

4.1 Land Use and Aesthetics

Introduction

This section of the EIR addresses existing land uses in unincorporated Plumas County and the impacts of the proposed project to on-site and surrounding land uses. The section also describes the visual setting of the County and evaluates the potential for changes in the visual character with implementation of the proposed project. The regulatory setting provides a description of applicable local, State, and Federal regulatory policies. A description of the potential impacts of the proposed project is also provided and includes the identification of feasible mitigation (General Plan policies) designed to avoid or lessen the impacts.

Summary of NOP Comments

No specific comments related to land use or aesthetic issues were received as part of the public and agency comments received during the NOP scoping period.

Summary of Impact Conclusions

A summary of the land use and aesthetic impacts described in this section is provided below.

**TABLE 4.1-1
SUMMARY OF LAND USE AND AESTHETIC IMPACTS**

Impact Number	Impact Topic	Impact Conclusion	Impact After Mitigation
Impact 4.1-1	Physical Division of an Established Community	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant
Impact 4.1-2	Conflicts with Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant
Impact 4.1-3	Scenic Vistas	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant
Impact 4.1-4	Scenic Resources	Less Than Significant	Less Than Significant
Impact 4.1-5	Visual Character or Quality	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable
Impact 4.1-6	Light or Glare	Potentially Significant	Significant and Unavoidable

Key Terms

According to the Federal Highway Administration, a “viewshed” is defined as an area of the landscape that is visible from a particular location (e.g., a scenic overlook, view point, etc.) or series of points (e.g., a road or trail). To identify the importance of views of a resource, a viewshed may be broken into distance zones of foreground, middleground, and background. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant it is and the greater its importance to the viewer. Although distance zones in viewsheds may vary between different geographic regions or types of terrain, a commonly used set of criteria identifies the foreground zone as 0.25 to 0.5 miles from the viewer; the middleground zone as 3 to 5 miles from the viewer; and the background zone extend infinitely. These distance zones are further defined below.

- **Foreground Zone:** the observer is a direct participant, and the views include objects at close range that may tend to dominate the view. This zone is an important linkage because it sets a tone for the quality of a visual resource.
- **Middleground Zone:** the observer focuses on the center of the viewshed. Views tend to include objects that are the center of attention if they are sufficiently large or visually different from adjacent visual features. Details will not be as sharp as the foreground view, but land features will still be distinguishable.
- **Background Zone:** the observer can see less detail and distinction in landform and surface features. The emphasis of background views is an outline or edge. Silhouettes and ridges of one landmass against another are the conspicuous visual parts of the background, with skyline serving as the strongest line. Objects in the background eventually fade to obscurity and increasing distance.

Regulatory Setting

Federal and State Regulations

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

The jurisdiction of Caltrans includes right-of-ways of state and interstate routes within California. Any work within the right-of-way of a federal or state transportation corridor is subject to Caltrans' regulations governing allowable actions and modifications to the right-of-way. Caltrans issues permits to encroach on land within their jurisdiction to ensure encroachment is compatible with the primary uses of the State Highway System, to ensure safety, and to protect the State's investment in the highway facility. The encroachment permit requirement applies to persons, corporations, cities, counties, utilities, and other government agencies.

California Department of Transportation - State Scenic Highways Program

The California Scenic Highways Program was created by the California Scenic Highway Law in 1963 with the purpose of preserving and protecting scenic highway corridors from any change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. State Scenic Highways are those highways that are either officially designated by Caltrans or are eligible for designation. The statewide system of scenic highways is part of the Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official State Designation as Scenic Highways. Scenic highway nominations are evaluated using the following criteria:

The proposed scenic highway is principally within an unspoiled native habitat and showcases the unique aspects of the landscape, agriculture, or man-made water features;

- Existing visual intrusions do not significantly impact the scenic corridor;
- Strong local support for the proposed scenic highway designation is demonstrated; and
- The length of the proposed scenic highway is not short or segmented.

A highway's status changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a Scenic Corridor Protection Program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as an official State Scenic Highway. Once a scenic highway is designated, the responsibility lies with the local jurisdiction to regulate development within the scenic highway corridor. This applies only to areas where the local agency has land use jurisdiction.

Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans

The U.S. and California Endangered Species Acts prohibit unauthorized take of species listed as endangered or threatened. The definition of "take" includes deliberate harm, such as trapping or shooting, but also unintentional harm that may occur incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, such as residential or commercial development. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), under section 10(a) (2) (A) of the Endangered Species Act, is a planning document that is a mandatory component of an Incidental Take Permit application. Both the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) contain requirements and restrictions for incidental take, but only the federal ESA specifically requires an HCP. An approved HCP allows the property owner to harm a listed species or its habitat in order to carry out an approved land use, providing that other habitat is protected to benefit the listed species. Currently, there are no proposed or approved HCPs in Plumas County and this issue is not discussed further in this section.

In 1991, California's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (NCCPA) was enacted to implement broad-based planning that balances appropriate development and growth with conservation of wildlife and habitat (California Fish and Game Code, Section 2800 et seq.). Pursuant to the NCCPA, local, state, and federal agencies are encouraged to prepare Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) to provide comprehensive management and conservation of multiple species and their habitats under a single plan, rather than through preparation of numerous individual plans on a project-by-project basis. The primary objective of the NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem scale while accommodating compatible land use. At the present time there are no proposed or approved NCCPs in Plumas County and this issue is not discussed further in this section.

United States Forest Service (USFS)

The USFS prepared the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) in 1988 to guide management and land use planning decisions in the Plumas National Forest. The FLRMP provides a designation for areas based on established priorities for various resources, including wilderness, recreation, wildlife, timber, and visual resources. The FLRMP also establishes visual quality objectives for decisions that are made specific to USFS lands within the County.

Local Regulations

Plumas County Local Agency Formation Commission

The Plumas County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is a state-mandated local agency responsible for: the oversight of boundary changes to cities and special districts; the formation of new agencies, including incorporation of new cities; and the consolidation of existing agencies. The broad goals of the agency are to ensure the orderly formation of local government agencies, to preserve agricultural and open space lands, and to discourage urban sprawl.

Plumas County Airport Land Use Commission

The Plumas County Airport Land Use Commission Plan (ALUCP) provides procedures and criteria established in accordance with the California State Aeronautics Act applicable to airport land use compatibility planning in the vicinity of public-use airports, such as Rodgers Field in Chester, Nervino Airport in Beckwourth, and Gasner Field in Quincy. The Plumas County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and affected local agencies implement the policies of the ALUCP. New or amended land uses within a defined Airport Influence Area are subject to ALUC review for consistency with the policies of the ALUCP, or the County may make certain findings and overrule the ALUC's determinations. The ALUCPs for the three airfields identified above were last updated in 2008.

The ALUCP includes an Airport Land Use Compatibility list that indicates compatible land uses in proximity to airports. This listing serves as a guide to the ALUC when determining if a particular type of proposed use will be compatible with the ALUCP. The Compatibility list designates the airport Planning Area into four separate zones.

Plumas County Transportation Commission

The Plumas County Transportation Commission's (PCTC's) primary responsibility is the development of federal and state transportation plans and programs that secure transportation funding for the region's highways, transit, streets and roads, pedestrian, and other transportation system improvements. PCTC is also the administrative and policymaking agency for the region's public transit service, Plumas County Transit.

County of Plumas Zoning Ordinance

The Plumas County Zoning Ordinance is the primary way that the County administers the General Plan. The General Plan identifies general land use designations, while the Zoning Ordinance identifies specific uses and development standards within these land use designations. Future development is required to comply with the Zoning Ordinance and would therefore be consistent with the 2035 Plumas County General Plan Update.

Environmental Setting

Existing Land Uses and Planning Areas

Plumas County contains a broad array of land uses, with the largest land use consisting of agricultural and timber resource lands. Approximately 76 percent of the land in Plumas County is National Forest land owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Rural and semi-rural development is scattered throughout the County, with a majority of growth concentrated within one of several designated Planning Areas. The County includes one incorporated area, the City of Portola.

Existing General Plan

Plumas County's most recent General Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1984. The existing 1984 General Plan has been amended numerous times over the past 28 years, with development governed in part by specific zoning designations and "Opportunity Areas". Opportunity Areas are categorized as prime, moderate, or limited (with five subcategories within the moderate classification) based on existing availability or the feasibility of providing public services. All Opportunity Areas classified as prime have services; however, the range of services (water, municipal sewer, fire protection, power and telephone) varies by location. For the moderate and limited Opportunity Areas, the key limiting service is typically roadway access. For example, limited Opportunity Areas usually have little or no access.

The Land Use Element of the 2035 General Plan establishes policies to designate the general distribution and intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public facilities, and open space uses of the land in the county. A key aspect of the Land Use Element is to create a general framework that encourages growth within or near developed/developing areas in order to reduce impacts to agricultural production, natural resources, or public services. These areas include the seven Planning Areas (see Figures 3-2 through 3-8 in Chapter 3 of this DEIR) more fully described below.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the 2035 General Plan guides the county in the long-term conservation and preservation of open space lands and natural resources while protecting private property rights. The County's intent is not to alter existing regional, State or Federal laws or regulations, but rather to enable greater cooperation among public agencies and the public to share management responsibilities in accomplishing a shared goal of conserving and protecting the resources of the region. Among the more prominent features within Plumas County are the Sierra Valley, the Lake Almanor Basin, and the Upper Feather River watershed, with the entire County falling within the Upper Feather River Watershed.

Visual Character of the Region

Plumas County's is a predominately rural county, with a few smaller urbanized areas. Consequently, the County's visual character and aesthetic resources are directly linked to its geography and the natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region. The County is located within the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range and includes the Upper Feather River

Watershed along with several unique valley areas. The study area can be generally broken down into the following landscape components:

- Valleys
- Ridgelines
- Vegetation
- Watercourses
- Travel Routes, and
- Historic Residential Neighborhoods.

Valleys and Meadows

The Sierra Valley, Mohawk Valley, American Valley, Indian Valley, and Meadow Valley areas support the majority of the County's agricultural resources (predominately cattle production) along with many of the larger communities. Although agricultural enterprises are a relatively small industry in Plumas County in terms of jobs or industry income, it plays a significant role in the history of the County as well as in the current landscape. Agriculture provides not only local food production, but also open space and scenic vistas which are an intrinsic part of the County's identity. Cattle grazing and production activities are typically considered more passive forms of agriculture versus the more highly manipulated landscapes brought on by more intensive forms of agriculture (irrigated row crops, irrigated pasture, orchards, and vineyards).

Communities within the valleys include Quincy, Greenville, Taylorsville, Chester, and Graeagle. Foreground, middleground, and background views of agriculture fields/pastures and the surrounding forest and mountain landscapes comprise the typical viewsheds along travel corridors and other viewing areas. Based upon the viewer's location within the landscape, views may be more expansive when unobstructed or more limited by things such as urban development.

Examples of these scenic valleys and meadow areas include the following:

- Rocky Point.
- Charles Valley.
- Beckwourth Peak.
- Adams Neck.
- Little Last Chance Creek Canyon.
- Little Last Chance.
- Ramelli.
- Indian Creek Canyon.
- Indian Valley.
- Humbug Valley.
- Keefer Ranch Meadows.
- Feather River Canyon.
- Thompson Valley.
- American Valley.
- Butterfly Valley.
- Spring Garden.
- Johnsville.
- Meadow Valley-Spanish Ranch.

- Feather River Meadows.
- Warner Valley.
- Soldier Meadows.
- Long Valley.
- Mohawk Valley.
- South Mohawk Valley.

Ridgelines

Ridgelines are one of the most prominent features of the landscape, and they offer the greatest opportunity for panoramic vistas, sometimes with a 360-degree viewshed that extend far into the background. Views from ridgelines vary based on available access to the ridgelines and public access is often limited to that provided by travel on public roadways and through public use areas within the Plumas National Forest. Views of ridgelines vary based on viewers' position in the landscape and can range from full middleground and background views of multiple ridges to views that are limited to the middleground by ridgelines that are of a higher elevation and vegetation.

Development on these prominently visible locations, even small structures, can have a significant impact as a structure's full mass may easily be visible from numerous points in the surrounding terrain that have views towards the ridgelines.

Vegetation

The natural vegetation that occupies much of the county is an essential component of the visual landscape and primarily consists of forest lands. The pattern of natural vegetation is a direct response to natural conditions of topography, drainage patterns, soil characteristics, slope, exposure, elevation, and aspect and developed or altered landscapes. Boundaries between natural and developed or manipulated landscapes are often very distinct, creating greatly differing visual experiences that can be located within close proximity to one another. The county, as a whole, has retained large portions of its natural vegetation within the ranges and hills, yet has seen almost complete alteration of natural vegetation to agriculture activities (primarily cattle grazing and production) in the valleys.

Watercourses

Natural drainage patterns and watercourses are integral to the visual environment as they shape the landscape, add visual interest, and influence the types and abundance of vegetation in nearby areas. In the project area, the primary watercourse is the Feather River and the larger Feather River Watershed. More detail on the Feather River Watershed is provided in Section 4.6, "Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage" of this EIR. Some of the natural drainage patterns and watercourse systems in the project area have been subject to various degrees of manipulation to accommodate human influence upon the landscape. For example, a large portion of the Feather River has been heavily manipulated for a variety of uses including both hydroelectric power generation (i.e., "Stairway of Power") and downstream water supply (State Water Project facilities).

Examples of these scenic watercourses and lakes include the following:

- Grizzly Creek.
- Johnson Fields-North Causeway.
- Frenchman Lake
- Lake Almanor.
- Middle Fort of the Feather River.

Travel Routes

Travel routes provide the broadest range and greatest visual access to the various aesthetic resources within the county. Both local and state roadways often travel through the region at changing elevations and serve to take motorists through the previously mentioned visual landscapes that comprise the County. There are many roadways that provide visual access and a number of scenic roadways and highways that exemplify such access.

Scenic Roadways and Highways

According to the current California Scenic Highway Mapping System (provided by the California Department of Transportation), there are no officially designed state scenic roadways within Plumas County. However, portions of SR 70, 89, and 36 are considered eligible for listing as a state scenic highway.

In addition to County Roads 101, 103, 109, 111, 112, 126, 206, 207, 218, and 214, the following local roadway segments are considered scenic roadways under the existing General Plan.

- Spanish Ranch Road – from Bucks Lake Road to Spanish Ranch Butte County Road.
- Graeagle-Johnsville Road – from Mohawk Highway 40 to JV02 Church Street, Johnsville.
- Mohawk Highway 40 – from Graeagle Johnsville Road to State Road 70.
- Sloat Road – from State Road 70 to Sloat Transfer Station Road.
- Quincy LaPorte Road – from State Road 70 to the Plumas National Forest.
- Golden Lake Forest Highway – from State Road 89 to Sierra County.
- Little Bear Road – from State Road 89 to State Road 70.
- Storrie Road – from Butte County to roadway terminus.
- Humbug Road – from Butte County to Humbug Creek Road.
- Humboldt Road – from State Road 89 to Butte County
- Almanor Drive West – from State Road 89 to Prattville
- Old Red Bluff Road – from Warner Valley Road to Tehama County.
- Chester Warner Valley Road – from the Old Red Bluff Road to roadway terminus.
- Rocky Point Campground Road – from State Road 89 to roadway terminus.

Historic Residential Neighborhoods

As described in Chapter 3 “Project Description” of this DEIR, many of the communities within Plumas County were established within the mid 1800s and are associated with a variety of historic events in California (i.e., mining, timber activities, etc.). Many of the communities have developed their historic downtown commercial and residential cores around local and regional travel corridors which provide roadway travelers with unique views of these urban landscapes within the County.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors subject to the potential effects of visual changes resulting from future development anticipated under the proposed project consist of travelers along local roadways and regional highways; and, permanent residents in the various unincorporated community plan areas. Given the programmatic nature of this analysis, specific locations of potential receptors have not been identified at this time.

Light and Glare Sources

There are primarily two sources of light intrusion:

1. light emanating from structural interiors and passing through windows; and
2. light from exterior sources, such as street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, event lighting in resort areas, traffic headlights, and landscape lighting.

Land uses such as residences, hospitals, and hotels are considered light sensitive, as they are typically occupied by persons who have expectations for privacy during evening hours and are subject to disturbance by bright light sources. At night, lights from cities and communities illuminate the developed areas, providing contrast with the generally uninterrupted darkness of the surrounding agricultural lands and mountains. The preservation of views of the night sky has been identified as valuable to the County.

Glare results mainly from sunlight reflection off flat building surfaces with glass and reflective metal surfaces typically contributing to the highest degree of reflectivity. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources, such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is typically related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Glare-sensitive uses generally include residences and transportation corridors.

Existing sources of light and glare within the County are primarily focused in the various community areas located within Planning Areas. It is anticipated that most new sources of light and glare (resulting from build-out of the General Plan) will occur within and around these urbanized areas. There are limited to zero sources of light and glare outside of the Planning Areas.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Methodology

The land use analysis assesses potential conflicts that could arise from proposed land use policies and designations associated with the implementation of the proposed project. The thresholds of significance listed below are used to determine whether the proposed project would result in significant environmental impacts.

Aesthetics and visual resources are subjective by nature. Consequently, the level of a project's visual impact is difficult to quantify. In addition, it is difficult to estimate the impact development would have on countywide aesthetic resources, since some individual projects can enhance the aesthetic quality of an area. Therefore, this analysis was conducted qualitatively, assessing potential growth implications of the proposed project. The proposed General Plan policies are also evaluated to determine the extent to which they would protect existing scenic landscapes or resources and minimize the degradation of the County's visual quality.

Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for this analysis were developed from criteria presented in Appendix G, "Environmental Checklist Form", of the CEQA Guidelines and based on the professional judgment of the County of Plumas and its consultants. The proposed project would result in a significant impact if it would:

- Physically divide an established community;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project area (including but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, forest plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Impact 4.1-1: Physical Division of an Established Community

LTS	The proposed project could divide the physical arrangement of an established community.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Less than Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>None</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Less than Significant</i>

Implementation of the proposed project to the 2035 planning horizon would result in changes to land use designations in several areas of the County, predominately with the designated Planning Areas. Examples of such intensification include new residential development and new infrastructure that could create physical barriers between existing community elements, such as residential areas and parks. However, the proposed project has been developed with the primary goal of insuring that future growth will occur in a concise, orderly pattern consistent with the economic, social, and environmental needs of the specific communities that can accommodate future planned population growth. This concept of orderly growth will help future land use planning decisions balance the development of needed infrastructure within existing and proposed community areas so that community continuity is maintained within these areas. The proposed project has been developed with the primary goal of insuring that future growth will occur in an orderly manner, which will help to prevent urban sprawl and ensure community-wide compatibility.

Policies and implementation programs included as part of the proposed project (see **Table 4.1-2**, below) that would minimize this impact are summarized below by general plan element. For example, the Land Use, Economics, and Circulation Elements provide guidance on the future development of community areas and roadways to ensure the orderly placement of compatible land uses near existing similar land uses (see policies LU-1.1.1, LU-1.2.2, E-5.1.4) while promoting a variety of compact growth land use concepts (see policies CIR-4.2.1 and PHS-6.8.2 “Walkable Communities” from the Public Health and Safety Element). Other policies from the Circulation Element promote the development of cohesive land uses by encouraging a balanced transportation system that also facilitates the use of alternative modes of transportation (see policies CIR-4.2.2 and CIR-4.4.2) that do not physically divide neighborhoods. The Land Use Element also includes a specific set of policies to encourage compatible development with the neighboring City of Portola (see policy LU-1.3.1 “Working with the City of Portola” and LU-1.3.2 “County and City of Portola’s General Plan Consistency”).

Future development can also physically divide existing neighborhoods through the development of new land uses in a manner that contributes to the abandonment or neglect of older neighborhoods (including central or downtown areas). The Land Use, Economics, and Conservation/Open Space Elements contain a variety of policies that encourage the preservation of existing historic areas and older neighborhoods (see Policies LU-1.1.2, LU-1.3.3, E-5.6.11, COS-7.5.1, COS-7.5.10, and COS-7.6.4). Policy LU-1.3.3 specifically addresses this issue with future development within the City of Portola’s Sphere of Influence. Additionally, Policy AG/FOR 8.2.8 encourages the County to maintain, rehabilitate, and restore historic era ranches and farms.

A variety of other policies from the Land Use, Economics, Noise, and Conservation/Open Space Elements promote community cohesiveness by encouraging the placement of compatible land uses (see Policies LU-1.2.2, E-5.1.4, N- 3.1.3, COS-7.1.2, COS-7.1.3, and COS-7.2.14) and the development of environmentally sensitive land uses.

**TABLE 4.1-2
MITIGATING POLICIES**

Land Use(LU), Economics(E), Conservation/Open Space (COS), Circulation(CIR), Noise (N), Public Health/Safety (PHS), Agriculture and Forestry (AG/FOR) Elements			
Policies designed to minimize any potential impact of dividing the physical arrangement of an established community by ensuring that growth occurs in an organized manner, including the following:			
LU-1.1.1	Future Development	CIR-4.2.1	Complete Street Design
LU-1.1.4	Land Divisions	CIR-4.2.2	Support of Multimodal Projects
LU-1.3.1	Working with the City of Portola	CIR-4.4.2	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in New Development
LU-1.5.2	Cost Effective Land Use Pattern		
E-5.9.5	Incentives for Use of Existing Infrastructure	CIR-4.6.1	Minimizing of Environmental Impacts
CIR-4.1.5	Developer Coordination with Roadway Plans	PHS-6.8.2	Walkable Communities
Policies designed to minimize this impact through the protection of traditional neighborhoods and historic resources include the following:			
LU-1.1.2	Infill Development	COS-7.5.1	Cultural and Historic Resource Preservation
LU-1.3.3	Development and Design in City of Portola's Sphere of Influence	COS-7.5.10	Community Character
E-5.6.11	Historic Downtown Area Revitalization	COS-7.6.4	Community Design
		AG/FOR-8.2.8	Historic Ranches and Farms
Policies designed to promote compatible land use development and patterns that minimize impacts to surrounding land uses (including open space uses) include the following:			
LU-1.2.2	Land Use Compatibility	N- 3.1.3	Noise / Land Use Compatibility Standards
LU-1.3.2	County and City of Portola's General Plan Consistency	COS-7.1.2	Conservation and Open Space Program
		COS-7.1.3	Collaborative Open Space Land Use Management
E-5.1.4	Discouragement of Non-Compatible Land Uses	COS-7.2.14	Natural Landscapes in Site Design

Significance Determination

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the development of new urban uses and infrastructure within the various Planning Areas of the County. Additional development would occur on individual lots, but on a more limited basis outside the various Planning Areas. Implementation of the policies described above would ensure that potential division of established communities is avoided or minimized through land use guidelines that emphasize orderly development and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Additionally, there are no planned large-scale infrastructure projects included under the proposed project that would divide established communities. While some future utility or roadway improvements could result in some changes to existing infrastructure systems, most are smaller localized projects and are not expected to result in large scale roadway widening or interchange improvements. Because these are limited to existing roads, they will not physically divide any communities to a substantially greater extent than they are already divided by the road. Policy CIR-4.4.3 “Inclusion of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access in New Transportation Projects” will ensure that

bicycle and pedestrian access is incorporated into future transportation projects consistent with all public safety requirements.

This impact is considered *less than significant*. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Significance Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant community division impacts and therefore associated impacts would be *less than significant*.

Impact 4.1-2: Conflicts with Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations

LTS	The proposed project could conflict with other applicable adopted land use plans.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Less than Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>None</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Less than Significant</i>

Land use in the County of Plumas is currently controlled by the existing General Plan. In addition, there are other local and regional plans which may affect the County:

- City of Portola General Plan.
- Airport Land Use Commission Plan (ALUCP).
- Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).
- Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP).
- Upper Feather River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

A General Plan is by definition a comprehensive long-range planning document that serves as the roadmap for future growth within a particular jurisdiction. General Plans establish land use patterns for urban and rural development, agriculture, resource preservation, and public uses. The proposed project has been drafted to be consistent with a variety of local and regional plans specific to the County.

To address compatibility issues with the City of Portola, the Land Use Element includes a specific goal with policies addressing coordination issues with the City of Portola (see **Table 4.1-3**, below). For example, Policy LU-1.3.1 requires the County to coordinate future planning efforts with the City. Policy LU-1.3.2 requires the County to work with the City to address land use consistency issues with the City’s sphere of influence. Policy LU-1.3.3 requires discretionary projects within the City’s sphere of influence to coordinate design, development standards, and funding programs.

Regarding airport land use compatibility, the issue of land use compatibility is comprehensively addressed across the Noise, Circulation, and Public Health and Safety Elements (see Table 4.1-3).

Policy PHS-6.6.1 requires the County to review all development proposals near county airports to ensure consistency with the current ALUCP’s height, noise, and safety policies. As appropriate, all development proposals shall be referred to the ALUC for their review and recommendation. Similarly, Policy CIR-4.5.1 requires the County to preserve the viability of local airports through the control of inappropriate land uses within the airport zones of influence. Finally, Policy 6.6.2 requires the County to ensure that development within the airport approach and departure zones are in compliance with FAA regulations.

Additional policies in the Conservation and Open Space, Water Resources, and Public Health and Safety Elements (Table 4.1-3, below) require the County to coordinate with the policies and resource management plans of a variety of State and Federal Agencies with management responsibilities for several of the resources within the County. These include the United States Forest Service (see Policy E-5.1.9), the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Water Resources Division of Flood Management (see Policy PHS-6.4.1). Policy COS-7.9.1 requires the County to cooperate with air quality management agencies to achieve improved air quality conditions both locally and regionally. Additionally, policies CIR-4.6.4 and COS-7.10.3 require the County to support statewide climate change objectives.

**TABLE 4.1-3
MITIGATING POLICIES**

Land Use(LU), Economics(E), Circulation(CIR), Conservation/Open Space (COS), Noise (N), Public Health/Safety (PHS), Water Resources (W) Elements			
Policies designed to promote compatible land use development and patterns that minimize impacts to surrounding land uses (including open space uses) include the following:			
LU-1.2.2	Land Use Compatibility	N- 3.1.3	Noise / Land Use Compatibility Standards
LU-1.3.1	Working with the City of Portola	COS-7.1.2	Conservation and Open Space Program
LU-1.3.2	County and City of Portola’s General Plan Consistency	COS-7.1.3	Collaborative Open Space Land Use Management
LU-1.3.3	Development and Design in City of Portola’s Sphere of Influence	COS-7.2.14	Natural Landscapes in Site Design
Policies designed to promote development compatible with local airport land use compatibility plans, include the following:			
N-3.1.5	Development Surrounding Airports	PHS-6.6.1	Consistency with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
CIR-4.5.1	Compatibility of Airports with Adjacent Land Uses	PHS-6.6.2	Compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations
Land Use(LU), Economics(E), Circulation(CIR), Conservation/Open Space (COS), Noise (N), Public Health/Safety (PHS), Water Resources (W) Elements			
Policies designed to minimize this impact through the continued coordination with federal, State, and other local agencies (regulatory and non-regulatory) responsible for addressing regional environmental issues include the following:			
CIR-4.6.4	Climate Action Plan	COS-7.9.1	Cooperation with Other Agencies
E-5.1.9	Maintain Strong Working Relationships with United States Forest Service	COS-7.10.3	Support Statewide Climate Change Solutions
E-5.8.2	State and Federal Energy-Planning Processes	W-9.1.1	Groundwater Management
PHS- 6.4.1	Coordination with Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States Army Corps of Engineers, and Department of Water Resources Division of Flood Management		
PHS-6.7.1	Emergency Response Services Coordination with Government Agencies		

Significance Determination

The proposed project is a comprehensive update to the County’s existing General Plan. As a comprehensive planning document, it establishes land use concepts, and sets forth goals and policies to guide future development and preserve natural and agricultural areas from urban encroachment. Consequently, development of the proposed project has been completed to be internally consistent between the various General Plan Elements. Consequently, as described above, the goals and policies of the proposed project are internally consistent. Therefore, no internal conflicts would occur. Additionally, the proposed project has been developed to ensure consistency and compatibility with other local and regional planning documents.

This impact is considered *less than significant*. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Significance Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant land use compatibility impacts and therefore associated impacts would be *less than significant*.

Impact 4.1-3: Scenic Vistas

LTS	The proposed project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Less than Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>None</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Less than Significant</i>

Visual quality is often affected by a variety of factors including General Plan land use designations and policies, specific plan requirements, zoning regulations and enforcement, and private property maintenance. Specific development projects resulting from implementation of the proposed project would result in temporary changes in local visual conditions during construction of specific projects within the various Planning Areas; however, given the relatively short-term nature of these construction-related activities, construction-related visual impacts are considered *less than significant*.

Future development under the proposed project up to the 2035 planning horizon would result in new urban development within the Planning Areas. Depending on the particular projects pursued in the County, new development allowed by the proposed project could alter topography, remove vegetation, or substantially change natural watercourses that may impact scenic vistas. Scenic vistas of particular concern include the various views of mountain ranges and valleys along local roadways.

The proposed project provides a variety of policies designed to maintain and enhancement the visual quality of the County and its surroundings. Policies contained in the proposed project can be divided into three distinct categories including those policies that specifically address land use and visual quality issues, the preservation of the County’s unique “built” environment (i.e., historic resources), and the preservation of the County’s unique open space resources.

By adopting the Land Use and Open Space and Conservation Elements, the County is taking proactive steps to improve its visual character. For example, the Land Use Element (see **Table 4.1-4**, below) includes a number of policies designed to address land use compatibility concerns (see Policy LU-1.2.2). The Open Space and Conservation Element includes a number of policies have the common goal of improving the visual quality of the County by maintaining or enhancing existing scenic resource conditions (including scenic conditions along roadways) developing guidelines to improve future development projects, and address the visual impacts of signs and billboards(see Policies COS-7.6.1 through COS-7.6.5).

Additional policies (see Table 4.1-4, below) have been designed to maintain the visual quality of the County’s unique “built” environment. For example, Policy 5.6.11 promotes retail development with community areas that conforms and helps maintain the vitality of historic downtown areas. Policy COS-7.5.1 requires the County to encourage the continued historic preservation and revitalization of housing and business sectors within the County. Policy AG/FOR-8.2.8 encourages the maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic era ranches and farms. Additional policies encourage community development standards that promote infill development that is both consistent and compatibility with existing development (see policies LU-1.1.2 “Infill Development”, COS-7.5.10 “Community Character”, and COS-7.6.4 “Community Design”).

Other sections of the Open Space and Conservation Element include a variety of policies (see Table 4.1-4) designed to preserve the existing rural character of the County through the preservation of open space and agricultural land uses. For example, COS-7.1.3 requires the County to collaborate with a variety of resource agencies to monitor County resources over time provide input to advance the County’s interest in land management issues. Policy COS-7.1.4 encourages continued use of public and private conservation easements programs that protect important natural resource and open space areas. Policy COS-7.2.4 promotes the protection of County stream corridors and Policy W-9.4.1 will require new development projects to mitigate potential impacts to surface water, recreation, agricultural, and wildlife habitat areas. Policy COS-7.2.14 calls for the integration of natural landscapes (i.e., rivers, streams, riparian areas) into new development as a way to enhance the aesthetic and natural character of individual locations within the County.

**TABLE 4.1-4
MITIGATING POLICIES**

Land Use(LU), Economics(E), Conservation/Open Space (COS), Agriculture and Forestry (AG/FOR), and Water Elements			
Policies designed to minimize this impact through improving the quality of the existing visual character and of the planned development:			
LU-1.2.2	Land Use Compatibility	COS-7.6.4	Community Design
COS-7.6.1	Scenic Areas	COS-7.6.5	Scenic Impacts of Off-premise Permanent Advertising Signs and Billboards
COS-7.6.2	Development in Identified Scenic Areas and Viewsheds	AG/FOR-8.7.1	Value of Working Landscapes
COS-7.6.3	Scenic Roadway Protection		
Policies designed to minimize this impact through the protection of traditional neighborhoods and historic resources include the following:			
LU-1.1.2	Infill Development	COS-7.5.1	Cultural and Historic Resource Preservation
LU-1.3.3	Development and Design in City of Portola’s Sphere of Influence	COS-7.5.10	Community Character

**TABLE 4.1-4
MITIGATING POLICIES**

Land Use(LU), Economics(E), Conservation/Open Space (COS), Agriculture and Forestry (AG/FOR), and Water Elements			
E-5.6.11	Historic Downtown Area Revitalization	COS-7.6.4 AG/FOR-8.2.8	Community Design Historic Ranches and Farms
Policies designed to minimize this impact through the preservation of open space and agricultural resources include the following:			
COS-7.1.1	Open Space Land Use Definition	COS-7.2.7	Wetland and Riparian Habitat Buffers
COS-7.1.2	Conservation and Open Space Program	COS-7.2.14	Natural Landscapes in Site Design
COS-7.1.3	Collaborative Open Space Land Use Management	AG/FOR-8.6.3	Conservation of Productive Agricultural Lands
COS-7.1.4	Conservation Easements	W-9.4.1	Watershed Protection
COS-7.2.4	Stream Corridor Development		

Significance Determination

New development by itself could potentially result in adverse impacts to scenic vistas. Development associated with the proposed project would result in new development throughout the five geographic areas that comprise the County (see Chapter 3 “Project Description”, page 3-8 of this DEIR). However, the proposed new growth is considered relative small and would be focused within the various Planning Areas identified under the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project’s policies described above set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas.

The proposed project policies summarized above identify visually sensitive locations in a general sense, focus growth within established Planning Areas (near existing County development), and explain how impacts would be minimized. For example, policies identified under the Land Use Element employ land use concepts such as Planning Area growth and the preservation of natural and open space areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most affected by new urban development. The DEIR and the 2035 General Plan are programmatic documents intended to provide a framework for development in the County. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic vistas as those impacts will depend on the specific development pursued in the County. Consequently, with incorporation of the above mentioned policies, impacts to scenic vistas would be reduced to less than significant levels.

This impact is considered *less than significant*. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Significance Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to scenic vistas and therefore associated impacts would be *less than significant*.

Impact 4.1-4: Scenic Resources

LTS	The proposed project could have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Less than Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>None</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Less than Significant</i>

A review of the Caltrans Map of Designated Scenic Routes indicates that there are no officially designated state scenic roadways within or adjacent to the County. However, portions of State Route 70, 89, and 36 are considered eligible for listing as a state scenic highway and there are a number of local County roads that are considered scenic roadways under the proposed project.

New development could potentially result in adverse impacts to a variety of scenic resources located along these roadways. The location of specific scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings along these roadways that could be affected by future development is not known at this time. However, the majority of future growth will be focused within the various Planning Areas of the County. Additionally, the various policies contained in the proposed project set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic resources within scenic highways and roadways (see the discussion provided above under Impact 4.1-3 “Scenic Resources”). The existing Federal and State historic preservation requirements protect historic buildings that may be located along scenic highways. Additionally, the proposed project is based on land use concepts such as Planning Area focused growth and preservation of natural areas that would direct future growth away from open space and scenic areas that would be most deleteriously impacted by urban development.

Significance Determination

New development by itself could potentially result in adverse impacts to scenic vistas and resources. Development associated with the proposed project would result in new development throughout the 5 geographic areas that comprise the County. However, the proposed new growth is considered relatively small and would be focused within the various Planning Areas identified under the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project’s policies described above set forth comprehensive measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on scenic vistas.

The proposed project policies summarized above identify visually sensitive locations in a general sense, focus growth within established Planning Areas (near existing County development), and explain how impacts would be minimized. For example, policies identified under the Land Use Element employ land use concepts such as Planning Area growth and the preservation of natural and open space areas that would direct future growth away from scenic areas that would be most affected by new urban development. The DEIR and the 2035 General Plan are programmatic documents intended to provide a framework for development in the County. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to particular scenic vistas as those impacts will depend on the specific

development pursued in the County. Consequently, with incorporation of the above mentioned policies, impacts to scenic vistas would be reduced to less than significant levels.

This impact is considered *less than significant*. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Significance Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to scenic vistas and therefore associated impacts would be *less than significant*.

Impact 4.1-5: Visual Character or Quality

SU	The proposed project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of Plumas County.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Potentially Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>New Policy COS-7.6.6 "Lighting and Night Sky Protection"</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Significant and Unavoidable</i>

New development resulting from implementation of the proposed project over the 2035 planning horizon would result in the permanent conversion of some undeveloped land to urban uses. Residential development identified as part of the proposed project (see Table 3-8, Chapter 3 of this DEIR) would comprise the majority of development. However, the actual type and intensity of development actually occurring with the County would depend on the particular projects pursued in the County and cannot be determined at this time, but may include roads, utilities, structures, grading, and the results of other human activities. The introduction of permanent urban uses on undeveloped land within the various Planning Areas (as directed under the proposed project) could still result in changes to existing topography, removal of vegetation, and the conversion of existing agricultural/open space land that could affect the visual character or quality of an area. In particular some geographic areas (i.e., Almanor and Mohawk Valley) experiencing a greater degree of development in comparison to the Indian Valley Geographic Area that would experience only minor amounts of anticipated development (see Table 3-8 of Chapter 3).

As described under the discussion for Impact 4.1-3, the proposed project provides a variety of policies designed to maintain and enhancement the visual quality of the County and its surroundings. For example, by adopting the Land Use and Open Space and Conservation Elements, the County is taking proactive steps to improve its visual character. For example, the Land Use Element focuses on policies designed to address land use compatibility concerns (see Policy LU-1.2.2). The Open Space and Conservation Element includes a number of policies have the common goal of improving the visual quality of the County by maintaining or enhancing existing scenic resource conditions (including scenic conditions along roadways) developing guidelines to improve future development projects, and address the visual impacts of signs and billboards(see Policies COS-7.6.1 through COS-7.6.5). Policy COS-7.5.1 requires the County to encourage the continued historic preservation and revitalization of housing and business sectors within the County. Policy AG/FOR-

8.2.8 encourages the maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic era ranches and farms. Additional policies encourage community development standards that promote infill development that is both consistent and compatibility with existing development (see policies LU-1.1.2 “Infill Development”, COS-7.5.10 “Community Character”, and COS-7.6.4 “Community Design”).

Other sections of the Open Space and Conservation Element include a variety of policies designed to preserve the existing rural character of the County through the preservation of open space and agricultural land uses. For example, COS-7.1.3 requires the County to collaborate with a variety of resource agencies to monitor County resources over time provide input to advance the County’s interest in land management issues. Policy COS-7.1.4 encourages continued use of public and private conservation easements programs that protect important natural resource and open space areas. Policy COS-7.2.4 promotes the protection of County stream corridors and Policy W-9.4.1 will require new development projects to mitigate potential impacts to surface water, recreation, agricultural, and wildlife habitat areas. Policy COS-7.2.14 calls for the integration of natural landscapes (i.e., rivers, streams, riparian areas) into new development as a way to enhance the aesthetic and natural character of individual locations within the County.

Significance Determination

New development by itself would potentially result in adverse impacts to the visual character and quality of the County. While the proposed new growth is considered relatively small and would be focused within the various Planning Areas identified under the proposed project, future development would result in the conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses, with some Planning Areas within the Almanor and Mohawk Valley Geographic Areas experiencing a greater degree of development (and greater changes in their visual appearance) versus development proposed within the Indian Valley Geographic Area. While these developed uses would primarily be located within areas that already support urban development (Planning Areas), the introduction of additional urban development within these areas would irreversibly alter the localized visual character of these portions of the unincorporated county.

The proposed project sets forth a variety of comprehensive policies and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. These policies, described above, identify how these impacts would be reduced. Proposed policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as focused growth within Planning Areas and the preservation of natural areas. The proposed project and the DEIR are programmatic documents that area intended to provide a framework for development in the County. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to visual character within the various Planning Areas as those impacts will depend on the specific development pursued in the County in the coming years. The policies and measures implemented under the proposed project would protect the visual character of the County, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth under the proposed project are implemented and that scenic resources are avoided the greatest extent practicable. Furthermore, future development would be required to comply with all applicable zoning restrictions including those that pertain to setbacks, height restrictions, landscaping, and other aesthetic considerations. Nonetheless, development under the proposed project would substantially and irreversibly

degrade the existing visual character and quality of Plumas County through the conversion of existing open space areas to a developed use. State planning law and housing element provisions require the County to provide sufficient development sites to meet its regional housing share. Growth planned for the various Planning Areas demonstrates that the County is meeting this state requirement. The County cannot prohibit new development, which would be the only way to reduce visual character impacts to a less than significant level. Consequently, even with implementation of the above mentioned policies, this impact is considered *potentially significant*.

Required Additional Mitigating Policies

In addition to the above mentioned general plan policies and implementation measures, the following new policy (Policy COS- 7.6.6 “Lighting and Night Sky Protection”) has been identified as a result of the environmental analysis and is required to mitigate an adverse impact on visual quality. The new policy identified below is to be incorporated into the Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal 7.6 “Scenic Resources”) prior to approval of the Final Goals and Policies Report.

- **COS-7.6.6 Lighting and Night Sky Protection** The County shall require that new lighting be designed and configured to reduce light pollution, glare, and spillage.

Significance Conclusion

Overall, policies included as part of the proposed project (including the new Policy COS-7.6.6. “Lighting and Night Sky Protection”) have been developed to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. However, the alteration of Plumas County’s localized visual character within designated Planning Areas would still result in an irreversible consequence associated with implementation of the proposed project through the 2035 Planning Horizon. No additional feasible mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this remains a *significant and unavoidable* impact.

Impact 4.1-6: Light or Glare

SU	The proposed project could create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the County.
	Level of Significance Before Mitigation: <i>Potentially Significant</i>
	Required Additional Mitigating Policies and Implementation Measures: <i>New Policy COS-7.6.6 “Lighting and Night Sky Protection”</i>
	Resultant Level of Significance: <i>Significant and Unavoidable</i>

As planned growth and development occur through implementation of the proposed project, additional lighting will be required to provide nighttime street and building illumination, security lighting, traffic lights, and light associated with new recreation areas. It is anticipated that most new sources of light and glare (resulting from build-out of the proposed project) will occur within and around identified Planning Areas; however, designated expansion areas and fringe areas

around the various Planning Areas are currently used for a variety of open space uses (with some scattered rural residential uses) and therefore currently contain limited sources of light and glare.

Excessive nighttime lighting could result in sky glow, the haze of light that surrounds highly populated areas and reduces the ability to see the stars. This could change the appearance of the nighttime sky over the long term. Additionally, new sources of light and glare adjacent to agricultural areas would alter the visual appearance of these landscapes. While specific impacts to surrounding land uses from future development cannot be determined at this time (due to lack of project specific design characteristics), it is possible to say that collectively, these new sources of light and glare could degrade and diminish daytime and nighttime views of existing Countywide visual resources.

The proposed project provides a variety of policies designed to maintain and enhancement the visual quality of the County and its surroundings. For example, by adopting the Land Use and Open Space and Conservation Elements, the County is taking proactive steps to improve its visual character. For example, the Land Use Element focuses on policies designed to address land use compatibility concerns (see Policy LU-1.2.2). The Open Space and Conservation Element includes a number of policies have the common goal of improving the visual quality of the County by maintaining or enhancing existing scenic resource conditions (including scenic conditions along roadways) developing guidelines to improve future development projects, and address the visual impacts of signs and billboards(see Policies COS-7.6.1 through COS-7.6.5). Policy COS-7.5.1 requires the County to encourage the continued historic preservation and revitalization of housing and business sectors within the County. Policy AG/FOR-8.2.8 encourages the maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic era ranches and farms. Additional policies encourage community development standards that promote infill development that is both consistent and compatibility with existing development (see policies LU-1.1.2 “Infill Development”, COS-7.5.10 “Community Character”, and COS-7.6.4 “Community Design”). Collectively, these policies promote compact-urban growth in existing Planning Areas and therefore discourage growth in open space areas where light and glare impacts would most affect nighttime views.

The Conservation and Open Space Element also includes Policy COS-7.6.6 “Lighting and Night Sky Protection” which requires the County to ensure that new develop design and configure new light sources to reduce light pollution, glare, and nuisance light spillage.

Significance Determination

New development by itself would potentially result in localized light and glare impacts on nighttime views within the County. While the proposed new growth is considered relatively small and would be focused within the various Planning Areas identified under the proposed project, future development would result in new sources of both day and nighttime sources of light and glare, with some Planning Areas (Almanor and Mohawk Valley Geographic Areas) experiencing a greater degree of development versus those areas (Indian Valley Geographic Area) with less development.

The proposed project sets forth a variety of comprehensive policies and land use concepts to avoid and minimize adverse light and glare impacts to the maximum extent practicable. These

policies, described above, identify how these impacts would be reduced. Proposed policies emphasize aesthetic compatibility through approaches such as focused growth within Planning Areas and the preservation of natural areas. The proposed project and the DEIR are programmatic documents that are intended to provide a framework for development in the County. It is speculative to analyze specific impacts to visual character within the various Planning Areas as those impacts will depend on the specific development pursued in the County in the coming years. The policies and measures implemented under the proposed project would protect the visual character of the County, but further environmental analysis as required by CEQA would occur on a project specific basis and appropriate mitigation for each development site would be identified at that time in order to ensure that the policies set forth under the proposed project are implemented and that scenic resources are avoided to the greatest extent practicable. Nonetheless, development under the proposed project would still create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day and nighttime public views. As this is a programmatic document, it is not feasible to develop mitigation that would apply effectively to all future development in the County due to the differences of each development in their location, orientation, design, and proposed land uses. Additionally, for a variety of reasons (including public safety concerns), it may be necessary or desirable to include some degree of night-time lighting as part of future development proposals in Plumas County. Consequently, even with implementation of the above mentioned policies, this impact is considered *potentially significant*.

Required Additional Mitigating Policies

In addition to the above mentioned general plan policies and implementation measures, the following new policy (Policy COS- 7.6.6 “Lighting and Night Sky Protection”) has been identified as a result of the environmental analysis and is required to mitigate an adverse impact on visual quality. The new policy identified below is to be incorporated into the Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal 7.6 “Scenic Resources”) prior to approval of the Final Goals and Policies Report.

- **COS-7.6.6 Lighting and Night Sky Protection** The County shall require that new lighting be designed and configured to reduce light pollution, glare, and spillage.

Significance Conclusion

Overall, policies included as part of the proposed project (including the new Policy COS-7.6.6. “Lighting and Night Sky Protection”) have been developed to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on visual character to the maximum extent practicable. However, the introduction of additional sources of day and nighttime light and glare would still result in an irreversible consequence associated with implementation of the proposed project through the 2035 Planning Horizon. No additional feasible mitigation is available to reduce the significance of this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this remains a *significant and unavoidable* impact.

