

## 4.1 AESTHETICS

This section provides a discussion of the existing visual and aesthetic resources on the project site and in the surrounding area, and evaluates the potential for changes in the visual character that could result from implementation of the Ganahl Lumber Project (proposed project). This section also evaluates the potential loss of existing visual resources, effects on public views, visual compatibility with existing uses, and light and glare impacts.

Information presented in this section is based on photographs of the project site taken during field surveys and site visits; the City of San Juan Capistrano (City) General Plan Land Use and Community Design Elements (1999); and the City Municipal Code (adopted 1980).

### 4.1.1 Scoping Process

The City of San Juan Capistrano (City) received 11 comment letters during the public review period of the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation (IS/NOP). For copies of the IS/NOP comment letters, refer to Appendix A of this EIR.

One comment letter included comments related to Aesthetics. The letter from Tom and Jeannie Gronewald received on June 6, 2019, suggested that down lighting and non-blue lighting should be incorporated into project design and implementation. Further, the commenters suggested that lighting included as part of the project is not designed similarly to the sports park lighting.

### 4.1.2 Methodology

The assessment of aesthetic impacts is subjective by nature. This analysis attempts to identify and objectively examine factors that contribute to the perception of aesthetic impacts that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project. The potential aesthetic impacts of the proposed project have been assessed based on consideration of several factors, including scale, mass, proportion, and the concepts described below.

- **Scenic Resources:** Scenic resources are defined as natural or man-made elements that contribute to an area's scenic value and are visually pleasing. Scenic resources include landforms, vegetation, water, or adjacent scenery and may include a cultural modification to the natural environment. The degree to which these resources are present in a community is clearly subject to personal and cultural interpretation. However, it is possible to qualify certain resources as having aesthetic characteristics and establish general guidelines for assessing the aesthetic impacts of new development.
- **Scenic Vista:** A scenic vista is a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the public's benefit. It is usually viewed from some distance away. Aesthetic components of a scenic vista include (1) scenic quality, (2) sensitivity level, and (3) view access. A scenic vista can be impacted in two ways: a development project can have visual impacts by either directly diminishing the scenic quality of the vista or by blocking the view corridors or "vista" of the scenic resource. Important factors in determining whether a proposed project would block scenic vistas include the project's proposed height, mass, and location relative to surrounding land uses and travel corridors.

- **Sensitive Views:** Sensitive views are generally those associated with designated vantage points and public recreational uses, but the term can be more broadly applied to encompass any valued public vantage point. Sensitivity level has to do with the (1) intensity of use of a visual resource; (2) visibility of a visual resource; and (3) importance of the visual resource to users.
- **Scenic Corridors:** Scenic corridors are channels that facilitate movement (primarily by automobile, transit, bicycle, or foot) from one location to another with expansive views of natural landscapes and/or visually attractive man-made development. Scenic corridors analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) typically include State-designated scenic highways and locally designated scenic routes.
- **Scenic Quality:** The scenic quality of a streetscape, building, group of buildings, or other man-made or natural feature that creates an overall impression of an area within an urban context. For example, a scenic vista along the boundary of a community, a pleasing streetscape with trees, and well-kept residences and yards are scenic resources that create a pleasing impression of an area. In general, concepts of scenic quality can be organized around four basic elements: (1) site utilization, (2) buildings and structures, (3) landscaping, and (4) signage. Adverse scenic quality effects can include the loss of aesthetic features or the introduction of contrasting features that could contribute to a decline in overall scenic quality.
- **Glare:** A continuous or periodic intense light that may cause eye discomfort or be temporarily blinding to humans.
- **Light Sources:** A device that produces illumination, including incandescent bulbs, fluorescent and neon tubes, halogen and other vapor lamps, and reflecting surfaces or refractors incorporated into a lighting fixture. Any translucent enclosure of a light source is considered to be part of the light source.
- **Regulations Governing Scenic Quality.** Visual impacts have been evaluated based on the project's consistency with goals and policies established in the Land Use and Community Design Elements of the City's General Plan and development standards related to aesthetics in the City's Municipal Code.
- **Light and Glare.** The analysis of light and glare identifies the location of light-sensitive land uses and describes the existing ambient conditions on and in the vicinity of the project site. The analysis describes the proposed project's light and glare sources and the extent to which project lighting, including any potential illuminated signage, would spill off the project site onto adjacent light-sensitive areas. The analysis also describes the affected street frontages, the direction in which the light would be focused, and the extent to which the proposed project would illuminate sensitive land uses. The analysis also considers the potential for sunlight to reflect off of windows and building surfaces (glare) and the extent to which such glare would interfere with the operation of motor vehicles, aviation, or other activities. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by artificial light sources, such as illuminated signage and vehicle headlights. Glare-sensitive uses generally include residences and transportation corridors (i.e., roadways).

### 4.1.3 Existing Environmental Setting

The 17-acre (ac) project site is currently undeveloped, and the northern portion of the site is vacant. A vehicle storage area, located on the central and southern portions of the project site, is secured by a chain-link fence. The vehicle storage area consists of a crushed-rock gravel surface and is not paved. The project site is occasionally used as an illegal dump site for trash and construction debris, which contributes to the degraded nature of the project site (refer to Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, for photographs of existing conditions on the project site).

The project site is generally bounded to the south by Stonehill Drive, to the west by San Juan Creek Channel and Trail, to the east by the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor, and to the north by the Capistrano Valley Mobile Estates mobile home park. ~~Additionally, directly south of the project site, an existing two-lane easement extends under the bridge at Stonehill Drive and connects the project site to neighboring parcels to the south.~~

Surrounding land uses include a mobile home park to the north; the San Juan Creek Channel and Trail, Creekside Park, and single-family residential uses to the west; the LOSSAN rail corridor and automobile dealerships to the east; and a hotel, a mobile home park, and commercial uses south of Stonehill Drive.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the City of San Juan Capistrano is located within the Mission Viejo-Lake Forest-San Clemente, CA Urbanized Area,<sup>1</sup> which also includes the Cities of Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, and the unincorporated communities of Coto de Caza, Ladera Ranch, and Las Flores. As described in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (*State CEQA Guidelines*) Section 15387 and defined by the United States Census Bureau, an “urbanized area” is a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more people, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile.<sup>2</sup> Because the City is located in an urbanized area, the project site is also located within an urbanized area. Further, surrounding land uses in the vicinity of the project site are representative of urban densities.

The existing General Plan land use designation for the majority of the project site is Quasi-Industrial. According to the City’s Land Use Element (1999, revised 2002), the Quasi-Industrial designation provides for a variety of light industrial and manufacturing uses, including limited regional commercial activities that are non-polluting and are compatible with surrounding land uses. The northernmost portion of the project site (designated as a utility easement for future private emergency access) has a land use designation of Industrial Park, which allows light industrial and manufacturing uses. Additionally, the majority of the project site is zoned Commercial Manufacturing (CM). The Commercial Manufacturing zone allows industrial and non-retail commercial uses, including wholesaling, limited manufacturing, eating establishments, and indoor

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. Mission Viejo-Lake Forest-San Clemente, CA Urbanized Area No. 57709. Website: [https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC\\_RefMap/ua/ua57709\\_mission\\_viejo--lake\\_forest--san\\_clemente\\_ca/DC10UA57709.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ua57709_mission_viejo--lake_forest--san_clemente_ca/DC10UA57709.pdf) (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. 2010 Census Urban Area FAQs. Website: [https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/ua/2010ua\\_faqs.pdf?#](https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/ua/2010ua_faqs.pdf?#) (accessed March 14, 2019).

recreational uses. The northernmost portion of the project site (designated as a utility easement for future private emergency access) is zoned Mobile Home Park Senior Overlay, which allows mobile home uses for seniors 55 years of age and older. The proposed project is consistent with the existing General Plan land use and zoning designations.

#### 4.1.4 Regulatory Setting

##### 4.1.4.1 Federal Regulations

No federal policies or regulations pertaining to aesthetics are applicable to the proposed project.

##### 4.1.4.2 State Regulations

**Caltrans Scenic Highway Program.** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program protects the natural scenic beauty of the State's highways and corridors through its designated scenic highways throughout the State. Caltrans defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that traverses an area of exceptional scenic quality. Other considerations given to a scenic highway designation include how much of the natural landscape a traveler may see and the extent to which visual intrusions degrade the scenic corridor.

As described further below (Threshold 4.1.2), no officially designated scenic highways are located in the vicinity of the project site.

##### 4.1.4.3 Regional Regulations

No regional policies or regulations pertaining to aesthetics are applicable to the proposed project.

##### 4.1.4.4 Local Regulations

**City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan.** The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan was approved by the City Council in December 1999, with the exception of the Housing Element, which was updated and adopted by the City Council in January 2014. In May 2002, the City Council approved a General Plan Amendment, which included a variety of changes to several of the General Plan Elements.

The City's General Plan is the principal land use document guiding development within the City. The City's General Plan is a comprehensive plan that establishes goals, objectives, and policies intended to guide growth and development in the City. The General Plan also serves as a blueprint for development throughout the community and is the vehicle through which the community needs, desires, and aspirations are balanced. The San Juan Capistrano General Plan is the fundamental tool for influencing the quality of life in the City.

**Land Use Element.** The Land Use Element presents goals and policies pertaining to how existing development is going to be maintained and enhanced and new development occur. The Land Use Element identifies the proposed distribution, location, and extent of land uses. The Land Use Element goals and policies directly affect the establishment and maintenance of existing neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and open spaces that distinguish and contribute to the City's livability, vitality, and image, while enhancing the City's existing setting through new development. A key ingredient to successful implementation of this vision is through the

management and appropriate mix of land uses. To this end, a Land Use Map was adopted and included in the Land Use Element to guide future development decisions.

The following goals and policies applicable to the proposed project and related to aesthetics and scenic quality are presented in the Land Use Element:

**Goal 2:** Control and direct future growth within the City to preserve the rural village-like character of the community.

**Policy 2.2:** Assure that new development is consistent and compatible with the existing character of the City.

**Goal 7:** Enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.

**Policy 7.1:** Preserve and enhance the quality of San Juan Capistrano neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of non-conforming buildings and uses.

**Policy 7.2:** Ensure that new development is compatible with the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.

**Community Design Element.** The Community Design Element addresses the conservation and enhancement of the visual quality of the City. The goals and policies in the Community Design Element aim to protect natural hillsides and features in the City (e.g., creeks and floodplains), preserve and enhance the historic character of the community, incorporate new development into existing developed neighborhoods, and maintain the community's "small-village" and "rural atmosphere."

The following goals and policies applicable to the proposed project and related to aesthetics and scenic quality are presented in the Community Design Element:

**Goal 1:** Encourage and preserve a sense of place.

**Policy 1.2:** Encourage high-quality and human scale design in development to maintain the character of the City.

**Goal 2:** Preserve the historic character of the community.

**Policy 2.1:** Encourage development which complements the City's traditional, historic character through site design, architecture, and landscaping.

**Goal 3:** Preserve and enhance natural features.

**Policy 3.3:** Preserve and enhance scenic transportation corridors, including Interstate 5 and the railroad.

**Policy 3.4:** Preserve important viewsheds.

**San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code.** The City's Municipal Code was adopted in 1980 and includes the following regulations related to aesthetics and scenic quality.

**Zoning Code.** The City of San Juan Capistrano Zoning Code, Title 9 of the Municipal Code, ensures consistency between the City's General Plan and proposed development. The Zoning Code identifies development standards for various land uses, which aim at regulating aesthetics and scenic quality.

**Lighting Standards.** Municipal Code Section 9-3.529 regulates lighting standards throughout the City. The purpose of the City's Lighting Standards is to maintain a small-village character while also providing for the safe movement of people and vehicles in the City. Recommended lighting levels are defined at minimum levels to allow for public safety and enhance buildings and landscaping to represent the desired atmosphere of the community.

#### 4.1.5 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for aesthetics impacts used in this analysis are consistent with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and the City's *Local Guidelines for Implementing CEQA* (2019). The proposed project may be deemed to have a significant impact with respect to aesthetics if it would:

- Threshold 4.1.1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Threshold 4.1.2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- Threshold 4.1.3:** 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, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?
- Threshold 4.1.4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The Initial Study, included as Appendix A, substantiates that there would be no impacts associated with Thresholds 4.1.2 because no officially designated State Scenic Highways are located in the vicinity of the project site. In addition, the Initial Study substantiates that impacts associated with Threshold 4.1.1 would be less than significant; the project would not result in significant impacts on views of the surrounding hills from adjacent roadways and sidewalks due to a maximum proposed building height of 35 feet, as well as the project site being sited at a lower elevation than the surrounding roadways. These thresholds will not be addressed in the following analysis.

#### 4.1.6 Project Impacts

- Threshold 4.1.3:** 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.** As stated previously, the United States Census Bureau designates the project site as part of an urbanized area because the entire City is within the Mission Viejo-Lake Forest-San Clemente, CA Urbanized Area. The project site's current land use designation (Quasi-Industrial and Industrial Park) and zoning designations (Commercial Manufacturing and Mobile Home Park Senior Overlay) are consistent with the proposed use. However, the following consistency analysis is included in this section to demonstrate the proposed project's consistency with General Plan and zoning regulations governing scenic quality.

**General Plan.** The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan is intended to guide future growth and development within the City. The General Plan Land Use and Community Design Elements contain specific goals and policies related to aesthetics and scenic quality. As shown in Table 4.1.A, the project would be consistent with applicable General Plan goals and policies related to aesthetics and scenic quality.

As shown above, the project would be consistent with applicable General Plan goals and policies related to aesthetics and scenic quality. Further, the project would be consistent with both existing General Plan land use designations for the property, and no General Plan Amendment would be required to implement the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site nor conflict with applicable General Plan regulations governing scenic quality.

**City of San Juan Capistrano Zoning Code.** Section 9-3.305, Industrial Districts, of the City's Zoning Code includes applicable development standards for the Commercial Manufacturing zoning classification (i.e., the zoning classification on the portion of the project site proposed for development). As shown in Table 4.1.B, the project would be consistent with applicable zoning code development standards related to aesthetics and scenic quality.

As previously stated, the majority of the project site is zoned Commercial Manufacturing (CM); however, the northernmost portion of the project site where the utility easement would be located is zoned Mobile Home Park Senior Overlay. For that reason, the above development standards apply to the Commercial Manufacturing zone and not the Mobile Home Park Senior Overlay zone. The proposed utility easement would consist of minor improvements and would be required to conform to development standards in the Mobile Home Park Senior Overlay zone. As such, the project would be consistent with both existing zoning designations for the property, and no Zoning Amendment would be required to implement the proposed project. For the reasons stated above, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site nor conflict with applicable zoning regulations governing scenic quality.

**Table 4.1.A: General Plan Policy Consistency Analysis**

Policies	Consistency Analysis
<b>Land Use Element</b>	
<p><b>Land Use Goal 2:</b> Control and direct future growth within the City to preserve the rural village-like character of the community.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The proposed project is an infill development project that would allow for the operation of a lumberyard and hardware store on the site, a vehicle storage lot, and future drive-through restaurants on the site. The proposed project would not introduce any land uses on the site that would increase population growth in the City in a manner that would result in changes to the village-like character of the community. In addition, the main building proposed as part of the project would be designed with timber framing, reclaimed wood and stone veneer accents, copper-colored metal roofing, and decorative concrete walls. Other buildings on the site would feature reclaimed wood accents, contrasting light and dark paint, textured concrete and metal features. A cobble swale would be installed near the main building to capture and treat storm water. The project would also include native arroyo landscapes found throughout Southern California, which would add to the village-like character of the community. Moreover, the proposed project would be required to comply with all development standards outlined in the City’s Municipal Code, including those with respect to height and scale. Compliance these standards would ensure consistency between the proposed project and surrounding uses, and would serve to preserve the character of the community. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Land Use Goal 2.</p>
<p><b>Land Use Policy 2.2:</b> Assure that new development is consistent and compatible with the existing character of the City.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> All new buildings proposed as part of the project would be compatible with the physical characteristics of surrounding land uses (e.g., height and scale). Development of the project site, which is currently unimproved and used as a vehicle storage lot and occasionally as an illegal dump site for trash and construction debris, would improve the visual character of the site and surrounding neighborhoods. As previously stated, the main building proposed as part of the project would feature a design consisting of timber framing, reclaimed wood and stone veneer accents, copper-colored metal roofing, and decorative concrete walls. Because of the prominence of natural building materials, the project would be visually consistent with surrounding area and the general character of the City. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Land Use Policy 2.2.</p>
<p><b>Land Use Goal 7:</b> Enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> All new buildings proposed as part of the project would be compatible the physical characteristics of surrounding land uses (e.g., height and scale). Development of the project site, which is currently unimproved and used as a vehicle storage lot, would improve the visual character of the site and surrounding neighborhoods. As previously stated, the main building proposed as part of the project would feature a design consisting of timber framing, reclaimed wood and stone veneer accents, copper-colored metal roofing, and decorative concrete walls. The project would also include a variety of native and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, groundcover, and vines, which would visually enhance the character of the project site and surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Land Use Goal 7.</p>



**Table 4.1.A: General Plan Policy Consistency Analysis**

Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p><b>Land Use Policy 7.1:</b> Preserve and enhance the quality of San Juan Capistrano neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of non-conforming buildings and uses.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The proposed project is an infill development project that would allow for the operation of a lumberyard and hardware store, a vehicle storage lot, and future drive-through restaurants on the site. Surrounding land uses include a mobile home park to the north; the San Juan Creek Channel and Trail, Creekside Park, and single-family residential uses to the west; the LOSSAN rail corridor and automobile dealerships to the east; and a hotel, a mobile home park, and commercial uses south of Stonehill Drive. The proposed uses are generally consistent with the land uses in the surrounding area. Further, project operations would be shielded from the adjacent sensitive residential uses to the north through the incorporation of a landscaped berm at the northern boundary of the project site. As such, the proposed project would preserve and enhance the quality of the City’s residential neighborhoods and would not allow the intrusion of non-conforming land uses. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Land Use Policy 7.1.</p>
<p><b>Land Use Policy 7.2:</b> Ensure that new development is compatible with the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> In its existing condition, the project site is undeveloped and relatively flat. The proposed project would include the development of three separate areas (Areas A, B, and C) which would provide for three separate types of land uses. However, the proposed uses on the project site would complement each other as well as the surrounding land uses. For example, the long-term vehicle storage proposed within Area C would provide local car dealerships with an overflow parking area. Further, the areas surrounding the project site consist of a mix land uses, including commercial, residential, open space/recreation, and transportation uses, which would be compatible with the proposed retail store, lumber yard, and future drive through restaurants. As discussed further in Section 4.12, Transportation/Traffic and Section 4.14, Utilities and Service Systems, respectively, the proposed project would be compatible with available public infrastructure availability in the City. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Land Use Policy 7.2.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Element</b></p>	
<p><b>Community Design Goal 1:</b> Encourage and preserve a sense of place.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> All new buildings proposed as part of the project would be compatible with the physical characteristics of surrounding land uses (e.g., height and scale). Development of the project site, which is currently unimproved and used as a vehicle storage lot and an occasional illegal dumping site for trash and construction debris, would improve the visual character of the site and surrounding neighborhoods. As previously stated, the main building proposed as part of the project would feature a design consisting of timber framing, reclaimed wood and stone veneer accents, copper-colored metal roofing, and decorative concrete walls. Because of the prominence of natural building materials, the project would be visually consistent with the general character of the City and would encourage and preserve a sense of place. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Goal 1.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Policy 1.2:</b> Encourage high-quality and human scale design in development to maintain the character of the City.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The project’s design concept aims at incorporating high-quality and natural building materials in order to reflect the character of the City. Because of the prominence of natural building materials, the project would be visually consistent with surrounding area and the general character of the City. Further, the retail store proposed within Area B would incorporate human-scale features, such as benches, a decorative boulder and headsaw sign, and directional signage. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Policy 1.2.</p>

**Table 4.1.A: General Plan Policy Consistency Analysis**

Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p><b>Community Design Goal 2:</b> Preserve the historic character of the community.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The project site is not located within close proximity to buildings exhibiting the historic or traditional character of the community. Building design features as part of the project would be representative of a community store that would be indicative of the products Ganahl Lumber sells, with lumber as the primary feature. The design of the project would not be designed as a traditional “big box” retail store. Overall, the project would be consistent with the visual character and setting of surrounding development (e.g., residences to the west). Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Goal 2.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Policy 2.1:</b> Encourage development which complements the City’s traditional, historic character through site design, architecture, and landscaping.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> As stated previously, the project site is not located within close proximity to buildings exhibiting the historic or traditional character of the community. The project’s design concept aims at incorporating high-quality and natural building materials in order to reflect the character of the City. Because of the prominence of natural building materials, the project would be visually consistent with the traditional and historic character of the City. The project would also include a variety of native and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, groundcover, and vines, which would visually enhance the character of the project site and surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Policy 2.1.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Goal 3:</b> Preserve and enhance natural features.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> Although the project site is not considered to be a natural feature, the proposed project would enhance the existing visual setting of the project site by converting the existing underutilized property to a developed commercial use featuring high-quality building materials and new landscaping. Following development of the site, views of the project site from the railroad and adjacent roadways would be improved. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Goal 3.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Policy 3.3:</b> Preserve and enhance scenic transportation corridors, including Interstate 5 and the railroad.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The project site is visible from the railroad; however, due to intervening land uses, the project site is not visible from I-5. As stated previously, the proposed project would enhance the existing visual setting of the project site by converting the existing underutilized property to a developed commercial use featuring high-quality building materials and new landscaping. Following development of the site, views of the project site from the railroad and adjacent roadways would be improved. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Community Design Policy 3.3.</p>
<p><b>Community Design Policy 3.4:</b> Preserve important viewsheds.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The project site contains scenic views of the surrounding hillsides and the Santa Ana Mountains beyond. The project would not result in significant impacts on views of the surrounding hills from adjacent roadways and sidewalks due to a maximum proposed building height of 35 ft, as well as the project site being at a lower elevation than the surrounding roadways. Overall, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially affect viewsheds in the vicinity of the project due to the prominence of the surrounding hillsides and the Santa Ana Mountains. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with Community Design Policy 3.4.</p>

Source: City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan, as amended (1999).

**Table 4.1.B: Zoning Code Development Standards Consistency Analysis**

Development Standards	Proposed Project Consistency
<b>Commercial Manufacturing (CM)</b>	
<b>Minimum Lot Area:</b> 7,200 sf (0.17 ac)	<b>Consistent.</b> Proposed lot sizes included as part of the project would be 2.06 ac (Area A), 10.61 ac (Area B), and 4.39 ac (Area C). Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the minimum lot area requirement of 7,200 ft, or 0.17 ac.
<b>Minimum Street Frontage:</b> 60 ft	<b>Consistent.</b> Area A (the portion of the project site abutting Stonehill Drive) would locate the closest proposed future drive-through restaurant 78 ft from the roadway. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the minimum street frontage requirement of 60 ft.
<b>Minimum Side Yard:</b> 5 ft	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed ancillary buildings on the site (e.g., sheds) would be setback 5 ft from the eastern and western boundaries of the property line, consistent with the required 5 ft side yard setback. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the minimum side yard requirement of 5 ft.
<b>Minimum Rear Yard:</b> 25 ft	<b>Consistent.</b> Due to the presence of a proposed landscaped berm and surface parking lot on the northernmost portion of the property, the project would comply with the City’s required 25 ft rear yard setback. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the minimum rear yard requirement of 25 ft.
<b>Maximum First-Floor/Lot Area Ratio:</b> 30%	<b>Consistent.</b> The future drive-through restaurant uses would cover approximately 5.5 percent of the 2.06 ac lot (Area A), and the buildings associated with the Ganahl Lumber retail store and lumber yard would cover 29 percent of the 10.61 ac lot (Area B), which does not exceed the maximum lot coverage ratio of 30 percent. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the maximum lot coverage requirement of 30 percent.
<b>Maximum Second-Floor/First-Floor Ratio:</b> 75%	<b>Consistent.</b> Although development plans associated with the future drive-through restaurant uses are unknown at this time, the proposed buildings would be one story in height. The buildings associated with the Ganahl Lumber retail store and lumber yard would include a maximum 2nd floor/1st floor ratio of approximately 8 percent on Area B. Therefore, upon project approval, the proposed project would be consistent with the maximum 2nd floor/1st floor ratio of 75 percent.
<b>Maximum Building Height:</b> 35 ft	<b>Consistent.</b> All buildings and structures proposed as part of the project have a maximum height of 35 ft. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the maximum building height requirement of 35 ft.

Source: City of San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code, Section 9-3.305.

ac = acre(s)

ft = foot/feet

sf = square foot/feet

**Summary.** The proposed project would enhance the existing visual setting of the project site by converting the existing underutilized property to a developed commercial use featuring high-quality building materials and new landscaping. Further, the project would be consistent with other regulations governing scenic quality, including those outlined in the General Plan Land Use and Community Design Elements and the City’s Zoning Code. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site nor conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, and no mitigation would be required.

**Threshold 4.1.4: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** Spill light occurs when lighting standards, such as streetlights, parking lot lighting, exterior building lighting, and landscape lighting, are not properly aimed or shielded to direct light to the desired location and light escapes and partially illuminates a surrounding location. The spillover of light onto adjacent properties has the potential to interfere with certain activities, including vision, sleep, privacy, and general enjoyment of the natural nighttime condition. Light-sensitive uses include residential, some commercial and institutional uses, and, in some situations, natural areas. Changes in nighttime lighting may become significant if a proposed project substantially increases ambient lighting conditions beyond its property line and project lighting routinely spills over into adjacent light-sensitive land uses areas.

Section 9-3.529 of the City's Municipal Code includes lighting regulations related to minimum and maximum illumination of parking facilities, as well as lighting design standards for exterior lighting displays, parking lots, and pedestrian sidewalks.

Reflective light (glare) is the result of sunlight or artificial light reflecting from finished surfaces (e.g., window glass) or other reflective materials. Glass and other materials can have many different reflectance characteristics. Buildings constructed of highly reflective materials from which the sun reflects at a low angle commonly cause adverse glare. Reflective light is common in urban areas. Glare generally does not result in the illumination of off-site locations but results in a visible source of light viewable from a distance.

Currently, there are no existing sources of light or glare emanating from the undeveloped project site. Existing sources of light in the project vicinity include headlights from vehicles on nearby roadways; lighting from the residential mobile home park to the north; and pole-mounted lighting in parking areas of adjacent developments. Sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the project site include the mobile home park to the north and residences and the San Juan Creek Trail to the west.

Short-term construction activities would occur primarily during daylight hours; however, construction activities may require periodic nighttime lighting. Any construction-related illumination during evening or nighttime hours would be shielded to the extent feasible and would consist of the minimal lighting required for safety and security purposes and would only occur on a temporary and as-needed basis. Due to its limited scope and duration, light generated during project construction would not substantially alter the character of off-site areas surrounding the construction area, or interfere with the performance of an off-site activity. Therefore, construction lighting impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

The proposed project would introduce new sources of light to the project site that are typical of commercial uses. Outdoor lighting proposed as part of the project would include wall-mounted lighting, pole-mounted street and parking lot lights, and security lighting along pathways. The proposed project would include lighting with similar intensity and glare produced by street light fixtures within adjacent developments. Lighting would be limited to on-site sources and be directed downward onto the project site and shielded to minimize overspill and glare to adjacent properties in compliance with the City's Lighting Standards (Municipal Code Section 9-3.529).

Although the proposed project is not anticipated to incorporate design features that would result in excessive lighting or the generation of glare on the site, lighting plans are subject to City review and approval as part of the site plan review process. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 require the project Applicant to prepare a lighting plan and photometric study for review and approval by the City's Development Services Department (refer to Section 4.1.8, below). These mitigation measures are intended to ensure that new sources of light and glare do not impact adjacent land uses that nighttime lighting is limited to that necessary for security, and that lighting is shielded to reduce glare and spill lighting effects on adjacent sensitive uses. A comprehensive lighting plan would illustrate the final locations for parking lot lights, walkway lights, and landscaping lights and demonstrate consistency with the City's Municipal Code. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would ensure that impacts associated with new lighting would remain less than significant.

#### 4.1.7 Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Prior to mitigation, the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts as a result of excessive lighting and/or the generation of glare on the project site.

#### 4.1.8 Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures

##### 4.1.8.1 Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs)

No regulatory compliance measures are required for the proposed project.

##### 4.1.8.2 Mitigation Measures (MMs)

The proposed project would comply with the following mitigation measures.

**MM AES-1 Comprehensive Lighting Plan.** Prior to issuance of any building permits, the project Applicant shall prepare a comprehensive lighting plan for review and approval by the City of San Juan Capistrano (City) Development Services Director and/or the City's Design Review Committee, or designee. The lighting plan shall be prepared by a qualified lighting engineer and shall be in compliance with applicable standards of the City's Municipal Code. The lighting plan shall address all aspects of lighting, including infrastructure, on-site driveways, safety, signage, and promotional lighting, if any. The lighting plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following, as determined by the lighting engineer:

- Exterior on-site lighting shall be shielded and confined within site boundaries.
- No direct rays or glare are permitted to shine onto public streets or adjacent sites.
- "Walpak" type fixtures are not permitted.
- Parking area lighting shall include cut-off fixtures, and light standards shall not exceed 20 feet in height.

- Lighting fixtures that blink, flash, or emit unusual high intensity or brightness are not permitted.
- The site shall not be excessively illuminated based on the illumination recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, or, if, in the opinion of the City Development Services Director, or designee, the illumination creates an unacceptable negative impact on surrounding land uses or environmental resources. The City Development Services Director, or designee, may order the dimming of light sources or other remediation upon finding that the site is excessively illuminated.

**MM AES-2 Photometric Study.** Prior to the issuance of any building permits, a Final Photometric Study shall be prepared by the project Applicant in conjunction with a Final Lighting Plan for approval by the City Development Services Director, or designee.

#### 4.1.9 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce potential impacts to excessive lighting and/or the generation of glare on the project site to a less than significant level. No significant unavoidable impacts related to aesthetics would occur with implementation of these measures. After mitigation has been implemented, all anticipated impacts related to aesthetics would be considered less than significant.

#### 4.1.10 Cumulative Impacts

As defined in Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, cumulative impacts are the incremental effects of an individual project when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects within the cumulative impact area for aesthetics. The cumulative impact area for aesthetics related to the proposed project is the City of San Juan Capistrano. Several residential and commercial development projects are approved and/or pending within the City. Each of these projects, as well as all proposed development in the City, would be subject to its own consistency analysis for policies and regulations governing scenic quality and would be reviewed for consistency with General Plan goals and policies and Zoning Code development standards. If there were any potential for significant impacts to aesthetics, appropriate mitigation measures would be identified to reduce and/or avoid impacts related to aesthetics.

For the reasons outlined above in Section 4.1.6, Project Impacts, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant cumulative impact related to aesthetics. The proposed project and all related projects are required to adhere to City and State regulations designed to reduce and/or avoid impacts related to aesthetics. With compliance with these regulations, cumulative impacts related to aesthetics would be less than significant. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant cumulative impact related to aesthetics.

#### 4.1.11 Project Alternatives

##### 4.1.11.1 Alternative 1 – No Restaurant Uses

Alternative 1 would allow for the future construction of a 161,385-square-foot (sf) Ganahl Lumber hardware store and lumber yard and a 399-space vehicle storage facility; however, no drive-through restaurant uses would be developed. Alternative 1 represents a reduction in 6,000 sf of drive-through restaurant use as compared to the proposed project. Under Alternative 1, Area A would provide 150 parking spaces, compared to 62 parking spaces provided in Area A as part of the proposed project.

Most components of the proposed project, such as outdoor lighting, circulation and access, signage, utilities and drainage, sustainability features, landscaping, and construction phasing, and grading, would not significantly change with the implementation of Alternative 1. Components specific to Area A, such as the location of walkways, retaining walls fences, and gates, would also not change under Alternative 1. The modification and installation of existing and new utilities and infrastructure associated with the proposed project would still occur under Alternative 1. Although Alternative 1 would not involve the development of structures on Area A as the proposed project would, the entirety of Area A would still be cleared, excavated, graded, and paved to accommodate surface parking.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would have less than significant impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, light, glare, and the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings. Additionally, both the proposed project and Alternative 1 would have no impact associated with State Scenic Highways because no official State Scenic Highways are located in the vicinity of the project.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would require the preparation of a lighting plan and photometric study, which would be approved by the City. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would still be applicable under Alternative 1 to ensure that new sources of light and glare do not impact adjacent land uses; additionally, nighttime lighting would be limited to lighting necessary for security, and lighting would be shielded to reduce glare and spill lighting effects on adjacent sensitive uses. Therefore, the overall visual impacts of Alternative 1 would be less than significant and similar to those of the proposed project. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2, Alternative 1 would have less than significant impacts with respect to aesthetics. Overall, impacts to aesthetics under Alternative 1 are reduced but similar to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Because impacts related to aesthetics for Alternative 1 would be less than those associated with the proposed project, cumulative impacts would also be less than cumulatively significant, and no mitigation would be required.

##### 4.1.11.2 Alternative 2 – 2,000 Square Feet of Restaurant Uses

Alternative 2 would allow for the future construction of a 161,385 sf Ganahl Lumber hardware store and lumber yard, a 399-space vehicle storage facility, and 2,000 sf of drive-through restaurant uses, which represents a reduction of 4,000 sf of drive-through restaurant uses as compared to the

proposed project. Specifically, Alternative 2 would provide 80 parking spaces, compared to 62 parking spaces provided in Area A as part of the proposed project.

Most components of the proposed project, such as outdoor lighting, circulation and access, signage, utilities and drainage, sustainability features, landscaping, and construction phasing and grading, would not significantly change with the implementation of Alternative 2. Components specific to Area A, such as the location of walkways, retaining walls, fences, and gates, would also not change under Alternative 2.

The modification and installation of existing and new utilities and infrastructure associated with the proposed project would still occur under Alternative 2. Under Alternative 2, similar to the proposed project, the entirety of Area A would be cleared, excavated, graded, and paved to accommodate surface parking and a building pad.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would have less than significant impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, light, glare, and the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings. Additionally, both the proposed project and Alternative 2 would have no impact associated with State Scenic Highways because no official State Scenic Highways are located in the vicinity of the project.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require the preparation of a lighting plan and photometric study, which would be approved by the City. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would still be applicable under Alternative 2 to ensure that new sources of light and glare do not impact adjacent land uses; additionally, nighttime lighting would be limited to lighting necessary for security, and lighting would be shielded to reduce glare and spill lighting effects on adjacent sensitive uses. Therefore, the overall visual impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than significant and similar to those of the proposed project. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2, Alternative 2 would have less than significant impacts with respect to aesthetics. Overall, impacts to aesthetics under Alternative 2 are reduced but similar to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Because impacts related to aesthetics for Alternative 2 would be less than those associated with the proposed project, cumulative impacts would also be less than cumulatively significant, and no mitigation would be required.

#### 4.1.11.3 Alternative 3 – 4,000 Square Feet of Restaurant Uses

Alternative 3 would allow for the future construction of a 161,385 sf Ganahl Lumber hardware store and lumber yard, a 399-space vehicle storage facility, and 4,000 sf of drive-through restaurant uses, which represents a reduction of 2,000 sf of drive-through restaurant use as compared to the proposed project. Specifically, Area A would provide 101 parking spaces, compared to 62 parking spaces provided as part of the project. Under Alternative 3, these additional parking spaces would be used by the drive-through restaurant use.

Most components of the proposed project, such as outdoor lighting, circulation and access, signage, utilities and drainage, sustainability features, landscaping, construction phasing, and grading, would



not significantly change under the implementation of Alternative 3. Components specific to Area A, such as the location of walkways, retaining walls, fences, and gates, would also not change under Alternative 3.

The modification and installation of existing and new utilities and infrastructure associated with the proposed project would still occur under Alternative 3. Under Alternative 3, similar to the proposed project, the entirety of Area A would be cleared, excavated, graded, and paved to accommodate surface parking and a building pad.

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would have less than significant impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, light, glare, and the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings. Additionally, both the proposed project and Alternative 3 would have no impact associated with State Scenic Highways because no official State Scenic Highways are located in the vicinity of the project. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would require the preparation of a lighting plan and photometric study, which would be approved by the City. Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would still be applicable under Alternative 3 to ensure that new sources of light and glare do not impact adjacent land uses; additionally, nighttime lighting would be limited to lighting necessary for security, and lighting would be shielded to reduce glare and spill lighting effects on adjacent sensitive uses. Therefore, the overall visual impacts of Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to those of the proposed project. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2, Alternative 3 would have less than significant impacts with respect to aesthetics. Overall, impacts to aesthetics under Alternative 3 are reduced, but similar to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Because impacts related to aesthetics for Alternative 3 would be less than those associated with the proposed project, cumulative impacts would also be less than cumulatively significant, and no mitigation would be required.

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