

4.1 AESTHETICS

This EIR section analyzes the potential for adverse impacts on the existing character and visual quality of the project site and its surroundings resulting from implementation of the proposed project. Issues scoped out from detailed analysis in the EIR include impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway, as the project site is not situated along a designated scenic highway. Full bibliographic entries for all reference materials are provided in Section 4.1.5 (References) at the end of this section.

All comments received in response to the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation (IS/NOP) circulated for the proposed project were taken in to consideration during preparation of this Environmental Impact Report, and if relevant, have been addressed in this section or others within this document.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is located in the urbanized northeastern portion of the City, within the eastern portion of the Edinger Commercial Corridor of Huntington Beach in western Orange County, California. The project site is located approximately three miles from the City's Downtown and approximately four miles from the Pacific Ocean. As shown in Figure 3-2 (Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses), the approximately 15.85-acre site is bounded by Center Avenue to the north, Edinger Avenue to the south, the existing Bella Terra Mall (Phase I) to the east, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way and commercial properties including The Ripcurl project proposed to the west. Open space on the grounds of Golden West College is located further to the west across Gothard Street.

■ Overview of the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor

The Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor generally extends from west of Goldenwest Street to east of Beach Boulevard. Land uses along Edinger Avenue primarily consist of commercial/retail-oriented uses, office, and industrial developments. Major developments along Edinger Avenue include the Golden West College to the west and the Bella Terra Mall (Phase I) immediately adjacent to the project site to the east. In addition, a mix of residential, office, and hotel uses are located north of Edinger Avenue between the Bella Terra Mall (Phase I) and I-405 Freeway. As stated in the City's General Plan, uses along Edinger Avenue have little physical or visual connection. As a consequence, the corridor lacks an overall identity and strong physical anchors.

A majority of the commercial/retail uses along Edinger Avenue Corridor exhibit the standard strip-mall development pattern, in which a row of one- to two-story shops sit behind surface parking lots. Several modern high rise buildings with large glass facades are located north of the Bella Terra Mall within the Towers at Bella Terra office development (previously called One Pacific Plaza). The heights of these structures range from five to twelve stories. Commercial signage is prevalent along the street front. Landscaping along Edinger Avenue consists of trees and ornamental shrubs that are located along the edges of the retail/commercial centers. The exception to the existing commercial/retail pattern in the area is Golden West College, which consists of educational buildings and a large amount of open space.

The Bella Terra Mall, which opened in September 2006, is the most prominent commercial use along the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor. The mall consists of an open air, retail, dining and entertainment complex with large public spaces spaced amid walkways or alleys. The architectural style of the mall consists of a mix of Classical, Neoclassical, Baroque Rococo, and even Modern and Postmodern styles with the Tuscan Village serving as the overall theme. The heights of the buildings generally range from 33 to 90 feet with tower elements rising to approximately 104 feet. The varying building heights throughout the site provide variety to the roofline. Finally, limestone, tile, and other materials in natural colors are incorporated into the facades of the structures to keep with the Tuscan Village motif, and the landscaping plan includes a large number of mature trees and small parks, accented with colorful plants.

■ Project Site Characteristics

The project site is currently vacant but is developed for retail and commercial use. A 190,100-square-foot (sf) retail building, formerly occupied by a Montgomery Ward Department store occupies the eastern portion of the project site. This building was originally an anchor tenant of the former Huntington Beach mall. An 18,600-sf auto repair facility associated with the Montgomery Ward store is located on the southwestern portion of the project site. The project site and surrounding vicinity is generally flat with no pronounced highs or lows. The site contains minimal landscaping in the form of trees and shrubs.

■ Adjacent Land Uses

Surrounding land uses to the north/northeast consist of a mixture of commercial, office, hotel, and residential uses. Old World Village is located directly north of the site, across Center Avenue, while the Golden West Transportation Center is located to the northwest. The Bella Terra Mall is located directly adjacent to the project site to the east. Commercial and office development is located to the south of the project site across Edinger Avenue, with single-family residential units located further south. The College Country Center, a shopping center containing retail and office space, is located to the west of the project site on the opposite side of the UPRR tracks. The Ripcurl Project, a mixed-use residential and commercial project is currently proposed on the College County Center site. A right-of-way easement for the UPRR, as well as existing high-voltage transmission lines, is located to the northwest, just north of The Ripcurl site. A former Levitz furniture store is also located west of the project site on the opposite side of the UPRR tracks, south of The Ripcurl project site. Finally, Golden West College is located further to the west across Gothard Street.

■ Existing Views

Views of and through the Proposed Project Site

Viewpoints of the project site and surrounding area are identified in Figure 4.1-1. There are ten viewpoints identified for the analysis of visual resources in this EIR. These viewpoints were chosen as a representative sample of the views available from the project site, as well as short- and long-range views of and through the project site from surrounding uses and the broader project vicinity. The general

character of each of these view points is described below, and each of the viewpoints is shown in Figure 4.1-2 through Figure 4.1-6.

View Point 1

This viewpoint consists of a view facing east down Edinger Avenue from east of the intersection of Gothard Street and Edinger Avenue. This view is illustrative of the development pattern along the eastern portion of the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor. As shown, the streetscape along Edinger Avenue dominates the foreground. A mix of new and older commercial structures are visible with some of the newer structures located along the street edge. Landscaping consisting of trees, grass, and ornamental bushes is located on the edge of the street and in the median. Promotional signage attached to street lights and commercial signage is also visible. Midrange views consist of additional commercial structures while background views include expanses of open sky.

View Point 2

This viewpoint consists of a view towards the south across a mall parking lot located along Edinger Avenue across from Golden West College. This view is illustrative of the standard strip-mall development pattern that is prevalent along the western portion of the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor. As illustrated, the parking lot dominates the foreground. Landscaping consists of small trees and bushes. Security lighting is also visible. Midrange views consist of a vacant supermarket to the east and retail stores to the south. Background views include expanses of open sky.

View Point 3

This viewpoint consists of views to the northeast, looking from the northern portion of the project site. A half vacant parking lot dominates the foreground. The parking lot is devoid of landscaping and the only features that are visible are security lights. Midrange views consist of a renovated commercial structure associated with the recently opened Bella Terra Mall. The structure is approximately 30 feet in height or two stories tall. High voltage transmission lines crossing above the parking lot are also visible. Background views consist of tall structures associated with the Towers at Bella Terra commercial development. Structures in the development range from five to twelve stories in height, including the eight-story Hotel Huntington Beach. Background views include expanses of open sky.

View Point 4

This viewpoint consists of views to the northeast, looking from the middle portion of the project site. A parking lot serving the recently opened Bella Terra Mall dominates the foreground. This parking lot would be removed as part of the proposed project. Landscaping consisting of small trees is also visible along with security lights and transmission lines across the parking lot. Midrange views consist of new commercial structures associated with the Bella Terra Mall, including a six-level parking structure. The structures in the mall range in height from 33 to 90 feet with tower elements rising to approximately 104 feet. Of particular interest are the varied roof lines and a tower element, which serves to break up the skyline and is a departure from standard rooflines associated with other commercial development along

the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor. Background views consist of the twelve-story structure associated with the Towers at Bella Terra commercial development and expanses of open sky.

View Point 5

This viewpoint consists of views to the south, looking from the southern border of the project site. Edinger Avenue dominates the foreground. Landscaping consisting of palm trees and pine trees approximately 30 to 40 feet high are visible. Midrange views consist of commercial development on the south side of Edinger Avenue. This commercial development exhibits the strip mall development pattern that is prevalent along the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor with parking provided in front of single-story retail establishments. Background views consist of expanses of open sky.

View Point 6

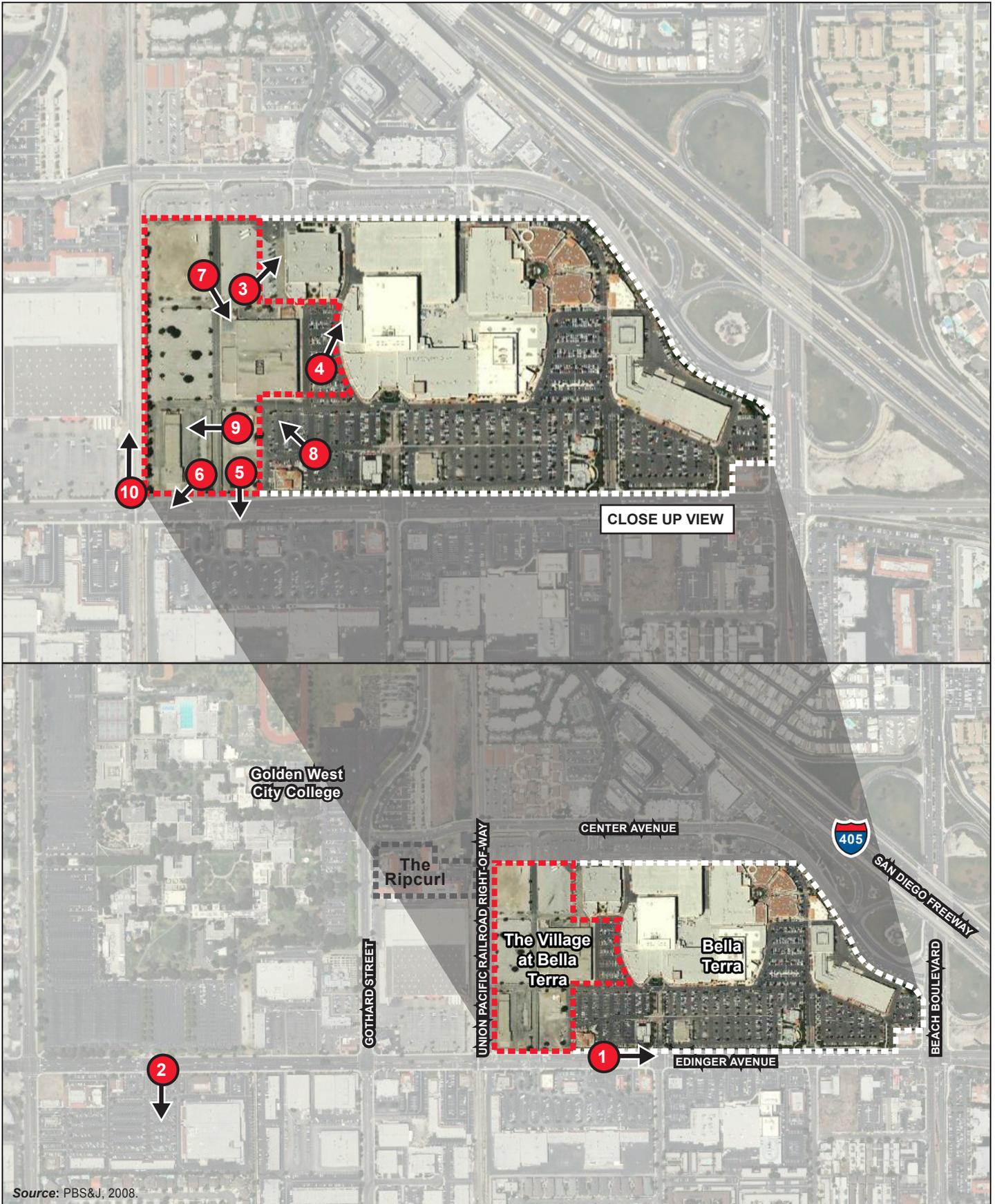
This viewpoint consists of views to the southwest, looking from the southern border of the project site. Edinger Avenue dominates the foreground. Again landscaping consisting of palm trees and pine trees with small ornamental bushes located in the landscaped median are visible. Midrange views consist of a rail road crossing and commercial development located on the south side of Edinger Avenue. Background views consist of expanses of open sky.

View Point 7

This viewpoint consists of views to the south across the project site, looking from the vacant parking lot in the northern portion of the project site. The parking lot dominates the foreground while the former Montgomery Ward building dominates midrange views. The structure is two stories tall, or 30 feet high, and was constructed after the post-modern block style of architecture. Views of the recently opened Bella Terra Mall are also available to the east and provide a contrast between the existing architectural style on the project site and the Classical, Neo-Classical, Baroque Rococo styles displayed by the new mall. Background views also include expanses of open sky.

View Point 8

This viewpoint consists of views northwest across the project site, looking from a parking lot located along the eastern border of the project site. The parking lot is part of the neighboring Bella Terra Mall and dominates the foreground. The landscaping consists of small trees. Security lighting is also visible. The former Montgomery Ward building dominates the midrange views. In these views, the entryway of the building is visible and the facade is recessed. Background views also include expanses of open sky.



Source: PBS&J, 2008.

FIGURE 4.1-1
Viewpoint Locations



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The Village at Bella Terra



Viewpoint 1: Looking east down Edinger Avenue



Viewpoint 2: Looking south across a strip mall

Source: PBS&J, 2008.



FIGURE 4.1-2
Viewpoints 1 and 2

0D2138300

The Village at Bella Terra



Viewpoint 3: Looking northeast from the northern portion of the project site



Viewpoint 4: Looking northeast from the middle portion of project site

Source: PBS&J, 2007.



FIGURE 4.1-3
Viewpoints 3 and 4

0D2138300

The Village at Bella Terra



Viewpoint 5: Looking south from the southern border of the project site



Viewpoint 6: Looking southwest from the southern border of project site

Source: PBS&J, 2008.



FIGURE 4.1-4
Viewpoints 5 and 6

0D2138300

The Village at Bella Terra



Viewpoint 7: Looking south from the northern border of the project site



Viewpoint 8: Looking northwest from eastern border of project site

Source: PBS&J, 2008.



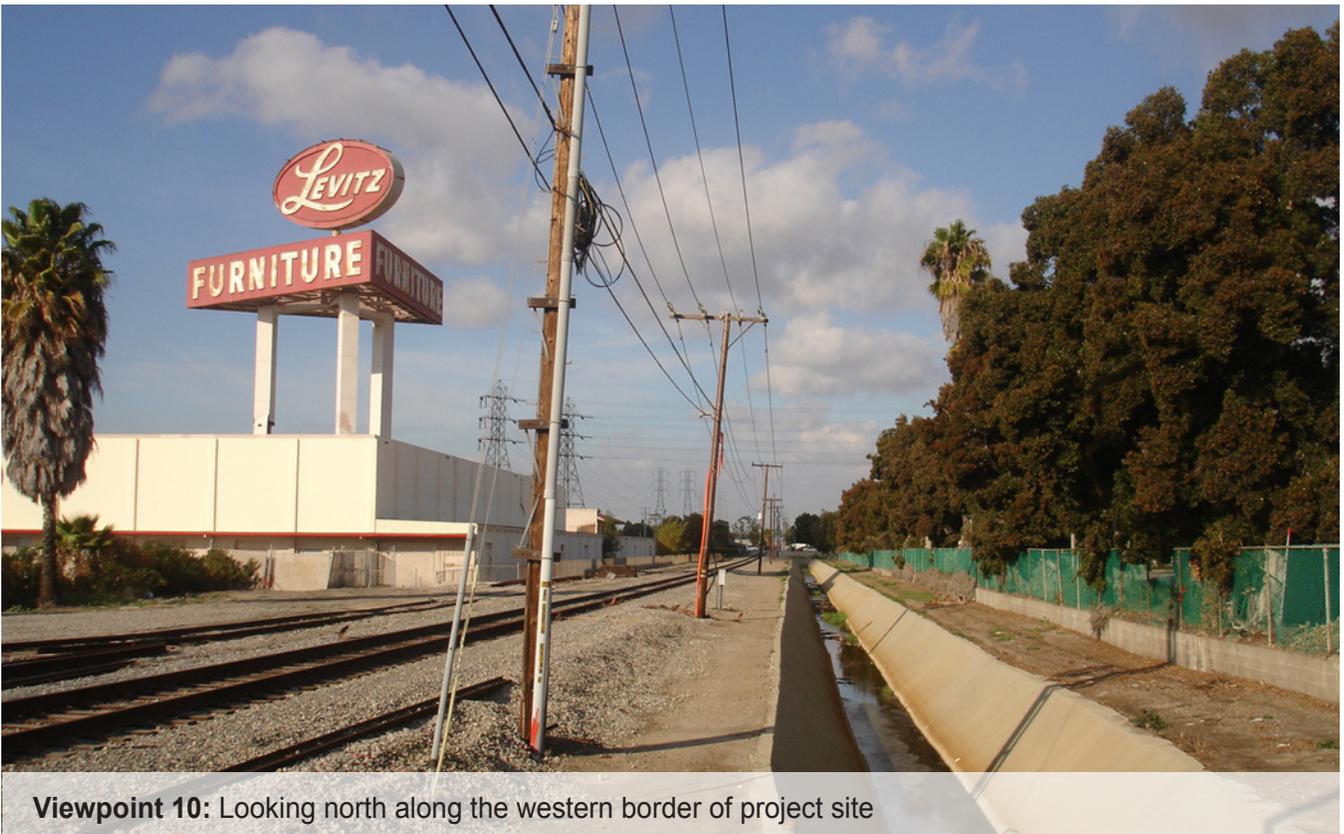
FIGURE 4.1-5
Viewpoints 7 and 8

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The Village at Bella Terra



Viewpoint 9: Looking northwest from the eastern border of the project site



Viewpoint 10: Looking north along the western border of project site

Source: PBS&J, 2008.



FIGURE 4.1-6
Viewpoints 9 and 10

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The Village at Bella Terra

View Point 9

This viewpoint consists of views to the west across the project site, looking from the eastern border of the project site. A vacant parking lot and access lane dominates the foreground. The access lane is delineated by rows of low hedges. Midrange views consist of the auto repair facility associated with the Montgomery Ward department store. The one-story structure is approximately 15 feet high and like the main building was constructed after the post-modern block style of architecture. In this view, the service bays are visible along with signage affixed to the façade. Background views consist of the approximately 60-foot Levitz furniture store sign that is located to the west of the project site. Background views also include expanses of open sky.

View Point 10

This viewpoint consists of views to the north from Edinger Avenue along the western border of the project site. Murdy Channel, a stormwater drainage channel serving the immediate area, utility poles, and the UPRR tracks dominate the foreground. Thick vegetation along the western side of the project site is also visible. Mid-range views consist of the Levitz furniture store located to the west of the project site. The store is two stories tall, or approximately 30 feet high, and was constructed after the post-modern block style of architecture. Background views include the high voltage transmission towers located north of The Ripcurl project site. Expanses of open sky are also visible.

Light and Glare

The site and the surrounding area currently have average ambient nighttime light levels for an urbanized area. Although the site is currently vacant, a variety of sources produce artificial light in the nearby vicinity, including street lights, illuminated signs, automobile headlights, security lights associated with buildings and parking lots, and interior and exterior lighting from commercial and office buildings.

Glare results from sharply reflected light caused by sunlight or artificial light reflecting from highly finished surfaces such as window glass or brightly colored surfaces. The high-rise office and hotel uses located northeast of the project site, adjacent to the I-405 Freeway and north of the Bella Terra Mall, have the potential to generate glare due to the large facades of glass surfaces. The remaining surrounding commercial/retail development presents only limited potential for glare, such as from light reflected off vehicle windows, and is typical of urban environments.

The types of land uses that are typically sensitive to excess light and glare includes homes, hospitals, senior housing, and other types of uses where excessive light and glare may disrupt sleep. In addition, light and glare may interfere with the vision of drivers.

Shade and Shadow

The two-story Montgomery Ward building and the associated one-story auto repair facility presently create limited shade and shadow patterns that are contained within the project site. Land uses surrounding the site are of similar height and also presently create limited shade and shadow patterns.

The nearest shadow-sensitive uses include Golden West College, located approximately 945 feet west of the project site and residential uses associated with Old World Village, which are located approximately 480 feet north of the project site.

4.1.2 Regulatory Framework

■ Federal

There are no federal regulations related to aesthetics that apply to the proposed project.

■ State

The State of California Department of Transportation designates scenic highway corridors. The project site is not visible from any existing designated (or eligible) scenic highways. The nearest eligible scenic highway is the Pacific Coast Highway, located approximately four miles west of the site.

■ Regional

The County of Orange General Plan Land Use Element (2005) contains a Scenic Highway Plan. However, the project site is not located within any designated Landscape or Viewscape Corridor within this General Plan. The nearest designated Viewscape Corridor is the Pacific Coast Highway, located approximately four miles west of the site.

■ Local

The City of Huntington Beach addresses aesthetic considerations for development in the City in various City documents. Specifically, the City of Huntington Beach General Plan contains policies relevant to the visual quality and character of the proposed project.

Urban Design Element

- Goal UD 1** Enhance the visual image of the City of Huntington Beach.
- Objective UD 1.3** Strengthen the visual character of the City's street hierarchy (i.e., major, primary, etc.) in order to clarify the City's structure and improve Citywide identity.
 - Policy UD 1.3.1** Require a consistent design theme and/or landscape design character along the community's corridors that reflects the unique qualities of each district. Ensure that streetscape standards for the major commercial corridors, the residential corridors, and primary and secondary image corridors provide each corridor

with its own identity while promoting visual continuity throughout the City.

Consistency Analysis

The proposed project is located on Edinger Avenue, which is designated as a “Primary Path/Image Corridor” within the Urban Design Element. The area surrounding the project site along the Edinger Avenue Commercial Corridor generally consists of commercial/retail-oriented uses. The Bella Terra Mall and a former Levitz furniture store are located adjacent to the project site on the north side of Edinger Avenue to the east and the west, respectively. A multi-tenant, low-rise commercial center is located to the south of the project site across Edinger Avenue. As discussed in the Urban Design Element, the Edinger Commercial Corridor is characterized by larger retail centers than those typically found along Beach Boulevard to the southeast. However, the multi-tenant and larger uses have little physical or visual connection. As a consequence, the corridor lacks overall identity and strong physical anchors. This is true in the vicinity of the project site. The new Bella Terra Mall lacks any visual connection to the smaller commercial/retail uses located to the south and to the vacant furniture store to the west.

A Specific Plan for the Beach-Edinger Corridor (also referred to as the Corridor Plan) is simultaneously underway, which is intended to present a clear and comprehensive vision for growth and change along Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue. However, because the Bella Terra property is subject to Specific Plan No. 13, which includes architectural and design guidelines, Bella Terra is not included in the Beach-Edinger Corridor Plan.

Additionally, the proposed project would include development standards and design guidelines that would adhere to City standards (including streetscape standards) and include substantial landscaping to soften the hardscape. Future development under the proposed project would provide visual continuity with the existing Bella Terra Mall to the east and if approved, would also provide a visual connection with The Ripcurl project, which is proposed northwest of the project site. Implementation of the proposed project would help to establish an overall identity for this portion of the corridor (intensive mixed-use development) and would not conflict with the policies identified in the Urban Design Element of the General Plan.

Circulation Element

Goal CE 7 Maintain and enhance the visual quality and scenic views along designated corridors.

Objective CE 7.1 Enhance existing view corridors along scenic corridors and identify opportunities for the designation of new view corridors.

Policy CE 7.1.4 Establish landscape and urban streetscape design themes for landscape corridors, minor scenic urban corridors, and major urban scenic corridors which create a different character enhancing the corridor’s surrounding land uses. For

example, the design theme for corridors adjacent to residential neighborhoods should be different than the design theme for industrial or commercial uses.

Consistency Analysis

Edinger Avenue is a designated “Minor Urban Scenic Corridor” within the vicinity of the project site (from Newland Street to Saybrook Street). Implementation of future development allowed under the proposed project would represent a visual extension of the existing Bella Terra Mall and would encourage substantial landscaping to soften the hardscape along the street edge. The visual continuity of such development standards would help to establish and encourage related urban design themes along the streetscape, which would help to enhance the visual quality along the corridor. The proposed project would therefore not conflict with the intent of the policies identified in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

4.1.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation

■ Analytic Method

A qualitative assessment of visual impacts was prepared by evaluating the existing visual setting and comparing it to visual conditions assumed to occur under the proposed project. It is important to note that an assessment of visual impacts is not a quantitative analysis, but rather qualitative and can be largely subjective. The project site and surrounding uses were observed, and photographs were taken to determine the short- and long-term visual effects of the proposed project. Policies from the City’s General Plan and applicable zoning ordinances were identified to determine if the project design was consistent with these adopted plans.

Both GPA/ZTA options would result in an increase in allowable uses compared to the existing General Plan and Zoning designations for the project site; however, the ratios of the type of land uses would differ. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the development of a mixed-use scenario in which *either* more residential uses would be permitted (Option 1) *or* more commercial uses would be permitted (Option 2).

For the purposes of this analysis, full buildout under either scenario would result in similar impacts regardless of the type of land use proposed because the same overall building footprint would result under either option. Additionally, all future development regardless of which Option is implemented would adhere to similar standards and provide consistent visual themes throughout the site. Since Option 1 and Option 2 propose the same land uses, with the difference lying in the ratio of commercial and residential uses, implementation of one GPA/ZTA Option would not be inherently different from implementation of the other in terms of potential aesthetic impacts. Therefore, the following impact analysis applies to both Option 1 and Option 2, as impacts would be the same for either GPA/ZTA.

■ Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the 2008 CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact if it would do any of the following:

- Have a substantial 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
- Create a new source of light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

■ Effects Not Found to Be Significant

Threshold	Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
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The State of California Department of Transportation designates scenic highway corridors. The project site is not within a state scenic highway; nor is the project site visible from any (officially designated or eligible) scenic highway. In addition, as the project site is presently developed, the site does not contain rock outcroppings or historic buildings. No impact would occur, and no further analysis of this issue is required in the EIR.

■ Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
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Impact 4.1-1 Implementation of Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

For the purposes of this analysis, “scenic resources” can include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes. Many people associate natural landforms and landscapes with scenic resources, such as oak woodlands, lakes, rivers, streams, and some historical areas. Scenic resources can also include urban open spaces and the built environment. Examples of these would include parks, trails, pathways, nature centers, archaeological, historical resources, and architectural features. Changes to a scenic vista would be considered substantial if the project results in obstruction of a publicly accessible scenic view, or removal, alteration, or demolition of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area as viewed from public vantage points.

Scenic vistas in the City of Huntington Beach are primarily located along the coast. As the project site is located approximately 4 miles from the ocean, no views of the coast from the site currently exist. The project site currently consists of vacant (former) commercial and auto repair uses with associated surface parking in a highly urbanized portion of the City. The project site and surrounding area do not constitute a scenic vista. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

Threshold	Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
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Impact 4.1-2 Implementation of Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

For the purpose of this analysis, a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site would occur if the project introduces a new visible element that would be inconsistent with the overall quality, scale, and character of the surrounding development. The analysis considers the degree of contrast between anticipated and existing features that represent the area’s aesthetic image, in addition to the degree to which the project would contribute to or degrade the area’s aesthetic value.

The proposed project is located in an area of the City that is currently undergoing revitalization. The Beach-Edinger Corridor Plan is simultaneously underway, and is intended to present a clear and comprehensive vision for growth and change along Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue. The area north of Warner Avenue along Beach Boulevard, and including the Edinger segment, is generally planned for more intensive mixed-use development. In particular, this northern segment is intended to act as a Town Center, or hub, providing a destination and live/work center for the City, with primarily retail and residential development. Although the Corridor Study is still in the early planning stages, The Village at Bella Terra project has taken into account the intended concept for the area in order to present a project that would fit into the overall visual scheme of anticipated development.

In particular, implementation of the proposed project would result in a change in land use designation that would allow horizontally integrated mixed-use development and an overall increase in the permitted density of residential and commercial uses compared to the existing designation. Although a specific development is not proposed as part of the project, two Conceptual Plans have been identified to illustrate the possible implementation of either GPA/ZTA Option 1 or Option 2. The overall building footprint would be the same under either scenario. Future development would facilitate development of a high-quality urban village consisting of high-density residential and commercial uses within a community of pedestrian-oriented buildings on urban blocks separated by streets, sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, and courtyards.

The overall scale and massing of development would generally increase from the presently permitted four stories, to six stories on a majority of the site. However, the maximum height limit under either GPA/ZTA Option would be ten stories, or approximately 135 feet. As envisioned by the Conceptual Plans, the ten-story height limit would be limited to one area in the northern portion of the project site

(on a portion of Block 5A and Block 5B). Figure 4.1-7 (Anticipated Massing and Elevations) illustrates the anticipated massing and elevations on the project site as envisioned by the Conceptual Plans.

Existing structures at the Bella Terra Mall generally range from 33 to 90 feet with tower elements rising to approximately 104 feet. The Ripcurl project would incorporate a five-story mixed-use development in the area, if approved. Therefore, the proposed increase from four to six stories on a majority of the site would not be out of character in comparison to the surrounding uses (existing and proposed). However, the introduction of ten-story structures on limited portions of the site would represent a significant change in the visual character of the project site and immediate surroundings. The nearest comparable structures in height are located northeast of the site at the Towers at Bella Terra, where buildings range in height from five to twelve stories adjacent to the I-405 Freeway.

The proposed ten-story structures would be located adjacent to Center Avenue, which is directly across from Old World Village. This could present a potentially significant impact if the new structures would create shade/shadow impacts on light-sensitive uses. Light sensitive uses are those that depend upon light for their operation (e.g., solar panels) or for which solar access is essential for their function (e.g., swimming pools). Light-sensitive uses also include public parks, residences, and routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residences (e.g., yards). The nearest light sensitive uses include residential uses in Old World Village, which are approximately 480 feet north of the project site and at the open space areas associated with Golden West College. Additionally, if approved, The Ripcurl project would include residential uses northwest of the project site. Shadow impacts are considered significant when shadows would be cast upon potentially sensitive uses during a substantial portion (greater than 50 percent) of the main daylight hours (9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. during the fall, winter, and spring seasons, and 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (daylight savings time) during the summer season.

A shade/shadow analysis was performed for the anticipated heights permitted under the GPA/ZTA Options and as illustrated in the Conceptual Plans. Figure 4.1-8 (Summer Solstice) and Figure 4.1-9 (Winter Solstice) illustrate shadows under the best- and worst-case scenarios, summer and winter solstices, respectively. In the morning and afternoon of the summer solstice as shown on Figure 4.1-8, shadows would be limited and would only fall within the project site. The afternoon shadows could extend onto small portions of the adjacent Mervyn's building to the east within the existing Bella Terra Mall. This structure is not considered a light-sensitive use.

Figure 4.1-9 illustrates shadows during winter solstice when the days are shortest and the angle of the sun in the sky has the potential to cast the longest shadows. Adjacent uses to the west and north would not be affected by shadows during the winter solstice. During the morning and afternoon hours, shadows would be cast just past the existing UPRR railroad tracks to the west and just past Center Avenue to the north. However, no structures would be affected in either scenario. Additionally, during the afternoon hours, shadows would be cast upon portions of the adjacent Mervyn's building to the east within the existing Bella Terra Mall. However, as stated above, this structure is not considered a light-sensitive use. Therefore, because the proposed ten-story structures associated with future permitted development under implementation of the proposed GPA/ZTA Options would not affect any light-sensitive uses, the inclusion of this element on a portion of the site would not represent an incompatible use with respect to the existing visual character of the area.

In general, future development would incorporate a range of architectural styles, building heights, and massing, similar to the existing Bella Terra Mall. While some portions of the project site would be more visually prominent than others, due to location of streets and general circulation in the vicinity, development standards of the proposed GPA/ZTA would ensure that future development includes proper site planning, unique architecture, high-quality building materials, and extensive indoor and outdoor amenities, as is represented by the proposed Conceptual Plans. The proposed project would ensure that form, height, and treatment of buildings would reinforce the prominence and role of major urban spaces within this portion of the City. Thus, although future development could include structures that are taller than those presently allowed on-site, the height, bulk, architecture, and/or signage would not degrade the visual unity of the area. Rather, future development would help promote a continuous visual theme of the area by expanding upon the existing Bella Terra Mall and adjacent Towers at Bella Terra.

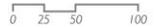
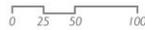
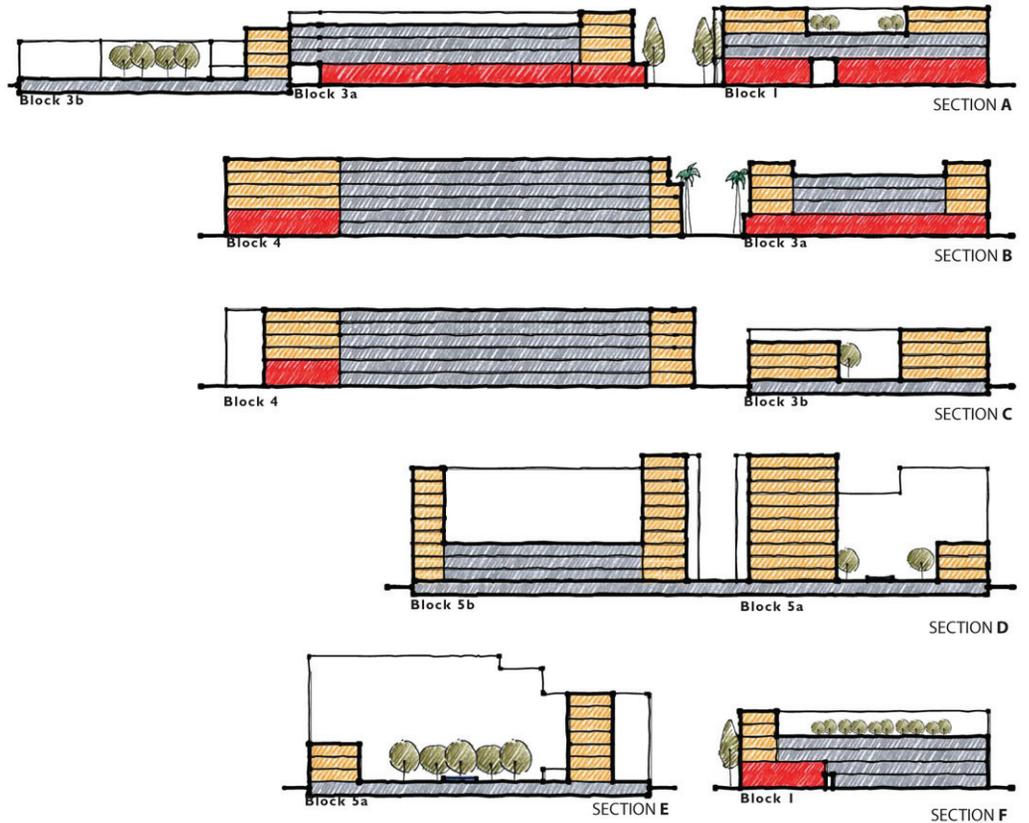
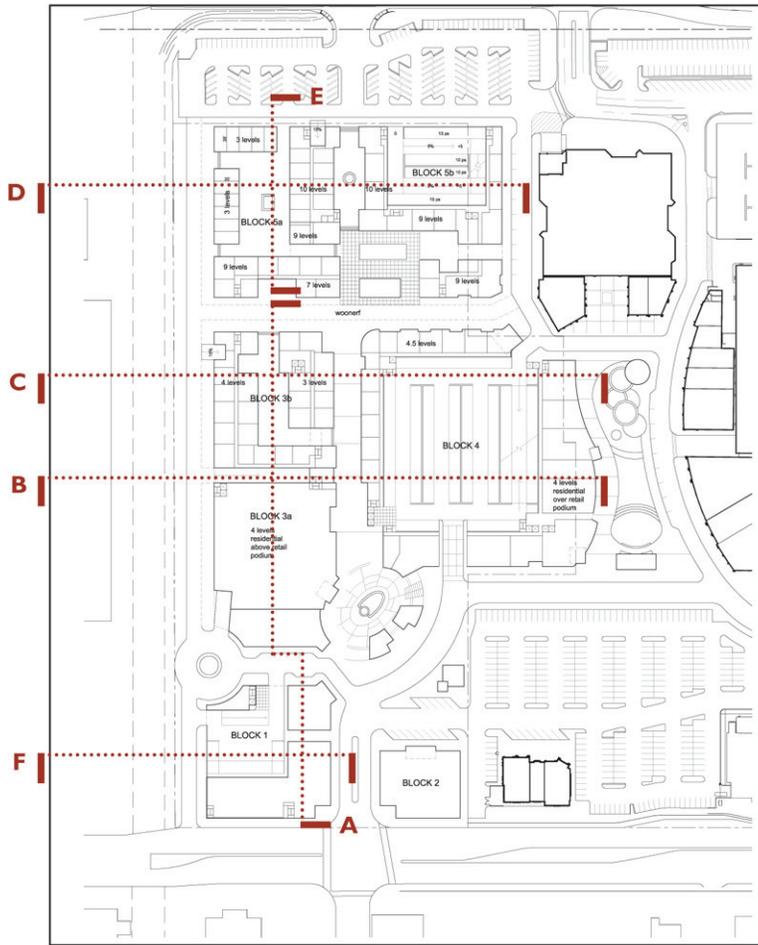
One of the primary intents of the proposed project (as well as the proposed Corridor Study) is to guide new development that enhances the overall image of the project area as an exciting destination for visitors and residents. Pedestrian activity would be encouraged through increased density of mixed uses, and future development would include increased landscaping throughout the site which would help to soften the appearance of hardscape. Pedestrian-friendly uses would help to promote an active street life that would be contiguous with the existing Bella Terra Mall.

Other architectural and design guidelines in the ZTA would help ensure maximum compatibility of design, minimization of light and glare, promote pedestrian-friendly entries and uses, and promote the use of compatible exterior materials. In general, future on-site development would serve to improve the aesthetic character of the presently-vacant project site. Although future development could result in taller buildings compared to existing uses, the overall changes that are proposed would be designed to create visually attractive and compatible uses. Consequently, future development that would be permitted under the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and this impact would be *less than significant*.

Threshold	Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?
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Impact 4.1-3 Implementation of Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would introduce new sources of light and glare into the project vicinity. However, these sources would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

For the purposes of this analysis, light or glare effects evaluate the change in illumination level as a result of project sources and the extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.



Sources: DJM Capital Partners, Inc., March 2008.

FIGURE 4.1-7
Anticipated Massing and Elevations

OD2138300

The Village at Bella Terra



June 21, 9 AM



June 21, 12 PM



June 21, 3 PM

Source: DJM Capital Partners Inc., 2008.

FIGURE 4.1-8
Summer Solstice



0D2138300

The Village at Bella Terra



December 21, 9 AM



December 21, 12 PM



December 21, 3 PM

Source: DJM Capital Partners Inc., 2008.



FIGURE 4.1-9
Winter Solstice

0D2138300

The Village at Bella Terra

Light

Future development that would be permitted under project implementation would increase overall nighttime lighting in the project area with the introduction of additional street lighting, exterior lighting, and vehicle headlights. Surrounding land uses immediately adjacent to the project site are generally commercial in nature. The closest sensitive receptors that could be affected by nighttime lighting include residents located in the Old World Village, located approximately 480 feet north of the project site. In addition, if approved, The Ripcurl project would include residential uses to the northwest of the project site.

Night illumination can affect people in several ways. For example, where intense lighting is viewed against a dark background, the contrast attracts the attention of the viewer and could be considered annoying. Under low-light conditions, the human eye adjusts to the brightest light within the field of view. If the range of light intensity to which the eye is exposed is large, the eye will be relatively insensitive to the more dimly lighted areas within the field of view. In addition, increased illumination can affect the suitability of sleeping areas, use of outdoor areas at natural light levels, and privacy. The degree of impacts may be related to the degree of change from the illumination levels to which people have become accustomed.

Due to the urbanized nature of the surrounding area, a significant amount of ambient nighttime light currently exists, reducing the views of stars and affecting views of the nighttime sky. Streetlights and headlights along Edinger Boulevard provide a significant amount of existing ambient light surrounding the project site. Surrounding uses such as the Bella Terra Mall also provide exterior lighting. The proposed project would introduce nighttime lighting directly onto the project site, as well as into the project vicinity. Consequently, the surrounding uses could be exposed to exterior lighting associated with the proposed buildings. However, as a standard condition of approval, the City requires that all outdoor lighting be directed to prevent light spillage onto adjacent properties, with indication of such provision on the final site plans. Additionally, some of this light would be masked by existing street lighting and nighttime vehicular traffic. Finally, given the distance and intervening development between the project site and the residences of Old World Village, nighttime lighting is not expected to negatively affect the closest sensitive receptors. Further, if residential development is approved at The Ripcurl project site, those future residents would consciously make the decision to live in a high-density area where there could be increased light sources associated with the mixed-uses in the general vicinity as compared to other areas in the City. A similar situation would exist for future residents at the project site.

Although one does not currently exist, a commuter rail line could be added to the UPRR in the future. Therefore, if existing trains or potential commuter trains were to operate at night, it is possible that train lights could affect the proposed residences during nighttime hours. However, a densely landscaped dog walk/path area is proposed along the western boundary of the site that runs parallel to the train tracks. The lights from trains operating at night would, therefore, not be expected to impact residential units located on the western boundary of the site. Therefore, light impacts would be *less than significant*.

Glare

Proposed structures would generally range from four to six stories and could include structures up to ten stories in height on the northern portion of the site. Buildings generally three or more stories in height have the potential to include large building faces that could introduce reflective surfaces (e.g., brightly colored building façades, reflective glass) that could increase existing levels of daytime glare. The proposed project could, therefore, serve as a new source of light and glare in the area, and impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of mitigation measure **MM4.1-1** would be required.

MM4.1-1 *To the extent feasible, the Applicant shall use non-reflective façade treatments, such as matte paint or glass coatings. Prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed project, the Applicant shall indicate provision of these materials on the building plans.*

The provision of non-reflective façade treatments for future development allowed under the proposed GPA/ZTA Options would ensure that impacts related to daytime glare would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by reducing the reflective properties of the building materials employed, such as glass, metal, or finished concrete.

Glare from headlights entering and exiting the site from Center Avenue and Edinger Boulevard would be momentarily visible to users across each roadway. However, as no light-sensitive uses are located directly adjacent to the project site that would be affected by vehicle headlights, impacts from glare would be ***less than significant***.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetic impacts includes areas with views of the proposed project site. The analysis accounts for all anticipated cumulative growth within this geographic area, as represented in Table 3-3 in Chapter 3 (Project Description). However, the primary catalyst of revitalization in the project vicinity is the Bella Terra Mall, which is located adjacent to the project site to the east. The Ripcurl project is also simultaneously being evaluated in a separate EIR, and is located immediately northwest of the project site. Consequently, the proposed project in conjunction with The Ripcurl project and the existing Bella Terra Mall, represent a significant portion of the existing visual character and changes that could occur in the immediate vicinity.

Because the City is an urban, developed area, it is anticipated that any future projects (including The Ripcurl project) would generally be consistent with the City's design standards. The Ripcurl project site is located adjacent to the project site across the UPRR right-of-way and is currently characterized by one- to two-story buildings that contain few architectural design features. Design review would consider the types and placement of planned development throughout the City. Consequently, changes in land use that would substantially degrade the area would generally not be permitted to occur, thereby protecting and enhancing the visual character of these areas. Additional development within the surrounding areas would constitute further intensification of an already urban and nearly built-out area and would generally occur through redevelopment; therefore, it would not be expected to result in substantial degradation of the visual quality of the area. Consequently, cumulative impacts are anticipated to be ***less than***

significant. Moreover, the contribution of the proposed project to such cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable, because as described above, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the visual character or quality of the project area. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact of the project would be *less than significant*.

Huntington Beach is an urbanized City and contains numerous existing sources of nighttime lighting. Cumulative development would constitute further intensification of an already urban and nearly built-out area and would generally occur through redevelopment or infill development. Although cumulative new development or redevelopment could include direct illumination of project structures, features, and/or walkways, the increase in ambient nighttime lighting levels in these areas would only rise minimally because a significant amount of ambient lighting currently exists due to the urbanized nature of the City as a whole. Thus, increases in nighttime lighting that would occur under cumulative development would not significantly affect nighttime views of the sky because such views are already limited. Cumulative development, in combination with development under the proposed project, is not anticipated to result in the creation of new sources of light that could negatively affect nighttime views. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with ambient nighttime lighting would be considered *less than significant*.

The cumulative context for spillover light would be other development that could add to the spillover light effects of the project on properties in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Spillover light is a site-specific effect that could only be added to by other projects in the immediate vicinity of the affected property. Implementation of the proposed project in combination with The Ripcurl project would add lighting typical of mixed-use residential and commercial developments. This includes directed lighting for architectural accents, signage, landscape elements, and security lighting. Because there are no immediately adjacent residential uses or other light-sensitive uses (the nearest are approximately 480 feet to the north), implementation of the proposed project in combination with The Ripcurl project represent the cumulative potential for spillover lighting in the area because both projects would contain residential uses. Future residents from both projects would make a conscious decision to live in an area that could include increased lighting due to the mix of uses proposed. Therefore, there would be *less than significant* cumulative impacts associated with spillover lighting.

Cumulative development could result in some increase in glare, as specific building materials and configurations are uncertain. However, these potential increases are likely to be minor and consistent with the existing built environment due to limited development potential and existing City regulations. Further, future projects would, in many cases, be subject to CEQA review and would require mitigation for these effects, which would likely also reduce the impacts to a less-than-significant level. Consequently, cumulative glare within the surrounding area would be less than significant. As implementation of the proposed project would not, after mitigation, result in a significant daytime glare impact, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this impact. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with glare would not be cumulatively considerable and would be *less than significant*.

4.1.5 References

Huntington Beach, City of. 1996. *City of Huntington Beach General Plan*, 13 May.