeowners Assn., Inc. v. Montecito Water District* (116 Cal. App. 4th 396), “[t]hat a project affects only a few private views may be a factor in determining whether the impact is significant.” Due to the varying topography, intervening vegetation, and existing single-family residences, private scenic views from within the project area are limited and visual changes will be isolated. Further, the 16-foot height limit is intended to be consistent with the height of existing structures within the surrounding area. Therefore, although the City acknowledges that some homeowners may experience adverse interference with a portion of their private views, the impact is not significant for purposes of the CEQA analysis.

Mitigation Measures. Measures AES-3(a) and AES-3(b) under Impact AES-3 would ensure compliance with applicable provisions of the Section 17.02.030 of the RPVMC and PBCA architectural standards. Additional mitigation is not required.



Significance After Mitigation. Impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant without mitigation.

Impact AES-2 **Parcels in Zone 2 contain vegetation of varying types and densities, and the development of residences on up to 31 undeveloped and underdeveloped private lots within the project area would likely result in the removal of mature trees and vegetation. Because tree groupings in the project area have been identified as scenic resources in the General Plan, impacts would be Class II, less than significant with mitigation incorporated.**

The proposed Landslide Moratorium Ordinance revisions would apply to 31 of the 111 Zone 2 lots located in the Portuguese Bend community. As stated above, there are no public views from within the project area, nor are there existing views of the project area from a designated state scenic highway. Public viewsheds of the site are limited to public roads and parks to the north, and from the public trails along the hillsides to the north and east of the site. Private views of the site are available from existing residences and roads in the community, as well as from residential properties on the hillsides to the north of the site.

As illustrated in the aerial view provided as Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0 *Project Description*, individual lots in the 112-acre project area contain vegetation of varying types and densities. Both native and non-native trees and vegetation are present on the vast majority of the 69 developed parcels and the 11 lots that have obtained planning entitlements for development via Exception "P". Existing vegetation on the 31 undeveloped lots range from sparsely vegetated with non-native grasses to densely vegetated with mature tree stands.

As indicated in Section 4.3, *Cultural Resources*, there are no registered historic buildings identified within the project area. While there are small existing rock outcroppings on hillside slopes located throughout the area, the development sites contain no other scenic resources, such as prominent rock outcroppings, that could be substantially damaged with the development of 31 residences on undeveloped Zone 2 lots. Additionally, there are no designated or proposed state scenic highways in close proximity to the project area.

Development of up to 31 residences may necessitate the removal or alteration of existing mature trees and vegetation for the purposes of site grading, construction and fire protection through fuel modification. As noted under Setting, tree groupings in the project area are identified as scenic resources in the General Plan. Tree removal associated with potential development that could be facilitated by the proposed ordinance revisions within or adjacent to the identified tree groupings would be a potentially significant impact to scenic resources.

Mitigation Measures. The following measure would reduce impacts to scenic resources to a less than significant level.

AES-2 **Avoidance of Tree Removal.** As part of approvals for development on the individual subject lots, the City shall require that future development on the affected lots avoid removal of or substantial damage to existing trees to the extent feasible and provided that such



trees do not obstruct views in accordance with Section 17.02.040 of the RPVMC. Where tree removal or substantial damage cannot be feasibly avoided during development, tree replacement shall be required using a ratio, stock, species and monitoring requirements sufficient to ensure a minimum 1:1 replacement five or more years after removal. When selecting replacement tree species, consideration should be given to species that, as they grow to full stature, would be less likely to result in obstruction of views for adjacent properties.

Significance After Mitigation. Implementation of the above mitigation measure would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Impact AES-3 The potential development of additional residences in the Zone 2 project area would introduce new structures and new landscaping and hardscape on up to 31 open and mostly undeveloped sites throughout the Portuguese Bend community. This would incrementally increase the density of development throughout the 112-acre project area. Although the general land use pattern and scale and type of development would be maintained, impacts to the existing visual character and quality of the project area and its surroundings would be Class II, less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

The existing visual character of the 112-acre project area is defined by the existing single-family residences, vegetation and open spaces amidst highly variable topography. Lots in the Portuguese Bend community are generally ¼ acre to 1 or more acres in size. Developed lots contain mainly one-story single-family houses constructed in the 1950s and 1960s that range from approximately 1,200 square feet to 3,500 square feet. Undeveloped vacant lots in the project area are characterized by highly variable topography ranging from relatively flat to steeply sloping land, and are vegetated with scrub, grasses, and mature trees of varying densities. Due to its sloping vegetated hillsides, open spaces, bucolic feel and varied scales and styles of residential development, the visual character of the project area is of high quality. Existing conditions are shown in Figure 2-3 (a-c) in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, and Figure 4.1-1.

The proposed Landslide Moratorium Ordinance revisions would result in the alteration of the visual character of the individual undeveloped lots and the project area as a whole by permitting individual property owners to apply for individual entitlements to develop their lots. This would increase the density of development within the 112-acre project area by up to 31 additional single-family residences and associated accessory structures. New residences facilitated by the ordinance revisions would be located on up to 31 lots dispersed through the project area, with the greatest change to visual character affecting areas in the northern and western portion of the project where affected lots are more generally concentrated in groups. These groups are mostly located along the western extent of Narcissa Drive; the east side of Plumtree Road; and the northern extent of Cinnamon Lane, as shown on Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*. In addition to the new structural development, the project would introduce formal landscaping, hardscaping, and fuel modification to parcels within the project



area, which are currently vegetated with grasses, trees and brush. This is a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures. The following mitigation measures are designed to ensure that new residences would be visually consistent with the surrounding neighborhood by adhering to the residential building standards set forth by the PBCA and Municipal Code Section 17.02.030, in addition to the Code's requirement that new residences "shall be compatible with the character of the immediate neighborhood."

AES-3 Consistency with RPVMC Section 17.02.030. All new residences shall be consistent with the standards contained in Section 17.02.030 of the RPVMC or will be subject to the requirements of RPVMC Section 17.02.040. Prior to any grading or building permit issuance, all new residences shall be subject to neighborhood compatibility analysis under the provisions of Section 17.02.030.B (Neighborhood Compatibility) of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code to verify consistency.

Significance After Mitigation. Impacts to the existing visual character would be reduced to a less than significant level with incorporation of Mitigation Measure AES-2 as all single-family residences built would be expected to be consistent with existing neighborhood character. With adherence to Mitigation Measure AES-3, the development of 31 undeveloped lots with single-family residences would not significantly degrade the visual character of the 112-acre project area because although it would incrementally intensify development, the existing character of the neighborhood would be generally maintained. In general, the overall visual experience of the project area would not be substantially altered from its current semi-rural residential setting.

Impact AES-4 **The proposed ordinance revisions would result in new sources of light and glare within the project area due to introduction of up to 31 new residences and associated lighting. Some of the new light and glare would be visible from public and private viewpoints. This would be a Class II, less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.**

Development resulting from the proposed ordinance revisions would introduce new sources of glare in the form of additional cars on neighborhood roads or light-colored building materials and hardscape. In general, although glare would incrementally increase, it would be similar to that already generated by existing residences and private roads, and due to the existing limited view corridors and varying topography, it would not be significant.

The proposed project would facilitate new lighting on up to 31 of the currently undeveloped and unlit lots within the project area. This lighting would be in the form of outdoor fixtures illuminating private driveways and yards, as well as lighting from within new buildings. The new lighting would be expected to be generally similar to lighting associated with existing residences adjacent to or in proximity to the affected lots, but would incrementally increase the lighting throughout much of Zone 2. This is a potentially significant impact.



Mitigation Measures. The following mitigation measure would ensure that new residences adhere to the municipal code requirements related to exterior illumination.

AES-4 Exterior Illumination. Exterior illumination for new residences shall be subject to the provisions of Section 17.56.030 (Outdoor Lighting for Residential Uses) of the RPVMC. Key standards that must be adhered to include the following:

- *No outdoor lighting shall be permitted where the light source is directed toward or results in direct illumination of a parcel of property or properties other than that upon which such light source is physically located. Individual, nonreflector, incandescent light bulbs, not exceeding 150 watts each, or an aggregate of 1,000 watts for each lot or parcel shall be permitted. On lots exceeding 15,000 square feet, an additional 100 watts in the aggregate shall be permitted for each 1,500 square feet of area or major fraction thereof, by which the lot or parcel exceeds 15,000; provided, that in no event shall the aggregate exceed 2,000 watts. As used herein, the term "watts" is irrespective of the voltage.*
- *No outdoor lighting shall be permitted where the light source or fixture, if located on a building, above the line of the eaves, or if located on a standard or pole, [is] more than 10' above grade.*

Significance After Mitigation. Adherence to the code requirements listed above in Mitigation Measure AES-4 would reduce the impacts of lighting from new residential development to less than significant levels.

c. Cumulative Impacts. In general, the proposed ordinance revisions combined with other pending projects in and around Rancho Palos Verdes could contribute toward creating a more built-out, developed community. However, no projects on the cumulative projects list (see Table 3-1 in Section 3.0, *Environmental Setting*) are near enough to the proposed project area to directly contribute to a cumulative visual impact in a common viewshed. The proposed ordinance revisions would not facilitate subdivision of existing lots, so the development pattern would maintain the existing RS-consistent lot density. While the addition of 31 new residences would contribute to the overall buildout of the Portuguese Bend community, the cumulative impacts to scenic views, resources and visual character are considered less than significant with the mitigation measures identified (mitigation measures AES-2 and AES-3). Cumulative impacts related to light and glare would also be less than significant with incorporation of Mitigation Measure AES-4, which would ensure that exterior illumination on new residences adheres to the existing municipal code requirements.



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