4.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the existing visual conditions of the project site and vicinity, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential impacts, and identifies mitigation measures related to implementation of the proposed project, if applicable.

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

4.1.1.1 Overview

The approximately 105-acre project site is located in the City of Irvine's (City's) Northern Flatlands Landform Zone, an area identified in the City's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element as occurring north of Interstate 5 and generally south of State Route (SR) 241. Situated between mountainous terrain to the north and more dense urbanized uses to the south, the Northern Flatlands Landform Zone is typified by flat to gradual slopes; numerous washes/streams, including Bee Canyon Wash and Hicks Canyon Wash; and agricultural and urban/residential development. The project site is at the northeast corner of Portola Parkway and Jeffrey Road and is within the City's existing Orchard Hills Planning Area. The site is bounded by Portola Parkway to the south, Jeffrey Road/Hicks Haul Road to the west, and Bee Canyon Access Road to the east. Hicks Canyon Wash is to the north. The regional location is shown on Figure 3- 1, Project Location, and the local area is shown on Figure 3-2, Local Vicinity.

The project site and surroundings encompass agricultural lands and an area of relatively recent development within the City, which includes the residential communities of Portola Springs and Orchard Hills. SR-261 and SR-241 provide highway access to the area. The developed areas in the northern portion of the City are adjacent to a large swath of open space called the Northern Open Space Preserve, which includes Limestone Canyon and Blackstar Canyon and extends north to the Cleveland National Forest. The residentially developed areas feature a mix of contemporary and traditional architectural styles, with neighborhoods including Eastwood and Orchard Hills showcasing distinctive design elements such as brick façades, stucco exteriors painted in cool/light-colored tones, arched entryways, and landscaping. Numerous parks, greenbelts, and scenic trails in the area, including the Jeffrey Open Space Trail (JOST), offer picturesque views of nearby rolling hills and open spaces.

The following discussion of the project site and surrounding area is supported by photographs taken during a site visit conducted on February 24, 2025. The locations of selected photographs are shown on Figure 4.1-1, Photograph Locations, and photographs depicting views of the project site and surrounding area are presented on Figure 4.1-2, Existing Conditions: Project Site, and Figure 4.1-3, Existing Conditions: Jeffrey Open Space Trail (JOST).

Project Site

The project site consists primarily of active agricultural fields, with equipment storage and laydown areas in the northern portion of the site. The current General Plan designation for the project site is Recreation, as shown on Figure 3-3, Existing Land Use, and the current zoning is 1.5–Recreation, as shown on Figure 3-4, Existing Zoning. The land is slightly elevated, with narrow, linear ditches occurring along the southern, eastern, and western site edges. Elevated terrain and agricultural lands are depicted on Figure 4.1-2 (Photographs A through D). Slatted or chain-link fencing is erected along Bee Canyon Access Road and blocks views to the agricultural portion of the site from this road. The site is typified by agriculturally cultivated fields featuring low row or similar crops. Mature trees are interspersed throughout the project site, mostly concentrating along the edges near the site boundary along Bee Canyon Access Road (see Figure 4.1-2, Photograph D). The equipment storage area in the northern portion of

the project site includes light tan, regularly shaped containers; some larger buildings; and a rectangular area of disturbance that includes an elevated earthen pad and an adjacent denuded area bordered on the east, west, and south by indeterminate vegetation. During the site investigation conducted in February 2025, miscellaneous vehicles were parked in various places in the northern portion of the project site.

Surrounding Land Uses

Hicks Canyon Wash forms the northern boundary of the project site. In the project area, Hicks Canyon Wash features a narrow, sandy, earthen bottom with moderate slopes supporting grasses and large, unmaintained shrubs. Just north of Hicks Canyon Wash is a private road that stretches east to the Irvine Ranch Conservancy Native Seed Farm and various other special use sites leased to third parties, including a landscape designer, a pump supplier, and an excavating contractor, all of which are generally surrounded by undeveloped hillsides or graded, manufactured slopes (these occur to the south of the referenced third parties and to the north of Bee Canyon Access Road). Following Hicks Haul Road to the north, through a gated entrance with a posted "Private Road – No Public Access" sign (the sign is on Hicks Canyon Road in the northeastern corner of the project site), are avocado groves, undeveloped open space, and the All American Asphalt (AAA) plant. The undeveloped open space features expansive greenbelts, rolling hills, and a variety of native vegetation.

Located to the south of the project site, south of Portola Road, and generally paralleling Jeffrey Road, the JOST runs through this area and offers scenic views of the surrounding landscapes, including groves of trees, wildflowers, and well-maintained grassy areas. The JOST runs between suburban residential developments to the north and south of Jeffrey Road. Representative photographs of the JOST near the project site are presented on Figure 4.1-3.

The final phase of Orchard Hills, a single-family residential development situated atop a steep, elevated manufactured slope, is under construction directly to the west of the project site. Rattlesnake Reservoir lies to the north of the residential development under construction, and farther north lies additional undeveloped open space near Rattlesnake Canyon and nearby residential, commercial, and educational development/uses within Orchard Hills.

Lastly, to the east of the project site and east of Bee Canyon Access Road is a large, somewhat triangular-shaped area of mostly hilly, undeveloped terrain that flanks a wash system that terminates at the Syphon Reservoir. The southwestern end of the reservoir is contained by a broad earthen slope that is adjacent to a private recreational complex featuring baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, a surface parking lot, and a path that ultimately connects users to the nearby main campus of Crean Lutheran High School.

4.1.1.2 Scenic Vistas

According to the City's General Plan EIR, a viewshed is an area that visible from a given vantage point and viewing direction, and a scenic vista is a view of undisturbed natural lands exhibiting a unique or unusual feature that comprises an important or dominant portion of the viewshed (City of Irvine 2024a). Scenic vistas may also be represented by a particular distant view that provides visual relief from less attractive views of nearby features.

The City does not designate any official scenic vistas; however, the City's General Plan lists features that are considered to contribute to the City's visual significance. Prominent natural features, such as the Santiago and San Joaquin Hills, along with scenic watercourses like San Diego Creek, enhance the City's aesthetic appeal. Prominent landforms in the City include the Santiago Hills, northern flatlands, central flatlands, and San Joaquin Hills. San Diego Creek, Agua Chinon Wash, Bee Canyon Wash, Borrego Canyon Wash, Hicks Canyon Wash, Peters Canyon Wash, Sand Canyon Wash, and San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh run through the City. The City's open space spine

network, featuring two north–south spines (including Jeffrey Spine) and six east–west spines (Hicks Canyon, Venta Spur Trail, Edison easement, San Diego Creek, and University Drive/Mason Regional Park), provides views throughout the community (City of Irvine 2024b).

4.1.1.3 Scenic Roads

A scenic road is a highway, road, drive, or street that provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made scenic resources. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program, there are no state-designated or eligible scenic routes located in the City of Irvine. While Caltrans has not designated any scenic routes in the city of Irvine and nearby areas, the City of Irvine General Plan notes that SR-241 and SR-261 provide panoramic views of hillsides and the Pacific Ocean (City of Irvine 2024b).

4.1.1.4 Light and Glare

Nighttime lighting is necessary to provide and maintain a safe and secure environment. Light that falls beyond the intended area of illumination is referred to as "light trespass." Types of light trespass include spillover light and glare. Spillover light, which is light that illuminates surfaces beyond the intended area, is typically caused by artificial lighting sources, such as from building security lighting, signs, parking lot lights, roadway lights, and stadium lights on playing fields. Spillover light can adversely affect light-sensitive uses (e.g., adjacent residences) by creating unwanted illumination. Because light dissipates as it moves farther from its source, the intensity of the lighting source is often increased to compensate for dissipating light, which increases the amount of light that illuminates adjacent uses. The type of light fixture determines the extent to which light will spill over onto adjacent properties and/or be visible from far away. Modern, energy-efficient fixtures that face downward, such as cutoff-type fixtures and shielded light fixtures, are less obtrusive than older light fixtures.

Direct glare is caused by excessive light entering the eye from a bright light source. The potential for direct glare exists any time one can "see" a light source. Glare can result from sunlight or from artificial light reflecting off building exteriors, such as glass windows, metal roofs, or other highly reflective surface materials. Glare can also result from a lighting system that aims light outwards and increases the potential for glare. Squinting or turning away from a light source is an indication of glare. Cutoff-type light fixtures minimize glare because they emit relatively low-intensity light at these angles. Glare resulting from sunlight reflecting off building exteriors can be reduced with design features that use low-reflective glass and exterior materials and colors that absorb, rather than reflect, light.

Sources of nighttime illumination and potential glare on and adjacent to the project site are generally limited to the interior and exterior lights of buildings, lighting visible through windows, parking lot and path lighting, and lighting along streets. These sources of illumination are typical of those in a developed area. In addition, the headlights of cars and trucks traveling to, from, and within the area represent another potential source of glare (albeit transient). Natural and artificial light reflects off various surfaces and can create localized occurrences of daytime and nighttime glare.

4.1.2 Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

Federal

There are no federal regulations regarding aesthetics applicable to the proposed project.

State

State Scenic Highway Program

Caltrans manages the State Scenic Highway Program detailed in Streets and Highways Code Section 260. A highway may be designated as scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. To become an officially designated scenic highway, a local jurisdiction must adopt a scenic corridor protection program for the eligible state scenic highway, apply to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receive notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a scenic highway. The scenic corridor protection program is made up of adopted ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or to document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. State and county roads can be designated as scenic highways.

There are no highways or roads within the proposed project site or surrounding area eligible for inclusion in the State Scenic Highway Program (Caltrans 2025).

Nighttime Sky – Title 24 Outdoor Lighting Standards

The California legislature passed a bill in 2001 requiring the California Energy Commission to adopt energy efficiency standards for outdoor lighting for both the public sector and the private sector. The most recent update to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Energy Code) includes outdoor lighting standards for new development to help to reduce the impacts of light pollution, light trespass, and glare. The standards regulate lighting characteristics such as maximum power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls to turn lighting on and off (CEC 2024).

Local

Irvine General Plan

This section outlines the key policies and guidelines from the 2045 Irvine General Plan (City of Irvine 2024b, 2024c) that govern aesthetic considerations in the proposed project area.

Land Use Element

Policy (b): Use building masses and landscaping to create a sense of unity throughout the City.

Policy (g): Distinguish individual planning areas in character and physical appearance by considering the following characteristics during design and development: public art, physical and visual separation, architectural style; and planning area edge.

Policy (j): Encourage variation in building heights and housing types (liners, podium, and towers) to avoid massive "project" appearance within high density residential projects.

Policy (k): Design buildings with articulated massing and roof forms to avoid institutional character and feel.

Policy (l): Incorporate architectural detailing that leads to a sense of quality, diversity, and authenticity in design.

Policy (m): Design roof forms with variations that are attractive when seen from both the ground and taller buildings.

Conservation and Open Space Element

Policy COS-1: Protect and enhance the visual quality of the city's natural and built environments.

Policy COS-2: Preserve significant viewsheds and scenic vistas, including those of the Santiago and San Joaquin Hills.

Irvine Municipal Code

This section outlines the key policies and guidelines from the Irvine Municipal Code that govern aesthetic considerations in the proposed project area.

Section 5-9-517 (Special Nonresidential Building Provisions) of Title 5 Planning, Division 9 Building Regulations, Chapter 5- Uniform Security Code discusses standards and requirements for lighting and glare in the City, including heights of lighting fixtures; design, installation, and maintenance of lighting fixtures; lighting for parking areas; and sign illumination. The Uniform Security Code is designed, in part, to limit light and glare to the extent feasible while providing sufficient light in a safe manner.

Zoning Ordinance

This section outlines the key policies and guidelines from the Irvine Municipal Code that govern aesthetic considerations in the proposed project area.

- Chapter 3-16 (Lighting) of the City's Zoning Ordinance requires that outdoor lighting be designed and installed so that all direct rays are confined to the site and adjacent properties are protected from glare and comply with the requirements of the City's Uniform Security Code (Municipal Code, Title 5, Division 9, Chapter 5).
- Standard Condition 3.6 (Site Lighting Requirements) states that prior to the issuance of building permits, Irvine Uniform Security Code requirements for lighting must be met by providing appropriate electrical, landscape, and full-scale for a complete review by the police department.
- Chapter 3-15 (Landscaping Standards) outlines the minimum site landscaping and maintenance requirements. This chapter also outlines the screening and landscaping requirements for parking areas and parking structures.
- Chapter 3-37 (Zoning District Land Use Regulations and Development Standards) outlines the regulations and development standards that are applicable to land uses proposed throughout the various Planning Areas of the City, including setbacks, building heights, landscaping, and maximum building intensity.
- Chapter 5-4 (Hillside Overlay District) provides regulations for the development of those areas in the City and its sphere of influence that, due to their topography, require special consideration to ensure that they are developed in a way that will substantially maintain their natural character and environmental and aesthetic values in accordance with the policies set forth in Section 5-4-2 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Division 7 (Signs) outlines the standards and regulations that apply to the design and installation of signage, including quantity, location, dimensions, and lighting.

Design Guidelines

Development in specific areas of the City is also regulated by adopted design guidelines, which regulate the architectural theme, character, and overall design of new development. These design guidelines are unique to the Planning Area to which they apply and are implemented on an individual project basis. It should also be noted that the City has recently developed Objective Design Standards that would further regulate the development of residential projects throughout the City, including the proposed project. As of August 2025, design guidelines for the proposed project have yet to be formally adopted by the City.

Design guidelines for the adjacent Planning Area 1 (Orchard Hills) are established in Chapter 9.1 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. In terms of theme and architecture, the Planning Area 1 design guidelines/development standards note the following:

Village Theme: The architectural design shall address detail articulated on all sides of the structures visible from streets, paseos, and other public areas. Particular attention shall be given to windows, balconies, doors, and other design elements. The elements and qualities which shall be encouraged are human scale and privacy, play of light using shade and shadows to provide relief, and variations in roof lines. Large blank walls with minimal detail shall be discouraged.

Residential/Community Commercial Architecture: A variety of architectural styles and forms will be used to express differences among projects and neighborhoods within the planning area. Variations of the following techniques may be used by the developer:

A. Overall Form: Employ symmetry at front facades or around entries to create balance in the overall form. Discourage entry view corridors terminating at blank walls and/or blank building elevations. Screen elevations of multifamily structures with exterior walkways serving as common access for dwellings on second and third floors from public rights-of-way either through building orientation, architecture, or landscaping.

B. Roof Form: Vary roof massing with a strong cornice line. Barrel, flat, shake, and slate concrete tile will be used predominantly with a variety of earthtone colors.

C. Details: Use simple cornices, moldings, projections and recesses, and integral-colored accent materials such as ceramic tile, brick (stone or painted stucco).

D. Site Design: Provide terraces, plazas, arcades, colonnades, and pergolas to define pedestrian areas.

E. Building Heights Along Arterial Roadways: Limit residential structures adjacent to arterial roadways to two stories.

4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

The significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts to aesthetics are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G, a significant impact related to aesthetics would occur if the project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.4 Impacts Analysis

1. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. According to the City's General Plan EIR, a scenic vista is a view of undisturbed natural lands exhibiting a unique or unusual feature that comprises an important or dominant portion of the viewshed. Scenic vistas may also be represented by a particular distant view that provides visual relief from less attractive views of nearby features. The City's General Plan does not designate any scenic vistas; however, it recognizes that open spaces, vegetation/landscaping, topographic and geologic features, natural water features, structures with architectural or historic significance, and scenic views from roadways contribute to the aesthetics of the City. Distinctive elements mentioned in the General Plan include natural features, water courses and trails, and scenic highways.

As proposed, development of the project site with two- to three-story attached and detached homes, recreation amenities, utilities, and landscaping (including site perimeter landscaping along the site frontage of Portola Parkway) would alter the quality of existing views across the project site, which mostly supports low-profile/low-growing agricultural crops under current conditions. Site development also includes the extension of the JOST (and a pedestrian bridge to span Portola Parkway) along the project site's frontage of Jeffrey Road. As shown on Figure 4.1-2 (see Photograph C), existing views from Portola Parkway along the project site's southern frontage includes site features (i.e., low-growing vegetation/crops, mature trees along the project site's eastern perimeter parallel to Bee Canyon Access Road) and extend to the north to include local hills and mountainous terrain in Limestone Canyon Nature Preserve. The dark silhouette of a partial ridgeline of terrain within the Santa Ana Mountains is also detectable in the view captured from Portola Parkway in Photograph C.

From Portola Parkway, and specifically from the location of Photograph C, the currently open and unimpeded view across the project site would be substantially altered. As shown on Figure 3-5, the project would introduce new landscaping and two- to three-story homes that would be within a foreground viewing distance of passing motorists. With regard to landscaping, the project would include planting an informal blend of evergreen and deciduous street and screen trees (see Figure 4.1-4, Landscape Concept Plan) along the project site's southern boundary paralleling Portola Parkway. Upon reaching maturity, these trees

could present a similar form and scale as existing street trees planted along the southbound travel lanes of Portola Parkway. In addition, as depicted on Figure 4.1-5, Landscape Concept: Portola Parkway, as experienced from Portola Parkway, future homes on the project site would be constructed atop a slightly elevated building pad, new manufactured slopes would be landscaped, and a continuous community wall could be constructed atop the new slopes. Beyond these features, new two- to three-story homes would be constructed and would further alter existing views across the project site such that local hills and mountains would be blocked. Similar blockage of local natural terrain is likely to occur elsewhere on Portola Parkway, including on the southbound approach to the Portola Parkway/Jeffrey Road intersection (at this location, new landscaping within the future JOST area and a future pedestrian bridge would be visible and could interrupt available views to existing off-site terrain).

Development of the project would alter the existing character and quality of views across the project site, which mostly supports low-growing agricultural crops/grasses under existing conditions, as shown in Photograph C (see Figure 4.1-2). Although the proposed landscaping, elevated building pads, and two- to three-story homes on the project site would block or interrupt views from Portola Road (and Jeffrey Road) to local hills and mountainous terrain that, according to the City, contribute to the aesthetics of Irvine, neither Portola Parkway nor Jeffrey Road are scenic roadways or City-designated scenic vistas. In this sense, the views from Portola Parkway and Jeffrey Road are not protected via scenic vista designation and therefore, the alteration of existing hill and mountain views from nearby public roads is not considered to be a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

2. ***Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

No Impact. The only designated state scenic highway in Orange County is a 4-mile-long stretch of SR-91 extending from the intersection of SR-55 with SR-91 to the eastern limits of the City of Anaheim (Caltrans 2025). The project site is approximately 11 miles southeast of this designated state scenic highway. The nearest eligible state scenic highway, SR-74, is 15 miles to the south of the project site. The site may be visible from SR-241, which is mentioned in the City's General Plan as a scenic roadway; however, it is not designated by Caltrans as an eligible or designated state scenic highway. Therefore, because development of the project site would not be visible from a state scenic highway, no impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.

3. ***In non-urbanized areas, would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?***

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21071, an urbanized area is an incorporated city that has a population of at least 100,000 persons or, if the city has a population of less than 100,000 persons, is contiguous with not more than two incorporated cities that, when combined, have a population of at least 100,000 persons.

The project site is in the City of Irvine, which has a population of 314,621 persons, as of July 1, 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). Therefore, for purposes of this analysis and pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21071, Irvine is an urbanized area and as such, impacts to visual character are assessed through consideration of potential conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The project site consists primarily of active agricultural fields, with equipment storage and laydown areas in the northern portion of the site and mature trees generally along the site's southern boundary. The surrounding area features Hicks Canyon Wash, undeveloped open space, and existing or under construction residential development/neighborhoods to the north and west. Residential development in the surrounding area is typically two stories in height and is designed in a variety of architectural styles.

The proposed project requires a General Plan amendment to change the City's Land Use Map from Recreation to Medium-High Density Residential on the project site, with High Density Residential to be applied on the affordable housing portion of the site only. Additionally, text, table, and figure updates in the Land Use Element would be made to establish Planning Area 2 (Gateway Village), which would also establish distinct design guidelines for the proposed project. Additional General Plan updates include revisions to the figures in the Circulation Element; updates to figures, tables, and text in the Conservation and Open Space Element; and updates to figures in the Safety Element. A zone change to the Irvine Zoning Ordinance is also required to change the zoning classification of the project site from 1.5 Recreation to 2.4J Medium-High Density Residential; add Chapter 9-2, Planning Area 2; and amend Section 3-3-1, Section 3-37-15, and Chapter 9-6 for consistency purposes. Additionally, the project would require Tentative Tract/Parcel Maps to subdivide the project site; Master Plans; a Park Plan; a Master Landscape and Trails Plan; Park Designs; and the annexation of County of Orange land parcels within the boundaries of the project site.

As proposed, the project would conflict with applicable zoning such that several actions are being requested to accommodate the proposed development on the project site.

Table 4.1-1 presents an assessment of the project's potential conflicts with identified local regulations and policies pertaining to scenic quality. As shown in the table, the project would be consistent with the identified scenic regulations. Therefore, impacts associated with conflict with other regulations (e.g., General Plan Objectives and Policies, Planning Area Development Standards) governing scenic quality would be less than significant.

Table 4.1-1. Scenic Quality Regulations Consistency Analysis

Policy	Consistency Analysis
Irvine General Plan Land Use Element	
Objective LU-1, Policy (b): Use building masses and landscaping to create a sense of unity throughout the City.	**Consistent.** The project proposes to construct 1,360 two- and three-story attached and detached homes over 65.5 acres. Density for different residential development areas would range from 10 to 22 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) at the lowest density to 30 to 40 du/ac at the highest density. Regarding landscaping, the project would include the installation of street and screen trees along the project site's southern boundary with Portola Parkway. As proposed, new landscaping would be visually cohesive with existing landscaping along the Portola Parkway corridor and a sense of landscape unity is envisioned.
Objective LU-1, Policy (g): Distinguish individual planning areas in character and physical appearance by considering the following characteristics during	**Consistent.** Regarding architectural style, the project proposes homes to be constructed in a cohesive Relaxed Mediterranean style that would function as a bridge function as a bridge between the Refined Mediterranean of the Orchard Hills area and the native landscape of the adjacent Northern Open Space Preserve. Incorporation of the Relaxed Mediterranean style would

Table 4.1-1. Scenic Quality Regulations Consistency Analysis

Policy	Consistency Analysis
design and development: public art, physical and visual separation, architectural style; and planning area edge.	promote general consistency in style with existing developments in the surrounding Orchard Hills area and would function as a less rigid transition (i.e., less rigid compared to the prevalent Refined Mediterranean style of the Orchard Hills area) to local undeveloped open space. The Planning Area edge would typically feature unprogrammed park spaces or landscaped corridors that would both define the project edge and soften the transition to the residentially developed areas of the project site from perimeter roads and adjacent lands.
Objective LU-1, Policy (j): Encourage variation in building heights and housing types (liners, podium, and towers) to avoid massive "project" appearance within high density residential projects.	**Consistent.** The project proposes to construct two- and three-story attached and detached homes over 65.5 acres. In addition to building height variation, a variety of housing types would be offered. The distribution of varying housing massing and offering across a 65.5 acre area, along with the proposed extension of the JOST and inclusion of perimeter landscape corridor and interior landscape parks (and streetscapes), would help avoid public perception of the project as massive.
Objective LU-1, Policy (k): Design buildings with articulated massing and roof forms to avoid institutional character and feel.	**Consistent.** Please refer to response to Objective LU-1, Policy (b) and Policy (j) regarding development massing and scale. As described above, a variety of housing types with varied roof forms and lines would be offered and would contribute visual interest to project design (and future neighborhood character). Further, the incorporation of upper-floor patios, archways, and step-backs/articulations would provide for a sense/feel of building variation.
Objective LU-1, Policy (l): Incorporate architectural detailing that leads to a sense of quality, diversity, and authenticity in design.	**Consistent.** Please refer to consistency analysis for Objective LU-1, Policy (b).
Objective LU-1, Policy (m): Design roof forms with variations that are attractive when seen from both the ground and taller buildings.	**Consistent.** Please refer to consistency analysis for Objective LU-1, Policy (k). As detailed therein, a variety of housing types with varied roof forms and lines would be offered and would contribute visual interest to project design (and future neighborhood character).
Irvine General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element	
Policy COS-1: Protect and enhance the visual quality of the city's natural and built environments.	**Consistent.** While development of the project site would result in the removal of existing active agricultural lands, the project is proposed adjacent to the primarily residentially developed Orchard Hills Planning Area. Once developed, the scale of proposed homes and general use of the site to support residential development would be consistent with development of nearby lands to the west and south for residential uses. Furthermore, the project proposes to incorporate landscaped corridors or park spaces along most project edges to soften the transition between off- and on-site uses. Please also refer to consistency analysis for Objective LU-1, Policy (g), which describes the architectural style envisioned for the project site. As summarized therein, the proposed Relaxed Mediterranean style is intended to promote general consistency in style with existing developments in the surrounding Orchard Hills area and would function as a less rigid transition (i.e., less rigid compared to the prevalent Refined Mediterranean style of the Orchard Hills areas) to local undeveloped open space.

Table 4.1-1. Scenic Quality Regulations Consistency Analysis

Policy	Consistency Analysis
Policy COS-2: Preserve significant viewsheds and scenic vistas, including those of the Santiago and San Joaquin Hills.	**Consistent.** As detailed in the scenic vista discussion presented at the beginning of Section 4.1.4, Impacts Analysis, the City's General Plan does not designate any scenic vistas, and views across the site from Portola Parkway (including views to the Santiago Hills) have not been designated by the City as a significant viewshed. Despite the lack of deliberate mapping or identification of significant viewsheds and scenic vistas, development of the project site as proposed would result in blockage of existing available views across the site to the Santiago Hills from Portola Parkway. The blockage of eastward views to the Santiago Hills along the project frontage on Portola Parkway would be experienced by motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists over a 0.30-mile-long segment of the road and would generally occur in the peripheral viewing angle of these road users. Although views to the east along the project site frontage on Portola Parkway would be blocked by new landscaping and two- to three-story residential development on the project site, distant hills would remain visible in the north-oriented views available to northbound road users. Because blockage of the Santiago Hills in views from Portola Parkway would be a temporary experience and would occur within the peripheral view of mobile road users, and because distant hill terrain would remain visible to select (i.e., northbound) road users along the project site frontage on Portola Parkway, development of the site as proposed would not conflict with Policy COS-2.
Planning Area 1 (Orchard Hills) Development Standards	
Village Theme: The architectural design shall address detail articulated on all sides of the structures visible from streets, paseos, and other public areas. Particular attention shall be given to windows, balconies, doors, and other design elements. The elements and qualities which shall be encouraged are human scale and privacy, play of light using shade and shadows to provide relief, and variations in roof lines. Large blank walls with minimal detail shall be discouraged.	**Consistent.** Please refer to response to Objective LU-1, Policy (b) and Policy (j), regarding development massing and scale. As described above, a variety of housing types with varied roof forms and lines would be offered and would contribute visual interest to project design (and future neighborhood character). Further, the incorporation of upper-floor patios, archways, and step-backs/articulations would provide for a sense/feel of building variation. The preliminary project design envisions variation in building scale, architectural design, and articulations. The intention is to achieve a pedestrian/human scale for the proposed development, providing landscaped parkways and wide sidewalks that would promote/encourage walkability. Lastly, incorporation of large blank walls in residential developments is not proposed; rather, archways and other openings, windows of varying size and with varying treatments, patios, pop-outs and other articulations, and varied rooflines, are intended/included in future home development.
Residential/community commercial architecture. A variety of architectural styles and forms will be used to express differences among projects and neighborhoods within the planning area. Variations of the following techniques may be used by the developer: a. Overall form: Employ symmetry at front facades or	**Consistent.** Please refer to the consistency analysis above for Planning Area 1 (Orchard Hills) Development Standards related to Village Theme in regard to overall form, roof form, and details. Although not specifically expressed in the Draft EIR Project Description (Chapter 3), the overall intention of the project design is to develop residential structures in a Relaxed Mediterranean style that incorporates simple projections and recessed, cool-toned exterior colors (i.e., painted stucco exteriors), and ceramic (or similar) tile roofing materials. The southern boundary of the project site parallels Portola Parkway, which, according to the City's General Plan Circulation Element, is classified as a Primary Highway. Per the City, Primary Highways are divided arterial

Table 4.1-1. Scenic Quality Regulations Consistency Analysis

Policy	Consistency Analysis
around entries to create balance in the overall form. Discourage entry view corridors terminating at blank walls and/or blank building elevations. Screen elevations of multifamily structures with exterior walkways serving as common access for dwellings on second and third floors from public rights-of-way either through building orientation, architecture, or landscaping. b. Roof form: Vary roof massing with a strong cornice line. Barrel, flat, shake, and slate concrete tile will be used predominantly with a variety of earthtone colors. c. Details: Use simple cornices, moldings, projections and recesses, and integral-colored accent materials such as ceramic tile, brick (stone or painted stucco). d. Site design: Provide terraces, plazas, arcades, colonnades, and pergolas to define pedestrian areas. e. Building heights along arterial roadways: Limit residential structures adjacent to arterial roadways to two stories.	highways with four through lanes. As proposed, the project would construct two- to three-story residential structures (attached and detached homes) in the southern portion of the project site near Portola Parkway.

4. Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Short-Term Construction Impacts

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Short-term light and glare impacts associated with construction of the project likely would be limited to nighttime lighting for security purposes or evening construction work that may occur within the City's Noise Ordinance limits (i.e., up to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and up to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays). Security lighting installed on site would be limited in number and lighting sources would be shielded and directed downward to avoid unnecessary illumination of adjacent land uses and the night sky. Use of shielding and downward directed lighting would also minimize potential for security light to glare that could be received at off-site viewing locations. Further, occurrences of evening construction work requiring

lighting (such as during winter months) are anticipated to be infrequent and/or of a short-term duration that would not adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.

Long-Term Operational Impacts

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The project would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting from decorative exterior lighting, internal street lighting, park lighting, and illuminated signage. In general, nighttime lighting would be installed for safety, security, and aesthetic purposes. Lighting from the project site would be visible from the residential properties and public roads near the project site. However, lighting would be typical of residential, neighborhood recreation, and neighborhood street uses and would not include any intense or atypical lighting uses. In addition, all lighting would comply with Chapter 3-16 (Lighting) of the City's Zoning Ordinance (City of Irvine 2024d) that requires all outdoor lighting to be designed and installed so that all direct rays are confined to the site and adjacent properties are protected from glare. Considering the existing sources of lighting in surrounding areas, including headlights from Portola Parkway, streetlights, and exterior lighting from the neighboring properties, the amount and intensity of nighttime lighting proposed on the project site would not be substantially greater or different from existing residential lighting in the surrounding area. With regard to glare, project structures/homes would be constructed with typical or commonplace building materials (e.g., wood, stucco, clay [or similar] shingle roofs) that would have minimal or no reflective properties. Materials such as glass and metals would be used but would be consistent with building materials used in residential developments in the surrounding area and would not adversely affect daytime views in the area. Therefore, impacts to daytime or nighttime views in the area due to new sources of substantial light or glare would be less than significant.

Impact Summary

Project-related impacts regarding aesthetics would be less than significant or would not occur.

4.1.5 Mitigation Measures

No significant aesthetics impacts were identified in the analysis in this section; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

4.1.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation is required; aesthetics impacts would remain less than significant.

4.1.7 Cumulative Impacts

This section provides an analysis of cumulative impacts from construction and operation of the proposed project and other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, as required by Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines. Where a lead agency concludes that the cumulative effects of a project, taken together with the impacts of other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, are significant, the lead agency then must determine whether the project's incremental contribution to such significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable" (and thus significant in and of itself).

Future development in the study area may cumulatively affect visual resources by altering the current visual quality and aesthetics. These changes could stem from gradual increases in density and urbanization, potentially transforming the area's visual character over time. However, such development would align with the visual quality and character of the surrounding areas through mandatory design reviews and adherence to the California Green Building Code, as well as the City's Zoning Ordinance, General Plan, and Standard Conditions of Approval. Additionally, future projects must comply with Municipal Code standards regarding light and glare, which aim to reduce light pollution and preserve dark skies. Consequently, the project is not expected to significantly contribute to cumulative aesthetic impacts.

As a result, the proposed project, in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects, would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; damage scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; degrade the visual character or quality of public views in non-urbanized areas or conflict with zoning and regulations in urbanized areas; or create substantial light or glare adversely affecting daytime or nighttime views. Therefore, the aesthetic impacts of the proposed project combined with those of cumulative projects would not substantially contribute to a cumulative impact on aesthetics.

Similarly, the proposed project would not conflict with applicable plans. As such, the project, in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects, would not conflict with a state or local plan.

Cumulative aesthetics impacts from implementation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

4.1.8 References

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SOURCE: Bing Maps (Accessed: 2025); Open Street Maps 2024

DUDEK

0 335 670 Feet

FIGURE 4.1-1

Photograph Locations

Irvine Gateway Village Project EIR

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Photo A

Photo B

Photo C

Photo D

FIGURE 4.1-2

Existing Conditions: Project Site

Irvine Gateway Village Project EIR

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Photo E

Photo F

FIGURE 4.1-3

Existing Conditions: Jeffrey Open Space Trail (JOST)

Irvine Gateway Village Project EIR

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SOURCE: SWA 2025

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FIGURE 4.1-4

Landscape Concept Plan

Irvine Gateway Village Project EIR

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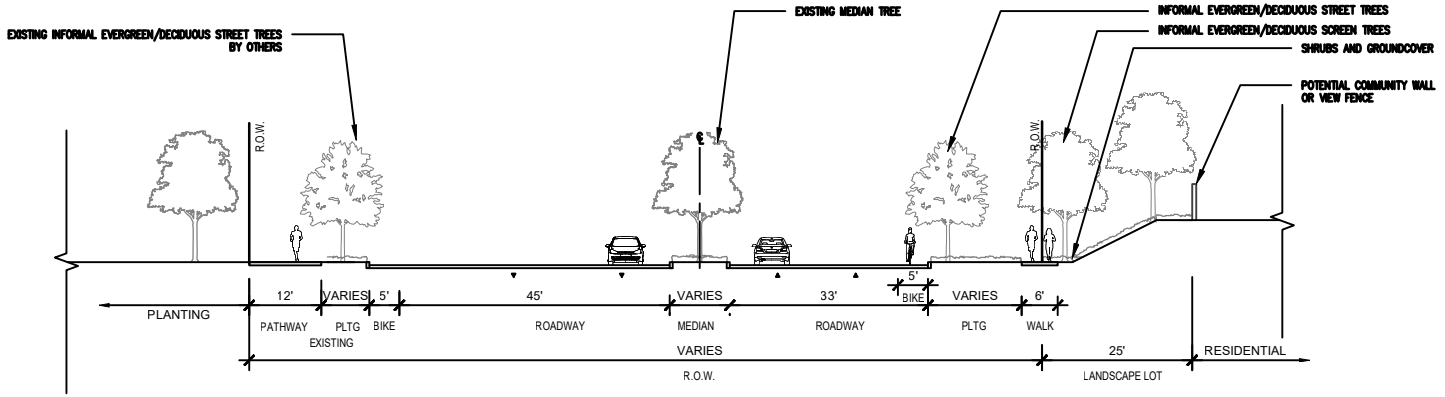
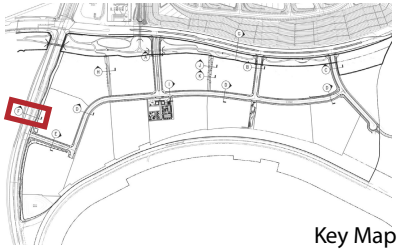
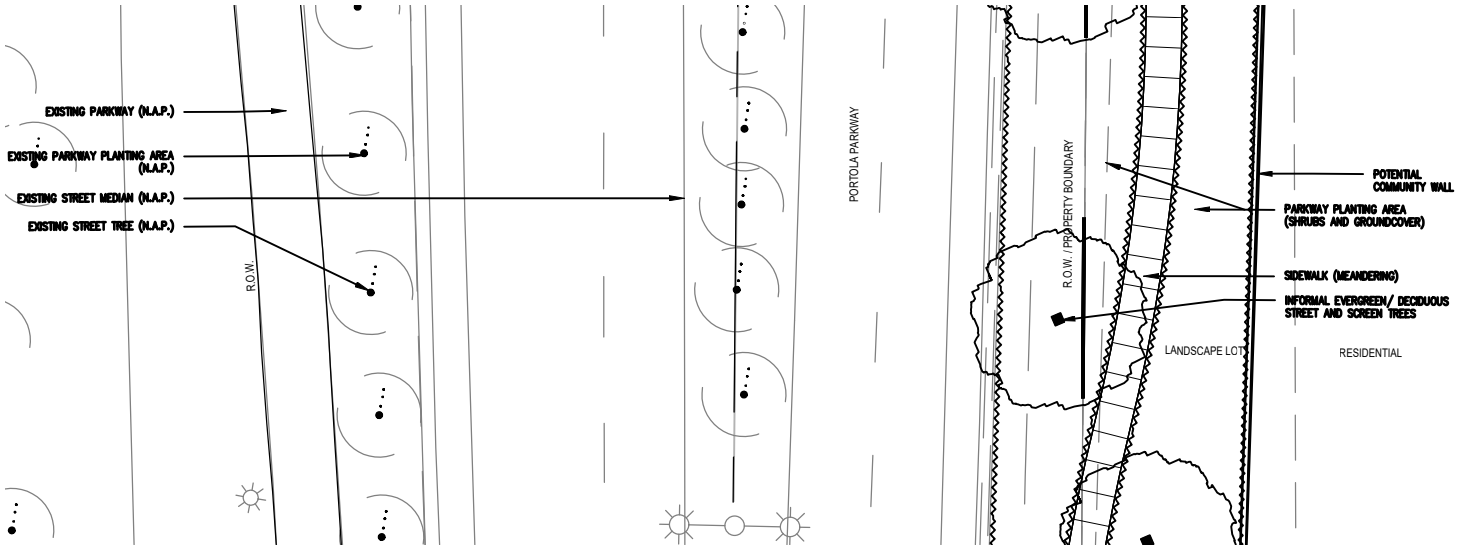
Section F





Key Map

Plan F



Landscape Concept

The Portola Parkway landscape enhances its adjacent land uses with a mixture of informal evergreen and deciduous trees. This interface provides an informal evergreen canopy that blends into the adjacent streetscape.

SOURCE: SWA 2025

FIGURE 4.1-5

Landscape Concept: Portola Parkway

Irvine Gateway Village Project EIR

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