

## 4.C AESTHETIC RESOURCES

### 4.C.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing visual setting for the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan, and evaluates changes in the visual and aesthetic environment that would result from the Plan's implementation. The analysis focuses on visual changes that would be seen from public viewpoints, including any important view corridors and vistas; views of distinctive visual landmarks, scenic resources; and potential impacts of new sources of light and glare. Resources and impacts related to character or visual quality of the site and its surroundings are discussed in Section 4.A, Land Use and Planning.

This EIR recognizes that assessment of whether aesthetic changes from existing conditions would result in comparatively better (substantially improved) or worse (substantially degraded) aesthetic conditions is largely subjective. The analyses in this section, therefore, focus on the extent to which the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan could change existing visual elements or features, rather than analyzing aesthetic values.

### DEFINITIONS

- **Aesthetic Resources** include a combination of numerous elements, such as landforms, vegetation, water features, urban design, and/or architecture, that impart an overall visual impression that is pleasing to, or valued by, its observers. Factors important in describing the aesthetic resources of an area include visual character, scenic resources, and scenic vistas. These factors together not only describe the intrinsic aesthetic appeal of an area, but also communicate the value placed upon a landscape or scene by its observers. These factors include:
  - **Visual Character**, which broadly describes the unique combination of aesthetic elements and scenic resources that characterize a particular area. The quality of an area's visual character can be qualitatively assessed considering the overall visual impression or attractiveness created by the particular landscape characteristics. In urban settings, these characteristics largely include land use type and density, urban landscaping and design, architecture, topography, and background setting;
  - **Scenic Resources**, which are visually significant hillsides, ridges, water bodies, and buildings that are critical in shaping the visual character and scenic identity of the TOD Plan areas, and the surrounding region; and
  - **Scenic Vistas**, which are defined as panoramic views of important visual features, as seen from public viewing areas. This definition combines visual quality with information about view exposure to describe the level of interest or concern that viewers may have for the quality of a particular view or visual setting. In relation to the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan area, these areas are located within a completely urban and developed area that is generally lacking topography. The City of Inglewood General Plan does not identify any scenic vistas within the City.

- **Glare** is the sensation produced by a source of brightness within the visual field that is sufficiently greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted to cause annoyance, discomfort, or loss of vision.

#### 4.C.2 APPLICABLE PLANS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

Implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan is subject to a range of state and local plans, policies, and regulations, which are described below.

##### FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

There are no federal regulations, plans, or policies applicable to aesthetics issues relevant to the Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan.

##### STATE PLANS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has designated scenic highway corridors throughout the state. The TOD Plan areas are not within or visible from any existing designated (or eligible) scenic highways. The nearest scenic highway is Interstate 110 between mile post 25.7 and 31.9 (Caltrans, 2016), which is located north of downtown Los Angeles and south of Interstate 210 in Pasadena. The closest portion of this scenic highway is nine miles northwest of the Fairview Heights TOD plan area.

##### LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

###### Inglewood General Plan

The City of Inglewood General Plan Land Use Element includes the following goal and policies that are relevant to the proposed project.

###### Land Use Element

**Goal:** Improve the visual appearance and economic condition of the existing arterial commercial development along Inglewood's major streets.

###### Major Mixed-Use Policies:

- **Architectural Design Quality.** Require that development in mixed-use districts conveys a high level of architectural design quality and landscape amenities, reflecting the traditions that historically have defined the City.
- **Design Integration.** Require that residential and non-residential portions of mixed-use buildings be seamlessly integrated by architectural design, pedestrian walkways, and landscape.
- **Cohesive and Integrated Development.** Require that planned development mixed-use districts seamlessly integrate uses and buildings as a cohesive project characterized by:

- A connected and unifying street and sidewalk network
  - Consistent property setbacks, frontage design, and building massing
  - Orientation and design of the ground floor of buildings to promote pedestrian activity
  - Consideration of shared parking in lieu of separate parking for each use
  - Transitions of development scale and mass and pedestrian linkages with adjoining neighborhoods and districts.
- **Site Development.** Require that buildings and improvements respect their setting and address elements such as location, slopes, drainages, native landscapes, and view sheds, as applicable.
  - **Compatibility of Residential and Non-Residential Uses.** Require that buildings integrating housing with non-residential uses be designed to assure the compatibility among uses and public safety including separate access, fire suppression barriers, secured resident parking, noise insulation, and other similar elements.

### 4.C.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### AESTHETIC ELEMENTS AND VIEWS

The City of Inglewood is a developed urban area that includes areas of moderately dense development along major corridors that consist of commercial, industrial manufacturing, and residential uses. The City is generally laid out in a grid system, whereby the streets define the location of development. The City has a relatively flat topography, with the majority of the City having a ground slope between zero and five percent (City, 2006), which limits views of adjacent areas. The street corridors provide the only long-range views, which consist of limited distant views of the Baldwin Hills to the north, and of other urban developed areas. In addition, street views include parked and moving vehicles, which is consistent with the urban land uses and character of the community. Overall, views within and surrounding the TOD Plan areas consist of urban development.

There are no designated or otherwise identified scenic views or vistas within, visible from, or of the City (City, 2006). In addition, there are no designated or eligible state scenic highway within or adjacent to the TOD Plan area (Caltrans, 2016). The nearest state scenic highway is Interstate 110 between mile post 25.7 and 31.9 (Caltrans, 2016), which is located north of downtown Los Angeles and south of Interstate 210 in Pasadena. The closest portion of this scenic highway is approximately nine miles northwest of the Fairview Heights TOD Plan area.

#### LIGHT AND GLARE

Nighttime lighting associated with the existing urban development is present throughout the City, including the TOD Plan areas. Existing lighting involves street lights, parking lot and building façade lighting, interior illumination passing through windows, and illumination from vehicle headlights. Sensitive receptors relative to lighting and glare include residents living in the TOD Plan areas, and motorists and pedestrians passing through the TOD Plan areas. Because of the urban nature of the TOD Plan areas and associated nighttime lighting that currently exists throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area, including the TOD Plan areas, nighttime views of stars are limited.

Glare can emanate from many different sources, some of which include direct sunlight, sunlight reflecting from cars or buildings, and bright outdoor or indoor lighting. Glare in the TOD Plan areas is generated by building and vehicle windows reflecting light. However, there are no buildings, structures, or facilities in the TOD Plan areas that presently generate substantial glare since most of the buildings are constructed of non-reflective materials and are not surfaced with substantial amount of windows adjacent to one another that would create a large reflective area. In addition, surface parking lots in the area are not substantially large and are generally separated by buildings, walkways, landscaping and other non-reflective surfaces; such that, the source of glare from sunlight or exterior light reflecting from car windshields is limited.

#### 4.C.4 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

##### SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Criteria outlined in CEQA Guidelines were used to determine the level of significance of aesthetics impacts. Appendix G of State CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project would have a significant effect if it were to:

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

Resources related to character or quality of the TOD Plan areas and their surroundings and potential degradation to those resources that occur from implementation of the proposed TOD Plans are discussed in Section 4.A, *Land Use and Planning*.

#### 4.C-5 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

**Threshold 4.C-1:** Adverse effect on a scenic vista.

**Impact 4.C-1:** Implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not result in adverse effects to a scenic vista.

##### *Methodology*

The assessment of aesthetic impacts is subjective by nature. Aesthetics generally refer to the identification of visual resources and the quality of what can be seen, as well as an overall visual perception of the environment. The significance determination for the aesthetics analysis related to scenic vistas is based on consideration of whether any scenic vistas exist within or near the TOD Plan areas; and if a scenic vista exists, (1) whether it can be viewed from public areas within or near the TOD Plan areas and (2) the potential for implementation of the TOD Plan to either hinder views of the

scenic vista or result in its visual degradation. Should scenic vistas not currently exist, implementation of the proposed TOD Plan would not result in impacts.

#### *Impact Assessment*

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As described above, there are no identified or designated scenic views or vistas within Inglewood (City, 2006). The City has a relatively flat topography, with the majority of the City having a ground slope between zero and five percent (City, 2006), which limits views of adjacent areas. The only long-range views within the TOD Plan areas are along roadway corridors, which provide limited distant views of the Baldwin Hills to the north and views of urban development.

The proposed TOD Plan would result in redevelopment and infill development within the existing developed urban environment. The views along road corridors would continue to be of a developed and urban landscape. Due to the lack of topography, scenic vistas would not be generated by the project, and as described above, no identified or designated scenic views or vistas exist. As a result, implementation of the proposed TOD Plans would have no impacts in relation to a scenic vista.

#### *Significance Conclusion for Impact 4.C-1*

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Implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not result in adverse effects to a scenic vista.

**Threshold 4.C-2: Damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway.**

**Impact 4.C-2: Implementation of the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway.**

#### *Methodology*

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The significance determination for the aesthetics analysis related to scenic resources within a state scenic highway is based on consideration of whether a state scenic highway exists within or near the TOD Plan areas; and if a state scenic highway exists, (1) whether it can be viewed from public areas within or near by the TOD Plan areas; and (2) the potential for implementation of the TOD Plan to damage its scenic resources. If no state scenic highways exist, implementation of the proposed TOD Plans would not result in impacts.

#### *Impact Assessment*

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The TOD Plan areas are not within or visible from any existing designated (or eligible) scenic highways. The nearest highway is Interstate 110 between mile post 25.7 and 31.9 in Los Angeles (Caltrans 2016), which is approximately nine miles northwest of the northwestern most portion of the Fairview Heights TOD Plan area. Due to the lack of a designated (or eligible) scenic highway, implementation of the proposed TOD Plan would not result in impacts to a scenic resource within a state scenic highway.

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### *Significance Conclusion for Impact 4.C-2*

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Implementation of the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plans would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and no impacts would occur.

**Threshold 4.C-3:** New source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

**Impact 4.C-3.1:** Implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not create substantial new sources of nighttime lighting.

### *Methodology*

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For the purposes of this analysis, the evaluation of nighttime lighting focuses on changes in illumination levels that would result from implementation of the proposed TOD Plan and the extent to which such new sources of light would increase nighttime lighting on sensitive uses. Lighting impacts would be considered significant if they increase lighting on sensitive uses (i.e., residences) for a substantial portion of the nighttime or would be directed so as to impair views of drivers on streets at night.

### *Impact Assessment*

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The proposed TOD Plan areas are urbanized and include a mix of residential, retail, commercial, office and industrial land uses. Sources of light include interior and exterior building lighting, parking lot lighting, vehicular lighting, street lighting, and landscape lighting. Implementation of the proposed TOD plan would increase overall nighttime lighting because it would result in greater intensity and density of land uses than currently exists. New lighting would accompany all new development, including exterior lighting for streetlights, parking lots, signs, walkways, and interior lighting, which could be visible through windows to the outside. In addition, existing and proposed residential uses, considered light-sensitive receptors, are located throughout the TOD Plan areas.

The requirements of Chapter 12 of the Inglewood Municipal Code related to lighting and shielding of light sources limit the potential for increased lighting on sensitive uses. Light emanating from new uses with the TOD Plan areas would be required to be either low scaled lighting or shielded to focus lighting and prevent lighting from spilling onto adjacent sensitive uses, such as residential, or from streaming directly into streets, which could impair views of drivers on streets at night. With compliance with the Municipal Code, that is checked by the City through the plan check and project permitting process, impacts related to increased sources of light would be less than significant.

### *Significance Conclusion for Impact 4.C-3.1*

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Implementation of the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan in compliance with the Municipal Code lighting standards would not create substantial new sources of nighttime lighting, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

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**Impact 4.C-3.2: Implementation of the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not create a substantial new source of glare.**

### *Methodology*

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For the purposes of this analysis, the analysis of glare focuses on the extent to which implementation of the proposed TOD Plan would increase daytime glare on sensitive uses. Glare impacts would be considered significant if site-specific development projects under the TOD Plan would create a new source of glare that would negatively affect sensitive uses (i.e., residences) or direct glare onto roadways so as to cause a safety hazard for drivers.

### *Impact Assessment*

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Glare can emanate from many different sources, some of which include direct sunlight, sunlight reflecting from cars or buildings, and bright outdoor or indoor lighting. Because implementation of the proposed TOD Plan would increase the total building area within the Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Plan areas, it has the potential to create substantially more daytime glare than currently exists within the TOD Plan areas. Glare from reflective surfaces would occur as the result of development that uses large expanses of glass, metal, and other reflective surfaces for building façades. New buildings constructed pursuant to the proposed TOD Plan would include sources of daytime glare, including glass windows, metal, or other reflective materials used on buildings or in parking areas.

However, the TOD planning areas are currently developed with similar urban land uses, and implementation of the TOD Plan would not result in a substantial net increase in daytime glare, even though a substantial increase in total building area would occur. Implementation of features, such as non-reflective textured surfaces on building exteriors, limiting of the use of reflective glass, and shielding external light sources as required by Chapter 12 of the Inglewood Municipal Code would reduce the potential to generate glare from new development. Thus, with compliance with the Municipal Code that is checked by the City through the plan check and development permit process, impacts related to increased sources of glare would be less than significant.

### *Significance Conclusion for Impact 4.C-3.2*

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Implementation of the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights TOD Plan would not create substantial new sources of glare, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

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## **4.C.6 REFERENCES – AESTHETIC RESOURCES**

Caltrans California Scenic Highway Mapping System (Caltrans 2016). Accessed March 30, 2016.  
[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/I6\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/I6_livability/scenic_highways/)

City of Inglewood Municipal Code Chapter 12, Planning and Zoning. Accessed March 30, 2016.

<http://www.qcode.us/codes/inglewood/>

City of Inglewood 2006 General Plan Technical Background Report, 2006.