

2. AESTHETICS

As with many other cities within the Central Coast region of California, Hollister's built environment reflects an eclectic mix of building styles reminiscent of the various cultures that have come to settle in the state. Building styles range from flat terra-cotta roofs and stucco ranch-style homes to classic red brick buildings or traditional wooden barns. Today, Hollister's historic Downtown extends into growing suburban neighborhoods before tapering into agricultural land and golden rolling hills.

2.1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes regulations for aesthetics at the federal, State, regional, and City level.

2.1.1 FEDERAL REGULATIONS

2.1.1.1 National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) as the official designation of historical resources, including districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. For a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register, it must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, and must retain integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Resources less than 50 years in age, unless of exceptional importance, are not eligible for the National Register. Though a listing in the National Register does not prohibit demolition or alteration of a property, the properties listed in the National Register have additional mechanisms in place to protect from discretionary demolition or alteration.

2.1.2 STATE REGULATIONS

2.1.2.1 California State Scenic Highways Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the State legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. The State laws governing the Scenic Highways Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. The California Scenic Highway Program is maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans has not officially designated any highway within the city of Hollister as a State Scenic Highway. Furthermore, there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the County of San Benito.¹

¹ California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019_a11y.xlsx, accessed on April 30, 2020.

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2.1.2.2 California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, commonly referred to as the “California Building Code” (CBC). The CBC is located in Part 2 of Title 24. The CBC is updated on a three-year cycle. It is effective statewide, but a local jurisdiction may adopt more restrictive standards based on local conditions under specific amendment rules prescribed by the State Building Standards Commission. The City of Hollister regularly adopts each new CBC update under the Hollister Municipal Code (SRMC) Chapter 15.04, Hollister Building Code. The CBC includes standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.

2.1.2.3 California Building Code: CALGreen

The California Building Standards Commission adopted the California Green Building Standards Code, also known as CALGreen. As part of the CBC, CALGreen is located in Part 11 of Title 24. CALGreen establishes building standards aimed at enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts that reduce negative impacts and increase positive environmental impacts by encouraging sustainable construction practices. Specifically, Section 5.106.8, Light Pollution Reduction, establishes backlight, uplight, and glare ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for nonresidential development. The local building permit process enforces the mandatory provisions of CALGreen. The City of Hollister has regularly adopted each new CALGreen update under the HMC Chapter 15.04, Hollister Building Code.

2.1.2.4 Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (SB 330, 2019)

SB 330 is a sweeping bill aimed at ensuring zoning-compliant housing projects are approved by streamlining project approvals and preventing local actions that reduce housing capacity. Most of SB 330's numerous provisions will sunset (expire) on January 1, 2025, unless it is extended by the legislature. Although SB 330 includes many requirements, the regulations specific to aesthetics include prohibiting local jurisdictions from:

- Acting to reduce the allowed intensity or number of units for residential land uses/parcels.
- Imposing or enforcing a moratorium on housing development.
- Imposing any new non-objective design standards on proposed housing projects developments.
- Implementing or enforcing limits on the number of residential building permits issued, subject to certain exceptions.

In certain cases, reductions in density/intensity are allowed, provided that those reductions are cancelled out by an increase elsewhere.

2.1.3 REGIONAL REGULATIONS

2.1.3.1 Wayfinding System Master Plan

San Benito County drafted and adopted the 2016 Multi-Governmental Wayfinding System Wayfinding Master Plan (MGWSWMP) to implement the City of Hollister’s 2013 comprehensive branding study, which called for a civic wayfinding system that would assist travelers in identifying known areas and navigating the greater San Benito County. The MGWSWMP directs users to existing destinations and intends to create experiences along the route. Guidelines and general design characteristics have been developed to ensure the success of the wayfinding signage system, and design criteria include location, orientation, consistency, user-friendliness, minimalism, aesthetics, and sustainability.

2.1.4 LOCAL REGULATIONS

2.1.4.1 City of Hollister General Plan, 2005

The City of Hollister 2005 General Plan goals, policies, and programs relevant to the visual setting are primarily in the Land Use and Community Design Element and Housing Element. In addition, the General Plan defines five Special Planning Areas to provide additional guidance on development, redevelopment, and property improvements. The General Plan identifies design concepts for circulation and parking, site organization, building detailing, landscaping and streetscape elements for each Special Planning Area, mapped in Figure 1-5 The Planning Areas include:

- **North Gateway.** The objective of this Planning Area is to foster a gateway for motorists arriving in Hollister from the north along Highway 25 and San Felipe Road, providing the opportunity for large retail uses, specifically automobile dealerships, that cater to commuters and other motorists without duplicating services found Downtown.
- **West Gateway.** The purpose of this Planning Area is to create an entry feature on San Juan Road as it bridges the San Benito River. Historical themes from Hollister's past should be incorporated into the design and carry over into the rest of the district.
- **Downtown.** The Downtown Planning Area includes the area along San Felipe Road from Santa Ana Road to Hawkins Street. This district has a number of early-twentieth century buildings that reflect the small-town agricultural character and history of Hollister. Parts of this district encompass the Downtown National Historic District, designated by the National Register of Historic Places in 1992, in which 53 contributing buildings are bound by Fourth, East, South, and Monterey Streets. New development and redevelopment that occurs Downtown must occur in context of the existing buildings. Amenities that encourage a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience in Downtown are also crucial elements of this Planning Area.
- **“Old Town” Residential.** This Special Planning Area partially contains two national historic districts, a portion of the Downtown National Historic District and the Monterey Street Historic District. Located east and south of Downtown, the Old Town Zoning District extends roughly from Fourth Street to Nash Road and encompasses an area that is characterized primarily by historic pre-World War II buildings. This architecturally diverse district promotes preservation efforts to reinforce the distinct attributes of the existing structures for any development or redevelopment that occurs in the district. New construction should blend well with structures in existing neighborhoods.

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- Home Office.** Intended for professional offices in the older residential district surrounding Downtown, as a subset of the “Old Town” Residential land. The major design goal is to preserve the residential look and feel of the neighborhood while continuing to allow office uses within the residential district.

As part of the General Plan Update, some existing General Plan goals, policies, and programs could be amended, substantially changed, or new policies could be added. A list of policies applicable to aesthetics is provided in Table 2-1 below.

TABLE 2-1 2005 HOLLISTER GENERAL PLAN RELEVANT AESTHETICS POLICIES

Policy No.	Policy
LU1.2	Historical Preservation Ordinance. Supplement the existing Historical Preservation Ordinance with an inventory and designation of potential sites and structures of architectural, historic, archeological and cultural significance.
LU1.3	Design Review. Require proposals for residential and nonresidential development projects adjacent to designated landmarks to undergo design review.
LU1.6	City Entrances. Improve the major entrances into the City with landmark entry features, signs and gateways at the North and West gateways and along the San Felipe Road corridor north of McCloskey Road.
LU1.8	Signage. Require that building signs be designed to fit within the scale and character of buildings.
LU1.9	Cohesive Design Elements. Use cohesive design elements in street trees, lighting and street furniture to strengthen character of the special planning areas and residential neighborhoods.
LU3.1	Streetscape and Building Façade Improvements. Encourage streetscape and building façade improvements in the downtown commercial district as a way to stimulate investment and attract high-quality private development.
LU3.2	Street Trees. Promote street tree planting and other community design features to maintain visual quality and small town atmosphere.
LU3.3	Landscaping. Maintain roadway landscaping through both public and private means.
LU3.6	Landscaping on Public and Private Sites. Require landscaping on public and private sites, including entry areas, street medians, parks, schools, parking lots, plazas, courtyards and recreational areas.
LU4.3	Building Frontages. Encourage building frontages that are safe and interesting for pedestrians. Require setbacks or 15’ of less Downtown, and follow the prevalent existing setback pattern in medium-density residential areas.
LU4.5	Lighting and Furniture. Require compatible pedestrian and bicycle pathways and automobile routes with design elements that use buildings, trees, lighting and street furniture to define spaces for travelers.
LU4.6	Signs for Pedestrians and Motorists. Scale and orient signs along the street to both pedestrians and motorists.
LU4.8	Pedestrian Environment. Design safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable and functional pedestrian crossings, intersections, sidewalks, street plantings, street furniture and traffic signals.
LU8.2	Historic Neighborhoods. Ensure that the existing historical neighborhoods remain intact by prohibiting incompatible uses and development types.
LU8.3	Residential Character. Ensure that new development in multifamily neighborhoods supports, rather than detracts from, the existing residential character of the area.
LU8.4	Neighborhood Scale. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with surrounding uses.

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Policy No.	Policy
LU9.1	Natural Design Elements. Ensure that building design takes into consideration air circulation, natural lighting, views, solar orientation, and shading areas to interior and exterior spaces.
LU10.4	Attractive Street Frontages. Encourage attractive, accessible, and pedestrian-friendly street frontages that contribute to the retail vitality of Downtown and other special planning areas.
LU11.1	Well-Articulated Buildings. Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design such as blank walls or an unbroken series of garage doors on street frontages
LU11.2	Unique Design Elements. Ensure that building designs include varied building façades, rooflines, and building heights to create interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes.

Source: City of Hollister, 2005 General Plan.

2.1.4.2 Hollister Municipal Code

The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to visual resources in Hollister. The HMC is organized by Title, Chapter, and Section. Most provisions related to aesthetics impacts are included in Title 15, Buildings and Construction, Title 16, Subdivisions, and Title 17, Zoning as follows:

- **Chapter 15.16, *Historic Resources.*** This chapter is relevant to the preservation of structures, sites, and areas of special character or special historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value that contribute to the visual setting in Hollister. Among other requirements, this chapter requires the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures, sites, and areas that are significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture.
- **Chapter 16.20, *Design Standards.*** This chapter regulates design standards for subdivisions, specifically regulating residential lots to be designed to preserve the maximum of trees and natural amenities. On larger lots, setbacks are extended to preserve trees and to prevent unnecessary interference with views from other lots. This chapter ensures residential lots contain an adequate building sites for a structure of reasonably expected size and type. In addition, Section 16.20.030, Blocks, regulates walkways to include adequate lighting for pedestrians.
- **Title 17, *Zoning.*** In addition to the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool that shapes the form and character of physical development in Hollister. The Zoning Ordinance contains all the zoning districts, and identifies land use standards, site development regulations, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the General Plan and proposed development projects. Section 17.02.010, Purpose, states that the Hollister Zoning Ordinance is, among other things, intended to provide standards for orderly growth and development that will maintain a high quality of life without causing unduly costs for development or restrictions on private enterprise, initiative, or innovation in design; conserve and protect natural resources; provide a diversity of areas characterized by differing land use activities, scale, and intensity while maintaining community identity and quality development; and maintain the unique, distinctive, and secure environment. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth the development standards include those related to visual resources as follows:

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- **Chapter 17.16, *Performance Standards*.** This chapter defines the performance standards for specific land uses, land use activities, and site-specific conditions. Section 17.16.050, Fencing, screening, and walls, protects the economic and aesthetic values, and ensures safe travel and vision clearance by regulating the development of fences, walls, and screening. Section 17.16.080, Landscaping design and standards, provides landscaping regulations intended to visually enhance the appearance of developments, reduce heat and glare, screen incompatible land uses, preserve the integrity of neighborhoods, among other objectives, to contribute to the community's image and appeal. Section 17.16.090, Lighting (outdoors), regulates exterior lighting, and includes performance and design standards for development to provide adequate lighting for safety and security; reduce light pollution, light trespass, glare, sky glow impacts, and offensive light sources; prevent inappropriate, poorly designed or installed outdoor lighting; encourage quality lighting design; light fixture shielding, uniform light intensities, maximum lighting levels within and on property lines, and lighting controls; and promote efficient and cost-effective lighting to conserve energy. These lighting standards require that lighting be shielded with full cutoff or recessed to reduce light splay to adjoining properties, public right-of-way, and the night sky, through the use of measures such as down lighting and fixture shielding to confine glare and reflection on new development.
- **Chapter 17.18, *Pedestrian, Bicycle, Parking and Loading Standards*.** Section 17.18.010, Purpose, states that pedestrian, bicycle, and off-street parking and loading standards provide accessible, attractive, secure, properly lighted, and well-maintained and screened facilities. Section 17.18.030, General pedestrian, bicycle and parking regulations, requires new developments, building additions, or use changes establish a circulation plan for vehicular and pedestrian access and parking facilities which requires plans for shaded pedestrian paths and pedestrian crossings with contrasting paving, among other requirements. Section 17.18.070, Bicycle parking design standards, establishes design standards for bicycle racks, lockers and like facilities to ensure they are visually identifiable and effective. Section 17.18.130, Off-street loading space requirements, establishes lighting, screening, and other development standards for off-street loading spaces.
- **Chapter 17.20, *Signs*.** Section 17.20.010, Purpose, states that this chapter is intended to regulate the design, character, location, number, type, quality of materials, size, illumination, and maintenance of signs in the city. These regulations help to preserve the visual character of the City and help serve the City's interest in maintaining and enhancing its visual appeal for tourists and other visitors by preventing the degradation of visual quality which can result from excess signage. Section 17.20.0500, Design Standards, outlines specific design criteria and restrictions for defined sign types. These standards include design continuity that requires all signs comply with building theme and placement, use common materials, colors, and illumination. Section 17.20.140 Signs on agricultural lands, further restricts the type of signs that may be permitted. This section established the type of signs permitted in agricultural zoning districts. Section 17.20.130, Public facility/institutional and open space regulations, establishes the types of signs permitted for public and quasi-public uses in other zoning districts to preserve the visual character of the community. Section 17.20.100, Signs in residential zoning districts, establishes stricter sign regulations in residential zones to be compliant with building design with specified exemptions. These regulations defend the visual peace and tranquility of Hollister's neighborhoods.

- **Chapter 17.22, *Requirements for Special Land Uses*.** This chapter established regulations governing the location, maximum height, size, and design requirements for certain land uses that are allowed within zoning districts. Development standards are applied to uses ranging from accessory agricultural structures to bed and breakfast inns to swimming pools, orienting views to and from the uses through preservation, screening, or other measures. Article II of the chapter regulates telecommunication facilities including the design, placement, permitting, and monitoring of facilities consistent with applicable federal standards. These regulations are in part intended to preserve the visual appearance of the City.
- **Chapter 17.24, *Planned Unit Development*.** Section 17.24.240, Planned Development Permits, defines the permitting of planned developments to provide maximum flexibility in site planning/property development, design, and density/intensity, while protecting the integrity and character of the residential areas of the city; encourage innovation and the development of affordable housing; and ensure consistency with the General Plan. This section also outlines architectural and site plan design review procedures for Planned Unit Development and requires conformance with adopted design guidelines and policies.

2.1.4.3 Draft Hollister Downtown Strategy Plan

The City prepared the Hollister Downtown Strategy Plan for Downtown Hollister, which was not formally adopted by the Council, to provide design guidelines for new development projects as well as Downtown projects that involve the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The Draft Downtown Strategy Plan includes design guidelines to coordinate and orchestrate the overall development of Downtown so that each development project exudes quality and contributes to a better, more livable, and vital Downtown. The guidelines address site planning, building form, roofs, building facades, projecting façade elements, landscaping, fences and walls, lighting, service areas and mechanical equipment, and business signage for four types of buildings in Downtown:

- **Main Street Commercial Buildings.** Guidelines for main street commercial buildings, which should be located primarily along San Benito Street and Fifth Street, promote thoughtfully designed commercial areas with aesthetic features to make them dynamic, community-focused, historic, and safe.
- **Apartment Flat Buildings.** The design guidelines for apartment buildings are focused in several areas east of East Street and south of Sixth Street. The guidelines for these areas encourage muted colors, simple windows, shade trees, and other design elements to conform with overall community character. These guidelines also encourage rehabilitation of existing cannery facilities that are no longer viable to reflect the historic cannery use of this district.
- **Townhouse Buildings.** The design guidelines for townhouse buildings are focused in areas east of East Street and south of Sixth Street. Entrances should be provided to different units at one entrance per unit on the front façade, and each unit should be differentiated from adjacent units with different designs, materials, or colors while remaining compatible to adjacent units. The design guidelines encourage visual diversity across buildings while retaining cohesive community character.
- **Detached House Buildings.** Downtown Hollister has several existing neighborhoods with detached houses as the primary building type, but these guidelines apply to detached houses in a small area along South Street between Sally Street and Prospect Avenue. These guidelines help the area serve as a visual transition between the higher density apartment community and the existing neighborhood south of South Street. Some existing detached houses may function as offices within the “Home

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Office” overlay zone, and have additional guidelines to accommodate the office use while maintaining the residential character.

2.2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the regional character, visual character and built form, scenic corridors and vistas, and light and glare of existing aesthetic resources in the General Plan Study Area.

2.2.1 REGIONAL CHARACTER

The City of Hollister is located within the San Benito Valley, southeast of Gilroy and east of San Juan Bautista. The city is surrounded by rolling foothills (as part of greater mountain ranges) on three sides: the Gabilan Mountains to the south and west and the Diablo Range to the east. In addition, the Coastal Mountains in the distant west also ring the valley. These mountain ranges provide a natural backdrop to the city’s developed landscape and serve as visually significant attributes to San Benito County scenic character. The city limits have been largely defined by Hollister’s immediate agricultural surroundings. The visual character within the Planning Area has transformed over the past four decades from a rural, agricultural community to a suburban community consisting of residential areas and commercial strips, sprawling into farmlands on the boundary of the SOI and into outer edges of the Urban Service Area and Planning Area.

2.2.2 VISUAL CHARACTER AND BUILT FORM

This section describes the urban form and character of Hollister today. Hollister has evolved over the past 150 years from the Downtown outwards and the urban areas are connected through a series of highways and roadway corridors. Most edges of the city quickly transition into agricultural or open space, further supporting a sense of entrance into the urban environment.

State Routes (SR) 25 and 156 are the major transportation corridors adjacent to Hollister. SR 156 is a mostly two-lane highway and travels along the west side of the Planning Area. SR 25, a four-lane highway, intersects the northern City Limits and travels through the eastern edge of the City Limits.

The physical form of Hollister’s neighborhoods has been heavily influenced by the city’s growth pattern over the past century and a half. Hollister began with the establishment of the downtown area which served as a commerce center for the surrounding agricultural region. The city developed from this central core through a series of commercial corridors and suburban neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods are mostly single-family one- and two-story homes built in a variety of architectural styles. Commercial areas include large setbacks and significant amounts of parking and the buildings integrate few architectural adornments.

Over time Hollister has grown and evolved into a suburban community that serves as the commercial, economic, civic, cultural, and educational center of San Benito County. Most of the development in Hollister is residential. Single-family one- and two-story homes represent the majority of residential development. Some multi-family housing is dispersed throughout the city, mainly located along arterial

and collector streets. The visual character of Hollister is defined by a lack of visually cohesive community design elements, as demonstrated by a variety of competing land uses, building scales, and building types.

The following is a summary of the urban form characteristics and unique community character elements for each of the city's eight Planning Areas (as shown on Figure 1-3):

- The North Gateway area includes primarily commercial uses along the San Felipe Road corridor. One-story commercial buildings with few architectural details, large parking lots, and deep setbacks from the roadways dominate the corridor. Businesses include car dealerships, hotels, and fast-food restaurants. San Felipe Road includes decorative landscaping and is the northern gateway to Downtown.
- The West Gateway area covers the area surrounding the San Juan Road corridor from Westside Boulevard to Graf Road. As its name implies, this Special Planning Area is the western entrance to the city. The corridor includes mostly vacant parcels. However, a few single family neighborhoods, a mobile home park, and limited single-story, strip-commercial uses are found along the corridor.
- The Downtown Special Planning Area includes a mix of one- to four-story early-twentieth century buildings that reflect the small-town agricultural character and history of Hollister. Downtown has a walkable, gridded street network. Historic civic and commercial buildings front most streets with little or no building setback. This dense and compact development pattern provides an ideal pedestrian environment, with sidewalks, occasional street trees, and pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections. The structure of Downtown was shaped significantly by the 1989 earthquake and the decentralization of commercial services due to auto-oriented development. During the 1989 earthquake along the Calaveras Fault, buildings along the 400 block of west side of San Benito Street were largely destroyed. This area remains largely vacant today, although there are plans for a new, mixed-use building at this site.
- The "Old Town" Special Planning Area contains some of Hollister's most diverse architecture distributed through a neighborhood of historical homes, and new development is required to blend with existing structures. The buildings in the area include a variety of architectural styles and range of sizes but the neighborhood is generally characterized by wide, shaded streets with single-family residences. They also reflect an integration of income levels and social classes within the neighborhoods. Some of the homes interspersed in the area were constructed after World War II and have a contemporary style. Although these are established neighborhoods, there remain opportunities for infill development within the Old Town zone district. Infill development must compliment the scale and architecture of the area.
- Within the "Old Town" Residential area, the Home Office Special Planning Area allows professionals to utilize an economically-viable area free of high-volume automobile and pedestrian traffic for business. This area preserves the residential façade of buildings and front yard landscaping while allowing special office uses adjoining residences.
- The Buena Vista Road Special Planning Area includes the corridor between Highway 156 and San Benito Street. The area is largely undeveloped and includes active farmsteads, mostly row crops and a few orchards, attached with older, ranch-style single family homes on large agricultural parcels. Buena Vista Road is a highly trafficked corridor in Hollister that is currently undergoing a Complete

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Streets project, which will improve road conditions, safety, and amenities to include bicycle lanes, safe pedestrian crossings, shade trees, and placemaking elements to address overall safety.

- The Union Road Special Planning Area corridor includes the area between San Benito Street and Airline Highway. Union Road is a two-lane corridor that serves as an east-west connection across the southern edge of the city. Primarily surrounded by agricultural land, this rural area is facing urbanization as the community spreads and the surrounding development intensifies. The City anticipates improving traffic conditions and safety on Union Road through road and infrastructure improvement projects while preserving views to the surrounding natural environment.
- The Meridian Street Planning Area includes the area between Santa Ana Road, Santa Ana Creek, Hillcrest Road and Fairview Road. Although this area is largely undeveloped and intersected by a creek, there are several ranchettes in the area and a newer large-lot single-family neighborhood with one- and two-story ranch style homes. The City is considering extending Meridian Street to the east to connect an existing gap in the street network to enhance accessibility and mobility in eastern Hollister.

2.2.3 SCENIC CORRIDORS AND VISTAS

Hollister has a primarily flat topography with low foothills near the San Benito River, located on the east side of the Planning Area, that does not facilitate short-range views. However, the Planning Area is situated in a basin that is surrounded on three sides by mountainous terrain; the Gabilan Mountains are located to the south and west and the Quien Sabe Range (part of the greater Diablo Range) are to the east. These mountains form a natural background to an agricultural and suburban landscape that has been highly modified over the past few decades. These views provide physical orientation and are integral to the community's sense of place, so preservation of these views is key to maintaining Hollister's identity.

As Hollister has developed in recent decades, new development has constrained views of the natural surroundings. Building heights are limited by zoning district as designated in the HMC, where residential zones never exceed 40 feet in building height, and commercial, mixed use, and industrial zones reach a maximum of 75 feet in building height in some zones. Other than general screening measures required for development in some zoning districts, the City does not have scenic view corridor or vista protection requirements. Unobstructed views of the surrounding hills are encountered throughout the Planning Area when existing development does not limit the public vantage point.

Per the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, SR 25, which runs northwest to southeast through the Planning Area, is an eligible state scenic highway but is not officially designated. SR 156, which runs along the northwestern edge of the Planning Area outside the SOI and the Urban Service Area, is another eligible state scenic highway but it is not officially designated at this time. San Benito County contains one other eligible state scenic highways in the south corner (SR 198), but it is not officially designated at this time. SR 198 is approximately 52 miles south of the Planning Area.

2.2.4 LIGHT AND GLARE

The City minimizes light intrusion and pollution primarily through actions defined in the General Plan and carried out in the Zoning Code. In order to minimize light trespass and greater overall light levels in the

city, new development and projects making major parking lot improvements or proposing new lighting are required to prepare a lighting plan for review by the city. The plan must meet design guidelines to include the following:

- All light sources are fully shielded from off-site view.
- All light is downcast except where it can be proved to not adversely affect other parcels.
- Escape of light to the atmosphere is minimized.
- Low intensity, indirect light sources are encouraged, except where other types of lighting is warranted for public safety reasons.
- On-demand lighting systems are encouraged.
- Mercury, metal halide, and similar intense and bright lights are not permitted except where their need is specifically approved and their light source is restricted.

Negative impacts of outdoor lighting, such as light pollution, light trespass, glare, sky glow impacts, and offensive light sources, on public, quasi-public, and private property are further controlled throughout the Planning Area with regulations in Title 17. Outdoor lighting features are limited to 14 feet in height in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods and 24 feet, or the height of the nearest building (whichever is less), in other areas. Outdoor lighting must also utilize energy-efficient fixtures/lamps. Lighting throughout the city is generally required to be shielded or recessed to reduce light bleed to adjoining properties, public rights-of-way and the night sky. Lights are also limited to hours of operation, and controls such as motion sensors are required during post-curfew hours.

Lighting on signage is also controlled by Title 17 of the HMC in the City Limits. Escape of light to the atmosphere from illuminated signs in the city must be minimized. Furthermore, upward directed sign lighting is prohibited, and external illumination for signs must be fully shielded so that all light is projected below the horizontal plan.

2.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Based on information contained in this chapter, the General Plan Update should consider the following:

- Establish new design concepts to manage development in the eight Special Planning Areas.
- Review residential design guidance to create cohesive, residential neighborhoods.
- Develop commercial design guidelines to improve community character and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Create policies and programs that preserve scenic views and corridors that contribute to the city's character and sense of place.