5. Environmental Analysis

5.1 **AESTHETICS**

This section describes impacts of the Proposed Project on visual character, visual and scenic resources, and light and glare. The information in this section is based on architectural plans, including building elevations, section views, and visual simulations, and review of aerial photographs, street views, and other available information.

5.1.1 Environmental Setting

5.1.1.1 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Anaheim General Plan

Creating a positive and strong community identity for such a large and diverse area as the City of Anaheim is the goal of the General Plan's Community Design Element. Combined with the Green Element, which combines parks and recreation, open space, conservation, and public landscaping into a comprehensive plan to beautify the City, the Community Design Element provides policy guidance that respects this diverse context while seeking to unify the City through carefully crafted design policies. The following goals in the General Plan relate to aesthetic quality in the City of Anaheim:

Land Use Element

• **Goal 8.1:** Preserve natural, scenic and recreational resources; continue to ensure residential neighborhoods are safe, well-maintained, places to live; and continue to provide necessary community services and facilities.

Green Element

- **Goal 1.1:** Maintain strict standards for hillside grading to preserve environmental and aesthetic resources.
- Goal 2.1: Preserve views of ridgelines, natural open space and other scenic vistas wherever possible.

Community Design Element

- **Goal 2.1:** Attractively landscape and maintain Anaheim's major arterial corridors and prepare/implement distinctive streetscape improvement plans.
- **Goal 3.1:** Single-family neighborhoods are attractive, safe and comfortable.
- **Goal 4.1:** Multiple-family housing is attractively designed and scaled to complement the neighborhood and provides visual interest through varied architectural detailing.
- **Goal 7.1:** Neighborhood retail centers are thoughtfully designed to create attractive places that provide convenient access and ample pedestrian amenities to residents of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Goal 11.1: Architecture in Anaheim has diversity and creativity of design and is consistent with the immediate surroundings.

• **Goal 21.1:** Preserve the Hill and Canyon Area's sensitive hillside environment and the community's unique identity.

City of Anaheim Municipal Code

The City of Anaheim Municipal Code identifies land use categories, development standards, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the General Plan and proposed development projects. The following sections of Title 18 (Zoning), of the Anaheim Municipal Code, are intended to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts associated with development projects and are relevant to the Proposed Project.

Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone (Municipal Code Section 18.18). The purpose of the SC Overlay Zone is to provide for and promote orderly growth in certain areas of the City designated as being of distinctive, scenic importance, while implementing local governmental agency actions for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the unique and natural scenic assets of these areas as a valuable resource to the community. This area has been designated as an area of distinctive natural and rural beauty, characterized and exemplified by the interrelationship between such primary natural features as the rolling terrain, winding river, Specimen Trees, and the profusion of natural vegetation.

The area of the City designated as being within the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone is defined as that area lying easterly of the intersection of the State Route 55/Costa Mesa and State Route 91/Riverside Freeways, westerly of the Orange County line, southerly of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, and northerly of the present or any future south city limits of the City of Anaheim, with the exception of those properties within the Anaheim Canyon Specific Plan No. 2015-01 (SP2015-01) Zone.

- Parking and Loading (Chapter 18.42). The purpose of this chapter is to prescribe minimum standards for parking and loading to ensure the attractiveness and adequacy of parking and loading of passengers and goods. The chapter establishes how many parking spaces are required for each unit but also dictates how parking lots and garages are designed.
- Landscaping and Screening (Chapter 18.46). This chapter is to define landscaping development standards, screening standards, and irrigation measures, in order to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the City, minimize graffiti opportunities, preserve privacy and security, and conserve water, consistent with the policy direction of the Anaheim General Plan.
- Additional development standards and design guidelines are found elsewhere in the Zoning Code organized by zoning district categories (e.g., commercial zones). The Proposed Project would reclassify the Project Site from the existing "C-G" General Commercial Zone to the "RM-3" Multiple-Family Residential Zone. The zoning and development standards for the RM-3 Zone are found in Chapter 18.06 (Multiple-Family Residential Zones) of the Anaheim Municipal Code.

As indicated in the project description, the Project Applicant is requesting certain modifications to the above standards through an Affordable Housing Density Bonus, and associated incentives, and a conditional use permit.

City of Orange General Plan

The City of Orange General Plan's Natural Resources Element Figure NR-4, Viewscape Corridors, designates Chapman Avenue east of Newport Boulevard, Newport Boulevard south of Chapman Avenue, and SR-91 east of SR-55 as viewscape corridors. The Project Site is approximately 2.5 miles south of the intersection of Chapman Avenue and Newport Boulevard.

5.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Visual Character and Scenic Vistas

The Anaheim General Plan Green Element identifies Anaheim's major scenic features, which are the Hill and Canyon Area, Santa Ana Mountains, Santa Ana River, and golf courses. These areas provide scenic and recreational resources for the City and the region. The Project Site is in the Hill and Canyon Area, which generally refers to eastern parts of the city and its sphere of influence area, east of the intersection of the SR-55 and SR-91 and north of Santa Ana River. More locally, the Project Site is in the Anaheim Hills area near Peralta Hills, in the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone. The Project Site's surrounding visual character includes residential units to the east, north, and south; an elementary school use to the south; and undeveloped lands and hill sides with residential units on top of the hills to the west. Low-lying hills from the Santa Ana Mountains near Weir Canyon and Peralta Hills are visible from Serrano Avenue to the east and south.

Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone

The area of the City designated as being within the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone is defined as that area lying easterly of the intersection of the SR-55 and SR-91, westerly of the Orange County boundary, southerly of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, and northerly of the present or any future south city limits of the City of Anaheim. The Project Site is easterly of the intersection of the SR-55 and SR-91 and westerly and northerly of the City limits, therefore is in the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone. Specimen trees including Schinus (Pepper) and Quercus (Oak) varieties within the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone are protected.

Existing Uses

The Project Site is relatively flat and fully developed with seven one-story neighborhood commercial buildings, associated parking, and landscaping. The northeast corner of the site is currently occupied by a playground area associated with a children's day care facility. The Project Site is bounded by a six- to eight-foot-high block wall on the north and eastern property lines. There are total of 65 trees on the Project Site. Three of the 65 trees are Brazilian pepper trees, which are subject to the specimen tree requirements of Section 18.18.040 of the Anaheim Municipal Code.

The Project Site is designated by the General Plan for Neighborhood Center (Commercial) land use with a maximum density of 0.35 to 0.45 floor area ratio (FAR).

Surrounding Uses

The Project Site abuts properties within the RS-2 (Single-Family Residential) Zone, which is intended to provide an attractive, safe, and healthy environment with single-family dwelling units on a minimum lot size of 7,200 square feet.

The area across Serrano Avenue to the south is within the RS-3 (Single-Family Residential) Zone, which permits single-family dwelling units on a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet.

The area west of Nohl Ranch Road is within the T (Transitional) Zone, including the Anaheim Hills Elementary School property. The area beyond T (Transitional) Zone is under the jurisdiction of City of Orange, and is within the Serrano Heights area, designated as the P-C (Planned Community) Zone.

5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines states that, "except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099," a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- AE-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- AE-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- AE-3 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.
- AE-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 impacts associated with the following thresholds would be no impact:

■ Threshold AE-2

This impact will not be addressed in the following analysis.

5.1.3 Plans, Programs, and Policies

Regulatory Requirements

RR AE-1 The Proposed Project will be constructed in compliance with Municipal Code Title 18, Chapter 18.06 (Multiple-Family Residential Zones).

- RR AE-2 The Project Applicant will comply with the Tree Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 18.18.040) and plant nine replacement specimen trees (minimum 24-inch box size) for the removed three Brazilian pepper trees (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) on the Project Site.
- RR AE-3 The Project Applicant will comply with Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations).

5.1.4 Environmental Impacts

5.1.4.1 IMPACT ANALYSIS

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the Initial Study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

Impact 5.1-1: The Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. [Thresholds AE-1 and AE-3]

The Project Site is in the Hill and Canyon Area, and the City has various goals and policies to preserve the Hill and Canyon Area's sensitive hillside environment attractiveness. According to Figure CD-1, General Plan Program, of the Community Design Element, the following district-level design features describe the Hill and Canyon Area; therefore, are applicable to the Proposed Project:

- Reinforce the natural environment of the area through appropriate landscaping and the preservation of open space.
- Encourage the siting of housing development below the existing ridgelines to preserve unimpeded views of existing natural contours.
- Use grading techniques that incorporate rounded slopes or curved contours to minimize disturbance to the site and to blend with the existing topography.
- Require compliance with the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone to reinforce quality development standards and guidelines compatible with the hillside area.

The Proposed Project involves redevelopment of a neighborhood commercial center surrounded by residential uses. The Proposed Project would not convert any natural environment to urban uses or require substantial grading to alter existing topography or ridge lines. The Project Site is developed with commercial uses and does not have any natural aesthetic resources to maintain or incorporate into the design of the Proposed Project. As shown in building perspectives in Figures 3-13 and 3-14, the Proposed Project would be attractive and of quality design, and provide visual interest through varied architectural detailing, including but not limited to building massing, heights, building materials, and decorative features. The Proposed Project would not adversely affect any natural attractiveness of the Hill and Canyon Area and would not have a significant adverse effect on a scenic vista from any publicly protected viewsheds.

The Project Site is relatively flat with existing topography at approximately 860 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The finished floor elevation for the Proposed Project would be approximately 861 feet amsl. Therefore, the Project Site topography would not change substantially from the existing conditions, and no ridge lines or natural open space would be affected by the proposed development.

The Proposed Project would modify the character of the Project Site from one-story multi-suite neighborhood uses to two- to three-story attached residential units. Although on-site visual character would change, the surrounding areas are developed with single-family and multifamily residential uses, and the Proposed Project would not substantially conflict with the visual character of the surrounding area. The adjacent residential units to the north, east, and south are two-story, detached single-family units in the RS-2 (Single-Family Residential) Zone, and the maximum permitted structure height in RS-2 Zone is 35 feet or 2 ½ stories. In RM-3 Zone, the maximum permitted height is 40 feet; however, buildings exceeding 40 feet or 3 stories in height may be permitted by conditional use permit.

The Proposed Project would construct eight buildings: Buildings 1 and 2 are three stories tall, and the overall building height would not exceed a maximum of 40 feet, and Buildings 3 through 8 are two stories tall, and the overall building height would not exceed a maximum of 30 feet. Therefore, the Proposed Project would comply with the maximum height requirements for RM-3 Zone, and it would also be noted that Buildings 3 through 8 to the north would comply with the height standard for RS-2 Zone. Buildings 1 and 2 would occupy the southern half of the Project Site, and the building elevations are shown in Figures 3-7a through 3-8b. Buildings 3 through 8 would occupy the northern half of the Project Site, and the building state are shown in Figures 3-9a through 3-11b.

While the Project Site's surface elevation would be approximately 861 feet amsl, the residences immediately to the north are on varied topography, progressively sloping down from west to east, from approximately 874 feet to 851 feet. Figures 5.1-1, *North Section Views*, and 5.1-2, *South, East, and West Section Views*, show locations of the adjacent residences in relation to the Project Site. As shown, not all adjacent residences have the unobstructed views of the low-lying Anaheim Hills to the south, as they are at grade or down slope from the Project Site. The Proposed Project would provide a setback ranging from 20 feet to 35 feet from the north property line to the proposed buildings, and a new 6-foot property line wall/fence would be provided 1 foot from the existing 6-foot solid wall/fence. Additionally, a new screening fence would be provided for further visual protection from the adjacent residential properties. Additionally, a tall landscape screen would also be provided along the new solid wall/fence, with minimum box size of 24 inches. Potential species would include 20- to 30-foot-tall green trees such as *Ficus nitida, Prunus caroliniana, Podocarpus gracilior*, and *Bambusa dol.* 'Green Stripe.' The proposed landscape plan is shown in Figure 3-5, *Proposed Landscape Plan*.

Section A-A in Figure 5.1-1 illustrates section views of Building 8 on the Project Site in relation to the singlefamily home to the north on Carnegie Avenue. As shown, there is an existing 6-foot solid wall/fence to remain, and the Proposed Project would provide a separate wall from the existing wall of the same height. The surface elevation at the adjacent single-family property is approximately 874 feet amsl, and the Project Site's elevation would be approximately 861 feet amsl; therefore, the grade difference would be approximately 13 feet. Similarly, the existing residential property immediately north of Building 7 would be on a slightly higher elevation than the Project Site at approximately 870 feet, and the grade difference between the Project Site and the residential property immediately north of Building 7 would be approximately 10 feet. Both Buildings 8 and 7 would be two stories high, a maximum of 30 feet, similar in height with the adjacent single-family residence to the north.





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Figure 5.1-2 - South, East, and West Section Views 5. Environmental Analysis

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Considering the topography and new landscape screening, it is anticipated that new residences would not have a direct view of the existing residences to the north, and no privacy issues would occur. Although the views are somewhat limited, the existing residences to the north have views of the low-lying hills to the south, and the Proposed Project would likely block these views. However, these views are not protected views of the public, and the Proposed Project would be developed consistent with the City's permitted building regulations that govern scenic quality, such as height, massing, and setback, and impacts would not be considered potentially significant (RR AE-1).

As shown in Section B-B in Figure 5.1-1, which illustrates the Building 5 section view, there is no noticeable difference in topography between the Project Site and the adjacent residential unit to the north. Therefore, with perimeter walls/fencing and trees that block the views, residences immediately north of Building 5 do not have views of the low-lying hills to the south. Section C-C in Figure 5.1-1 illustrates the section view of Building 4, which is at a slightly higher elevation than the adjacent residential units to the north, with grade difference of approximately 4 feet to 6 feet. Section D-D in Figure 5.1-1 illustrates section views of Building 3, with the grade difference of approximately 7 to 10 feet. Therefore, the existing residential units adjacent to Buildings 3 through 5 to the north are on a lower elevation than the Project Site and do not have views of the hills to the south. Therefore, with the new wall/fence and 20- to 30-foot-tall landscape screen, no privacy issues or adverse private view impacts are anticipated. As shown in Figures 3-9a through 3-11b, Buildings 3 through 8 are two stories high and would have a maximum wall plane height of 20 feet. Buildings 3 and 4 would have an overall height of building with rooflines at 25 feet and 9 inches, and Buildings 5 through 8 would have an overall height to RS-2 Zone to the north would not exceed 30 feet, consistent with the maximum height standards established for the RS-2 Zone, no significant aesthetic impacts are anticipated.

The southern half of the Project Site would be occupied by Buildings 1 and 2, which are three stories high. Buildings 1 and 2 would have a maximum wall plane height of 30 feet, and a maximum overall building height of 37 feet and 11 inches. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not exceed the RM-3 height requirement of maximum 40 feet and would not conflict with the applicable zoning standards.

Although Building 2 would be adjacent to the single-family residential units in the RS-2 Zone to the east, the building would be placed at 55 feet from the east property line, and direct views of the proposed buildings from these residences would be obstructed by the perimeter fence/wall and tall landscape screening. It should also be noted that Tremont, a 2- to 3-story condominium community totaling 97 units in the City of Orange, is approximately 900 feet from the Project Site to the west, adjacent to Anaheim Hills Elementary School. The Proposed Project would be compatible with the surrounding single- and multi-story residential properties and would not conflict with the existing regulations protecting aesthetic quality of the area. Therefore, less than significant visual impacts are anticipated.

Approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) would allow modification to the interior landscape setback standards abutting a single-family residential zone, therefore reducing interior landscape setback to 2 feet, 4 feet, and 6 feet where 10 feet would be required. The modification is proposed in segments, not throughout the Project Site boundary abutting residential zone as shown in Figure 5.1-3, *Proposed Setback Modifications*. Figure 3-5, *Proposed Landscape Plan*, shows areas of landscape buffer along the north and east property line. The

Proposed Project would provide 4 feet landscape buffer along east property line to the 5 feet walkway. Although the interior landscape setback would be reduced to 2 feet in some segments abutting single-family residential zone, the Anaheim Municipal Code allows such modifications, if they are needed in order to achieve a good project design, privacy, livability, and compatibility with surrounding uses. The Proposed Project would provide a new block wall of the same height one foot away from the existing wall, plant tall perimeter trees to provide visual screening, provide walkways, and parking spaces to achieve a quality design, privacy, livability, and compatibility with surrounding uses.

Approval of a CUP would also allow modification to building-to-building setback within the Project Site, reducing to 36.7 feet where 40 feet would be required between Building 1 and Building 2, facing Serrano Avenue, and 32 feet where 35 feet would be required between Building 1 and Building 8. However, as shown in Figure 3-5, *Proposed Landscape Plan*, and Figures 3-13 and 3-14, *Building Perspective from Serrano Avenue of Building 1*, and *Building Perspective from Nohl Ranch Road of Building 8*, the Proposed Project would incorporate various building materials and design features to enhance visual experience and to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts.

The Project Site is in the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone. Zoning Code Section 18.18.070, Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay - Multiple-Family Residential Zones Standards, requires a minimum project area of five acres and a 50-foot minimum setback from Nohl Ranch Road and Serrano Avenue, which are designated as arterial highways. Although the Project Site is 3.03 acres and the minimum setback from both Nohl Ranch Road and Serrano Avenue is 14 feet, the City allows deviation from these standards with provision of affordable housing units. Therefore, because the Proposed Project would provide 12 affordable housing units, or 20 percent of the total 58 units, these minimum requirements would be waived upon approval of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable regulations.

Section 18.18.040, Tree Preservation, of the Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone contains standards for specimen trees that are protected within the SC Overlay Zone. There are total of 65 trees on the Project Site. Three of the 65 trees are Brazilian pepper trees, which are subject to the specimen tree requirements of Section 18.18.040 of the Anaheim Municipal Code.. Therefore, a Specimen Tree Report was prepared, and the Project Applicant is required to plant nine replacement specimen trees (minimum 24-inch box size) for three Brazilian pepper trees (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) that would be removed from the Project Site (RR AE-2). Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality of the City, and the Proposed Project would have less than significant aesthetic impacts.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.





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Impact 5.1-2: The Proposed Project would create a new source of light and glare, but it would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. [Threshold AE-4]

The Project Site currently provides six area lighting fixtures in the parking lot for security purposes: one at the southeast corner of the Project Site, one adjacent to the center driveway on Serrano Avenue, two near the southwest corner of the Project Site, one adjacent to the driveway on Nohl Ranch Road, and one near the center of the north property line. There are also three street lights along Serrano Avenue, two on Nohl Ranch Road, and one at the intersection of Nohl Ranch Road and Serrano Avenue. The existing buildings are not constructed with reflective materials and do not have reflective windows along roadways to create substantial glare during day times.

Excessive light and glare can negatively affect sensitive land uses when they are close to land uses that have outdoor lighting or are made from materials that reflect light. During the day, glare may reflect off glass or metal surfaces; at night, light is generated by street lights, vehicle headlights, building and security lights, signage, and parking lot lights. The Proposed Project could potentially result in additional nighttime and daytime lighting sources due to increased development density. However, building materials would include concrete tiles, stucco, manufactured stone veneer, wood trims, and metal railings, which are not considered highly reflective building materials that could adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. As with other residential development in the area, the building materials and the interior lighting would be similar to typical residential neighborhood, and would not create bright, high-intensity, or blinking light conditions that could result in significant lighting or glare impacts.

Land uses sensitive to light and glare include existing residential uses in the area. The existing Anaheim Hills Elementary School would not be operational at night, so no adverse impacts from increased nighttime light and glare impacts would occur.

The Proposed Project would be required to comply with outdoor lighting provisions of the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations), which require a number of methods to limit overspill of light and glare, including motion sensors and luminaire cutoff requirements (RR AE-3). Therefore, the Proposed Project will be required to have the proper installment of light fixtures that include necessary shielding—such as hoods, filtering louvers, and glare shields—to ensure that lights do not result in detrimental impact to the public health, safety, or general welfare. In these locations, light overspill would be less than under existing conditions.

For the above reasons, potential increases in light intensity resulting from the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Potentially significant impact.

5.1.5 Cumulative Impacts

Potential Project-related aesthetic impacts have been found to be less than significant. The Project Site and the surrounding areas are developed with various urban uses (residential and institutional) while surrounding open spaces areas and hills are considered natural visual resources. The Project Site is currently developed, and the

Proposed Project would be developed in compliance with the existing regulations and policies concerning aesthetics, compatible with other residential uses in the area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not cumulatively alter the existing urbanized, residential visual character of the area, and no cumulatively considerable aesthetics impacts would occur.

The Project Site and its surrounding areas are already developed and generate nighttime lighting from similar sources. Project development would result in similar nighttime lighting and daytime glare impacts. The Proposed Project would not significantly change the on- or offsite lighting or glare levels in the area. No cumulatively considerable light and glare impacts are anticipated.

Level of Significance before Mitigation: Less than significant.

5.1.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, some impacts would be less than significant: 5.1-1 and 5.1-2.

5.1.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

5.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are required to reduce potential impacts to aesthetics to a level that is less than significant. The Proposed Project would not have significant, unavoidable, adverse impacts to environmental aesthetics.

5.1.9 References

Anaheim, City of. Anaheim Municipal Code.

http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/California/anaheim/anaheimmunicipalcode?f=templates \$fn=default.htm\$3.0\$vid=amlegal:anaheim_ca

California Energy Commission (CEC). Building Energy Efficiency Standards For Residential and Nonresidential Buildings.