

CHAPTER 4 – AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the environmental setting (existing conditions and regulatory setting) for the aesthetic and visual environment in the MTP Plan Area. This chapter also presents the federal, state, and local policies and regulations that determine mitigation requirements and identifies impacts on visual resources that may result from implementation of the proposed MTP 2035 projects, and mitigation measures to reduce these impacts where necessary.

The study area consists of transportation routes, including highways, rail alignments, bicycle trails, state routes, roads, and Caltrans right-of-way in the MTP Plan Area. The aesthetic appearance of the Sacramento metropolitan area is a function of both the natural landscape and man-made elements that create an urban design. Because transportation facilities can have a major influence on human perception of the visual environment, this section addresses the general aesthetic landscape of the region and assesses the potential impacts from region-wide construction of at- and above-grade facilities.

SETTING

This section provides definitions of the concepts used to characterize and evaluate the existing aesthetic setting and the potential visual impacts of the MTP. Using these concepts, this section describes the regional visual quality and character, visual resources of the region, views from important vantage points, general viewer sensitivity, and existing sources of light and glare. This analysis uses a qualitative, descriptive approach for evaluating the visual resources of the area and the effects of proposed regional transportation improvements on those resources.

Concepts and Terminology for Aesthetics Analysis

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual *character* and *quality*, combined with the viewer response to the area (Federal Highway Administration 1983). The scenic quality component can best be described as the overall impression that an individual viewer retains after driving through, walking through, or flying over an area (U.S. Bureau of Land Management 1980). Viewer response is a combination of *viewer exposure* and *viewer sensitivity*. Viewer exposure is a function of the number of viewers, the number of views seen, the distance of the viewers, and the viewing duration. Viewer sensitivity relates to the extent of the public's concern for particular viewsheds. These terms and criteria are described in detail below.

Viewshed: A viewshed is defined as all of the surface area within the field of view of an observer that is visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or sequence of locations (e.g., a roadway or trail) (Federal Highway Administration 1983). The term is commonly used to describe the extent of a scenic resource. The extent of a viewshed can be limited by a number of intervening elements, including trees and other vegetation, built structures, or topography such as hills and mountains. Because of the scale of the MTP project area, generalized landscape *units*, instead of specific viewsheds, were assessed (see “Regional Visual Quality and Character,” below).

Visual Character: Both natural and artificial landscape features make up the *character* of a view. Character is influenced by geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreational, and urban features. Urban features include those associated with landscape settlement and development, such as roads,

utilities, structures, earthworks, and the results of other human activities. The perception of visual character can vary significantly seasonally and even hourly as weather, light, shadow, and the elements that compose the viewshed change. Form, line, color, and texture are the basic components used to describe visual character and quality for most visual assessments (U.S. Forest Service 1974, Federal Highway Administration 1983). The appearance of the landscape is described in terms of the dominance of each of these components.

Visual Quality: Visual quality is the character, condition, and quality of a scenic landscape or other visual resource and how it is perceived and valued by the public. Various jurisdictions within the SACOG region, such as cities, counties, or federal or regional agencies, provide guidelines regarding the preservation and enhancement of visual quality in their plans or regulations. Because of the size and diversity of the SACOG region, there are no uniform standards that apply to all areas within the region.

Environmental Setting

Regional Visual Quality and Character

The bulk of the MTP Plan Area is located in the Sacramento Valley, a basin generally bounded by the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the east and the coastal ranges to the west. Topography in the Sacramento valley is generally flat, with relief anywhere from slightly below sea level near the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta to over 2,150 feet above sea level at the Sutter Buttes. The network of rivers that drain the Sierra Nevada ranges and Central Valley are a key aesthetic component of the natural landscape. These include the American and Feather Rivers, both of which converge on the Sacramento River, the state's largest and longest river, for eventual outlet into the San Francisco Bay. The Cosumnes River in south Sacramento County supports a significant wetlands estuary. The Bear and Yuba Rivers - which converge on the Feather River - make up part of the landscape in Yuba County.

The eastern portion of the region - Placer and El Dorado Counties - is located in the Sierra Nevada mountains and foothills. Topography in this area varies greatly, with gently rolling hills in the western portion and steeper, more mountainous terrain in the east. Many of the hills in Placer and El Dorado Counties have steep slopes, with intermittent creeks dividing the landscape. Consequently, a substantial portion of Placer and El Dorado Counties remains in open space use, distinguished by large expanses of rugged, densely wooded and undeveloped hillsides with scattered areas of rural residential and commercial uses. The flatter western portions of the counties have been historically and are still used for grain cultivation and pasture.

The natural landscape in the MTP Plan Area has been modified by several man-made elements, including the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel in Yolo County and the Folsom Dam in Sacramento County. In addition, an extensive flood control system which includes levees, overflow weirs, draining pump plants, and bypass channels exists to respond to the pervasive threat of flooding.

With respect to urban form, the MTP Plan Area spans a diverse geography, including productive agricultural lands, the rapidly growing urban core and foothill communities, and the sparsely populated forest lands of the western Sierra Nevada Mountains. The MTP Plan Area is characterized by several urban growth centers within El Dorado, Sacramento, Placer and Yolo counties. These urbanized areas have experienced much of the population growth and urban growth experienced by other urban centers in the Central Valley. However, the urbanized landscape covers only a portion of the total plan area. As discussed in the Land Use and Planning chapter, much of the MTP Plan Area is rural and is characterized by large areas of agricultural lands.

Transportation facilities in the area are another man-made element that characterizes the urban area. The region's central location in the state and proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area has resulted in a network of freeways and railroad facilities. A number of at-grade intersections or highways are sometimes the only urban improvements through agricultural, rural lands.

Transportation systems have a major influence on human perception of the visual environment. In urban areas, roadway rights-of-way comprise 20-30 percent of total land area. As most vehicular movement occurs along transportation corridors, their placement largely determines what parts of the area will be seen. Even for people not using the transportation system at a particular time, or who never use certain modes of travel, transportation systems are usually a dominant element of the visual environment.

Viewsheds and visual quality are affected by air quality and more specifically, visibility. In the Sacramento metropolitan area, high pollutant emissions - combined with poor natural ventilation in the air basin - result in degraded visibility. Of particular note are photochemical smog and airborne particulates, finely divided solids or liquids such as soot, dust, aerosols, and mists that absorb sunlight, producing haze and reducing visibility.

Visual Resources

Aesthetically significant features occur in a diverse array of environments within the SACOG region, ranging in character from urban centers to rural agricultural lands to natural woodlands. The extraordinary range of visual features in the region is afforded by the mixture of climate, topography, and flora and fauna found in the natural environment, and the diversity of style, composition, and distribution of the built environment.

Natural features include land and water resources such as park and open space areas, mountain areas, beaches, and natural water sources. Included as natural features are elements of the visual environment that have been constructed to resemble natural features, such as manmade lakes. The loss of natural aesthetic features, reduction of vistas, or the introduction of contrasting urban features may diminish the value of natural resources in the region.

From a regional perspective, views of the various mountain ranges from locations in the region are considered valuable visual resources. Other natural features that may contain visual significance include the numerous rivers, streams, creeks, lakes and reservoirs located within the region. Features of the built environment that may also have visual significance include individual or groups of structures that are distinctive due to their aesthetic, historical, social, or cultural significance or characteristics. Examples of the visually significant built environment may include bridges or overpasses, architecturally appealing buildings or groups of buildings, landscaped freeways, and a location where an historic event occurred.

Designated State and Local Scenic Highways

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program is administered by Caltrans and consists of laws, incentives, and guidelines that are intended to protect the scenic, historic, and recreational resources within designated scenic highway corridors. A scenic highway corridor is defined by Caltrans as the area of land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway (Caltrans 1996). It is usually limited by topography and/or jurisdictional boundaries. State goals for scenic highways include the following:

1. preserve and enhance the unique visual, biological, and ecological resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
2. prevent and eliminate (when reasonably possible) conditions that detract from or compromise the quality of the aesthetic resources of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
3. encourage the development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the Scenic Highway Corridor;
4. encourage preservation of historical landmarks adjacent to the Scenic Highway Corridor;
and
5. encourage community civic groups to create programs that increase community interest in the visual assets of the Scenic Highway Corridor and facilitate the implementation of such programs.

Figure 4-1 shows state and locally designated scenic highways in the MTP Plan Area. The table below also identifies these routes. The remainder, are locally designated highways or streets. These designations represent recognition of the high scenic and visual qualities of these corridors. Specific design guidelines are required by local regulation for all designated highways, and the state-designated corridors must be reviewed when improvements are proposed to determine if the highway will remain eligible for designation as a scenic corridor.

Table 4-1. – State and Local Scenic Highways

County	Highway	Location	Designation
El Dorado	State Route 49	Countywide	Eligible State Scenic Highway
	State Route 89	Countywide	Official State Scenic Highway
	U.S. 50	East of Placerville to SR89	Official State Scenic Highway
Placer	State Route 28	East of SR89	Eligible State Scenic Highway (all)
	State Route 49	Countywide	
	State Route 89	Countywide, south of Truckee	
	Interstate 80	SR 20 to Truckee	
Sacramento	State Route 160	Along the Sacramento River	Official State Scenic Highway
Sutter	None	None	None
Yolo	State Route 16	Portions between north border of County to west of Interstate 505	Eligible State Scenic Highway
Yuba	State Route 49	From the Yuba County Line to the Yuba Summit.	Eligible State Scenic Highway

Source: California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/ Accessed February 5, 2007.

Within the MTP Plan Area, designated vista points along scenic highways are located in El Dorado and Placer counties, as follows:

- El Dorado County, Christmas Valley, State Route 89
- Placer County, Emigrant Gap, Interstate 80
- Placer County, Alice Richardson, State Route 89

However, according to information provided by Caltrans, the Christmas Valley vista point is a pullout that does not have a view or facilities associated with designated vista points. The Alice Richardson site is not developed. Only the Emigrant Gap vista point along Interstate 80 is fully developed. It overlooks Bear Valley and has a rock wall.

Regulatory Setting

Federal Regulations

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) SAFETEA-LU includes numerous provisions for improvements and changes to the implementation of transportation enhancement activities, which are funded by a ten percent set aside of Surface Transportation Program funds that are earmarked for transportation enhancement projects. SAFETEA-LU includes a list of qualifying transportation enhancement activities which include several items supportive of visual quality enhancement such as acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs, landscaping or other scenic beautification, and control and removal of outdoor advertising, among others. Transportation enhancement activities are not required to have a direct link to surface transportation, and they are sufficiently qualified if they merely relate to surface transportation.

State Regulations

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program was created by the State legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would reduce the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. To be included in the State program, the highways proposed for designation must meet Caltrans' eligibility requirements and have visual merit. The status of a state scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the California Department of Transportation for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway.

Local Regulations

County and City Controls

Most local planning guidelines to preserve and enhance the visual quality and aesthetic resources of urban and natural areas are established in the jurisdiction's General Plan. The value attributed to a visual resource generally is based on the characteristics and distinctiveness of the resource and the number of persons who view it. Vistas of undisturbed natural areas, unique or unusual features forming an

important or dominant portion of a viewshed, and distant vistas offering relief from less attractive nearby features are frequently considered to be scenic resources. In some instances, a case-by-case determination of scenic value may be needed, but often there is agreement within the relevant community about which features are valued as scenic resources.

In addition to federal and State designations, counties and cities have their own scenic highway designations, which are intended to preserve and enhance existing scenic resources. Criteria for designation are commonly included in the conservation/open space element of the city or County General Plan.

Cities and counties can use open space easements as a mechanism to preserve scenic resources, if they have adopted open-space plans, as provided by the Open Space Easement Act of 1974 and codified in California Government Code (Section 51070 et seq.) According to the Act, a city or County may acquire or approve an open-space easement through a variety of means, including use of public money.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methods and Assumptions

Impacts to scenic resources and vista points were identified based on available SACOG data on state-designated highways and vista points, and on each County's data on county-designated scenic highways and vista points, located within the six county region. This analysis discusses and assesses potential impacts to designated scenic resources, including scenic highways or vista points that may be generated from projects proposed within the MTP 2035. Although the proposed project sites within the MTP Plan Area were not physically surveyed, future project-level environmental documentation would evaluate site-specific visual resources and identify potential impacts.

Generally, with regard to aesthetic impacts, the greater the change from existing conditions, the more significant the impact. For example, the construction of a new roadway generally has a greater impact on scenic resources than the widening of an existing one. Likewise, the construction of a new interchange usually has a greater impact on the surrounding area than the modification of an existing one. Road widening, however, can have significant local impacts especially when requiring the removal of trees and other important landscape buffers, or when construction of noise barriers or other visual impediments are necessary.

Criteria for Determining Significance

The criteria for determining whether the MTP 2035 would have significant environmental impacts related to aesthetics were based on the environmental checklist form in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.). According to the State CEQA Guidelines, significant impacts to aesthetics would occur if the plan would:

- 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;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Project

This section describes the impacts on aesthetics and visual resources that could result from the proposed project. Some projects within the MTP 2035 could significantly affect aesthetics and visual resources. However, prior to final approval of each project considered in the MTP 2035, the implementing agency will conduct the appropriate project-specific environmental review. Significant impacts and mitigation measures will be considered during that project-level review.

Impact AES - 1: Substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista within the MTP Plan Area

Vista points are typically associated with high visual quality and character, and would likely have a high level of sensitivity for viewers. As noted, there are only three scenic vista points within the MTP Plan Area, located along Interstate 80 at Emigrant Gap in Placer County and along State Route 89 in El Dorado County. Primary viewers are travelers, and some local residents. The MTP 2035 includes some proposed projects that are located along these routes and may be in some proximity to these vista points. For example, the Emigrant Gap pavement rehabilitation project would be located approximately 1.5 miles from the vista point. The construction of a slope embankment along Interstate 80 would be located approximately three miles from the vista point at Emigrant Gap. The slope embankment would be approximately 0.8 miles in length.

Construction activities associated with the proposed improvements would include the use of heavy equipment and associated vehicles, including bulldozers, graders, scrapers, and trucks, which would be temporarily included in the viewshed. However, these activities would be adjacent to the highway, which creates a man-made corridor of low visual value, and temporary in nature, and are thus considered to be less than significant. In addition to the construction activities, there may be longer term visual effects that are unknown at the planning stage. Based upon the general planning nature of the MTP 2035, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As a result, SACOG does not have sufficient reliable data to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on the impact and no significance determination can be reasonably made. The implementing agency will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. The following mitigation measures could be used by implementing agencies to address potential impacts during project-level review:

Mitigation Measure AES - 1a: Reduce Visibility of Construction Staging Areas and Re-vegetate Exposed Earth Surfaces

Implement typical mitigation measures used to minimize short term visual impacts, including reducing the visibility of construction staging areas where possible, by fencing and screening these areas with low contrast materials consistent with the surrounding environment. Re-vegetate graded slopes and exposed earth surfaces at the earliest opportunity.

Mitigation Measure AES - 1b: Determine Specific Visual Effects Associated with Proposed Improvement Projects

Consistent with mitigation measures set forth in the *Draft Supplemental Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2027 Regional Transportation Plan*, within Placer County, complete further study of the specific visual effects from projects along Interstate 80 near Emigrant Gap and implement appropriate project specific mitigation measures to reduce any identified impacts.

Impact AES - 2: Short- and long-term damage to scenic resources within the MTP Plan Area

The MTP 2035 includes some projects within the MTP Plan Area that would be located along the identified state and local scenic highways and vistas. However, in those instances where scenic resources would be affected by the construction of these projects, changes that could affect the visual quality or character of the locations could occur. Based upon the general planning nature of the MTP 2035, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As a result, SACOG does not have sufficient reliable data to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on the impact and no significance determination can be reasonably made. The implementing agency will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. The following mitigation measure could be used by implementing agencies to address potential impacts during project-level review:

Mitigation Measure AES - 2: Implement Applicable Local Policies and Standard Measures to Protect Scenic Vistas, Scenic Resources and Visual Character

Ensure consistency with established policies and adopted mitigation measures set forth by local jurisdictions in general plans and in the environmental impact reports for those general plans that collectively protect the important elements of scenic vistas, including scenic resources, and the visual character of an area.

Impact AES - 3: Substantial degradation of visual character or quality within the MTP Plan Area

Implementation of the proposed MTP 2035 project could result in both short-term and long-term visual impacts by blocking views from transportation facilities or from the surrounding area. In the short term, construction of constituent projects could result in view blockage by construction equipment and scaffolding, removal of landscaping, temporary route changes, temporary signage, exposed excavation and slope faces with contrasting soil colors, and construction staging areas. Best management practices utilized during construction to minimize the visual intrusion would include locating construction staging areas in less visible locations (given other environmental considerations such as avoiding sensitive habitat, etc.), fencing and/or screening staging areas, and re-vegetation of exposed slopes at the earliest possible opportunity. Even with these typical practices, short-term visual impacts would still occur. Projects included in MTP 2035 could have long-term visual impacts as well. For example, the projects located in rural/agricultural area where land uses are proposed to shift to a urban/residential character could have an effect upon the visual character of that area.

The majority of MTP 2035 projects would be constructed at grade level in areas where similar infrastructure exists. Projects involving construction of overpasses, interchanges, intersections, park-and-ride lots, multimodal stations, and the substantial physical expansion of existing highway and street segments would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis to ensure visual compatibility with surrounding property.

Based upon the general planning nature of the MTP 2035, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As a result, SACOG does not have sufficient reliable data to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on the impact and no significance determination can be reasonably made. The implementing agency will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. The following mitigation measures could be used by implementing agencies to address potential impacts during project-level review:

Mitigation Measure AES - 3: Design Projects to be Visually Compatible with Surrounding Areas

Design projects to minimize contrasts in scale and massing between the project and surrounding natural forms and developments. Avoid, if possible, large cuts and fills when the visual environment (natural or urban) would be substantially disrupted. Site or design projects to minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds and use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain.

Mitigation Measure AES - 4: Develop Design Guidelines that Make Project Elements Visually Compatible with Surrounding Areas

Develop design guidelines for each type of transportation facility to ensure that elements of proposed facilities are visually compatible with surrounding areas. Visual design guidelines will, at a minimum, include setback buffers, landscaping, color, texture, signage, and lighting criteria. The following methods will be employed whenever possible.

- Transportation systems should be designed in a manner where the surrounding landscape dominates.
- Transportation systems should be developed to be compatible with the surrounding environment (e.g., colors and materials of construction material).
- If exotic vegetation is used, it should be used as screening and landscaping that blends in and complements the natural landscape.
- Trees bordering highways should remain or be replaced in-kind, so that clear-cutting is not evident.
- Grading should blend with the adjacent landforms and topography.
- New slopes and embankments should be landscaped with compatible grasses, shrubs, and trees to soften cuts and edges.

Impact AES - 4: Creation of a new source of light or glare

Proposed project improvements along roadways, and at transit stations could create substantial light or glare. East-west asphalt transportation routes reflect glare from the sun during summer months. Installation of overhead lighting could introduce a new source of light during nighttime hours, affecting views and casting light on adjacent properties. Proposed rail stations and bus maintenance yards would likely have nighttime lighting fixtures associated with the buildings and parking lots. Additional nighttime lighting in an area could result in a substantial change.

Based upon the general planning nature of the MTP 2035, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As a result, SACOG does not have sufficient reliable data to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on the impact and no significance determination can be reasonably made. The implementing agency will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. The following mitigation measures could be used by implementing agencies to address potential impacts during project-level review:

Mitigation Measure AES - 5: Plant Trees along Transportation Corridors to Reduce Sun Glare

Plant trees along transportation corridors to reduce glare from the sun. Tree species chosen shall be able to provide significant shade cover when mature. Utilities shall be installed underground along these routes wherever feasible to allow trees to grow and provide shade without need for severe pruning. Planting trees along transportation corridors could also assist with reducing the effects of carbon dioxide emissions from mobile sources.

Mitigation Measure AES - 6: Design Structures to Avoid or Reduce Impacts Resulting from Glare

For projects that would introduce a new source of light and/or glare, require the design of proposed structures and facilities to reduce or avoid impacts resulting from glare, due to the use of reflective materials, such as metal. Measures employed shall include the use of non-reflective materials, such as paint, vegetative screening, matte finish coatings, and masonry. Project designs shall be submitted to any applicable design review committees and shall implement their recommendations.

Mitigation Measure AES - 7: Design Lighting to Meet Minimum Safety and Security Standards

Incorporate lighting design specifications to meet minimum safety and security standards where lighting is required or proposed. Incorporate the following standards into lighting plans to reduce the impact of introduced light and glare, as applicable:

- Luminaries should be fixtures that cast low-angle illumination to minimize incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space. Fixtures that project light upward or horizontally should not be used.
- Luminaries should be directed away from habitat and open space areas adjacent to the project site.

- Luminaries should provide good color rendering and natural light qualities.
- Low-pressure sodium and high-pressure sodium fixtures that are not color-corrected should not be used. Intensity will be approximately 10 lux for roadway intersections.
- For pole lighting, luminary mountings should be downcast and the height of the poles minimized to reduce potential for back scatter into the nighttime sky and for incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space. Luminary mountings should have non-glare finishes.

Impact AES-5: Construction of soundwalls would affect view and change visual character in transportation corridors

The construction of soundwalls along transportation corridors, where they are used to reduce noise levels in surrounding residential areas, could significantly alter views from the road reducing visual interest and sense of place while also limiting views and sunlight from adjoining areas. Soundwalls that may be built to mitigate noise impacts of freeways and highway expansion projects, would affect the visual character of the streetscapes, highway and freeway corridors where these programs are implemented. Architectural relief, landscaping and visual screening, which are now customary requirements, for new soundwall programs would soften the contrasts, but views into neighborhoods would be blocked by these programs. Because the full scope of these programs has not yet been established, the physical extent of view blockage is unknown at this time. Based upon the general planning nature of the MTP 2035, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As a result, SACOG does not have sufficient reliable data to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on the impact and no significance determination can be reasonably made. The implementing agency will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. The following mitigation measures could be used by implementing agencies to address potential impacts during project-level review:

Mitigation Measure AES - 8: Construct Soundwalls to complement the surrounding landscape

Construct sound walls of materials whose color and texture complements the surrounding landscape and development. Use color, texture, and alternating facades to “break up” large facades and provide visual interest.

Mitigation Measure AES - 9: Include landscaping for soundwalls to complement the landscape of surrounding areas

Landscape the sound walls with plants that screen the sound wall, preferably with either native vegetation or landscaping that complements the dominant landscaping of surrounding areas, as space allows.