

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the potential environmental impacts related to aesthetics from implementation of PLAN Hermosa. As described in Chapter 2.0, Introduction, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluates physical environmental impacts. As such, the analysis in this EIR focuses on the visual resources and characteristics of the public visual environment, that is, visual features, viewpoints, corridors, and other significant elements of the visual landscape which are accessible from public areas such as streets, beaches, parks, and plazas. The analysis provides an overview of public visual resources in the city, considers their relative significance to the visual environment, and identifies potential causes of adverse impacts to those resources that might arise from implementation of PLAN Hermosa, as well as the effectiveness of PLAN Hermosa policies and implementation actions to avoid significant impacts. Where warranted, the EIR includes measures to mitigate potential impacts.

NOP Comments: No comments were received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) addressing aesthetic resource concerns. Comments included written letters and oral comments provided at the NOP scoping meeting.

4.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Visual character is the overall impression of a landscape created by its unique combination of visual features such as landform, vegetation, water, and structures. Scenic quality is a measure of degree to which these elements blend to create a landscape that is visually pleasing to a viewer. As such, viewer sensitivity informs the degree to which changes in visual quality may be considered significant.

Generally, the key factors in determining the potential impacts on visual character and quality are based on overall visual change/contrast, dominance, and view blockage. An adverse visual impact may occur when a project (1) perceptibly and substantially changes the existing physical features of the landscape that are characteristic of the region or locale; (2) introduces new features to the physical landscape that are perceptibly uncharacteristic of the region or locale or that become visually dominant from common viewpoints; or (3) blocks or completely obscures scenic resources in the landscape. The degree of impact depends on how noticeable the adverse change might be to sensitive viewer groups.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE REGION

Hermosa Beach's visual character and visual resources reflect the community's regional setting. The city is located along the southern end of Santa Monica Bay. As such, it occupies a visible edge between the extensive urban landscape of the South Bay subregion and the entire Los Angeles Basin, and its boundary with the Pacific Ocean. This edge defines the dominant visual character of Hermosa Beach's environment.

The city's position in the South Bay provides panoramic views of regionally significant visual features: Santa Monica Bay itself (the ocean and the bay's coastline), the Palos Verdes Peninsula to the south, and the more distant Santa Monica Mountains across the bay to the north. From the more inland and higher elevations of the city (in the Hermosa Hills and Eastside neighborhoods east of Pacific Coast Highway), the Los Angeles Basin and San Gabriel Mountains are visible. These easterly views, although less predominant than those along the coast, have regional significance and are among the valued visual resources in the community. Public views to these vistas, including viewpoints and view corridors, are significant visual resources and are discussed in greater detail below. In addition to these vistas, there is the edge itself, Hermosa's beach, which gives the city uninterrupted open space and visual expansiveness

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along its entire western boundary. The beach, with its unobstructed vistas, is the destination of and visual reward for Hermosa Beach visitors.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE CITY

Urban land uses that currently contribute to the visual character of the city's built environment are primarily residential uses, which are distributed throughout the city, and commercial uses that are mostly located along Pacific Coast Highway, Aviation Boulevard, and Pier Avenue. Architecture styles of development in the city vary and most buildings are low in stature, reflecting height restrictions that limit building heights to 25 to 35 feet, depending on zoning and location. The city's prominent open space areas include the beach, Hermosa Valley Greenbelt, and park and school sites such as South Park, Clark Stadium, Hermosa View School, Valley View School, and Valley Park. There are 19 parks in the city, including many small parkettes.

The prevailing low-profile beach atmosphere and the availability of walking streets and small-scale east-west streets along the oceanfront provide a visual transparency experienced from major public thoroughfares such as Hermosa Avenue, Manhattan Avenue, and Monterey Boulevard. Visual transparency refers to the degree to which people can see or perceive what lies beyond the edge of a street or public space. More specifically it refers to the degree to which people can see or perceive human activity beyond the edge of a street or other public spaces (Ewing 2013). This visual permeability in the community's local urban landscape softens the urban/ocean edge and contributes to the beach town character of the community.

While Hermosa Beach is well known for its sweeping views of natural resources, the area also includes numerous structures and buildings that are considered scenic resources. Some of the city's historic landmark structures are regionally distinctive, such as the Bijou Theatre, the Bank of America Building, and the Community Center. Historic resources in Hermosa Beach are discussed in greater detail in Section 4.4 Cultural Resources, of this EIR. Aside from individual structures, scenic resources may also include a collection of buildings that are architecturally distinctive or potentially historic, well-manicured streetscapes such as Pier Avenue, and commercial corridors or districts. The areas identified as playing a key role in defining the city's visual character are described below.

Downtown District

The Downtown District is located in an area along Pier Avenue from Valley Drive to The Strand and on Hermosa Avenue. The district is predominantly characterized by commercial and visitor-serving uses, with a small amount of residential development. Street-oriented storefronts, trees and landscaped spaces, varying architectural styles, and streetscape improvements contribute to the visual character of this area. In general, buildings are one to two stories tall and are located along the sidewalk with stepbacks on the upper levels. The predominant architectural style is that of a California beach town, with no officially designated styles. Most buildings are painted in light colors to reflect the sun. The district's landscaping comprises palm trees and low native scrubs in street medians. Ornate streetlights in an old-fashioned style line the major corridors, while on-street parking (both parallel and angled) lines several streets, including Pier Avenue.



Landscaping, outdoor eating spaces, and streetscape features add to the pedestrian-oriented character of Pier Plaza in the Downtown District.

The Strand

This oceanfront boardwalk traverses the length of the city from Herondo Street to 35th Street. Sandy beaches and the shoreline dominate the scenic views to the west of the boardwalk, while the area east of The Strand is characterized by one-, two-, and three-story residences as well as the Downtown District. These residences are designed and oriented to take advantage of the sweeping ocean views. There is minimal landscaping along The Strand, and no predominant architectural style or color. Most notable views are of the Pacific Ocean, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and the Santa Monica Mountains.



North-facing view from The Strand.

Hermosa Valley Greenbelt

The original Santa Fe Railway right-of-way was converted to a recreational use trail in the 1980s (Hermosa Beach Historical Society 2009). Today, this trail is known as the Hermosa Valley Greenbelt. It is one of the community's most highly used public spaces, second only to the beach. The landscaped trail extends the length of the city between Ardmore Avenue and Valley Drive.



Lush landscaping and the jogging trail are the primary visual characteristics of the Hermosa Valley Greenbelt.

Pacific Coast Highway (PCH)

Pacific Coast Highway traverses the city in a north-south direction and is located east (inland) of the Pacific Ocean and the Downtown District. In Hermosa Beach, PCH offers views of the Palos Verdes Peninsula but does not provide any views of the Pacific Ocean except via small view corridors at intersections. The highway is a major arterial with two to three lanes of traffic in each direction, serving mainly as a transportation corridor for through traffic. Land use along Pacific Coast Highway includes both commercial and residential, as well as some public facilities. Most buildings are one to three stories tall. The overall visual aspect of PCH along this stretch is of an urbanized and highly trafficked corridor.

Residential and Commercial Areas

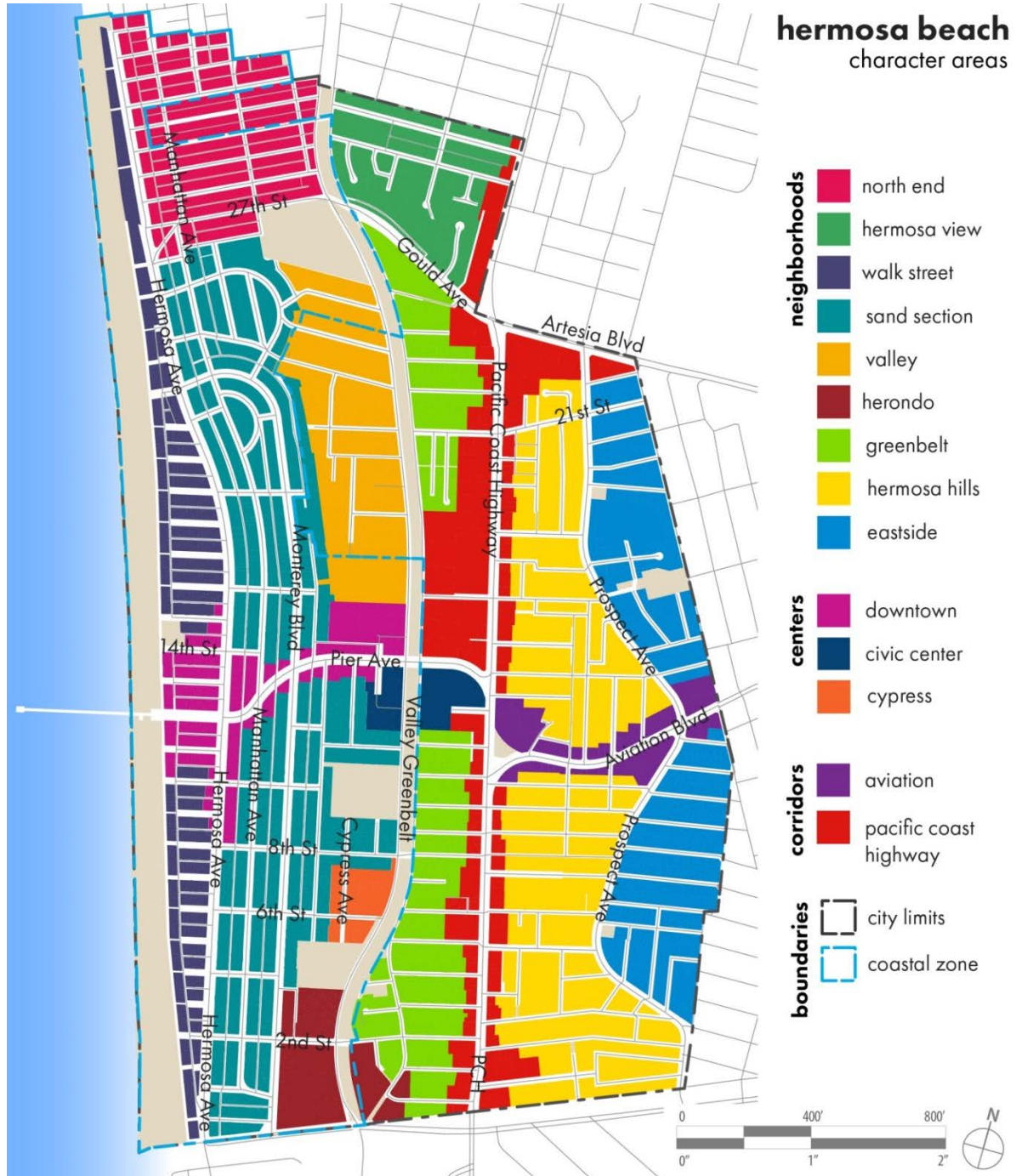
Hermosa Beach consists of many distinct neighborhoods and commercial areas. PLAN Hermosa identifies nine residential neighborhoods with more or less distinct characteristics and five commercial corridors or districts (see **Figure 4.1-1, Character Areas**). The predominant land use in Hermosa Beach is residential, which accounts for approximately 67 percent of the city's total land area. The residential areas have no predominant architectural style, as many homes have been rebuilt over time. Most homes have small front yards, if any, and landscaping varies from grassy lawns to drought-tolerant xeriscapes. The architectural diversity of Hermosa Beach's distinct neighborhoods contributes to the visual character of the community, which can be summarized as low-key, predominantly residential and diverse.

The city's public spaces—its streets and streetscapes, parks, plazas, and public buildings—create much of its urban form. Aside from parks and the beach, streets and sidewalks make up a large portion of the public realm in Hermosa Beach. In character and appearance, the streetscape defines the experience for street users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Streetscape amenities on Pier Avenue and the pedestrian mall of lower Pier Avenue are prominent features,

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along with other visually iconic structures and monuments such as the Hermosa Pier and the Bijou Theatre that also contribute to the city's visual character.

**FIGURE 4.1-1
CHARACTER AREAS**



SCENIC VISTAS/VIEW CORRIDORS

A scenic vista is a high quality view from which the public can experience one or more significant visual features, a landscape, or an aesthetically pleasing viewshed. Scenic vistas are often available from elevated vantage points that offer panoramic or expansive views. Hermosa Beach does not have officially designated scenic vistas. Nonetheless, prominent public viewpoints and view corridors in the city provide long-range views of important scenic features: Santa Monica Bay, the Palos Verdes Peninsula and the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains.

Pacific Ocean

Public views of the Pacific Ocean from within the city can be described according to three general categories: (1) uninterrupted panoramic views; (2) major vistas or viewpoints; and (3) intermittent views. Uninterrupted public views of the ocean are available along the entire length of The Strand, from the beach, and from Hermosa Pier. These view locations are significant because of the high quality of the views (they are panoramic and include all of the major visually significant coastal features—Santa Monica Bay, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and the Santa Monica Mountains) and they are also locations of high public use. Major vistas of the ocean are also available from several public streets where the topography and surrounding structures do not obstruct the line of sight. In some cases, these viewpoints are located at relatively high elevations in the eastern half of the city; for example, the intersection of Prospect Avenue and 6th Street.

Public views of the Pacific Ocean from north-south-trending streets in the city are generally more limited because existing development along the street frontage obstructs views. However, the ocean is visible at key points along major corridors including Pacific Coast Highway at Longfellow Avenue and along Aviation Boulevard at key intersections. From within the coastal half of the city, major public views of the ocean exist along Pier Avenue and on several east-west-trending streets such as 8th, 14th, 22nd, and 27th streets.

For a typical viewer who is 5 to 6 feet in height, standing within 50 feet of a building that is 20 to 35 feet in height, the panoramic views that would qualify as scenic vistas or prominent viewpoints could be obstructed by the existing buildings. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, the abundant small east-west streets, particularly between The Strand and Loma Drive/Morningside Drive, along most of the coastal length of the city offer a series of intermittent views to the ocean as one travels parallel to the coast on north-south-trending streets (Hermosa Avenue, Manhattan Avenue, and Monterey Boulevard). These east-west streets cumulatively provide visual transparency from the public streets to the ocean, an effect that contributes to the visual character of Hermosa Beach.

Palos Verdes Peninsula and Santa Monica Mountains

Public views of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and the Santa Monica Mountains are unobstructed from The Strand, the beach, and the pier. Views of the Santa Monica Mountains are available from the extreme northwest corner of the city within the public right-of-way in the vicinity of Hermosa Avenue and 35th Street. Views of the Palos Verdes Peninsula are available along Pacific Coast Highway (framed by urban development on both sides of the corridor), on Aviation Boulevard, and from Prospect Avenue near 6th Street. Other locations offer intermittent views of the Peninsula (for example, from several points along Pier Avenue), but the most significant of these might be the view from Cypress Avenue because of the unique character and mix of activities and land use at this lower elevation in the city. Views of both the Peninsula and the Santa Monica Mountains serve as backgrounds from many minor viewpoints in the city. Most of these views are fragmented by existing urban development.

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Los Angeles Basin and San Gabriel Mountains

Public views of the Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains generally are from higher elevations in the eastern part of the city along east-west-trending streets. The best views are from Aviation Boulevard, the southern end of Prospect Avenue looking east, and 5th Street looking northeast (though framed by existing development along the roadway). The Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains serve as backgrounds for the city. Most views of these features are fragmented by existing urban development.

PROMINENT PUBLIC VIEWS

Figure 4.1-2, Prominent Public Viewpoints, identifies significant public viewpoints from which these features can be viewed. The viewpoints identified in **Figure 4.1-2** are considered prominent based on four key criteria established by the City.

- 1) The view includes one or more of the five regionally significant features identified above.
- 2) The view is readily accessible to the public.
- 3) The view is panoramic, expansive, or a relatively unobstructed, high quality view.
- 4) The view contributes importantly to the visual environment of Hermosa Beach.

These criteria, and the viewpoints identified in **Figure 4.1-2**, are considered in the impact assessment in this section.

FIGURE 4.1-2
PROMINENT PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS



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SHADE OR SHADOW

Prolonged periods of shade and shadow during the middle of the day can adversely affect parks and other public gathering areas. Shade and shadow effects are limited in Hermosa Beach because of building height limits enforced by the City. Since most buildings in the planning area are less than 35 feet tall, the most common sources of prolonged shadows are natural topographic features and on a smaller scale, trees. Examples include shadows from the ridgeline along Loma Drive in the Valley Drive or Greenbelt areas or from landscape features and trees.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Artificial lighting can negatively affect the visual character of land uses, especially at night. Light pollution from urban sources can also adversely affect views of the night sky. Although the night sky above the Los Angeles Basin is already impacted by the region's expansive urban development, a few relatively unpolluted locales still exist. The western portion of the Santa Monica Mountains is a known dark sky viewing location that can be said to have regional significance because of its accessibility to the Los Angeles Basin and the relative rarity of dark sky viewing locations in the region. Significant sources of light pollution in the greater Los Angeles Basin that impact the night sky have the potential to contribute to the cumulative degradation of night sky viewing.

Hermosa Beach contains various sources of light and glare that are typical of urban communities, such as streetlights along roadways and lights in parking lots, illuminated signs, lighted recreation facilities, landscape lighting, and light emitted from the interiors of residential and nonresidential buildings. Noncommercial sources of night lighting in Hermosa Beach include lighted sports fields, notably Clark Field, which is lit most evenings of the year.

The greatest source of daytime glare in Hermosa Beach is specular reflection from the Pacific Ocean. This is a natural source, of course, and a dominant element of the Southern California coastal environment. On clear days, sunlight and its attendant glare saturates the sky unobstructed by intervening buildings or structures above 35 feet in height. This natural condition reflects the city's position on the urban edge with the Pacific Ocean. If adverse sources of daytime glare exist, they are localized and small-scale, and most likely result from singular instances of highly reflective surfaces (e.g., windows and parked vehicles) present in the man-made environment. Because most buildings in the city are at or below 35 feet in height, glare effects from structures are limited to the immediate vicinity of the individual buildings.

SENSITIVE VIEWER GROUPS

Potentially impacted viewers can be categorized into groups of shared sensitivity to changes in the existing scenic quality of a landscape. Viewer sensitivity (or public concern) for the scenic quality of a landscape or particular view is informed by the activity a user is engaged in at the time something is visible. For example, commuting in heavy traffic can distract many viewers from aspects of the visual environment, while activities such as pleasure driving can encourage viewers to look at view components more closely and for a longer period of time.

Viewer sensitivity considerations include the number of viewers, duration of exposure, and degree of public interest in a particular view. In the city, highly sensitive viewers are generally assumed to include residents, tourists, and recreationists traveling through Hermosa Beach. Less sensitive viewer groups are assumed to include commuters and viewers from commercial or industrial-type land uses.

Residents are considered to be the most sensitive viewer groups because of the duration of exposure and their degree of interest in the view. Their exposure is considered long term and their interests in the view are considered to relate to both the visual quality and the character of the area. Tourists also have high sensitivity, in that they generally visit the city to observe the views as well as to enjoy the city's recreational opportunities.

Commuters and viewers from commercial or industrial-type land uses are considered less sensitive viewer groups because of the short duration of the view and their trip purposes. Such users usually pay less attention to visual quality and character and are exposed for short times to vistas and other visual characteristics.

4.1.3 REGULATORY SETTING

Several relevant state and local laws, regulations, and policies relate to visual resources. They provide the regulatory framework for addressing visual impacts. The regulatory framework for aesthetics is fully discussed in detail in **Appendix C-2**. Key regulations applicable either directly or indirectly to visual resources are presented below.

FEDERAL

No federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to visual resources apply to the planning area.

STATE

- **Caltrans Scenic Highway Program:** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program protects and enhances the natural scenic beauty of the state's highways and corridors through special conservation treatment. There are no officially designated scenic highways within the city boundaries (Caltrans 2011).
- **California Coastal Act of 1976:** The California Coastal Act of 1976 and the California Coastal Commission, the state's landmark coastal protection law and planning agency, consider scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas as a protected resource of public importance:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting. (California Coastal Act Section 30251).

See Section 4.9, Land Use and Planning, of this EIR for a discussion of PLAN Hermosa and consistency with the California Coastal Act.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL

- **City of Hermosa Beach 1981 Local Coastal Program:** The Hermosa Beach Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) component addresses aesthetic considerations of design and development in the Coastal Zone. CLUP goals and objectives associated with coastal recreational access and development and design include preserving and enhancing

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coastal overviews and key view point areas. Visual policies and programs in the Coastal Development and Design portion of the CLUP include the following:

- Height restrictions for residential and commercial uses (which are now contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance) to protect overview and viewshed qualities.
- Condominium project design consistent with the city's character.
- Implementation of a design review process.
- Establishment of a Downtown Plan.
- Landscaping provisions for The Strand.

The Local Implementation Plan has not yet been certified; therefore, the Coastal Commission retains authority to review and issue coastal development permits for development in the Coastal Zone. PLAN Hermosa is intended to result in an adopted and certified LCP.

- **City of Hermosa 1979 General Plan:** The current General Plan includes the following policies and programs (summarized) that address visual resources:
 - Conservation Element Policy 6 – No additional structures should be placed on the beach (with the exception of restrooms).
 - Urban Design Element Policy 1 – Maintain the present scale of the city.
 - Program 2 – Development of visual design standards.
 - Program 3 – Eliminate garish or degrading signs.
 - Program 4 – Restore and maintain residential uses in older sections of city.
- **City of Hermosa Beach Zoning Ordinance:** The City's Zoning Ordinance (Hermosa Beach Municipal Code Title 17) addresses aesthetic considerations of development. While the Zoning Ordinance sets development standards for parking, building heights (maximum 35 feet), setbacks, density, lot coverage, open space requirements, and signs which collectively contribute to the visual character of the community, the Municipal Code does not include an explicit viewshed protection ordinance related to the protection of private views. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance includes the following requirements:
 - Requirements that condominium project design be in harmony and not a major disruption to established character of the neighborhood (Section 17.22.130).
 - Commercial lighting standards to avoid lighting impacts (Section 17.26.050).
 - Screening of outdoor storage and activities for commercial uses (Section 17.26.050).
 - Landscaping and setback buffer standards for commercial projects that adjoin residential areas (Section 17.28.030).
 - Discretionary review and approval of precise development plans for development (except for single family and renovations less than 1,500 square in size) (Chapter 17.58).

4.1.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

For purposes of this EIR, impacts on visual resources are considered significant if adoption and implementation of PLAN Hermosa would:

- 1) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- 2) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- 3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the city or its surroundings.
- 4) Create new shade or shadow in a manner that substantially affects outdoor recreation facilities or other public gathering areas.
- 5) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

ANALYSIS APPROACH

The discussion below addresses the potential for future changes to the public visual environment to be significant and adverse, based on the preceding assessment of prominent visual resources, current (baseline) conditions and the significance thresholds identified above. The impact assessment that follows addresses each of the five significant impact thresholds in turn and considers potential impacts of the plan in its entirety, including its proposed new policies as well as the current General Plan policies and zoning regulations that would be carried forward as part of PLAN Hermosa. The impact assessment also considers standard conditions of approval and current regulations of other agencies that would be enforced during the implementation of PLAN Hermosa and that would reduce or avoid visual impacts.

PLAN HERMOSA POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following PLAN Hermosa policies and implementation actions address visual resources either directly or indirectly.

Policies

Land Use + Design Element

- **1.1 Diverse and distributed land use pattern.** Strive to maintain the fundamental pattern of existing land uses, preserving residential neighborhoods, while providing opportunities for enhancement or transformation of corridors and districts in order to improve community activity and identity.
- **1.6 Scale and context.** Consider the compatibility of new development within its urban context to avoid abrupt changes in scale and massing.
- **1.8 Respond to unique characteristics.** Enhance the unique character and identity of the city's neighborhoods, districts, and corridors through land use and design decisions. Allow policies and programs to be focused on each unique character area of the city.
- **2.5 Neighborhood preservation.** Preserve and enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of disruptive, nonconforming buildings and uses.

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- **2.7 Context-sensitive design.** Wherever feasible, orient residential buildings to address streets, public spaces, or shared private spaces and consider the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.
- **2.8 Neighborhood transitions.** Encourage that new development provide appropriate transitions in scale, building type and density between different land use designations.
- **5.1 Scale and massing.** Consider the scale of new development within its urban context to avoid abrupt changes in scale and massing.
- **5.4 Locally appropriate materials.** Require architectural designs, building materials and landscape design to respect and relate to the local climate, topography, history, and building practices.
- **5.7 Design guidelines and development standards.** Seek to maintain and enhance neighborhood character through design guidelines and development standards that articulate building form, orientation, and scale, but allow for eclectic and diverse architectural styles.
- **10.6 Incentives for preservation.** Provide incentives for preservation of designated landmarks, potentially historic resources, and older buildings.

Parks + Open Space Element

- **5.1 Protection of views.** Identify and protect the public viewpoints, view corridors, and viewsheds from which scenic vistas can be observed.
- **5.2 Visual character.** Accommodate economic growth and new buildings in a way that preserves the visual character of the community.
- **5.3 Building sites and designs.** Require that massing, height, and orientation of new development be sited and designed to protect public coastal views to and along the ocean and scenic areas.
- **5.4 Landscape design.** Require new public and private landscape installations to consider public views of vistas and encourage landscape design that protects or enhances those views.
- **5.5 Pacific Coast Highway.** Protect Pacific Coast Highway as a potentially scenic highway and important view corridor.
- **5.6 Signage and infrastructure.** Ensure signage, infrastructure, and utilities do not block or detract from views of scenic vistas.
- **5.7 Light pollution.** Preserve skyward nighttime views and lessen glare by minimizing lighting levels along the shoreline.
- **5.8 Lifeguard structures and views.** Limit the number, size, and spacing of lifeguard structures to provide unobstructed views of the ocean from coastal access points while maintaining good safety practices.
- **7.4 Beach structures.** Restrict buildings and structures on the beach with regard to size and number consistent with current access, safety, and beach use.
- **7.6 Children's recreational equipment.** Limit children's recreational equipment to slides, swings, and climbing apparatus of a non-obstructive design. Locate near major or primary entrances to the beach, at least 100 feet from the Strand wall.

Infrastructure Element

- **1.7 Aesthetic and urban form.** Require infrastructure and infrastructure improvements that are aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the scenic character of the surrounding area.

Implementation Actions

Land Use + Design Element

- LAND USE-3. Develop building design guidelines to illustrate and articulate the appropriate building form, scale, and massing for each established character area. The Design Guidelines shall be tailored to:
 - Identify and safeguard the prominent visual characteristics of each character area in accordance with those key features and characteristics to ensure that the overall visual character of the neighborhoods, centers, and districts is preserved.
 - Include provisions that ensure avoidance of significant shadow impacts from new structures onto public recreational areas, parks or other public gathering places during the hours of 10 AM to 2 PM.

Parks + Open Space Element

- PARKS-10. Develop and apply design standards and evaluation procedures for development projects that have the potential to degrade regionally important views or interfere with prominent public viewpoints, as identified in PLAN Hermosa.
- PARKS-11. Protect public views of the Pacific Ocean by establishing and applying the following development review requirements:
 - Locate new and relocated utilities underground when possible. Place and screen all other utilities to minimize public visibility.
 - Replace automobile-scale streetlights with shorter, pedestrian-scale streetlights where safe and appropriate.
 - Fences, walls, and landscaping shall not block views of scenic areas from designated viewpoints, scenic roads, parks, beaches, and other public viewing areas.
- PARKS-12. Protect visual and aesthetic resources through design review and by establishing and applying the following development review requirements:
 - New development in areas visible from prominent public viewpoints shall incorporate colors and exterior materials that are compatible with the surrounding landscape.
 - Public works projects adjacent to prominent public viewpoints that include hardscape elements such as retaining walls, cut-off walls, abutments, bridges, and culverts shall incorporate veneers, texturing, and colors that blend with the surrounding earth materials or landscape.
 - Landscaping material shall be used to screen uses that detract from the scenic quality of the coast from prominent public viewpoints.
- PARKS-13. Minimize nighttime light pollution by establishing and applying the following development review requirements:
 - Exterior lighting (except traffic lights, navigational lights, and other similar safety lighting) shall be minimized, restricted to low intensity fixtures, shielded (full cutoff), and downcast (emitting no light above the horizontal plane of the fixture) concealed to the maximum feasible extent so that no light source is directly visible from public

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viewing areas, there is no glare or spill beyond the property lines and the lamp bulb is not directly visible from within any residential unit.

- PARKS-14. Minimize the negative aesthetic impacts of signs by establishing or revising and applying the following design requirements:
 - Enforce appropriate limits on height, size, design, and materials of signs.
 - Prohibit signs other than traffic or public safety signs that would obstruct views to the ocean, beach, parks, or other scenic areas.
 - Enforce sign maintenance controls.
 - Continue restrictions on the use of lights and moving parts in signs, billboards, and rooftop signs.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACT 4.1-1 *Would PLAN Hermosa Cause Adverse Effects on Scenic Vistas and Viewsheds? Future actions under PLAN Hermosa have the potential to encroach on views from prominent public viewpoints. Future actions also have the potential to degrade the visual quality of scenic vistas, through the introduction of incongruous features to the viewshed. This impact would be **potentially significant** because development under PLAN Hermosa could adversely affect scenic vistas.*

As indicated in **Figure 4.1-1**, multiple public view corridors in the city provide views of the Pacific Ocean, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains. While PLAN Hermosa does not specifically propose or entitle any development project or public project, it would provide for and apply to such projects subsequent to the adoption of the plan. Subsequent projects under PLAN Hermosa could result in the alteration of these view corridors by partially blocking the public view and/or introducing a new feature that dominates the view. Examples include building features such as awnings, facades, walls, and similar items.

PLAN Hermosa outlines the community's vision for proposed development in each of the city's distinctive zones and identifies policies and actions to reduce impacts to these public view corridors. For example, implementation actions PARKS-10, 11, and 12 require discretionary design review for new development based on specific criteria to be established in the Zoning Ordinance to protect scenic vistas. As such, utilities would be located underground when possible, and fences and walls would not block views from designated viewpoints, scenic roads, or other public viewing areas. Parks + Open Space Element Policy 5.1 states the intent to protect scenic vistas. Public vistas would also be protected through proposed implementation actions, as listed above.

In addition, the City's Zoning Ordinance includes height restrictions that prohibit buildings from exceeding 35 feet, require screening of commercial outdoor storage and activities from public views (Section 17.26.050), and require development projects to be reviewed through the City's precise development plan process (Chapter 17.58).

However, neither current City standards nor PLAN Hermosa policies or actions include specific provisions to protect public view corridors. Therefore adverse effects on scenic vistas and viewsheds would be **potentially significant** and mitigation measure **MM 4.1-1** would be required. Due to the built-out nature of Hermosa Beach, the limited reach of the views, and the small amount of new development, 50 feet is an appropriate distance for the protection of public views. This metric is based on similar project experience and conversations with the City about its goals for protecting scenic vistas.

Mitigation Measures

MM 4.1-1 Projects located within 50 feet and within the directional arrow of a prominent public viewpoint, or within the uninterrupted viewing areas, as identified in Figure 4.1-2, shall demonstrate that existing public views of scenic resources along the view corridors identified in Draft EIR Figure 4.1-2 are, at a minimum, maintained in their current condition and that no features are added in the viewshed that substantially obstruct or detract from the public views of the Pacific Ocean, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains. This requirement shall be incorporated into the review process for precise development plans under Chapter 17.58 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure **MM 4.1-1** would ensure that existing view corridors which offer views of the Pacific Ocean, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Los Angeles Basin and the San Gabriel Mountains are maintained. Therefore, this impact would be reduced to **less than significant**.

IMPACT 4.1-2 *Would PLAN Hermosa Have Adverse Effects on Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway? There are no designated state scenic highways in or near Hermosa Beach. However, PLAN Hermosa directs the City to protect Pacific Coast Highway as a potentially scenic highway and would guide development and reuse projects in a manner that is consistent with the existing visual character of Pacific Coast Highway so that it may be designated as a scenic highway at some point in the future. Therefore PLAN Hermosa would have a **less than significant** impact.*

Scenic resources can include man-made or natural features, viewpoints, or viewsheds. They can include visually significant features such as rocks, trees, and historic buildings, particularly if those features are within a state scenic highway. There are no designated state scenic highways in or near Hermosa Beach. However, proposed Parks + Open Space Element Policy 5.5 directs the City to protect Pacific Coast Highway as a locally designated scenic highway and important view corridor. This policy is the basis for future planning decisions that enhance the local stretch of PCH as a scenic resource. In its current state, Pacific Coast Highway's only significance as a scenic resource is its public views to the Pacific Ocean and the Palos Verdes Peninsula. As noted in the discussion above, significant public vistas from Pacific Coast Highway would be protected through proposed Policy 5.1 in combination with mitigation measure **MM 4.1-1**.

Potential impacts on other scenic vistas are also addressed in the discussion above. Impacts to other scenic resources (such as iconic structures and visual permeability to the ocean) are addressed in the discussion of Impact 4.1-3 below. Impacts to historic resources (which may contribute significantly to the visual character of the community) are addressed in Section 4.4, Cultural Resources, of the EIR. With impacts on scenic vistas addressed by Impact 4.1-1 and on cultural resources addressed in Section 4.4, PLAN Hermosa would have a **less than significant** impact on scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

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IMPACT 4.1-3 *Would PLAN Hermosa Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and Its Surroundings? PLAN Hermosa would guide future development and reuse projects in the city in a manner that would not adversely alter the existing land use pattern or visual character of the city. This would be a less than significant impact.*

Hermosa Beach identifies itself as a small beach town, where visual character is defined by its coastal location, diverse residential neighborhoods, and public open spaces, including lower Pier Avenue, the beach, the pier, and The Strand. PLAN Hermosa outlines future visions for the city's distinctive areas, which include neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, as outlined in **Table 4.1-1 (City of Hermosa Beach Existing Visual Character and Future Vision)**.

**TABLE 4.1-1
CITY OF HERMOSA BEACH EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER AND FUTURE VISION**

Existing Visual Character	Future Vision
Neighborhoods	
North End Neighborhood	
The North End is a well-defined neighborhood with a range of low- and medium-density residential development with centralized neighborhood commercial goods and services.	The intent is to preserve building form and scale and maintain neighborhood connectivity and access to nearby commercial services. Buildings should orient toward the walk streets and preserve the street frontages from driveways and curb cuts to maintain the walkable qualities offered by this neighborhood's compact grid network and scale of building that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
Hermosa View Neighborhood	
This neighborhood is perched high on a hill, with a dramatic rise in slope moving north from Gould Avenue, creating a separate, distinct single-family residential enclave.	The intent is to preserve building form, orientation, and scale and to retain the unique streetscape with wide parkways and uninterrupted sidewalks. The low-density residential development pattern of this neighborhood should be maintained through the retention of larger lot sizes, building orientation toward the street, and wider setbacks that provide room for parkways and sidewalks.
Walk Street Neighborhood	
The Walk Street neighborhood currently provides a range of beachside residential development and neighborhood commercial services within a linear street network. The walk streets that provide beach access from Hermosa Avenue out to The Strand are a feature unique to this beachfront residential area.	The intent is to maintain the high quality pedestrian connections through the walk streets and retain the form, scale, and orientation of buildings in this area by designing buildings that take advantage of the opportunities for outdoor living.
Sand Section Neighborhood	
Today, the Sand Section neighborhood accommodates a range of residential development types, with neighborhood commercial services. The abundance of small, pedestrian-friendly blocks gives this area its charm and intimate sense of community.	The intent is to enhance multimodal connectivity and access while preserving the building form, scale, and orientation in this neighborhood. Through new multimodal connections, convenient access to community parks and the Greenbelt is provided and helps to maintain the compact urban format and highly connected street network of this neighborhood.

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Existing Visual Character	Future Vision
Valley Neighborhood	
The Valley neighborhood includes low-density, single-family homes between key community facilities. The average density for this area is roughly 10 dwelling units per acre, with parcel sizes ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 square feet. The Valley Greenbelt runs the length of this area, and Valley School and Valley Park are beneficial amenities to residents in this neighborhood.	The intent is to improve key pedestrian thoroughfares that enhance connectivity and access while preserving the single-family development pattern of this area. Buildings should retain larger setbacks and lower scale and massing, and new sidewalks should be added to contribute to a complete pedestrian network.
Herondo Neighborhood	
The Herondo neighborhood currently accommodates the city's higher-density and larger-format residential development. Multiple connections to nearby neighborhoods, community parks, and the Greenbelt are provided throughout the neighborhood.	The intent is to preserve the scale and building form of this neighborhood and maintain connections and access to nearby amenities. To ensure a diverse range of housing formats and building types, this area will be protected for larger-format apartment complexes and townhouses. Permeability through the large apartment blocks should continue to be improved, allowing residents to walk to the Greenbelt and the beach.
Greenbelt Neighborhood	
The Greenbelt neighborhood offers a range of small-scale residential development types and provides nearby access to commercial services along PCH. Single-family homes and duplexes currently coexist side by side.	The intent is to maintain the building scale and form of this neighborhood, while enhancing access to local neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Neighborhood commercial uses and amenities should be added to serve the needs of nearby residents.
Hermosa Hills Neighborhood	
The Hermosa Hills area transitions from high- and medium-density uses adjacent to PCH and lower-density single-family uses closer to Prospect Avenue. House forms are generally small in this area, with small to moderate front and side setbacks, and many streets are closed to through traffic next to PCH.	The intent is to improve key pedestrian thoroughfares to enhance connectivity and access while preserving the single-family development pattern of this area. Many streets in this neighborhood have been enhanced with new sidewalks to create a complete pedestrian network.
Eastside Neighborhood	
The Eastside neighborhood accommodates single-family residential development types and includes Hermosa View School and multiple neighborhood parks. In terms of street activity levels, this neighborhood is one of the quietest areas of the community.	The intent is to preserve building form, orientation, and scale and to retain the quiet nature and unique streetscape of this area. Many streets in this neighborhood have been enhanced with new sidewalks to create a complete pedestrian network.
Districts	
Downtown District	
The Downtown District is the heart of social and commercial activity in Hermosa Beach, serving as a centralized location for social gatherings and the recreational activities of residents and visitors. Pier Plaza serves as a popular venue for outdoor events and dining, connecting Downtown to the beach, the pier, and The Strand. The "pedestrian scramble" at the intersection of Hermosa Avenue and Pier Avenue is a unique pedestrian amenity that reinforces the pedestrian-oriented nature of Downtown.	The intent is to enhance the building form and orientation and to maintain the pedestrian realm along Pier Avenue while transforming the realm on Hermosa Avenue. The Downtown District will continue to offer an array of uses for residents and visitors, and any new buildings should pay close attention to and contribute to the high quality pedestrian environment provided throughout Downtown.

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Existing Visual Character	Future Vision
Civic Center District	
<p>At the physical center of town, the Civic Center area is the civic hub of services and activities for the community. The Civic Center provides efficient and accessible services to the community, but is in need of modernization, repairs, and additional space.</p>	<p>The intent is to transform the building orientation and design in the Civic Center, while enhancing the streetscape and circulation of all modes and users. The Civic Center facilities will be modernized to accommodate the range of functions and services provided by the City, and will be expanded to provide consolidated parking facilities in well-designed or underground parking structures to serve commercial uses both along Pacific Coast Highway and in Downtown. Streetscape enhancements will provide an important connection between the main thoroughfares of Pacific Coast Highway, Downtown, and the residential neighborhoods.</p>
Cypress District	
<p>The Cypress District currently includes a range of professional design, light manufacturing, and warehousing uses and is home to many of the locally renowned surfboard shapers. The City operations yard occupies a large portion of this area.</p>	<p>The intent is to transform both the building design and orientation as well as the public realm and streetscape within the Cypress District. This area is the creative, production, and light industrial center of Hermosa Beach where ideas, spaces, and creativity are easily shared. The Cypress District includes a variety of flexible use spaces, co-working offices, and creative or “maker” industries. The City Yard will be repurposed as an innovation center, with incubator space, job training programs, and related services to enhance the local economy.</p>
Corridors	
Aviation Corridor	
<p>The Aviation Boulevard Corridor serves as the primary entry point into Hermosa Beach. There are currently a variety of commercial retail, office, and auto-oriented uses along the corridor.</p>	<p>The intent is to transform the building design, form, and orientation while enhancing the streetscape and access for pedestrians and bicyclists in this area. The area will be transformed into a walkable, multi-use, active commercial corridor with services and facilities to serve the daily needs of residents east of PCH and providing artistic and cultural services to the entire community. Enhanced streetscapes with parkettes or outdoor space, paired with new commercial uses, should help to activate the street.</p>
PCH Corridor	
<p>The PCH corridor serves as the primary entry point into Hermosa Beach, as well as a pass-through corridor between Manhattan Beach and the Palos Verdes Peninsula. There should be a variety of commercial retail, office, residential, and auto-oriented uses along the corridor.</p>	<p>The intent is to enhance building design and form and to transform streetscapes and gateways to serve pedestrians and improve vehicular circulation. The PCH corridor will be a multi-use commercial corridor with key activity nodes and iconic architecture to activate the entryways. The corridor will connect the community with adjacent neighborhoods and cities. A regular rhythm of storefronts and streetscape enhancements should provide a welcoming atmosphere that is enticing to shoppers and pleasant to walk along. New gateway monuments and signage should be added to promote Hermosa Beach’s identity.</p>

Source: City of Hermosa Beach 2015

The potential for visual character to change significantly under PLAN Hermosa is largely a function of how changes to the built environment are regulated and shaped by future policies to protect the community's visual character. Protecting visual character does not prohibit changes to the visual environment. However, the changes that occur would not significantly degrade or eliminate key elements that contribute to visual character, and new elements introduced into the built environment are not incongruous to the point of degrading the local visual environment.

Visual Transparency

As described above in the Scenic Vistas/View Corridors subsection, visual access to the ocean is an important characteristic of much of Hermosa Beach, particularly in the portions of the city west of Loma Drive/Morningside Drive. This visual access is made available to the public through the visual transparency provided by many small and closely spaced east-west-trending streets offering views of the ocean. Current zoning in this portion of the city consists of R-1, R-2, R-2B, R-3, C-1, and C-2 designations. Within this range of residential and commercial zones, a minimum front yard setback of 5 feet is required (or 10 percent of the lot depth, in an R-1 zone).

PLAN Hermosa does not propose changing the current setback requirement in these districts. Residential building heights are limited to 25 to 30 feet, with commercial building heights limited to a maximum of 35 feet, provisions that would also remain unchanged under PLAN Hermosa. Many of the commercial height limits were established through voter initiatives and would require a citywide vote of the people to change the height limits. The continued regulation of land uses in accordance with these standards is a mechanism for preventing significant encroachment and for the protection of minor view corridors present along east-west coastal streets. Although future actions under PLAN Hermosa would include remodels and reuse development projects, these key elements of the City's current and future development standards in these zones would reduce impacts on the characteristic visual permeability that currently exists. This protection would be reinforced by proposed Policy 5.3 of the Parks + Open Space Element. Potential impacts of utilities and other public infrastructure projects are addressed in implementation action PARKS-11.

The established development standards that would be carried forward with PLAN Hermosa, along with proposed Policy 5.3 and implementation action PARKS-11, would avoid significant adverse impacts on visual transparency in the coastal area of the city.

Visual Character of Neighborhoods, Corridors, and Districts

As outlined above, PLAN Hermosa's intent is to maintain and enhance the city's visual character through appropriate building massing, scale, and size. Adoption and implementation of PLAN Hermosa would not substantially alter any of the residential neighborhoods or areas of the city, but may alter certain areas near Downtown and The Strand, through new development and streetscape. PLAN Hermosa policies are meant to preserve the city's character, including those resources that are designated landmarks or architecturally distinctive. For example, Goal 5 is intended to specifically retain the city's character as a small beach town. Further, Land Use + Design Element Policy 1.6 would require the City to consider new development's compatibility with the existing scale and context, and Parks + Open Space Element Policy 5.2 requires the preservation of visual character in all development. None of the provisions of PLAN Hermosa would alter current land use patterns, height restrictions, or compatibility and buffering requirements currently established in the Zoning Ordinance (e.g., Sections 17.22.130, 17.26.050, and 17.28.030). PLAN Hermosa policies and implementation actions identified in this section implement and expand current General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan policy provisions for the protection of the city's visual character identified above in subsection 4.1.3, Regulatory Setting.

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Future land uses consistent with PLAN Hermosa would only allow new development to occur within the city in a manner that enhances and preserves Hermosa Beach's existing visual character. While changes to and demolition of certain buildings may have an impact on the cultural significance of a resource, it does not necessarily mean that these alterations would have an impact as an aesthetic resource. Provided that new structures are consistent with the visual character of the surrounding area based on the PLAN Hermosa policies and descriptions of the character area, it is possible for future development projects to impact the significance of a cultural resource but have a less than significant impact to aesthetic resources.

Additionally, future development projects would be evaluated for form, line, and massing in relation to the neighborhood or adjacent structures or background as part of the City's design review process and for compliance with the Municipal Code. Compliance with Municipal Code Section 17.20.020, for instance, would ensure that the proposed structure's style and pitch of the roof, mass and bulk, and architectural appearance (e.g., type, style, and shape of the structure and the proposed exterior materials) match the neighborhood's existing character. In addition, Municipal Code Section 17.53.020(c) encourages proposed developments near historic structures to incorporate complementary contemporary design and construction.

Land Use + Design Element Policies 1.6, 1.8, and 2.7 would also require new developments to be compatible with surrounding development, as well as enhance existing character and be sensitive to context. Similarly, Land Use + Design Element Policy 10.6 requires attention to preservation of designated landmarks, potentially historic resources, and older buildings. Implementation action LAND USE-3 directs the City to develop building design guidelines to illustrate and articulate the appropriate building form, scale, and massing for each established character area in accordance with those key features and characteristics to ensure that the overall visual character of the neighborhoods, centers, and districts is preserved. This action would apply to individual neighborhoods and character areas as identified in **Figure 4.1-1** and in **Table 4.1-1**, as it would apply citywide. The proposed implementation action establishes the appropriate mechanism for developing design guidelines that would prevent significant degradation of the built environment's visual character. As such, implementation of PLAN Hermosa policies and programs would reduce the impacts associated with visual character and visual sensitivity to a less than significant level because the City would implement design review standards that require attention to and consistency with neighboring structures in form, line, massing, and color and existing visual character and identity. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

IMPACT 4.1-4 *Would PLAN Hermosa Create New Shade or Shadow in a Manner That Substantially Affects Outdoor Recreation Facilities or Other Public Gathering Areas?* PLAN Hermosa would allow development or reuse projects in a manner where new sources of shade or shadow may reach outdoor recreation facilities or public gathering areas. However, the voter-approved height limits effectively restrict the number of areas in which shade or shadow may have an adverse effect but do not eliminate all potential sources. This impact would be **less than significant**.

The length and direction of shadows cast from buildings and other structures are a function of building height and sun angle. Sun angle is, in turn, a function of latitude, season, and time of day. In Hermosa Beach, because of its latitude in the northern hemisphere, the sun casts shadows only on the north side of structures. Shadows move clockwise during the day, beginning in a northwesterly direction (as the sun rises in the southeast) and rotating to a

northeasterly direction (as the sun sets in the southwest). Shadow length changes dramatically during the day, with its greatest lengths occurring just after dawn and just before dusk, with a minimum at noon when the sun is nearly directly overhead. In the winter months, shadows are longer, as the sun shifts south relative to the earth, culminating in the longest shadows on the winter solstice (December 21). The summer solstice (June 21) is the time of year when the sun's shadow is shortest. In between the two solstices, the sun angle and its shadows range between the two extremes of the winter and summer solstices. Examples of shadow lengths for Hermosa Beach's latitude and for a 35-foot-tall structure are presented in **Table 4.1-2 (Shadow Lengths in Hermosa Beach)**.

**TABLE 4.1-2
SHADOW LENGTHS IN HERMOSA BEACH**

Shadow Lengths for 35-Foot Structure (in feet)			
Time of Year	10 AM	Noon	2 PM
March 20 (Spring Equinox)	49	26	26
June 21 (Summer Solstice)	29	10	11
September 22 (Autumn Equinox)	44	25	27
December 21 (Winter Solstice)	69	55	74

Source: *suncalc.org 2016*

Under current zoning, the maximum allowed building height in Hermosa Beach is 35 feet. The shadow lengths in **Table 4.1-2** therefore present seasonal and diurnal lengths for a worst-case condition. The distances in the table suggest that a building of 35-foot height would cast a shadow that would extend beyond the property limits of its parcel, given the relatively small size of most parcels in Hermosa Beach. In residential areas where building setbacks are usually 5 feet or less, a 35-foot building would likely cast a shadow onto one or more adjacent properties.

For purposes of this EIR, the City considers shadow impacts to be significant and adverse if they intrude extensively into a public open space, such as a park, plaza, greenbelt, or walk street, for a prolonged period of time. Other shadow effects, such as shadows that extend onto private properties, may raise important planning or design considerations, but they do not relate to the public environment. The City's Zoning Ordinance addresses potential shadow effects on private properties for proposed structures above 30 feet in height in areas where the normally allowed building height is 30 feet or less but adjacent structures that pre-date current zoning exceed the current limit.

For a significant shadow impact to occur, a new structure would have to be sited at a location that is adjacent to a public open space area. The adjacent open space would have to be north of the proposed structure and the structure would have to be near enough to impact the open space area significantly during the greater part of the sunlit day, that is, between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM. The representative shadow lengths shown in **Table 4.1-2** suggest that the adjacent open space would have to be within at least 40 feet of the proposed structure for a significant shadow encroachment to occur. This assumes that the proposed structure is the maximum allowed building height of 35 feet. There are very few locations in the city where these conditions might occur.

One such area is the neighborhood just south of Clark Field. Under current conditions, this neighborhood is occupied by two- and three-story residential buildings, which likely cast a shadow during the early morning and late afternoon hours onto some portion of the field, although the effect would extend to cover less than 20 percent of the field area (Clark Field is

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approximately 450 feet in length) within the hours of peak park sunlight or of peak park use. PLAN Hermosa does not propose any changes to the current height limits. Implementation action LAND USE-3 indicates that the City would develop design guidelines that would include provisions that ensure avoidance of significant shadow impacts from new structures onto public recreational areas, parks or other public gathering places during the hours of 10 AM to 2 PM.

Any future project that would be developed under PLAN Hermosa would be required to comply with this regulation. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

IMPACT 4.1-5 *Would PLAN Hermosa Create New Sources of Light or Glare? PLAN Hermosa would guide development and reuse projects in a manner that could create new sources of glare, skyglow, and spillover lighting. However, PLAN Hermosa also includes specific policies and implementation actions that minimize adverse effects related to new sources of light and glare. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.*

The city is primarily built out, with existing sources of daytime glare and nighttime light. Development and other future actions under PLAN Hermosa have the potential to introduce new sources of daytime glare and increase nighttime lighting and illumination levels through intensification of development.

Lighting impacts can be identified according to three categories:

- Glare – Intense light that shines directly or is reflected from a surface into a person’s eyes.
- “Skyglow”/Nighttime Illumination – Artificial lighting from urbanized sources in sufficient quantity to cause lighting of the nighttime sky and reduction of visibility of stars and other astronomical features.
- “Spillover” Lighting – Artificial lighting that spills over onto adjacent properties, which could interrupt sleeping patterns or cause other nuisances to neighboring residents.

The main source of introduced daytime glare is sunlight reflected from structures with reflective surfaces such as windows or glass and metal used as building materials. The amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight, which can be more acute at sunrise and sunset because the angle of the sun is lower at these times. Glare impacts are best avoided through careful selection of building materials and consideration of the site-specific context in which new structures or remodels are proposed, relative to sun angles and surrounding uses. The likelihood of significant glare impacting public spaces (such as the plaza of lower Pier Avenue) as a result of PLAN Hermosa and its policies and actions is low and can be addressed through provisions of the design guidelines proposed under implementation action LAND USE-3.

Potential sources of new and increased nighttime lighting and illumination include, but are not limited to, lighting associated with new development or remodels (of any land use type), lights associated with vehicular travel (e.g., car headlights), street lighting, parking lot lights, and security-related lighting. Increased nighttime lighting and illumination can result in adverse effects in the form of spillover onto adjacent properties and nighttime skyglow impacts. Subsequent development would be subject to existing City development and design standards set forth in the City’s Municipal Code. Section 17.26.050 of the current Municipal Code requires any lighting provided for commercial outdoor dining uses, unless exempted by a Conditional Use Permit, to be extinguished no later than 11:00 PM in the C-3 zone and by 10:00 PM in zones that allow similar uses. It also requires that the lighting be high efficiency, the minimum intensity

necessary, fully shielded (full cutoff) and downcast (emitting no light above the horizontal plane of the fixture), not create glare or spill beyond the property lines, and the lamp bulb not be directly visible from within any residential unit. PLAN Hermosa does not propose to alter this section of the code. These requirements would continue to apply to all C-3 uses.

PLAN Hermosa Parks + Open Space Element Policy 5.7 would require that new buildings preserve nighttime views and minimize light levels along the shoreline. In addition, implementation action PARKS-13 would require that new developments meet exterior lighting standards.

Implementation of PLAN Hermosa policies and programs and compliance with Municipal Code Section 17.26.050 would reduce potential impacts of light or glare in the planning area by ensuring that new developments' designs, including outdoor lighting features and material reflectivity, do not result in additional sources of light and glare. These provisions stipulate that exterior lighting be fully shielded (full cutoff) and downcast (emitting no light above the horizontal plane of the fixture), and not create glare or spill beyond the property lines, and the lamp bulb is not to be directly visible from within any residential unit. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetics and visual resources impacts includes Hermosa Beach and the communities of the South Bay subregion.

IMPACT 4.1-6 *Would PLAN Hermosa Contribute to Cumulative Adverse Effects Related to Visual Resources? Of the categories of potential visual impacts addressed, only the impact of artificial lighting to the night sky (skyglow impact) is potentially cumulative in nature. All other impacts (to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, shade and shadow effects, and lighting impacts of glare and spillover) are localized and confined within the city limits of Hermosa Beach. This is a **less than cumulatively considerable** impact.*

Because this EIR addresses citywide impacts, cumulative effects of multiple projects that might occur within the city during the lifetime of PLAN Hermosa are addressed as a part of this assessment. The discussion of potential skyglow impacts under Impact 4.1-5 acknowledges the cumulative nature of this impact and addresses the project's potential contribution to cumulative skyglow effects. Therefore, this impact would be **less than cumulatively considerable**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

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4.1.5 REFERENCES

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