

5. Environmental Analysis

5.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the program EIR evaluates the potential for implementation of the SUP to impact aesthetic resources in the District. This section discusses plans and policies from several jurisdictional agencies and LAUSD standard conditions, guidelines, specifications, practices, policies, and project design features (LAUSD Standards), along with the existing aesthetic setting throughout the SUP area with examples of scenic vistas and other significant aesthetic features, and possible environmental impacts that may occur during future phases of the SUP and site-specific projects implemented under the SUP.

TERMINOLOGY

Aesthetic impact assessment generally deals with the issue of contrast, or the degree to which elements of the environment differ visually. Aesthetic features occur in a diverse array of environments, ranging in character from urban centers to rural regions and wildlands. Adverse visual effects can include the loss of natural features or areas, the removal of urban features with aesthetic value, or the introduction of contrasting urban features into natural areas or urban settings.

Natural features include, but are not limited to: open space; native or ornamental vegetation/landscaping; topographic or geologic features; and natural water sources. The loss of natural aesthetic features or the introduction of contrasting urban features may have a local impact, or, if part of a larger landscape, may contribute to a cumulative decline in overall visual character.

Urban features include, but are not limited to: structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art or gardens; heritage oaks or other protected trees or plants; consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height, and signage) along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; landscaped medians or parks.

Aesthetics generally refer to the identification of visual resources and the quality of what can be seen, or overall visual perception of the environment.

Views refer to visual access and obstruction, or whether it is possible to see a focal point or panoramic view from an area.

Shading issues are concerned with effects of shadows cast by existing or proposed structures on adjacent land uses.

Nighttime illumination addresses the effects of a proposed project's exterior lighting upon adjoining uses.

Luminaire. The complete lighting unit (fixture), consisting of a lamp, or lamps and ballast(s) (when applicable), together with the parts designed to distribute the light (reflector, lens, diffuser), to position and protect the lamps, and to connect the lamps to the power supply.

Footcandle. The unit of measure expressing the quantity of light received on a surface. One footcandle is the illuminance produced by a candle on a surface one foot square from a distance of one foot.

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Glare. Lighting entering the eye directly from luminaires or indirectly from reflective surfaces that causes visual discomfort or reduced visibility.

Light Trespass or Light Spill. Light that falls beyond the property it is intended to illuminate.

Fully Shielded Luminaire. A luminaire constructed and installed in such a manner that all light emitted by the luminaire, either directly from the lamp or a diffusing element, or indirectly by reflection or refraction from any part of the luminaire, is projected below the horizontal plane through the luminaire's lowest light-emitting part.¹

5.1.1 Environmental Setting

5.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State and local laws, regulations, plans, and guidelines, along with LAUSD Standards are summarized below. The following regulatory framework discussion does not include all plans and policies that relate to aesthetics in the District. Site-specific projects have not been identified, and there may be local jurisdictional plans and policies that are applicable depending on the project site. Specific requirements of these laws, regulations, plans, and guidelines might not be up to date when a proposed site-specific school project undergoes review. Therefore, this section provides a general discussion of the most important plans and policies that apply to SUP-related projects. Some of these are not directly applicable to the SUP or site-specific projects implemented under the SUP; however they are included to assist in identifying potential impacts and significance thresholds. See *Applicable Regulations and Standard Conditions* at end of this chapter for those that require District compliance.

State

California Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263

The **California Scenic Highway Program**, which was adopted by the Legislature in 1963, seeks to preserve and protect areas of outstanding natural beauty that are visible from State highways. A highway may be designated as scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be readily observed, the scenic quality of that landscape, and the extent to which development may intrude on view enjoyment.² Within the District, a number of highways are considered eligible for scenic highway designation or are so designated (see Table 5.1-1).

¹ International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). Model Lighting Ordinance. http://www.darksky.org/assets/documents/MLO/MLO_FINAL_June2011.pdf; IDA is the recognized authority on light pollution. Founded in 1988, IDA is the first organization to call attention to the hazards of light pollution.

² California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 2014. California Scenic Highway Program, updated September 7, 2011. http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm.

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Table 5.1-1 Selected Scenic Highways and Corridors

Scenic Highway, Byway, Route, or Corridor	Caltrans Status (Eligible or Officially Designated)	Los Angeles County General Plan Scenic Priority	Other Designations
SR 1 (Pacific Coast Highway (PCH)) – between SR 187 and SR 101	Eligible	1st Priority Scenic Highway	–
SR 2 (Angeles Crest Highway) – between La Canada-Flintridge and Wrightwood	Officially Designated	–	–
SR 27 (Topanga Canyon. Boulevard.) – between SR 1 and Mulholland Dr.	Eligible	1st Priority Scenic Highway	–
SR 27 (Topanga Canyon Boulevard) – N of Valley Circle Boulevard	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
SR 39 – between I-210 and SR 2	Eligible	–	–
SR 110 (Pasadena Freeway)	–	–	National Scenic Byway Historic Parkway; CA Historic Parkway
SR 118 (Reagan Freeway) – between SR 23 and Desoto Ave.	Eligible	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
I-5 (Golden State Freeway) – between I-210 and Castaic	Eligible	1st Priority Scenic Highway	–
I-5 (Golden State Freeway) – between I-210 and I-405	Eligible	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
I-210 (Foothill Freeway)	Eligible	1st Priority Scenic Highway	–
I-405 (San Diego Freeway) – between I-5 and SR 118 and between Mulholland Drive and Wilshire Boulevard	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
US Route 101 (Ventura Freeway) – west of Valley Circle Boulevard	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Big Tujunga Canyon Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
La Tuna Canyon Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Little Tujunga Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Lopez Canyon Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Los Feliz Boulevard	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Malibu Canyon – between Las Virgenes Highway and Lost Hills Rd.	Officially Designated	–	–
Mount Hollywood Drive	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Mulholland Drive – between PCH and Kanan Dume Road, and from Cornell Road to Las Virgenes Road	Officially Designated	1st Priority Scenic Highway	–
Old Topanga Canyon Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Saddle Peak Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
San Vicente Boulevard/Wilshire Boulevard	–	2nd Priority Scenic	–

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Table 5.1-1 Selected Scenic Highways and Corridors

Scenic Highway, Byway, Route, or Corridor	Caltrans Status (Eligible or Officially Designated)	Los Angeles County General Plan Scenic Priority	Other Designations
West of Interstate 110		Highway	
Santa Monica Boulevard (SR 2)	Officially Designated	–	–
Santa Susana Pass Road	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–
Sunset Boulevard/Cesar Chavez Avenue West of Main Street	–	2nd Priority Scenic Highway	–

Sources: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Website Updated: December 19, 2013. California Scenic Highway Program, updated September 7, 2011. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/cahisys.htm>
 Los Angeles County General Plan, 1980. <http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan/existing>

Highways considered eligible for designation have substantial value as scenic resources. In order for a highway to be officially designated as a scenic resource, the local city or county must adopt a scenic Corridor Protection Program and apply to Caltrans for official designation. Without official designation and the accompanying scenic corridor protection, nearby development could degrade the highway’s scenic value even if it is considered eligible for designation.

The sponsoring city or county must also adopt ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or prove that such regulations already exist in local codes and ordinances. The corridor protection requirements should be sufficiently detailed and must present a workable strategy to protect the scenic character of the corridor. These ordinances and/or policies form the Corridor Protection Program of the California Scenic Highway Program.

California Public Resources Code, Division 20

Part of the District is in the Coastal Zone, where proposed projects may be subject to the requirements of the **California Coastal Act**.³ Section 30251 of the Coastal Act discusses the act’s aesthetic requirements, wherein the scenic qualities of coastal areas must be considered and protected in the development process. This section states “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.”

Permitted development must be located and designed so as to protect the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. This includes protecting views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, matching the visual character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, restoring and enhancing visual quality in visually degraded areas. Pursuant to the Coastal Act, cities and counties within the Coastal Zone must develop Local Coastal Plans.

³ California Public Resources Code, Division 20, California Coastal Act (2014).

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California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2

Current law states that every local agency enforcing building regulations, such as cities and counties, must adopt the provisions of the **California Building Code (CBC)** within 180 days of its publication. The publication date of the CBC is established by the California Building Standards Commission. The most recent building standard adopted by the legislature and used throughout the state is the 2013 version, often with local, more restrictive amendments that are based on local geographic, topographic, or climatic conditions. These codes provide minimum standards to protect property and public safety by regulating the design and construction of excavations, foundations, building frames, retaining walls, and other building elements to mitigate the effects of seismic shaking and adverse soil conditions. The CBC contains standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to improve energy efficiency, and reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.⁴

California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 14010

The function of the **California Department of Education School Facilities Planning Division (CDE SFPD)** is to review and approve school district sites and construction plans. Prior to approving a site for school purposes, the SFPD, in accordance with their design standards, reviews many factors, including environmental hazards, proximity to airports, freeways, and power transmission lines, as well as scenic resources and aesthetics. CCR Title 5, Section 14010 specifically requires the consideration of aesthetics: “The district shall consider environmental factors of light, wind, noise, aesthetics, and air pollution in its site selection process.”

In many instances, the District needs to complete the process of identifying the site and to have SFPD approval for the site prior to applying for site acquisition funding. As previously discussed, the CDE is given the authority in law to develop standards for school site acquisition. The CDE uses these standards to review a site and determine if it is an appropriate location for a new or expanded school facility. In the CDE SFPD’s current Initial School Site Evaluation process, the criteria include scenic resources and aesthetics as one of many factors to be considered.⁵ This information is typically provided in the following documents/studies:

- SFPD 4.0, Initial School Site Evaluation
- SFPD 4.02, School Site Report

Local

City General Plans

The City of Los Angeles General Plan contains two elements that regulate the protection of aesthetics and views and identification of scenic highways in the SUP area. The Conservation Element confirms that one plan objective is to “protect and reinforce natural and scenic vistas as irreplaceable resources and for the aesthetic enjoyment of

⁴ California Building Standards Commission, <http://www.bsc.ca.gov/codes.aspx> , accessed on March 11, 2014.

⁵ California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 14010 et seq.; Education Code Sections 17070.50, 17251[a)].

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present and future generations.”⁶ One policy that seeks to attain this objective is to encourage or require property developers to retain significant existing landforms (e.g., ridgelines, bluffs, unique geologic features) and unique scenic features (e.g., mountains) and to protect the public’s ability to view these scenic features.

The current Transportation Element is also pertinent to aesthetic resources in the Program area. It addresses motorized and non-motorized transportation, along with scenic highways and bikeways citywide.⁷

Cities and communities within the District attendance boundaries have General Plans or community plans that guide development. Many of these plans establish goals and policies that pertain to aesthetic resources, thereby providing a measure of protection for significant visual resources.

Where a proposed LAUSD school project is inconsistent with a General Plan policy or zoning ordinance, state law provides for an exemption pending a two-thirds vote of the Board of Education.⁸ Under this law, the LAUSD may proceed with such a project.

LAUSD Standards

This table lists the aesthetic related standard conditions and project design features (PDF) that are included as part of each SUP-related project, as appropriate.

PDF #	Topic	Trigger for Compliance	Implementation Phase	Standard Conditions and Project Design Features
Standard Conditions				
AE-00 Compliance	Degradation of neighborhood character	When a project will have aesthetic impacts from demolition of historic building	During project design	School Design Guide. This document outlines measures for re-use rather than destruction of historical resources. Requires the consideration of architectural appearance/consistency and other aesthetic factors during the preliminary design review for a proposed school upgrade project.
AE-00 Compliance	Light spillage and glare	When a project will generate new light sources that impact adjacent residences	During and after installation of lights	School Design Guide. This document outlines requirements for lighting and measures to minimize glare for pedestrians, drivers and sports teams, and to avoid light spilling onto adjacent properties.
AE-00 Compliance	Degradation of neighborhood character	When a project may increase graffiti and accumulation of rubbish and debris along the walls adjacent to public rights-of-way.	During project operation	School Design Guide. This document outlines measures to reduce aesthetic impacts around schools, such as shrubs and ground treatments that deter taggers, vandal-resistant and graffiti-resistant materials, painting, etc.

⁶ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 2001. Conservation Element, City of Los Angeles General Plan, adopted September 2001.

⁷ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 2001. Transportation Element, City of Los Angeles General Plan, adopted September 1999.

⁸ California Government Code, Title 5, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 1, Article 5.

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PDF #	Topic	Trigger for Compliance	Implementation Phase	Standard Conditions and Project Design Features
AE-00 Compliance	Outdoor signs with electronic message display	When a project will install a new school marquee	Prior to final design and prior to and during installation	Marquee Signs Bulletin BUL-5004.1. This policy provides guidance for the procurement and installation of marquee signs (outdoor sign with electronic message display) on District campuses. The policy includes requirements for the design, approval, placement, operation, and maintenance of electronic school marquees erected and operated at a LAUSD schools. The policy also includes measures to mitigate light and glare, such as the use of "luminaries" in connection with school construction.
AE-00 Compliance	Shadows	When a project will include construction of buildings or structures taller than surrounding neighborhood	Prior to project approval	OEHS CEQA Specification Manual, Appendix F, Protocol for Shadow Analysis in CEQA Documents for Proposed School Sites. This document outlines the methodology and impact thresholds for shadow analysis.
Project Design Features				
AE-1	Light spillage and glare	When a project will generate new light sources	Prior to building occupation, first stadium event, or first use of lights.	LAUSD shall reduce the lighting intensity from the new sources on adjacent residences to no more than two foot-candles, measured at the residential property line. LAUSD shall utilize hoods, filtering louvers, glare shields, and/or landscaping as necessary to achieve the standard. The lamp enclosures and poles shall also be painted to reduce reflection. Following installation of lights the lighting contractor shall review and adjust lights to ensure the standard is met.
AE-2	Viewshed obstruction and degradation of neighborhood character	When a project may have a significant adverse aesthetic impact from a school building or site design	During project design	LAUSD shall consider whether or not a proposed project is consistent with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, including any proposed changes to the density, height, bulk, and setback of new or updated building. Where feasible, LAUSD shall make appropriate design changes to reduce or eliminate viewshed obstruction and degradation of neighborhood character. Such design changes could include, but are not limited to, changes to campus layout, height of buildings, landscaping, and/or the architectural style of buildings.
AE-3	Light and glare	When a project will generate new light sources	Prior to building occupation, first stadium event, or first use of lights.	Design site lighting and select lighting styles and technologies to have minimal impact off-site and minimal contribution to sky glow. Minimize outdoor lighting of architectural and landscape features and design interior lighting to minimize trespass outside from the interior. International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) shall be used a guide for environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. The MLO outdoor lighting has outdoor lighting standards that reduce glare, light trespass, and skyglow. The Joint IDA-IESNA Model Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (MLO) uses lighting zones (LZ0-4) which allow the District to vary the stringency of lighting restrictions according to the sensitivity of the area as well as consideration for the community. The MLO also incorporates the Backlight-Uplight-Glare (BUG) rating system for luminaires, which provides more effective control of unwanted light. IDA-IESNA Model establishes standards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of light that can be used • Minimize glare by controlling the amount of light that tends to create glare

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PDF #	Topic	Trigger for Compliance	Implementation Phase	Standard Conditions and Project Design Features
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize sky glow by controlling the amount of uplight Minimize the amount of off-site impacts or light trespass

5.10.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The consideration of aesthetics in environmental impact evaluations dates to the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Since that time, the concept of aesthetics in environmental analysis has generally been construed as a suite of key visual resources that embrace both the natural (i.e., landscape) and built environments. In the context of school-related projects or programs, aesthetics often include:

- Undisturbed and/or unique viewsapes or vistas
- Natural or undisturbed areas (i.e., open space)
- Unique natural and manmade landscapes, buildings/structures, or features
- Areas that have been formally recognized as a significant visual resource by a local, State, or Federal agency.

The sensitivity of an aesthetic or visual resource generally depends on its unique qualities as well as the visual access afforded to a typical prospective viewer (i.e., is it readily viewed or are there impediments to viewing). Consistent with its predominantly urban character, the District possesses many man-made aesthetic resources. These resources can include individual buildings or groups of buildings or structures that possess a distinctive appearance, history, and/or societal or cultural importance. Such resources can also include locations that are judged important to a region's history and sense of place.

Consistent with a programmatic scope, this discussion generally characterizes aesthetic resources within the District. Specific school upgrade projects have not been scoped at this time, and an evaluation of site-specific aesthetic resources is not feasible. Each future school project would require a site-specific aesthetic analysis during CEQA review. Moreover, because the SUP will be implemented over the course of several years, a detailed description of aesthetic resources could become obsolete over time as resources are added and deleted.

Visual Character

The overall visual character in the District is highly diverse, reflecting a wide range of landforms as well as variations in the built environment. Urban and suburban residential and commercial land uses predominate and the area is heavily populated, constituting the second most populous metropolitan region in the nation. The Los Angeles area is generally bound by the San Gabriel and Santa Susana Mountains to the north and northwest, the Santa Monica Mountains to the west, and the Pacific Ocean to the west and south. As a consequence of this unique setting, these natural geographic barriers have both constrained and shaped urban development over the years.

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As noted above, the visual character throughout the District does vary, depending on the location within the Los Angeles metropolitan region. For example, much of the inland valleys such as the San Fernando, San Gabriel, and Santa Clarita Valleys are largely suburban regions situated in a flat sedimentary basins flanked by mountains. These areas experienced substantial growth (i.e., “booms”) following World War II, after which single and multiple-family residences were built on the remaining undeveloped land. With local exceptions due to intervening topographic features such as the Verdugo Mountains, San Rafael Hills, etc., the visual character of these valleys is relatively flat with a pattern of roadways and development that is regular, and often, orthogonal.

Buildings in the valley areas tend to be low in height, predominantly one- to three-story structures. Major arterials are often flanked by low- to medium-density commercial development interspersed with multi-family apartments. In the areas between arterial streets, narrower residential streets allow for low- to medium-density neighborhoods generally composed of detached, single-family residences. Pockets of industrial land use in these valley areas range from small, light industrial properties such as gas stations, auto body shops, and small machining/manufacturing operations, to large-scale plants such as the Lockheed aerospace plant and the Warner Brothers and Disney film and animation studios in the San Fernando Valley.

Unlike the suburban valleys described above, there is no single predominant development pattern in the area extending south and west from downtown Los Angeles. The area’s land uses are particularly diverse, embracing heavy manufacturing plants that were once operated by large companies such as Alcoa Aluminum, Goodyear Tire and Rubber, and Bethlehem Steel. This area also includes large tracts of medium-density housing, and like the valleys, much of the housing stock was built in the aftermath of World War II.

Downtown Los Angeles is highly urbanized, featuring a blend of commercial, light and heavy industry, and skyscraper/office land uses. Home to the tallest building in the western U.S., the urban nature of downtown Los Angeles represents a regional aesthetic resource, with a distinctive skyline that is widely visible throughout the region. Transportation infrastructure also influences the visual character of this area. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is readily recognized due to its distinctive architecture and heavy air traffic (i.e., reportedly the sixth-busiest airport in the world).

The visual character of the southernmost part of the District is heavily influenced by the Long Beach and Los Angeles Harbors, the busiest port of entry in the U.S. Similarly, this area also houses more than a dozen oil refineries and terminals. Urban single- and multi-family land use is also widespread, and it is generally interspersed with these industrial and shipping land uses.

Visual Resources

Historically, development in the City of Los Angeles and surrounding urban and suburban areas has encroached on many natural aesthetic resources, such as undeveloped open space. Such development notwithstanding, the area still possesses many widely recognized visual resources, also referred to as scenic vistas and aesthetic features. Table 5.1-2 lists some of the most noteworthy vistas and features throughout the area. They include natural visual resources, such as nearby beaches, parks, national forests, and recreation areas, as well as distinctive resources in the built environment, such as the downtown Los Angeles skyline, Los Angeles City Hall, the Griffith Park Observatory, and the Point Fermin Lighthouse.

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Landforms

The natural landforms that are found in the District are almost unmatched for diversity in an urban setting, including rugged mountains whose elevations locally exceed 10,000 feet; expansive, sandy beaches; coastal headlands; sediment-filled inland valleys, some of which are more than 25 miles long; and a broad coastal plain that is typified by low elevations and nearly flat topography.

Mountain Ranges

Los Angeles County includes several mountain ranges, the most prominent of which are the San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, Santa Susana Mountains, and the Verdugo Mountains. The largest of these ranges, the San Gabriel Mountains, includes Mount San Antonio, commonly referred to as Mt. Baldy, which tops out at just over ten thousand feet and can be seen from much of the southern part of the County.

Inland Valleys

The District includes several prominent inland valleys, all of which are underlain by sedimentary basins. Sediment sources are tied to regional tectonic deformation and uplift that results in sediment erosion in mountain areas, followed by alluvial transport and ultimate deposition in the neighboring valleys.

The Los Angeles Coastal Plain

The Los Angeles Basin is a sedimentary basin flanked by mountains to the north and northeast, and the Pacific Ocean to the west and south. Topographically, the basin is manifest as a broad coastal plain marked by low elevations and nearly flat relief. Such a setting is amenable to many types of development, which contributed to the City of Los Angeles' current role as a commercial, governmental, and visual focal point of the region.

Coastline

The coastline of Los Angeles is widely recognized, comprising a distinctive part of the area's visual landscape. Moreover, there is a significant variety in the coastal landforms, ranging from expansive, sandy beaches to rugged, cliff-bound headlands.

Scenic Vistas and Corridors

The District is traversed by a number of scenic highways and corridors that are judged to possess substantial aesthetic value. A few of the highways within the area have been officially designated as scenic under the California Scenic Highway Program, although several are considered eligible for such designation.⁹ Table 5.1-1 lists scenic highways, byways, routes, and corridors within the SUP area. In designating scenic highways, Caltrans considers the following criteria: 1) the scenic highway should be part of a memorable landscape that showcases the natural scenic beauty or agriculture of California; 2) visual intrusions do not significantly impact the scenic corridor; 3) evidence of strong local support for the proposed designation; and

⁹ California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 2014. California Scenic Highway Program, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed on March 10, 2014.

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4) length not less than a mile and not segmented.¹⁰ In the Scenic Highway Element of the adopted 1980 Los Angeles County General Plan, the County also distinguishes between highways that are officially designated scenic, highways that should be given first priority in scenic designation, and highways that should be given second priority in scenic designation.¹¹

In addition to the scenic highways and corridors discussed above, the District also embraces many other scenic vistas and aesthetic features, some of which are man-made, such as distinctive or historic buildings like Los Angeles City Hall, Union Station, or the Watts Towers, and some of which reflect natural, largely undisturbed settings such as Griffith Park, the Angeles National Forest, or the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area. Table 5.1-2 lists some of the most distinctive and well-known scenic vistas and aesthetic features in the District.

Table 5.1-2 Select Scenic Vistas and Aesthetic Features

Aesthetic Resource	Description
Angel's Gate Lighthouse	Architecturally unique among California lighthouses, Angel's Gate is at the entrance to Los Angeles Harbor.
Angeles National Forest	This 650,000-acre National Forest provides aesthetic value, recreational opportunities, and watershed protection.
Balboa Park and Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area	This relatively flat, open space in the San Fernando Valley provides a sharp visual break from the surrounding developed commercial/residential areas.
Baldwin Hills	Nearly 450 acres of protected park, including the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.
Beaches	Beaches flank the west side of the District, including the Los Angeles communities of Pacific Palisades, Venice, Playa del Rey, and Westchester.
City Hall	Once the tallest building in the City, its distinctive architecture was designed by John C. Austin in 1928.
Dodger Stadium	The famous 52 year-old stadium features well-known views of downtown Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Mountains.
Downtown Los Angeles Skyline	Visible from many parts of the Valley area, this cityscape combines urban skyscrapers, mountains, and palm trees.
El Pueblo de Los Angeles (Olvera Street)	Historical site preserving the origins of Los Angeles and containing Olvera Street, Los Angeles's first street, and the Avila Adobe, the oldest remaining residence in Los Angeles.
Elysian Park	At 600 acres, the second largest city park in the city, including hiking trails, picnic areas, a man-made lake, and children's play area.
Griffith Park and Observatory	Covering more than 4,107 acres, Griffith Park is the largest municipal park and urban wilderness area in the US. The Observatory, recently renovated in 2005, is located on Mount Hollywood with panoramic views of the Los Angeles Basin and the Hollywood Hills.
Hollywood Sign	Famous sign atop Mount Lee in the Hollywood Hills, northwest of downtown Los Angeles.
J. Paul Getty Center	Art museum renowned for its architecture as well as collections.
La Brea Tar Pits (G. Page Museum)	Contain fossils of Pleistocene mammals, including dire wolves, sabre-toothed cats, and mammoths.
Los Encinos State Historic Park	Historic site with archeological significance, including over one million artifacts. The park also contains exhibits on early California ranch life.
Marina del Rey Boat Marina	Marina del Rey is the largest manmade small-boat harbor in the world and home to over 6,000 pleasure boats and yachts.

¹⁰ Caltrans, 2008. Scenic Highway Guidelines, Landscape Architecture Program, October 2008.

¹¹ County of Los Angeles, 1980. Adopted General Plan, Scenic Highway Element.

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Table 5.1-2 Select Scenic Vistas and Aesthetic Features

Aesthetic Resource	Description
Point Fermin Lighthouse	One of San Pedro's most recognized landmarks, with a Victorian-style building and flower gardens.
Port of Los Angeles	One of the largest and busiest seaports in the world; 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles, it occupies 7,500 acres along 43 miles of coast.
San Gabriel Mountains	In addition to numerous recreational opportunities, this mountain range provides the Valley with a strong visual backdrop to the north, with elevations locally exceeding 10,000 feet above sea level.
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area	This 150,000-acre National Recreation Area includes a number of aesthetic features visible along the south side of the San Fernando Valley. Other areas of scenic value include Stunt Ranch, Topanga Canyon, Stone Canyon Reservoir, and Will Rogers State Historic Park.
Topanga State Park	This park in the Santa Monica Mountains features 36 miles of trails through open grassland, live oaks, and spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. Considered the world's largest wildland within the boundaries of a major city. Also a geological resource, since the park contains earthquake faults, marine fossils, volcanic intrusions, and various sedimentary formations.
Union Station	Los Angeles' first train depot remains a vital, multi-modal transportation hub. Architecturally distinctive design by Parkinson and Parkinson, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places.
Watts Towers	Distinctive pair of steel towers built by Simon Rodia and decorated with scrap metal, bed frames, bottles, ceramic tiles, and seashells. The towers are on the National Register of Historic Places.
Wilacre Park	Located in the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains above Studio City, Wilacre Park has 128 acres of wooded trails and canyons.
Wilson Canyon Park	Located at the northern edge of the San Fernando Valley, this 242-acre park includes oak groves and woodlands, a year-round stream, scenic vistas, and extensive trails leading into the Angeles National Forest.

Source: California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES), 2013. Los Angeles Urban Area Imagery, sourced from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), dated June 20, 2013.

Note: This table is not all-inclusive. It lists some of the most distinctive scenic vistas/aesthetic features in the District.

Unique Aesthetic Resources

LAUSD is the second largest public school system in the United States and encompasses nearly 800 campuses distributed across more than 700 miles. Since its founding in 1872, the district has commissioned, designed, and acquired a remarkable collection of buildings, campuses, and facilities. These properties reflect more than a century of social, architectural, and technological advances, as well as ongoing educational and curricular reform. Properties range from a few late-nineteenth-century, wood-framed schoolhouses to mid-twentieth-century superblock campuses exemplary of modernist architectural design. Unique aesthetic features can be found on District schools with the following architectural styles.

- Late-Nineteenth-Century Victorian Era Styles
- Early Twentieth Century: Beaux-Arts Classicism and Neo-Classical Revival
- Early Twentieth Century: Indigenous Revival Styles and Historic Eclecticism
- Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival
- Renaissance Revival Style

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- Gothic Revival / Collegiate Gothic
- Art Deco
- Streamline Moderne | Moderne
- PWA Moderne
- Early Modernism | International Style
- Mid-Century Modernism / Regional Modernism

Many schools are considered historically significant, meeting the listing criteria for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. A number of the schools are directly associated with the distinguished southern California architects, who include but are not limited to: John C. Austin, George Edwin Bergstrom, Stiles O. Clements, Myron Hunt, Gordon Kaufmann, Richard Neutra, Charles F. Plummer, and Alfred Rosenheim.

Based on a 2002 District-wide survey and the 2014 update, a list of the most historically and architecturally significant school buildings was developed (refer to Chapter 5.5 Cultural Resources).

5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Appendix G a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- AE-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- AE-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- AE-3 Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- AE-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

5.1.3 Environmental Impacts

The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

**Impact 5.1-1: SUP-related projects would not have a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas.
[Threshold AE-1]**

All SUP Projects

As a rule, existing, established public schools tend to be aesthetically compatible with the neighborhoods in which they are located, and their scope, height, and mass are unlikely to block, obscure, or degrade surrounding views. This pattern notwithstanding, the potential for SUP implementation to adversely impact

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one or more of the scenic vistas and aesthetic features in Table 5.1-2 deserves consideration. From the perspective of natural viewscapes, such as views of surrounding mountains, parks, and shorelines in the greater Los Angeles area, most of existing and newly built schools are one or two-stories in height. Additions to or modifications of these school buildings may add another story or a side addition that may block existing scenic views. Each SUP-related project would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. LAUSD's site-specific review process for upgraded or new school construction projects under LAUSD PDF AE-2 requires analysis of views. The District is required to consider whether or not a proposed project is consistent with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, including any proposed changes to the density, height, bulk, and setback of new or updated buildings.

Furthermore, the District is required to include unique vistas, natural areas, or scenic areas that have been formally recognized in the project vicinity and to consider whether the project would have an adverse aesthetic effect on these resources. School construction in neighborhoods that exhibit cohesive and pervasive aesthetic qualities, such as a distinctive architectural style, would be designed to comply with those aesthetic values. In some instances, school upgrade/modernization projects could enhance the view amenities and aesthetic properties of a given neighborhood, especially where the neighboring properties do not meet building codes and/or are dilapidated.

Certain policies in the Conservation Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan have a comparable protective effect, wherein property developers are encouraged to retain significant existing landforms (e.g., ridgelines, bluffs, unique geologic features) and unique scenic features (e.g., mountains) and to protect the public's ability to view these scenic features.

For site-specific projects within the Coastal Zone implemented under the SUP that may be in a State-recognized Coastal Zone, protection of scenic vistas is required by various provisions of the California Coastal Act. The act states, "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."

For any site-specific projects implemented under the SUP that requires site grading or new building construction or exterior modification, the District will incorporate California Coastal Act requirements along with LAUSD School Design Guide into the site design and construction for protection of unique scenic features and designated scenic vistas. Scenic vista impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-2: SUP-related projects would not alter scenic resources within a state scenic highway. [Threshold AE-2]

All SUP Projects

State-designated scenic highways, highways with scenic priority identified in the L.A. County General Plan, nationally designated Scenic Byway Historic Parkways, and California Historic Parkway or those highways that could be so designated are listed in Table 5.1-1. Very few existing schools are near these scenic highways

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(specifically along the I-210, I-5, and Pacific Coast Highway, among others), and opportunities for new school construction and/or significant school building expansion are limited in most instances.

Many of the listed highways are high-volume, limited-access freeways with well-established and demarked landscaped or engineered margins (including sound walls/barriers), or scenic highways in sparsely populated mountain areas where the surrounding terrain is often typified by very steep slopes. CDE Title 5 criteria governing school project siting within 500 feet of a major transportation thoroughfare would also reduce the likelihood of a school upgrade or modernization project being undertaken near a scenic highway.

Additional protection of scenic resources near a state scenic highway are included in the California Scenic Highway Program, where the sponsoring city or county must also adopt ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor. Such ordinances and policies often constitute a formal Corridor Protection Program.

For any site-specific projects implemented under the SUP that requires site grading or building construction or exterior modification, the District will incorporate LAUSD School Design Guide into the site design and construction for protection of scenic resources. Impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-3: SUP-related projects would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. [Threshold AE-3]

All SUP Projects

In some cases implementation of the SUP potentially could bring about adverse impacts on the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. For example, the architecture associated with a school construction project might be incompatible with a neighborhood that possessed a distinctive, widely appreciated architectural style or visual quality. Similarly, where an existing school building or buildings possess unique visual qualities, as in the case of certain older LAUSD school buildings designed by leading architects of their era, poorly conceived building additions or new structures could have an adverse impact on the visual character or quality of the site.

LAUSD School Design Guide requires the consideration of architectural appearance/consistency and other aesthetic factors during the preliminary design review for a proposed school upgrade project. The District encourages the reuse rather than destruction of historical resources, with the multiple goals of: 1) retaining and preserving the historic character of a building, structure, or site; treating distinctive architectural features or examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity; concealing reinforcement required for structural stability or life, safety, or mechanical systems; and conducting surface cleaning of historic structures by the gentlest means possible.

LAUSD PDF AE-2 would also help minimize the likelihood of degraded visual character or quality during SUP implementation. PDF AE-2 requires appropriate design changes to reduce or eliminate significant adverse aesthetic impacts resulting from a proposed school project's building or site design. These design

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changes could include, but are not necessarily limited to, changes to campus layout, height of buildings, and/or architectural style of buildings.

Compliance with LAUSD OEHS CEQA Specification Manual would ensure shade and shadow impacts are analyzed and mitigated. A shadow analysis is required to determine whether a proposed project “would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings.”

For any site-specific projects implemented under the SUP, the District will incorporate LAUSD School Design Guide, OEHS CEQA Specification Manual, PDF AE-2 into site-specific projects for protection of character and quality of site surroundings. Impacts to visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-4: SUP-related projects would not generate substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views. [Threshold AE-4]

All SUP Projects

Depending on site-specific factors and conditions, new light sources could be associated with a future school upgrade project. Examples of such new light sources include campus marquees, parking lot or pedestrian walkway lights, crosswalk lights, building and courtyard lighting, and lighting associated with athletic fields or related athletic infrastructure (tennis courts, outdoor pools, etc.). The construction and operation of new features like these could result in adverse light and glare impacts on nearby land uses, most notably, single- or multi-family residences. During site-specific environmental review of future proposed school upgrade or modernization projects, the District will be obliged to consider whether the project will result in significant adverse light and glare impacts or not. Similarly, these new projects would be required to conform to existing District policies concerning school marquees and related potential for light and glare impacts.

LAUSD Bulletin BUL-5004.1 includes requirements that are intended to minimize adverse light and glare impacts on nearby properties. The Bulletin which was revised in May 2010, includes detailed criteria for the design, approval, placement, and operation and maintenance of electronic light boards (i.e. marquees) proposed for any LAUSD school site. The LAUSD School Design Guide provides measures such as eliminate direct-beam projection off-site or glare off buildings into adjoining residential areas, install lighting to minimize glare for pedestrians and drivers, and to avoid light spilling onto adjacent properties.

PDF AE-1 provides quantitative performance standards for light and glare impacts to no more than two foot-candles, as measured at the property line of an affected nearby residence. The use of light hoods, filtering louvers, glare shields, and/or landscaping is discussed, as is painting of lamp enclosures and poles to reduce reflection. PDF AE-3 includes site lighting standards that would have minimal impact off-site and minimal contribution to sky glow, glare, and light trespass.

The CBC also contains standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.

Impacts from substantial light and glare would be less than significant.

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5.1.4 Applicable Regulations and Standard Conditions

State

- California Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263
- California Public Resources Code, Division 20
- California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2
- California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 14010

Local

- City and County of Los Angeles General Plan: scenic corridors

LAUSD Standards

- School Design Guide. Los Angeles Unified School District. January 2014.
- Marquee Signs (outdoor sign with electronic message display). BUL-5004.1 adopted May 25, 2010.
- LAUSD OEHS CEQA Specification Manual, Appendix F, Protocol For Shadow Analysis In CEQA Documents For Proposed School Sites. December 2005, Revised June 2007.
- Project Design Features: PDF AE-1, PDF AE-2, and PDF AE-3.

5.1.5 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and LAUSD Standards listed above, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.1-1, 5.1-2, 5.1-3, and 5.1-4.

5.1.6 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

5.1.7 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

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