3.1 AESTHETICS

This section describes the existing visual conditions, meaning the physical features that make up the visible landscape, on and surrounding the Master Plan Area, and assesses the changes to those conditions that would occur from implementation of the 2035 Master Plan. The effects of the project on the visual environment are generally defined in terms of the project's physical characteristics and potential visibility, the extent to which the project's presence would change the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, and the expected level of sensitivity that the viewing public may have where the project would alter existing views. This analysis evaluates project effects on scenic vistas, scenic resources within a state scenic highway view corridor, public views, and daytime and nighttime levels of light and glare.

No comments regarding aesthetics were received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP).

3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL

No federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to aesthetics or light and glare are applicable to the project.

STATE

California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the California Legislature in 1963 and is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The goal of this program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would affect the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to highways. A highway may be designated "scenic" depending on how much of the natural landscape travelers can see, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on travelers' enjoyment of the view (Caltrans 2008).

LOCAL

Cal Poly is an entity of the CSU, which is a constitutionally created state agency, and is therefore not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. Cal Poly may consider, for informational purposes, aspects of local plans and policies for the communities surrounding the campus when it is appropriate. The proposed project would be subject to state and federal agency planning documents described herein but would not be bound by local or regional planning regulations or documents such as the City's General Plan or municipal code.

County of San Luis Obispo General Plan

The County of San Luis Obispo (County) General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element provides goals and policies to protect the county's visual resources, including open areas, scenic corridors, and the built environment. The general plan designates Sensitive Resource Areas where specific scenic protection policies apply (see Figure VR-1 of the Conservation and Open Space Element). The Master Plan Area is directly north of urban areas and is not identified as a Sensitive Resource Area; however much of the area surrounding the West Campus is rural and designated as a Sensitive Resource Area where scenic protection policies apply. No candidate scenic corridors, listed in Table VR-2 of the County General Plan, were identified within the Master Plan Area. The following policies apply to visual resources within the County:

- Policy VR 1.1: Adopt Scenic Protection Standards. Protect scenic views and landscapes, especially visual Sensitive Resource Areas (SRAs) from incompatible development and land uses.

- **Policy VR 2.1: Develop In A Manner Compatible with Historical and Visual Resources.** Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that are compatible with the natural landscape and with recognized historical character, and discourage designs that are clearly out of place within rural areas.
- **Policy VR 2.2: Site Development and Landscaping Sensitively.** Through the review of proposed development, encourage designs that emphasize native vegetation and conform grading to existing natural forms. Encourage abundant native and/or drought-tolerant landscaping that screens buildings and parking lots and blends development with the natural landscape. Consider fire safety in the selection and placement of plant material, consistent with Biological Resources Policy BR 2.7 regarding fire suppression and sensitive plants and habitats.
- **Policy VR 6.1: Urban Design.** Ensure that new multi-family residential, mixed-use, and commercial or other non-residential development in the urban and village areas is consistent with local character, identity, and sense of place.
- **Policy VR 7.1: Nighttime Light Pollution.** Protect the clarity and visibility of the night sky within communities and rural areas, by ensuring that exterior lighting, including streetlight projects, is designed to minimize nighttime light pollution.

City of San Luis Obispo General Plan

The City of San Luis Obispo (City) General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element includes the following policies related to views and scenic resources:

- **Policy 9.1.1: Preserve natural and agricultural landscapes.** The City will implement the following policies and will encourage other agencies with jurisdiction to do likewise:

  A. Natural and agricultural landscapes that the City has not designated for urban use shall be maintained in their current patterns of use.

  B. Any development that is permitted in natural or agricultural landscapes shall be visually subordinate to and compatible with the landscape features. Development includes, but is not limited to buildings, signs (including billboard signs), roads, utility and telecommunication lines and structures. Such development shall:

     1. Avoid visually prominent locations such as ridgelines, and slopes exceeding 20 percent.
     2. Avoid unnecessary grading, vegetation removal, and site lighting.
     3. Incorporate building forms, architectural materials, and landscaping, that respect the setting, including the historical pattern of development in similar settings, and avoid stark contrasts with its setting.
     4. Preserve scenic or unique landforms, significant trees in terms of size, age, species or rarity, and rock outcroppings.

  C. The City's non-emergency repair, maintenance, and small construction projects in highly visible locations, such as hillsides and downtown creeks, where scenic resources could be affected, shall be subject to at least "minor or incidental" architectural review.

- **Policy 9.1.2: Urban development.** The City will implement the following principle and will encourage other agencies with jurisdiction to do so: urban development should reflect its architectural context. This does not necessarily prescribe a specific style, but requires deliberate design choices that acknowledge human scale, natural site features, and neighboring urban development, and that are compatible with historical and architectural resources. Plans for sub-areas of the city may require certain architectural styles.
- **Policy 9.1.3: Utilities and signs.** In and near public streets, plazas, and parks, features that clutter, degrade, intrude on, or obstruct views should be avoided. Necessary features, such as utility and communication equipment, and traffic equipment City limits form a well- defined urban edge, with open space beyond and signs should be designed and placed so as to not impinge upon or degrade scenic views of the Morros or surrounding hillsides, or farmland, consistent with the primary objective of safety. New billboard signs shall not be allowed, and existing billboard signs shall be removed as soon as practicable, as provided in the Sign Regulations.

- **Policy 9.1.5: View protection in new development.** The City will include in all environmental review and carefully consider effects of new development, streets and road construction on views and visual quality by applying the Community Design Guidelines, height restrictions, hillside standards, Historical Preservation Program Guidelines and the California Environmental Quality Act and Guidelines.
- **Policy 9.1.6: Night-sky preservation.** City will adopt a "night sky" ordinance to preserve nighttime views, prevent light pollution, and to protect public safety by establishing street and public area lighting standards.
- **Policy 9.2.1: Views to and from public places, including scenic roadways.** The City will preserve and improve views of important scenic resources from public places, and encourage other agencies with jurisdiction to do so. Public places include parks, plazas, the grounds of civic buildings, streets and roads, and publicly accessible open space. In particular, the route segments shown in Figure 11 [of the General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element] are designated as scenic roadways.
    A. Development projects shall not wall off scenic roadways and block views.
    B. Utilities, traffic signals, and public and private signs and lights shall not intrude on or clutter views, consistent with safety needs.
    C. Where important vistas of distant landscape features occur along streets, street trees shall be clustered to facilitate viewing of the distant features.
    D. Development projects, including signs, in the viewshed of a scenic roadway shall be considered "sensitive" and require architectural review.
- **Policy 9.2.2: Views to and from private development.** Projects should incorporate as amenities views from and within private development sites. Private development designs should cause the least view blockage for neighboring property that allows project objectives to be met.
- **Policy 9.2.3: Outdoor lighting.** Outdoor lighting shall avoid: operating at unnecessary locations, levels, and times; spillage to areas not needing or wanting illumination; glare (intense line-of-site contrast); and frequencies (colors) that interfere with astronomical viewing.

City of San Luis Obispo Municipal Code

Section 17.70.090: Hillside Development Standards

The purpose of this section is to protect and preserve scenic hillside areas and natural features such as the volcanic Morros, ridge lines, plant communities, rock outcroppings and steep slope areas that function as landscape backdrops for the community; to avoid encroachment into sensitive habitats or unique resources as defined in the Conservation and Open Space Element; to protect the health, safety and welfare of community residents by directing development away from areas with hazards such as landslides, wildland fires, flooding and erosion; and to protect the city's scenic setting. This section includes requirements for general site planning, site access, retaining walls, downhill building walls, mechanical equipment, and fencing. Plans submitted for hillside development shall be reviewed for consistency with the city's community design guidelines, this section, and general development standards of the zoning regulations.

Section 17.70.100: Lighting and Night Sky Preservation

These outdoor lighting regulations are intended to encourage lighting practices and systems that will: permit reasonable uses of outdoor lighting for nighttime safety, utility, security, and enjoyment while preserving the ambience of night; curtail and reverse any degradation of the nighttime visual environment and the night sky; minimize glare and obtrusive light by limiting outdoor lighting that is misdirected, excessive, or unnecessary; help protect the natural environment from the damaging effects of night lighting; and meet the minimum requirements of the California Code of Regulations for Outdoor Lighting and Signs (Title 24, Chapter 6).

Outdoor lighting shall be designed, installed, and maintained to prevent nighttime sky light pollution, preserve and enhance visibility of stars, and use energy efficiently by lighting only those areas or objects necessary for safety and security.

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SURROUNDINGS

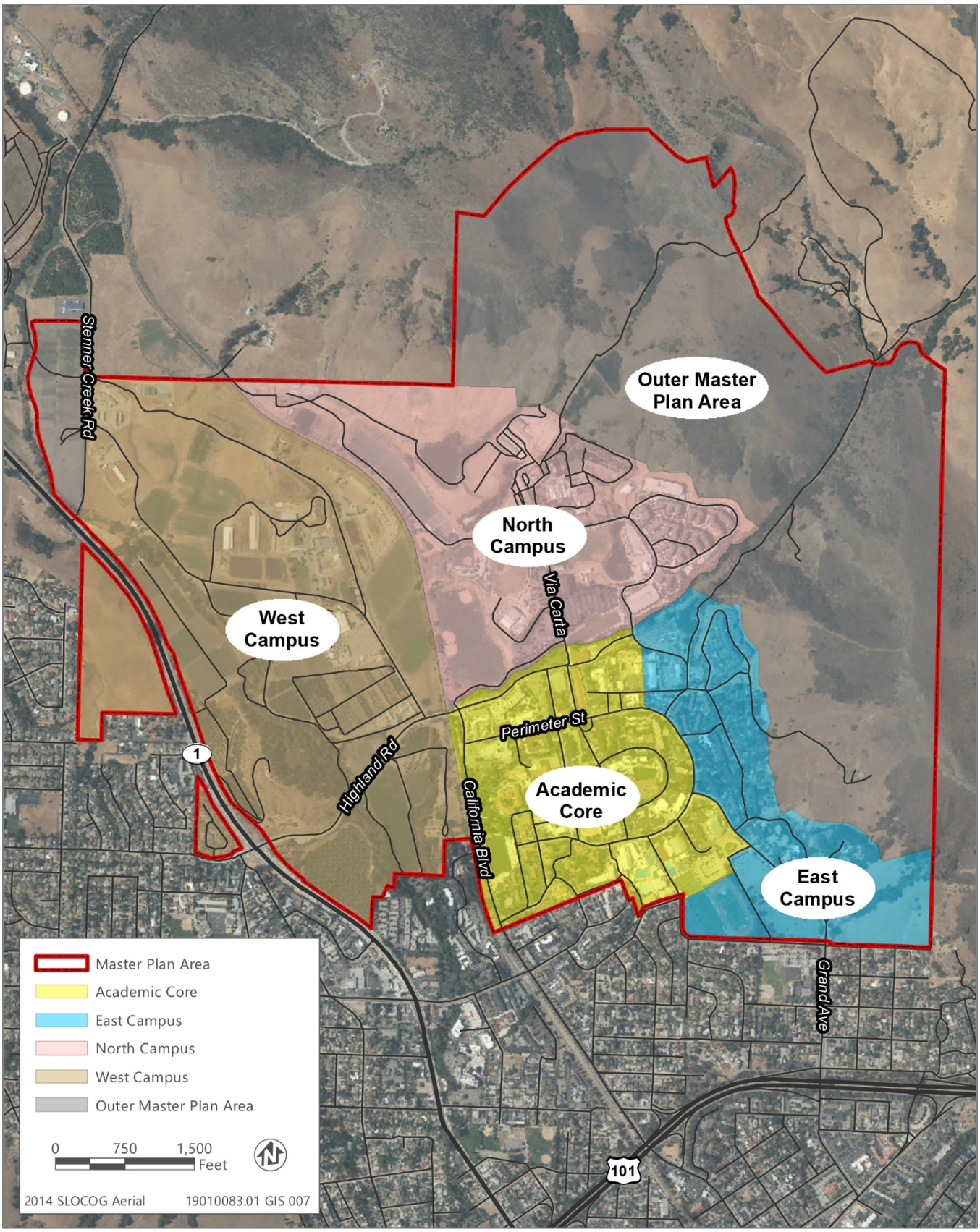
Cal Poly's land holdings include over 6,000 acres in San Luis Obispo County and approximately 3,700 acres in Santa Cruz County. These lands primarily consist of open rangeland, farmland, and open space. Most of the University's academic, administrative, and support facilities are located on the main campus. The 2035 Master Plan consists only of projects and activities within the Master Plan Area located at the northeastern edge of the City, at the base of the western foothills of the Santa Lucia Range and at the eastern end of the highly scenic Chorro Valley. The Chorro Valley, defined by the Santa Lucia Mountains and the Cuesta Ridge to the northeast and the Morros or Nine Sisters (a series of distinct mountain peaks rising up from the valley) to the southwest, runs northwest to Morro Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Morros are recognized by the County as highly scenic visual resources that should be protected (County of San Luis Obispo 2010:7). The topography of the area is generally defined by low hills and ridges with intermittent volcanic and metavolcanics peaks (referred to as morros). The Master Plan Area is also adjacent to the City of San Luis Obispo, an urbanized area with largely residential and commercial uses surrounding a downtown core which is located approximately 1 mile south of the Master Plan area. Land uses within the City vary in visual character and height, although the majority of structures within the City are between one and three stories in height with some taller structures, especially within the downtown core.

Scenic Resources

The designation of scenic roads and highways is intended to promote and enhance the natural scenic beauty occurring along portions of county and state highways. The rural areas of the County have many scenic attributes that contribute to the pleasure of driving through them, including the volcanic Morros between San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay, agricultural features, ocean views, mountain landscapes, and unique geologic features (County of San Luis Obispo 2015:5-8). State Route (SR) 1, located directly west of the campus, is both a Designated State Scenic Highway and an All-American Road in the National Scenic Byway system (Caltrans 2017). Each of these designations indicate a high degree of scenic quality within the highway's view corridor. U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) is also identified by Caltrans as an Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated. Additionally, the County has designated US 101 as a scenic corridor and has adopted Highway Corridor Design Standards to address development along the highway (County of San Luis Obispo 2010:9.3, 9.14). The City has also identified portions of both SR 1 and US 101 in the northern portion of the City as scenic roadways. In addition, the City designates California Boulevard and Foothill Boulevard as scenic roadways (City of San Luis Obispo 2014:6-62).

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE MASTER PLAN AREA

The main campus consists of hilly terrain and is largely developed and relatively compact, including academic, housing, and administrative buildings, and agricultural support facilities. The main campus is comprised of four visually distinct subareas: Academic Core, East Campus, North Campus, and West Campus (Figure 3.1-1). The visual character of each subarea is described in detail below.



Source: Data received from Cal Poly in 2019; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Figure 3.1-1 Campus Planning Areas

Academic Core Subarea

The Academic Core subarea encompasses an area roughly defined by Brizzolara Creek to the north, the southern edge of campus to the south, Grand Avenue and Perimeter Road to the east, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the west. The subarea is surrounded on three sides by the East Campus, North Campus, and West Campus subareas. To the south, the Academic Core is bounded by the City boundary and residential neighborhoods. This subarea is the most densely developed area of campus and contains multiple large, multistory structures. As the hub of Cal Poly's academic and administrative functions, this subarea contains a wide mix of uses, including academic buildings, passive recreation, housing, and sports stadiums, in a visual framework defined by a variety of architectural styles, forms, and physical spaces.

The subarea also experiences the most activity in terms of vehicular and pedestrian movement. Vehicular access is provided via three major entrances: Grand Avenue with direct connections to US 101, Highland Drive directly off SR 1 (Santa Rosa Street), and California Boulevard off Foothill Boulevard at the southwest corner of campus. Via Carta Way provides bicycle and pedestrian access through the center of the Academic Core, in addition to North Poly View Drive and South Poly View Drive.

Although the Academic Core is the most densely developed campus subarea, visibility from the surrounding community is relatively limited. The campus can be easily seen from streets and neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of campus; however, because of topography, intervening development, and mature tree canopy, the Academic Core is not readily seen from public viewpoints away from campus. Portions of the Academic Core can be seen from SR 1. However, because of viewing distance, it occupies just a small portion of the overall viewshed and is generally indistinguishable from the adjacent community.

East Campus Subarea

The East Campus subarea is located immediately adjacent to the Academic Core subarea and borders open space to the east and residential neighborhoods to the south. The existing visual character is largely defined by multistory dormitories, athletic fields, and parking areas. Mature landscaping can be seen throughout the area. Much of the East Campus visual setting is also influenced by the undeveloped Santa Lucia Mountains, which rise to the east, and by the established single-family residential neighborhoods, immediately to the south.

Existing student housing is concentrated on the east side of campus, primarily along Grand Avenue, at the base of the eastern hills. The newest housing development, Yakʔitʸutʸu, at the Grand Avenue entrance to campus opened in fall 2018, allowing all first-year students to live on campus in traditional dormitory-style housing. Amenities, such as parking and recreation facilities, also exist within the East Campus.

Portions of the East Campus can be seen from various off-campus locations. The southernmost section is easily visible from the adjacent predominately residential neighborhoods. Student housing developments, such as Cerro Vista, extend partway up the hillside and can be seen from a portion of SR 1. Grand Avenue, which serves as a primary gateway to campus, is identified as a Scenic Roadway in the City of San Luis Obispo General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element (applicable only to the portion of Grand Avenue located within City limits). Important scenic resources along this section of Grand Avenue approaching campus include the Santa Lucia Mountains to the northeast as well as the Morros to the west. Throughout other portions of the San Luis Obispo community, the East Campus has limited visibility due to viewing distance, intervening topography, development, and mature tree canopy.

North Campus Subarea

The North Campus subarea encompasses land uses and facilities across Brizzolara Creek from the Academic Core subarea, and is defined by Brizzolara Creek to the south, the northern edge of the main campus and Peterson Ranch to the north and east, and the UPRR tracks to the west.

The North Campus currently supports a variety of agricultural, athletic, and residential functions. Agricultural uses include equine, environmental horticulture, and beef unit facilities, along with various barns, greenhouses, and study labs. Recreational or athletic uses include Baggett Field and Janssen Field, located near the UPRR tracks. Various parking lots are also located within the North Campus subarea. Poly Canyon Village, a mixed-use student housing development, is located at the eastern perimeter of this subarea. The North Campus is generally accessed by Village Drive, Via Carta,

and unnamed, unpaved access roads. The visual character of the area is mixed. Sports and agricultural fields along the area's western section transition to the multistory residential developments seen to the east.

Because the topography rises gradually from the Academic Core to the north, portions of the North Campus are somewhat more visible from the surrounding community than other areas of campus. Traveling northbound on Johnson Avenue near Bishop Street in San Luis Obispo, a portion of the North Campus can be seen in the distance. Also, views from SR 1 include much of the North Campus, including agriculture and sports fields in the midground, with student housing visible at the base of the foothills to the northeast. Viewing distances from these public viewpoints to the North Campus range from approximately 0.6 mile to 1 mile. Although some existing development in the North Campus subarea is visible from public viewpoints, it is generally not easily discernable in the overall landscape and occupies a relatively small proportion of the total viewshed. Throughout other portions of the San Luis Obispo community, visibility of the North Campus subarea is limited due to viewing distance, intervening topography, development, and mature tree canopy.

West Campus Subarea

The West Campus subarea is the least-developed portion of the campus and is bordered on the west by SR 1 and Stenner Creek Road, to the north by the northern edge of the main campus, to the east by the UPRR tracks, and to the south by the city.

A combination of agricultural fields, support facilities, and working labs are seen throughout the subarea. Structures associated with the Dairy Science and Poultry Science Complexes, Beef Evaluation Unit, Corporation Warehouse, and Technology Park are located within the West Campus. The overall landform of the area rises from the southwest to the northeast, interspersed with a few small elevated knolls and Stenner Creek, which generally bisects the West Campus in a north-south direction. Radio Hill is part of the West Campus subarea, located just northeast of SR 1 and Highland Drive, providing views of the campus and the surrounding mountain ranges. The primary access roads for the area are Stenner Creek Road and Mount Bishop Road.

The West Campus subarea also includes two parcels located west of and adjacent to SR 1. A triangular-shaped parcel, just north of Westmont Avenue, is undeveloped and is bounded on the west by an established single-family residential neighborhood, and on the south by residences and a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection facility. The second smaller triangular-shaped parcel, located northwest of the SR 1 and Highland Drive intersection, is a developed residential community bounded by residential neighborhoods to the south and west.

Because of its proximity to SR 1, the West Campus subarea is the most visible portion of campus for travelers on the highway. As seen from SR 1 much of the West Campus provides the foreground and middle-ground setting for views of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the east. The vegetation of Stenner Creek, which runs somewhat parallel to SR 1, limits views to portions of the West Campus. However, because the landform gradually rises east of the creek, views to the agricultural uses in those elevated areas are available from the highway. Although some existing developments within the West Campus are somewhat visible from SR 1, they tend to be subordinate to the overall landscape setting.

The West Campus parcel located west of SR 1 and north of Westmont Avenue is seen as the foreground for scenic views to Bishop Peak and the Morros to the west. The topography of the northern portion of this parcel rises up quickly from SR 1, precluding views of the Morros and at the same time serving as the primary ridgeline to the west.

Portions of the West Campus can also be seen from the surrounding community. Traveling northbound on Johnson Avenue near Bishop Street in San Luis Obispo, a portion of the West Campus can be seen in the distance. The West Campus parcels located west of SR 1 are immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods, resulting in high visibility to these portions of the West Campus.

PUBLIC VIEWS: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

Figure 3.1-2 shows the location of photographs and viewpoints referenced in this analysis.

Viewpoint 1, shown in Figure 3.1-3, is located just south of the Academic Core and East Campus subareas and presents a typical view of the campus from the residential neighborhood located directly south of campus, across Slack Avenue. The foreground is dominated by residential development and utility lines. Farther north, the campus recreational center and athletic facilities can be seen, and views of the eastern hills are provided. Views looking south along Longview Lane indicate the residential neighborhood is densely vegetated with mature trees and scrubs and views of rolling hills can be seen in the background.

Viewpoint 2, shown in Figure 3.1-4, is located just south of East Campus subarea and presents a view from Grand Avenue, near McCollum Street, looking north towards the main campus. City residents are located along the arterial roadway and views of the campus, specifically the Yakʔitʸutʸu student housing development, can be seen.

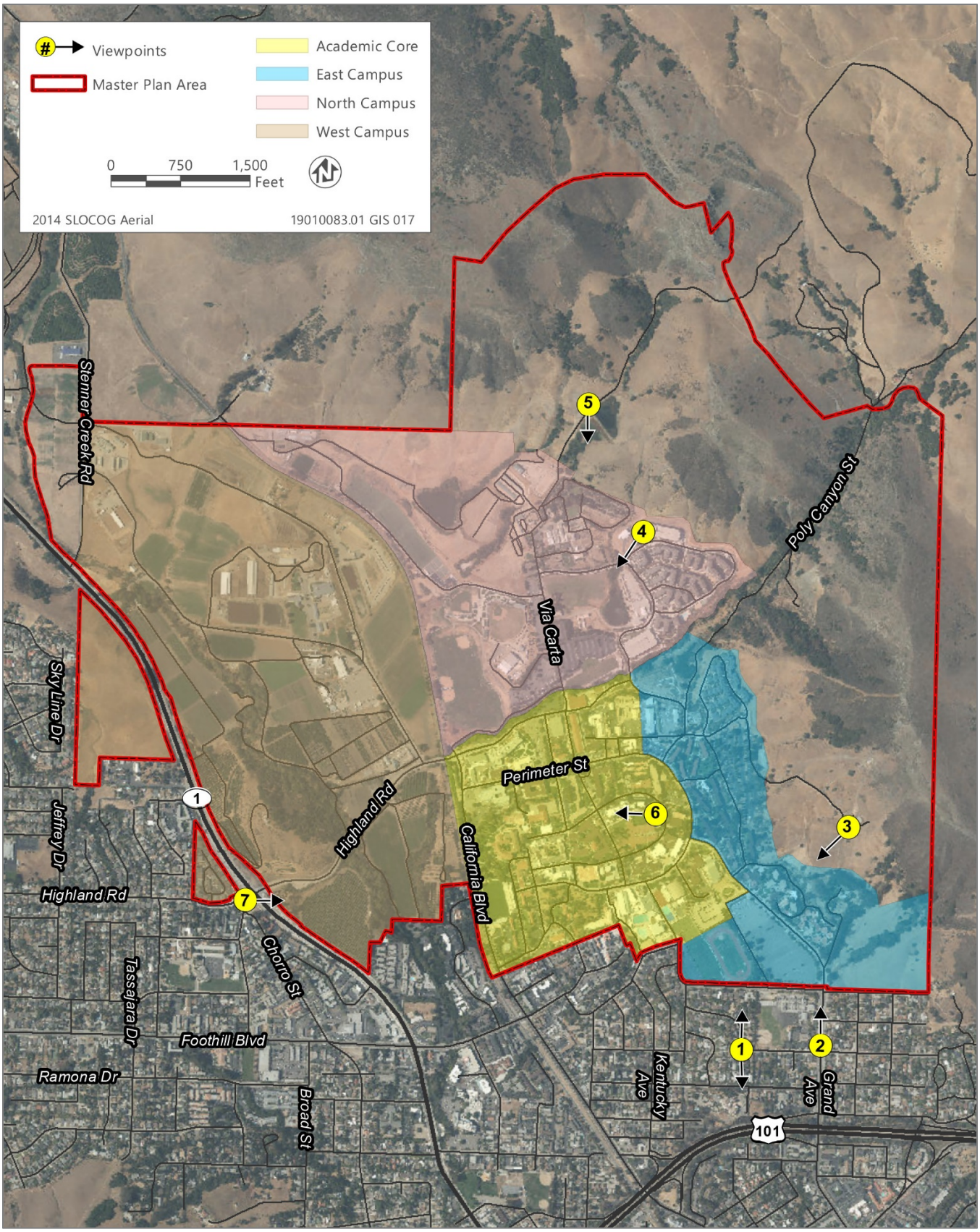
Viewpoint 3, shown in Figure 3.1-5, is located east of East Campus subarea and depicts the view looking southwest from the hills that rise above campus to the east. Student housing and athletic facilities and playing fields located in East Campus can be seen in the foreground. Development within the City is interspersed by trees and vegetation. In the distance, one can see Cerro San Luis Obispo, Bishop's Peak, and the Sister Peaks.

Viewpoint 4, shown in Figure 3.1-6, is located in North Campus subarea and presents typical views seen from the northeastern portion of the main campus at the Canyon Circle parking structure. To the south, multistory residence halls located in Poly Canyon Village lie in the forefront and Drumm Reservoir, surrounded by grazing pasture, is seen directly west of the residence halls. Looking further west, the Sister Peaks come into view, with sparsely developed agriculture lands in the foreground.

Viewpoint 5, shown in Figure 3.1-7, is located north of North Campus subarea and displays the view of North Campus looking south from Indonesian Reservoir. The University's Leaning Pine Arboretum can be seen, as well as Cerro San Luis Obispo. Views of the North Campus and Academic Core subareas are softened by tree coverage and vegetation.

Viewpoint 6, shown in Figure 3.1-7, is located in the Academic Core subarea and presents the view from the entrance steps of the Faculty Offices East building looking west. The Warren J. Baker Center for Science and Mathematics opened in 2013 is located to the north and the aging Science building built before 1960 is located to the south. A large lawn open space area is provided in the center of the buildings, directly west of the Faculty Offices East building. In the distance, views of Bishop's Peak are provided.

Viewpoint 7 shows the Highland Drive Entrance and is located at the intersection of SR 1 and Highland Drive on the western campus boundary. As shown in Figure 3.1-8, this viewpoint displays the area's rolling topography and grasslands as well as the mountain ranges on the east side of campus. The main campus is mostly hidden by the topography however an entrance sign to the campus is seen on the southeastern corner of the intersection and an entrance sign to the city is located along SR 1 on the southwestern corner of the intersection.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Figure 3.1-2 Viewpoint Locations

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 1 – Longview Lane near Albert Drive Looking North to Campus.

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 1 – Longview Lane near Albert Drive Looking South.

Figure 3.1-3 Representative Photographs (1 of 6)

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 2 – Grand Avenue Looking North to Campus.

Figure 3.1-4 Representative Photographs (2 of 6)

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 3a – Santa Lucia Foothills Looking Southwest Across Campus.

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 3b – Santa Lucia Foothills Looking Southwest Across Campus.

Figure 3.1-5 Representative Photographs (3 of 6)

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 4a – Poly Canyon Village Looking Southwest.

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 4b – Poly Canyon Village Looking Southwest.

Figure 3.1-6 Representative Photographs (4 of 6)

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 5 - Indonesian Reservoir Looking South.

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 6 – Faculty Offices (Building 25) Looking West.

Figure 3.1-7 Representative Photographs (5 of 6)

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 7a - Highland Drive near State Route 1 Looking East toward Campus.

Source: Photo taken by Ascent Environmental in 2019

Viewpoint 7b - Highland Drive near State Route 1 Looking East toward Campus.

Figure 3.1-8 Representative Photographs (6 of 6)

VIEWER PERSPECTIVE AND SENSITIVITY

Viewer sensitivity is considered in assessing the impacts of visual change and is a function of several factors. The sensitivity of the viewer, or viewer concern, is based on the visibility of resources in the landscape, proximity of the viewers to the visual resource, elevation of the viewers relative to the visual resource, frequency and duration of views, numbers of viewers, and types and expectations of individuals and viewer groups.

The viewer's distance from landscape elements plays an important role in the determination of an area's visual quality. Visibility and visual dominance of landscape elements depend on their placement within a viewshed. A viewshed is defined as all of the area visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or sequence of locations (e.g., a roadway or trail) (FHWA 1981). Landscape elements are considered higher or lower in visual importance based on their proximity to the viewer. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant, and thus the more visually important it is to the viewer. For purposes of analysis, landscapes are separated into foreground, middle-ground, and background views (U.S. Forest Service 1995). In general, the foreground is characterized by clear details (within 0.25 or 0.5 mile of the viewer); the middle ground is characterized by the loss of clear detail in a landscape, creating a uniform appearance (from the foreground to 3 to 5 miles in the distance); and the background extends from the middle ground to the limit of human sight (Bacon 1979).

Visual sensitivity is also affected by viewer activity, awareness, and expectations in combination with the number of viewers and the duration of the view. Visual sensitivity is generally higher for views that are observed by people who are driving for pleasure, or engaging in recreation activities such as hiking, biking, camping or by residents of an area. Sensitivity is lower for people engaged in work activities or commuting to work. Viewer response must be based on regional context. The same landform or landscape feature may be valued differently in different settings; landscape features common in one area would not be valued as highly as the same feature in a landscape that generally lacks similar features. For example, a small hill may have little value in a mountainous area but may be highly valued in a landscape that has little topographic variation.

Potential sensitive viewer groups include residents of the Ferrini Heights neighborhood and the Foothill neighborhood, adjacent to the West Campus subarea, and the Alta Vista and Monterey Heights Neighborhoods near the Academic Core and East Campus subareas. Campus students and faculty/staff and travelers on SR 1 are also potential sensitive viewer groups. These groups are familiar with the area, are likely to engage in recreation activities in the area, and frequently spend time on campus.

LIGHT AND GLARE CONDITIONS

Night lighting includes streetlights, interior and exterior building lights, and automobile headlights. Glare is caused by light reflections from pavement, vehicles, and building materials, such as reflective glass and polished surfaces. During daylight hours, the amount of glare depends on intensity and direction of sunlight. Dominant sources of night lighting can cause a skyglow effect that can be visible from long-distance viewpoints and can reduce night sky visibility of stars (commonly referred to as dark sky concerns).

Natural and artificial light reflect off various surfaces and can create localized occurrences of daytime and nighttime glare. Buildings and structures made with glass, metal, and polished exterior roofing materials exist throughout the main campus. Existing sources of light include streetlights along project roadways; lights in parking lots, along walkways, and on the exteriors of buildings; and interior lights in buildings. Dominant sources of night lighting are field lights used for illumination of recreation and athletic facilities, which can cause a skyglow effect that can be visible from long-distance viewpoints. Due to the high density of buildings, roadways, and pathways, the Academic Core subarea contains the most sources of light and glare and is the most brightly illuminated area of the campus at night. Campus housing, dining areas, recreational facilities, and parking lots within the East Campus subarea also present sources of light and glare. Campus housing, athletic facilities, and parking lots located north of Stenner Creek in the North Campus subarea contribute to existing light and glare. However, the West Campus consists primarily of agricultural and open space areas requiring minimal or no nighttime lighting and have minimal sources of glare. Nighttime lighting within the Academic Core and East Campus subareas results in light spillover into the adjacent Alta Vista and Monterey Heights neighborhoods. However, because the West Campus and North Campus subareas are

not directly adjacent to neighborhoods (SR 1 separates the West Campus subarea from the Ferrini Heights and Foothill neighborhoods), nighttime lighting does not result in spillover to nearby neighborhoods.

3.1.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of potential aesthetic and visual resource impacts is based on review of site photos representing key vantage points; the nature, scale, and design of 2035 Master Plan projects; and documents pertaining to the campus and surrounding area. In determining the level of significance, this analysis focuses on the nature and magnitude of visual change associated with the development under the 2035 Master Plan, the number of public vantage points from which changes would be visible, and the number of viewers who would be affected. It is assumed that projects implemented under the 2035 Master Plan would comply with applicable CSU, Cal Poly, and other state policies, regulations, and procedures pertaining to development within the campus. This includes 2035 Master Plan policies that influence the visual siting, design and quality of proposed projects.

Cal Poly 2035 Master Plan

The following "Guiding Principles" were developed early in the process by the 2035 Master Plan professional team with input from campus leadership, including the college deans, and considered continuity with the 2001 Master Plan. Guiding Principles can be thought of both as starting points for the plan process and as overarching standards relevant to all or most Master Plan topics. They are organized by topic heading in the Master Plan as General Principle (GP), Academic Mission and Learn by Doing, Design Character (DC), Implementation, Implementation Program, Other Recommendation (OR), Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship (S), Transportation and Circulation (TC), or Residential Community and University Life. The following principles were identified as relevant to aesthetics and visual resources:

GP 05 Cal Poly's scenic setting – a campus surrounded by open spaces – should be preserved; its open lands and the surrounding natural environment are highly valued and should be considered in campus planning efforts.

GP 06 Open space should be incorporated into the core campus and integrated into the scope of every new building project, for aesthetics, leisure, social interactions, and activities contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

GP 07 Land uses should be suitable to their locations considering the environmental features of the proposed sites.

GP 08 The siting of new land uses and buildings should always be considered within the context of the greater campus; functional connections among related activities should be considered, including the nature of activities, "adjacencies" and paths of travel.

GP 09 The siting and design of campus buildings and other features should reflect and enhance visual and physical connections to the surrounding natural environment and outdoor spaces on-campus, and should maintain, enhance or create aesthetically pleasing views and vistas.

GP 10 Campus buildings should incorporate the best design elements regarding massing, human scale, materials, articulation, architectural interest, sustainability and connections with surrounding buildings and spaces; design should reflect authenticity and attention to details in materials, historical context and architectural style.

GP 16 Cal Poly should consider potential impacts – including but not limited to traffic, parking, noise and glare – on surrounding areas, especially nearby single-family residential neighborhoods, in its land use planning, building and site design, and operations.

GP 18 Cal Poly should maintain open communication with neighbors, stakeholders, and local public agencies, respecting the community context and potential impacts of campus development.

DC 01 The siting and design of campus facilities should incorporate a full 360-degree approach, where all sides of the facility contribute to a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing experience.

DC 04 The planning, siting, design and construction of campus facilities should include visual connections to activities inside buildings.

DC 05 The design of campus facilities should maintain and incorporate a pedestrian sense of scale.

DC 10 The edge of campus should be transparent, friendly, and aesthetically pleasing to the surrounding community.

OR 11 The design of the built environment (interior and exterior) should take full advantage of the Central Coast's Mediterranean climate for health, environmental, energy efficiency and aesthetic reasons.

S 04 Open spaces should form links (spaces and corridors) at all scales to form visual, recreational and access connections.

S 05 The siting and design of campus buildings and other features should reflect and enhance visual and physical connections to the surrounding natural environment and outdoor spaces on campus.

TC 15 Parking facilities should be sited and designed to reduce visual obtrusiveness while maintaining safety.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would normally have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

- have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- 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 public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

All issues applicable to aesthetics listed under the significance criteria above are addressed in this chapter.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.1-1: Result in a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista or Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public Views of the Site and Its Surroundings

New construction and expansion within the Academic Core and North Campus subareas would be largely consistent with existing uses and would not be located in areas of high viewer sensitivity. As required by 2035 Master Plan Policies GP09 and S05, project design would preserve or enhance the existing visual character and quality of the site. The siting, scaling, and design of new development would help to maintain or preserve the existing visual quality and character. However, proposed new, permanent structures in the West Campus, specifically the Farm Shop and the University-Based Retirement Community, and in the East Campus, specifically the residential neighborhood proposed for the northeast corner of Slack Street and Grand Avenue, would be located in areas of high viewer sensitivity and could be incompatible with the existing visual character and quality of the sites. Project development in the West Campus would potentially result in adverse effects to scenic vistas, including views of the Morros, and development of the Slack and Grand project in the East Campus could result in substantial degradation of existing visual character. Therefore, this impact would be **significant.**

Academic Core Subarea

The Academic Core subarea is the most densely developed subarea and would be further developed under the 2035 Master Plan. Proposed development would include renovation and expansion of existing facilities, as well as construction of new facilities. Via Carta, which is already the primary north/south pedestrian and bicycle route for the Academic Core would become the central spine of campus, providing access to a variety of interactive gathering places, open spaces of numerous types and sizes, and would provide a framework for incorporating new buildings in an integrated, unifying and welcoming manner. Master plan development would capitalize on the varied topography of the Academic Core to create interesting places and to preserve and enhance views of the surrounding hills, campus lands and buildings. Existing topography would allow grade-level access at multiple levels for many of the proposed buildings.

Buildout of the 2035 Master Plan would result in approximately 1.29 million gross square feet (gsf) of new academic, administrative, and support buildings and 455,000 gsf of replacement space within the Academic Core. Proposed buildings within the Academic Core would be between three and six stories high, dependent on needed space and topography. Figure 3.1-9 shows the locations of the proposed development under the 2035 Master Plan.

A major focus of the Academic Core land use is to create a true heart of campus. This area is anticipated to be a confluence of two spaces, Dexter Lawn and Centennial Meadow. Implementation of the 2035 Master Plan would expand Dexter Lawn to the east and Centennial Meadow, by the Warren J. Baker Center for Science and Mathematics, would be expanded to create a more meadow-like open space with Central Coast landscaping and numerous seating areas. Visual quality would be improved through the expanded open space by creating connections between landscape and structures and a comfortable human-scale setting.

The proposed Creekside Village, at the northern edge of the Academic Core at Via Carta and Brizzolara Creek, would include a mix of uses, including teaching and office spaces, recreation, retail and food services, lounge and study spaces, the campus transit center, and more. Each new development would integrate open spaces to provide quality seating and study areas and connect the associated building to the natural setting. Views to the Cal Poly outer lands and surrounding hills would be preserved through specific alignment and orientation of roads and pathways and building siting and massing.

Several projects proposed within the Academic Core would be completed within the first 10 years of plan implementation. Near-term projects include the Health and Wellbeing Center, Engineering Projects Building, Student Center Addition, and the Classroom and Offices Building as described below:

- The Health and Wellbeing Center would construct a new health center facility (approximately 65,000 gsf) and would renovate or demolish the existing health center. This project is located on the southern border of the Academic Core, west of the recreation center and adjacent to the Alta Vista neighborhood.
- The Engineering Projects Building would encompass 71,000 gsf and would include a new building as well as replacement of the existing aeronautical hangers. The project is located on the western edge of the Academic Core bordering the UPRR tracks.
- The Student Center Addition would expand the existing Building 19 Dining Commons by approximately 44,000 gsf. This project would include office, meeting, study, and other support spaces and would be located in the center of the Academic Core, north of the recreation center and west of the Julian A. McPhee University Union.
- The Classroom and Offices Building would consist of one building or part of other mixed-use facilities depending upon space needs and would include a total of 72,000 gsf. The exact location of this project has not been identified at the time of this analysis; however, this project would be located within the Academic Core and would likely consist of infill development.
- The existing facilities operations complex constructed in 1961 would be demolished and the operations would be relocated to the West Campus. This new Facilities Operations Complex is discussed in further detail under the West Campus subarea.

Tier 1: Replace — Low intensity, older buildings that are in need of replacement at higher density, when feasible.
Tier 2: Renovate — Buildings may be in need of substantial investment. Replace if appropriate.
Tier 3: Retain — Buildings are current and do not need significant improvements in the near future.

01 --- Administration
02 --- Cotchett Education
03 --- Business
04 --- Research Development Center
05 --- Architecture and Environmental Design
06 --- Christopher Cohan Center
07 --- Advanced Technology Laboratories
08 --- BioResource and Agricultural Engineering
8A --- BioResource and Agricultural Engineering Shop
09 --- Farm Shop
10 --- Alan A. Erhart Agriculture
11 --- Agricultural Sciences
13 --- Engineering
14 --- Frank E. Pilling Building
15 --- Cal Poly Corporation Administration
19 --- Dining Complex
20 --- Engineering East
21 --- Engineering West
22 --- English
24 --- Food Processing
25 --- Faculty Offices East
26 --- Graphic Arts
26A - Printing Press
27 --- Health and Wellbeing Center
28 --- Albert B. Smith Alumni and Conference Center
33 --- Clyde P. Fisher Science Hall
34 --- Walter F. Dexter Building
35 --- Robert E. Kennedy Library
36 --- University Police
38 --- Mathematics and Science
40 --- Engineering South
41A - Grant M. Brown Engineering
42 --- Robert A. Mott Athletics Center
43 --- Recreation Center
43A - Kinesiology
44 --- Alex and Faye Spanos Theatre
45 --- H.P. Davidson Music Center
46 --- Old Natatorium
47 --- Faculty Offices North
52 --- Science
53 --- Science North
60 --- Crandall Gymnasium
61 --- Alex G. Spanos Stadium
65 --- Julian A. McPhee University Union
70 --- Facilities
71 --- Transportation Services
115 - Chase Hall
116 - Jespersen Hall
117 - Heron Hall
117T CAD Research Center
124 - Student Services
130 - Grand Avenue Parking Structure
133 - Orfalea Family and ASI Children's Center
180 - Warren J. Baker Center for Science and Mathematics
186 - Construction Innovations Center
187 - Simpson Strong-Tie Material Demonstration Lab
192 - Engineering IV
197 - Bonderson Engineering Project Center

Source: Image prepared and provided by Cal Poly

Figure 3.1-9 Academic Core Subarea Building Inventory

The majority of the new development and replacement buildings proposed would be located in the center of the Academic Core or near Brizzolara Creek. Visibility of these newly constructed buildings within the Academic Core from public viewpoints in the surrounding community would be limited. Because the Academic Core is already well-developed, future development would generally be infill and would be consistent with the existing visual character of the area. As shown in Figure 3.1-9, building renovations are proposed along Campus Way, adjacent to the existing Alta Vista neighborhood. These renovations and building expansions would be visible from public viewpoints in the surrounding neighborhoods. However, development in this area would be consistent with existing uses and compatible with the general scale and density of existing and adjacent campus buildings. Existing vegetation would be preserved to the degree feasible to maintain the visual character of the site.

Although no scenic vistas have been identified within the Academic Core, views of the surrounding hillsides, specifically of the Morros and the Santa Lucia Mountains, are available throughout the subarea. Proposed development would be designed to maintain or enhance views and vistas consistent with 2035 Master Plan Principle GP 09, described above under "Methodology."

The 2035 Master Plan identifies architectural design requirements to maintain the natural setting, create a sense of place, improve connectivity, and increase character continuity throughout the campus. Architectural design requirements include the consideration of building siting and orientation, scale and massing, architectural style and materials, and strategic buildings to complement existing features, topography, and future expansion. Because development under the 2035 Master Plan would be designed to preserve existing scenic views and to enhance the visual quality and character of the site and its surroundings, project development in the Academic Core subarea would result in a less-than-significant impact.

East Campus Subarea

Development in the East Campus subarea is dominated by concentrated student housing and would remain so under the 2035 Master Plan. One near-term project proposed within the East Campus is a residential neighborhood east of the Grand Avenue campus entrance at Slack Street (referred to as Slack and Grand). This near-term project is designated predominantly for workforce housing for Cal Poly faculty, staff, or other persons employed in the area. Nontraditional students, including, but not limited to, graduate students, married students or students with families, veteran students, or other students needing specific accommodations may also be eligible. This housing is anticipated to also include some community facilities, parking, and convenience retail. The proposed residential development project would sit on 5 acres and would provide 380 units. The project would consist of a mix of three-, four-, and five-story buildings, in a layout that would place shorter buildings along the perimeter, nearer street frontages and public viewing locations, then stepping up in height with distance from the roadways.

The proposed residential neighborhood would be constructed on a vacant parcel, would remove existing horse pasture, and would impair/obstruct views of the hills to the northeast. Because of its sizeable footprint and height, the development would substantially alter the existing visual character of the site. The project would be visible from public viewpoints, specifically from residences directly south of Slack Street, from within the Alta Vista and Monterey Heights neighborhoods, and from nearby existing student housing and campus facilities. The project would also be visible from Grand Avenue, a designated scenic roadway in the city. Master Plan Principles GP 10, DC 01, and DC 05 would require project design to be cohesive with the surrounding area through the use of historical context and architectural design and a pedestrian sense of scale. Master Plan Principle DC 10 requires that the edge of campus be transparent, friendly, and aesthetically pleasing to the surrounding community, and Master Plan Principle GP 18 requires that Cal Poly maintain open communication with neighbors, stakeholders, and local public agencies. Notwithstanding adherence to these principles, implementation of the Slack and Grand project would permanently degrade the visual character and quality of the site. Near- and mid-field views of what is now a more natural landscape—pasture land, rolling hills, trees, and ridgelines—would be replaced by dense residential development with three to five-story buildings and associated retail and parking uses. While views of the site would be largely compatible with existing campus development to the north and east, the project would conflict with the visual character of the neighborhood to the south, particularly on Slack Street, which is characterized by single-story residences.

The 2035 Master Plan proposes additional future housing within the East Campus at full buildout. This would include the renovation and expansion of the North Mountain residence halls, construction of proposed student housing replacing existing parking lots located directly east of the North Mountain residence halls and south of the Cerro Vista Apartments, and informal recreation areas. This future housing development would be consistent with existing uses and compatible with the general scale and density of existing and adjacent campus facilities. These housing and recreation facilities would comply with the Master Plan Principles related to aesthetic and visual quality. In addition, campus green and other informal recreation areas would be included at the new development sites enhancing the visual quality and character of the site.

Although no designated scenic vistas have been identified within the East Campus, views of the surrounding hillsides, the Morros, and the Santa Lucia Mountains, are available throughout the subarea. The subarea is located at the base of the Santa Lucia Mountains and student housing would extend up the hillside increasing visibility of development. In accordance with Master Plan Principle GP 09 (described above under "Methodology"), the siting and design of campus buildings and other features should reflect and enhance visual and physical connections to the surrounding natural environment and outdoor spaces on-campus, and should maintain, enhance, or create aesthetically pleasing views and vistas. While application of this principle will serve to minimize aesthetic impacts to the degree feasible, implementation of proposed university developments, specifically the Slack and Grand project, will still result in substantial visual degradation from public spaces. This would be a significant impact.

North Campus Subarea

The North Campus subarea is the focus of the physical expansion in the 2035 Master Plan and would consist of new student housing, recreation facilities, and parking structures. Student housing would be constructed just north of Brizzolara Creek replacing existing surface parking lots. Recreational facilities, including athletic facilities, would be located near the UPRR tracks and would include expansion of existing facilities and construction of new facilities. Informal recreation areas, or campus green, would be developed along Brizzolara Creek as well as within the proposed student housing developments. Two parking structures would be constructed: the Northwest Campus Parking Structure, just north of Brizzolara Creek and east of the UPRR tracks, and the Via Carta Parking Structure, south of Sports Complex Road and west of Via Carta. These parking structures would replace existing athletic fields and a surface parking lot.

An 11.9-acre student housing development north of Brizzolara Creek and west of Village Drive is identified as a near-term project and would be constructed to provide approximately 2,600 beds. While design is still conceptual, the housing development would include buildings three to five stories tall, and support facilities such as administrative offices, recreational lounges, student study areas, community meeting rooms, laundry facilities, counseling offices, and outdoor recreational space. This project would replace an existing parking lot.

Development under the 2035 Master Plan would replace existing surface parking lots and athletic fields and would increase building density within the North Campus. However, proposed buildings and structures would be located near areas that have been previously developed and would be consistent with the surrounding uses. Informal recreation areas and pedestrian pathways, such as the one proposed along Brizzolara Creek, would enhance the visual quality of the site by improving aesthetic resources through the enhancement of the natural environment of Brizzolara Creek and preservation of open space areas.

Although no scenic vistas have been identified within the North Campus, views of the surrounding hillsides, specifically of the Morros and the Santa Lucia Mountains, are available throughout the subarea. Proposed development would be designed to maintain or enhance views and vistas, as required by Master Plan Principle GP 09, described above under "Methodology."

New development would be designed in compliance with Master Plan Principles, described above under "Methodology." The visual character of the site and surrounding area would be preserved through the integration of informal recreation areas and through a 360-degree approach, where all sides of the facility contribute to a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing experience, as required by Master Plan Principle DC 01. Because project design would preserve the visual quality and character of the area and maintain or enhance views of the surrounding areas, development in the North Campus would result in a less-than-significant aesthetic impact.

West Campus Subarea

The 2035 Master Plan would include the construction of various facilities dispersed throughout the West Campus subarea. Proposed development includes new and expanded agricultural support facilities, a Water reclamation facility (WRF), a technology park expansion, a retirement community, and other uses. A detailed description of near-term projects identified under the 2035 Master Plan is provided below:

- The Beef Cattle Evaluation Center Expansion Project would enlarge the existing facility by 10,000 gsf to provide needed space for continuing agricultural programs. This project would be located west of Mount Bishop Road near its intersection with Stenner Creek Road.
- The Farm Shop Project would demolish the existing Farm Shop (Building 9) and construct a 51,200-gsf replacement facility in the western portion of the campus to allow for more efficient operations. This project would be located west of Mount Bishop Road on the edge of campus, just east of SR 1.
- The IT Services Consolidation Project would construct a 15,000-gsf facility off Mt. Bishop Road near the existing Corporation Warehouse. Currently, campus Information Technology Services department offices are located throughout the campus in Old Natatorium, Cotchett Education Building, and Frank E. Pilling Building. This project would consolidate the IT Services department by providing offices to house administrative staff, programmers, and support personnel.
- The Technology Park Expansion Project would be located off Mt. Bishop Road, adjacent to the existing Technology Park facility of similar size and function, and similar to the existing facility it would provide customized research and office space. This expansion would construct multiple buildings totaling 125,000 gsf to provide customized research and office space for start-up companies. It would be designed with smaller spaces to be flexible and adaptable to changes in use over time.
- The Facilities Operations Complex would be constructed to replace the existing facilities complex within the Academic Core subarea constructed in 1961. This new Facilities Operation Complex would encompass 108,000 gsf, would include primarily administrative offices, services, and storage and would be located south of Highland Drive and west of the UPRR tracks. The first phase of the Facilities Operations Complex would provide a 934-space interim parking lot to accommodate surface parking displaced by student housing development in the North Campus.
- The University-Based Retirement Community Project would construct a retirement living community intended for alumni, former faculty and staff, and those who wish to maintain an affiliation with the university beyond their working years. This project would consist of approximately 200 units and include independent living, assisted living and memory care units and would be located on the southern 12 acres of the 25-acre site, west of SR 1 and north of Westmont Avenue.
- The Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) would treat Cal Poly wastewater and disinfect the levels required by Title 22 standards for the irrigation of Cal Poly agricultural and recreational fields. The facility would be located south of the Student Experimental farm and west of the compost operation, just south of the UPRR tracks.

Much of the development proposed within the West Campus would be constructed on vacant land and could potentially affect the visual quality and character of the site and its surroundings. The Beef Cattle Evaluation Center Expansion would be located directly adjacent to the existing evaluation center and would be designed to be compatible and cohesive with it. The IT Services Consolidation Project and the Technology Park Expansion Project would each be constructed on existing surface parking lots near existing development, maintaining the visual character of the site.

The Facilities Operations Complex would be located on agricultural land and could alter the visual character and quality of the site. The site is in an area of low viewer sensitivity, however, and is located adjacent to similar existing uses and buildings in the Academic Core subarea. The Farm Shop would be located near existing structures but would be adjacent to SR 1, and highly visible to travelers along the roadway. Therefore, this facility could adversely affect existing views of the site from SR 1. In addition, the Farm Shop could introduce commercial uses to the existing agricultural area, thereby potentially changing the existing character. Although the Farm Shop would bring more

people to the area and would be a commercial use, the Farm Shop would be consistent with existing agricultural uses and would provide the campus and general population the opportunity to view and purchase agriculture products generated on campus. The University-Based Retirement Community would also be located directly adjacent to SR 1 and would be visible to travelers along the roadway. It could block hillside views, including views of Cerro San Luis from SR 1, and could be incompatible with the existing visual setting. The proposed Retirement Community would also be directly east of the Ferrini Heights single-family residential neighborhood, would be highly visible to sensitive viewers, and would potentially block or alter existing views from this neighborhood.

Development would comply with Master Plan principles previously identified under "Methodology." However, the proposed Farm Shop and University-Based Retirement Community would be highly visible, and the preservation of scenic views may not be feasible through project design. Because the project would potentially result in adverse effects on scenic vistas and may substantially alter the visual quality and character of the site, development in the West Campus would result in a significant aesthetic impact.

Summary

Development under the 2035 Master Plan would be largely consistent with existing uses and would apply Master Plan Guiding Principles, described above under "Methodology." New construction and expansion within the Academic Core and North Campus subareas would be largely consistent with existing uses and would not be located in areas of high viewer sensitivity. However, new structures in the West Campus, specifically the Farm Shop and the University-Based Retirement Community, and in the East Campus, specifically the Slack and Grand project, would be located in areas of high viewer sensitivity and could be incompatible with the existing visual character and quality of the site. Project development in the West and East Campus subareas (specifically the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand project) would alter visual character, block views of the surrounding hillsides and mountain peaks, and result in adverse effects to scenic views and vistas. Therefore, this impact would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.1-1: Prepare and Implement Landscaping Plans for Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand Projects

Prior to implementation of the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community Project, and Slack and Grand project, Cal Poly shall prepare site-specific landscaping plans for review and approval by the CSU. The plans shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect and shall include specifications for plant and tree species, sizes, densities and planting locations that shall be implemented during construction of each project. The objective of the landscaping plans shall be to provide visual screening of the projects from sensitive viewing locations and to reduce the impression of visual mass and structure.

Significance after Mitigation

In accordance with Section 15370 of the State CEQA Guidelines, mitigation includes avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment; reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements. In the context of the aesthetic impacts of the Farm Shop and the University-Based Retirement Community developments in the West Campus subarea, and of the Slack and Grand project in the East Campus subarea, mitigation could include reducing the height and scale of development or relocating the development to other less visually sensitive areas. Smaller scale development coupled with landscape screening, as described above in Mitigation Measure 3.1-1, could reduce the aesthetic impact of these developments.

However, any construction on the proposed University-Based Retirement Community site, west of SR 1, would reduce views of the Morros from SR 1. Relocation of the University-Based Retirement Community would not be feasible because there is no other campus site large enough to accommodate the proposed housing while maintaining close

proximity to important community services that are vital to serve the retirement community residents. Other potential residential sites would be intended to serve students and faculty/staff where proximity to the Academic Core subarea and other campus features is of paramount importance. In general, all lands east of SR 1 are reserved for academic and support functions. The Retirement Community would blend with the nearby neighborhood, would have access to the local community, and would be distinct from the undergraduate student housing in the North and East Campus subareas. Elimination of the University-Based Retirement Community would conflict with recommendations and campus policies to provide retirement housing and housing for faculty and alumni.

Relocation of the Farm Shop would not be feasible because other sites on campus would not allow Cal Poly to realize necessary efficiencies in operations such as proximity to existing agricultural uses and access to off-campus locations, and elimination of the Farm Shop would substantially reduce the resources available to students regarding agricultural operations. Relocation of the Slack and Grand project would also be infeasible because there are no other campus sites large enough to accommodate the substantial workforce housing project, particularly in proximity to both the campus core and uses within the city such that objectives for alternative travel modes (e.g., walking, biking) can be achieved.

Because construction at any of the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, or Slack and Grand project sites would block scenic views and/or substantially degrade the visual character and quality of the sites and alternative sites are not available or feasible, this measure would not be feasible and no other feasible mitigation is available to substantially lessen the aesthetic impact.

Adherence to the 2035 Master Plan principles would address impacts and minimize, where possible, impacts on scenic views. Reducing the scale of development would not reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels and the relocation or elimination of projects within the East and West Campus subareas would not be feasible. No other feasible mitigation is available to reduce the impact to less-than-significant levels. As a result, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Impact 3.1-2: Damage Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway

Project development within the Academic Core, North Campus, and East Campus subareas would not occur along SR 1 and visibility of these features would be limited. Proposed development would be compatible and visually cohesive with existing development and would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Development in the West Campus subarea would be constructed along SR 1, would be prominently visible, and would reduce views of Bishop Peak and the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the project would damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and this impact would be **significant**.

Academic Core Subarea

The Academic Core subarea is located approximately 0.25 mile east of SR 1, the nearest officially designated state scenic highway, and approximately 0.4 mile north of US 101, the nearest eligible—not officially designated—state scenic highway. Portions of the Academic Core can be seen from SR 1; however, development within the Academic Core subarea is fairly indistinguishable from the campus and nearby city and scenic vistas are dominated by the surrounding hillsides and mountain peaks. Development proposed under the 2035 Master Plan would be consistent with existing uses and would not alter or damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Therefore, project development in the Academic Core subarea would result in a less-than-significant aesthetic impact.

East Campus Subarea

Although the East Campus subarea is located over 0.5 mile east of SR 1, the nearest officially designated state scenic highway, and approximately 0.4 mile north of US 101, the nearest eligible state scenic highway – not officially designated, the elevated topography of the area renders it highly visible from surrounding areas. Housing developments proposed in the East Campus subarea could be visible from SR 1. However, the proposed housing developments would be expansions or replacements of existing housing, would be consistent with existing uses, and would be designed to be transparent and aesthetically pleasing. Development within the East Campus subarea would

not alter or damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway; and, therefore, would result in a less-than-significant aesthetic impact.

North Campus Subarea

The North Campus subarea is located approximately 0.5 mile east of SR 1, the nearest officially designated state scenic highway, and approximately 1 mile north of US 101, the nearest eligible state scenic highway – not officially designated. Similar to the East Campus subarea, the topography rises up gradually, increasing visibility of the North Campus subarea. Development of the North Campus subarea under the 2035 Master Plan would result in additional student housing and recreational facilities within the North Campus subarea. These proposed developments would be similar to existing uses and would be designed to preserve views of the surrounding area. Therefore, project development in the North Campus subarea would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway and would result in a less-than-significant aesthetic impact.

West Campus Subarea

The West Campus subarea is primarily located east of SR 1 with two additional parcels located just west of the highway. Because of its proximity to SR 1, much of the West Campus provides the fore- and middle-ground setting for views of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the east. Most of the development proposed in the West Campus subarea would be located closer to the Academic Core and North Campus subareas and would therefore be shielded by the vegetation of Stenner Creek and subordinate to the overall landscape setting. However, the proposed Farm Shop and University-Based Retirement Community would be located directly adjacent to SR 1. The Farm Shop would be located on the eastern side of SR 1, in the foreground setting for views of the Santa Lucia Mountains. The project would preserve or enhance existing vegetation along the boundary of the site directly adjacent to SR 1. Vegetation would continue to block views of the proposed Campus Farm and scenic resources within the state scenic highway would be protected.

The University-Based Retirement Community is proposed on the campus parcel located west of SR 1, just north of the existing California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection station. Portions of the site are the foreground for scenic views to Bishop Peak located to the west. In the northern portion of the site, views of Bishop Peak are reduced, due to the existing topography of the site. Development is proposed on the southern 12-acre portion of the 25-acre site and no changes to the topography of the northern portion of the site would be required such that scenic resources would be altered. Development of the southern portion could result in topographic changes due to the construction of buildings that could potentially block views of the surrounding landscape from SR 1.

Because the 2035 Master Plan would propose development within the West Campus subarea along a state scenic highway and could potentially damage scenic resources, the project would result in a significant aesthetic impact.

Summary

Proposed development within the Academic Core, North Campus, and East Campus subareas would not occur along SR 1 and visibility of new development from that corridor would be limited. Proposed development would be compatible and visually cohesive with existing buildings and would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Development within the West Campus subarea (specifically the University-Based Retirement Community) is proposed along SR 1, would be highly visible, and could damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Therefore, this impact would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures

As discussed above under Impact 3.1-1, mitigation related to the aesthetic impacts associated with development of the West Campus subarea, in accordance with Section 15370 of the CEQA Guidelines, could include reducing the scale of the development or relocating the development to other less visually sensitive areas. However, because any construction at the proposed sites would block scenic views of Bishop Peak from SR 1, a state scenic highway, and alternative sites are not available, these mitigation measures are not considered feasible.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Master Plan principles would address impacts and minimize, where possible, impacts on scenic views through project design, siting, massing, and landscaping. However, no feasible mitigation is available to reduce the aesthetic impact of development in the West Campus subarea to a less-than-significant level. A decrease in proposed development and/or greater setbacks could reduce the potential disruption to existing scenic views, however, any development on the vacant parcel west of SR 1 would reduce scenic views of the Morros, damaging scenic resources within a state scenic highway. As a result, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Impact 3.1-3: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare Which Would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area

Implementation of the 2035 Master Plan would introduce new sources of light and glare associated with new buildings and facilities, and new lighting at the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand project sites would contribute to degradation of visual character and quality of public views (see Impact 3.1-1). Additionally, to support the Master Plan goal to create a 24-hour campus community, increased lighting would be required for longer hours. Such lighting could contribute to indirect lighting/glare on adjacent land uses that could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views and result in additional skyglow. This impact would be **significant**.

Academic Core Subarea

Under existing conditions, the Academic Core subarea is largely developed with multiple sources of light and glare. The project would renovate or expand several existing buildings and would construct new facilities in this area. In addition, Master Plan Principle UL 04 states that entertainment, recreation, and social facilities should be provided to support a 24-hour community. Areas such as Creekside Village and the University Union could operate 24 hours per day and would require additional lighting. Pedestrian pathways and bikeways, such as Via Carta, would need to be accessible at all times and would also require nighttime lighting throughout. New or renovated buildings may include the use of metal or glass, increasing the potential for glare from reflective light. However, because multiple sources of light and glare are present under existing conditions, the increase in light or glare as a result of the project would not be substantial, may not be noticeable from off-site locations, and would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, project development in the Academic Core subarea would result in a less-than-significant impact.

East Campus Subarea

Buildout of the 2035 Master Plan would result in an increase in recreation facilities, student housing, residential neighborhoods, and amenities, thereby presenting additional sources of interior and exterior light. Recreation facilities and housing amenities, such as sports courts and dining halls, could operate 24 hours per day, based on Master Principle UL 04. Operation during nighttime hours would require increased lighting. The Slack and Grand project would create new sources of light and glare from security lighting on entrances, parking areas, pathways and buildings, and from glass or metal surfaces. These sources of light and glare could result in indirect lighting or glare in the off-campus neighborhood south of Slack Street and could affect day or nighttime views in the East Campus subarea. This impact would be significant.

North Campus Subarea

The North Campus subarea currently includes some existing housing and recreational facilities. However, under the 2035 Master Plan a substantial increase in such facilities and their densities would occur. Master Plan Principle UL 04 states that entertainment, recreation, and social facilities should be provided to support a 24-hour community. Therefore, facilities including residential units, dining halls, pedestrian and bike pathways, and recreation areas, would require lighting during evening and nighttime hours. Athletic fields would require substantial sources of light, including floodlights, during the evening and nighttime hours that may result in additional skyglow. Building materials used in project development may include reflective surfaces such as glass and metal and may result in additional sources of glare. Because new sources of light and glare would be introduced and may affect nighttime views in the North Campus subarea, this impact would be significant.

West Campus Subarea

The West Campus subarea consists primarily of agricultural uses and has limited sources of light and glare. New development in this area would increase facilities and create new sources of light and glare. Facilities proposed east of SR 1 would not operate 24 hours per day and would only require minimum security lighting during the nighttime hours. The Farm Shop would serve the campus and the surrounding public and would operate into the evening hours. In addition to light required for building operations, traffic traveling to the Farm Shop during evening hours would introduce light from vehicle headlights. The proposed University-Based Retirement Community, located west of SR 1, would develop a vacant lot and would require lighting for parking lots, roadways, entrances, security, and nighttime building operations. This community would be located directly adjacent to the existing Ferrini Ranch neighborhood and may expose existing residents to new sources of light. Building materials used throughout the West Campus subarea would likely include glass, metal, and polished roofing material which would reflect light and present new sources of glare. Because project development would create new sources of light and glare that may affect daytime and nighttime views, this impact would be significant.

Summary

Development of the main campus under the 2035 Master Plan would result in an increase in light required for building operations, parking lots, pathways, building security, and recreational facilities. Additional light sources would be required for evening and nighttime building operations to provide 24-hour access. Building materials may include glass or metal and would increase the number of reflective surfaces resulting in glare. New lighting at the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand project sites, specifically, would contribute to degradation of visual character and quality of public views (see Impact 3.1-1). Because the project would create new sources of substantial light and glare and would potentially affect daytime and nighttime views, this impact would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.1-3a: Use Nonreflective Materials on Building Surfaces

Cal Poly shall require the use of nonreflective exterior surfaces and nonreflective (mirrored) glass for all new or redeveloped structures.

Mitigation Measure 3.1-3b: Prepare and Implement Lighting Plans for Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand Projects

Prior to approval of development plans for the Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community Project, or Slack and Grand project, Cal Poly shall prepare comprehensive, and site-specific lighting plans for review and approval by the Division of the State Architect that shall be implemented as part of project construction/implementation. The lighting plans shall be prepared by a qualified engineer who is an active member of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) using guidance and best practices endorsed by the International Dark Sky Association. The lighting plans shall address all aspects of the lighting, including but not limited to all buildings, infrastructure, parking lots, driveways, safety, and signage. The lighting plans shall include the following, as feasible, in conjunction with other measures determined feasible by the illumination engineer:

- the point source of exterior lighting shall be shielded from off-site viewing locations;
- light trespass from exterior lights shall be minimized by directing light downward and using cutoff fixtures or shields;
- illumination from exterior lights shall be the lowest level necessary to provide adequate public safety;
- exterior lighting shall be designed to minimize illumination onto exterior walls; and
- any signage visible from off-site shall not be internally illuminated.

Mitigation Measure 3.1-3c: Use Directional Lighting for Campus Development

Cal Poly shall require all new, permanent outdoor lighting fixtures to utilize directional lighting methods (e.g., shielding and/or cutoff-type light fixtures) to minimize glare and light spillover onto adjacent structures. In addition, light placement and orientation shall also be considered such that light spillover is reduced at nearby land uses, to the extent feasible. Verification of inclusion in project design shall be provided at the time of design review.

Mitigation Measure 3.1-3d: Install Vegetated Barriers if Needed

If the use of permanent, high-intensity lighting without directional considerations is necessary for recreational facilities, Cal Poly shall require installation of landscaping adjacent to lighted recreational facilities, to include trees and vegetation, that will shield substantial sources of light and prevent spillover light from affecting nearby receptors including existing residential neighborhoods. Barrier design would be determined at the time of individual project design, based on project details, proximity to existing land uses, and anticipated operational characteristics of the proposed development. Barriers shall be designed or approved by a qualified arborist or landscape architect, in coordination with Cal Poly, and shall consider vegetation types that are native to the region and provide year-round leaf cover, and overall design shall be consistent with other applicable University policies, while minimizing light spillover to the extent feasible.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of these mitigation measures would require use of nonreflective surfaces, directional lighting with shielded and cutoff type light fixtures that minimize light spillage and skyglow, and use of vegetation to reduce light spillage from recreation facilities and residential developments. These measures would limit impacts such that skyglow and light spillage would not substantially increase beyond existing conditions. Specific lighting measures for three developments proposed along the Master Plan Area perimeter (Farm Shop, University-Based Retirement Community, and Slack and Grand project) would minimize the potential for residents and receptors within the city and motorists on SR 1 to experience light spillover and/or night lighting effects associated with these developments. Effects on daytime and nighttime views from new sources of light and glare would be minimized and impacts would be reduced to **less-than-significant** levels.

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