

## 3.1 AESTHETICS

This section provides a description of existing visual conditions, meaning the physical features that make up the visible landscape, near the project site for the Student Housing Project and an assessment of changes to those conditions that would occur from project implementation. The effects of the project on the visual environment are generally defined in terms of the project's physical characteristics and potential visibility, the extent to which the project's presence would change the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, and the expected level of sensitivity that the viewing public may have where the project would alter existing views. The "Methodology" discussion in Section 3.1.3, below, provides further detail on the approach used in this evaluation.

During the public scoping period for the NOP, commenters expressed concerns about the compatibility of the design with the surrounding area, landscaping, and spillover lighting onto adjacent properties. These comments are addressed, as appropriate, in this section.

### 3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

#### FEDERAL

No plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to aesthetics, light, or glare are applicable to the project.

#### STATE

##### California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the California Legislature in 1963 and is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The goal of this program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would affect the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to highways. A highway may be designated "scenic" depending on how much of the natural landscape travelers can see, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on travelers' enjoyment of the view. The program includes a list of highways eligible to become, or designated as, official scenic highways and includes a process for the designation of official State or county scenic highways. There are no designated State scenic highways in the project vicinity. However, US Highway 101 (US 101), which is adjacent to the project site, and US Highway 299, which is approximately 0.8 mile northeast of the project site, are listed as eligible state scenic highways (Caltrans 2019).

#### CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

##### Humboldt State University 2004 Master Plan

The *Humboldt State University 2004 Master Plan* is a strategy for modifying the Cal Poly Humboldt campus to accommodate growth and change over the 30- to 40-year planning horizon. Chapter 5, "Design Guidelines," of the *Humboldt State University 2004 Master Plan* includes campus design guidelines, which ensure that projects are designed and built to contribute to Cal Poly Humboldt's vision of the campus. The design guidelines govern height limits; setbacks; building area; and connection with campus open space, pedestrian pathways, and vehicle access roads for new buildings (Humboldt State University 2004).

#### LOCAL

Cal Poly Humboldt is part of the CSU, which is a statutorily and legislatively created, constitutionally authorized State entity. As explained in the "California State University Autonomy" section in Chapter 3 of this EIR, the CSU is not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. Nevertheless, in the exercise of its

discretion, Cal Poly Humboldt does reference, describe, and address local plans, policies, and regulations where appropriate and for informational purposes. This evaluation is also intended to be used by local agencies for determining, as part of their permit processes, the project's consistency with local plans, policies, and regulations.

### City of Arcata General Plan

The Design Element of the *Arcata General Plan* outlines community-wide design features and criteria and addresses the protection of scenic and visual qualities of the City and the coastal zone (City of Arcata 2008). The following policies from the *Arcata General Plan* are relevant to visual resources:

- ▶ **Policy D-1a: Maintain small scale of building.** Buildings shall be designed to maintain the small-scale character of the community.
  1. This may be accomplished by breaking larger developments into several smaller buildings rather than constructing a single large, monolithic building.
  2. This shall be accomplished by avoiding large, unbroken expanses of wall and roof planes.
  3. This shall be accomplished by providing articulation in building mass, surfaces, rooflines, wall planes, and facades, and including architectural ornamentation.
- ▶ **Policy D-1c: Promote quality and diversity of design compatible with neighborhood context.** Site and building design shall be harmonious with the neighborhood context, including existing structures. Within new subdivisions, diversity in building appearance rather than repetitive designs is encouraged.
- ▶ **Policy D-1d: Preserve natural landforms and landscape features.** Site designs shall have the minimum disturbance necessary to natural conditions such as existing contours and vegetation, and shall preserve, to the maximum extent practicable, any unusual natural features.
- ▶ **Policy D-1f: Create buffers between incompatible land uses.** At boundaries between different land-use designations, and where different and incompatible land-uses are adjacent, buffer areas shall be incorporated into site design for new development. Buffers may consist of additional setbacks, landscaping, and visual and noise barriers such as fences or walls.
- ▶ **Policy D-3c: Design policy for projects affecting scenic highways.** The following standards shall apply to any development which affects scenic highways:
  1. Billboards or other off-premises signs are prohibited.
  2. Landscape planting along State Route 101 shall not interrupt scenic views to the bay or eastward across agricultural lands.
  3. New development or redevelopment in the industrial area of South "G" Street shall provide dense landscape screens along all perimeter lot lines visible from State Route 101.
  4. The City shall work jointly with the County of Humboldt, Caltrans, and the Coastal Commission to enhance scenic views along scenic highways, particularly State Route 101 and 255 corridors.
- ▶ **Policy D-3g: Wooded hillsides.** Views of wooded hillsides forming the City's eastern edge from vantage points along public streets west of the State Route 101 should not be blocked by development.
- ▶ **Policy D-6c: Design of institutional development.** Since institutional uses—such as churches, schools, government facilities, and others—are frequently located within residential areas, their design shall be reviewed for compatibility with the adjacent residential neighborhood. In addition, the City requests that HSU, school districts, and other institutional entities adhere to the following criteria, which shall apply to design of any facilities within Arcata:
  1. Long, uninterrupted expanses of wall and roof planes should be avoided and architectural features which add interest and variation, such as porches, cupolas, towers, arbors or pergolas, etc., should be incorporated.
  2. Appropriate buffers and screening should be provided between institutional uses and adjacent residential uses, including increased setbacks, fencing, and landscaping.

3. The massing of buildings and the visual organization of facades, including the proportion of window and door openings to total wall surface, exterior materials and colors, and architectural detailing and ornamentation, should be designed to harmonize with any adjacent residential uses.
4. Appropriate setbacks and landscaped buffers should be provided to minimize noise and visual impacts.

### Arcata Land Use Code

Section 9.30, "Standards for All Development and Land Uses," of the Arcata Land Use Code expands on the City's zoning district development standards by addressing additional details of site planning, project design, and the operation of land uses. The intent of these standards is to ensure that proposed development is compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties, and produces an environment of stable and desirable character, consistent with the *Arcata General Plan* and any applicable specific plan. Section 9.30.030 governs fences, walls, and screening, including height limits, fencing and screening requirements, and prohibited materials. Generally, fencing is limited to 6 feet in height within the City, including the project site, and the use of barbed wire, razor wire, or other sharp materials (e.g., nails, broken glass, etc.) is not permitted. Fencing may consist of plant materials and a solid wall of masonry, wood, or similar durable material.

Section 9.30.040 governs height limits for structures and establishes a height limit of 45 feet for industrially zoned properties like the project site for projects within the City's purview. Section 9.30.070 includes standards for outdoor lighting, including maximum height, energy-efficiency, shielding, and illumination level requirements. Generally, light standards are limited to 14 feet or less in height and are required to use energy-efficient fixtures that are shielded or otherwise recessed to prevent spillover of lighting onto adjacent properties. Illumination levels are not permitted to exceed one foot-candle on any property within a residential zoning district except within the subject property itself. Section 9.30.090 governs setback requirements for structures and requires a minimum 20-foot setback of structures on industrially-zoned properties, like the project site, from residential property lines.

## 3.1.2 Environmental Setting

### METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The methodology for describing the environmental setting related to aesthetics was adapted from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015). Although FHWA's guidelines were developed for assessing visual impacts associated with transportation projects, these guidelines are easily transferred to other types of projects that could alter existing landscapes.

Identifying the project area's visual resources, character, and quality involves the following process:

- ▶ objectively identifying visual features and resources of the landscape,
- ▶ assessing the character and quality of the resources relative to overall regional visual character, and
- ▶ determining importance to people (or sensitivity) of views of visual resources in the landscape.

Visual character is described through the elements of form, line, color, and texture of the landscape features. The appearance of a landscape can be described in terms of the dominance of each of these components.

Visual quality is assessed through determining the degree of vividness, unity, and intactness of the view:

- ▶ **Vividness:** the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking or distinctive visual patterns.
- ▶ **Unity:** the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole; it frequently attests to the careful design of individual components in the landscape.
- ▶ **Intactness:** the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching, incongruous elements; this factor can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.

Viewer sensitivity is also considered in assessing the impacts of visual change and is a function of several factors. The sensitivity of the viewer or viewer concern is based on the visibility of resources in the landscape, proximity of the viewers to the visual resource, elevation of the viewers relative to the visual resource, frequency and duration of views, numbers of viewers, and types and expectations of individuals and viewer groups.

The visual quality of an area can provide a good indication of how responsive an area's most sensitive viewers would likely be to changes in the visual environment. For example, viewers with high viewer sensitivity in areas that are categorized as having high visual quality would be expected to react more strongly to changes in the visual environment than they would in areas that have medium or low visual quality. Viewer sensitivity can help determine areas where a project might be expected to have its greatest impacts on visual resources.

## REGIONAL SETTING

The aesthetic character of the Humboldt Bay area is predominantly defined by its natural features and surroundings, including forested mountains to the north, south, and east; forested coastal dunes; the Samoa Peninsula; and the Pacific Ocean coastline to the west. Situated at the north end of Humboldt Bay, the City of Arcata sits on a coastal terrace and is bordered by the Mad River corridor to the north, Arcata Bay to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and Fickle Hill Ridge to the east. The City's surrounding natural scenery includes coastal, riparian, mountain, forest, flat bottomland, and bayfront landscapes. These features form distinctive natural edges and vistas and are some of the City's most important visual resources.

The City includes a combination of natural or wilderness, rural, and urban/suburban aesthetic settings. Prominent natural visual features within the City's planning area include Arcata Bay, the Arcata Community Forest, and the Lanphere Dunes Preserve. The City also has urban/suburban visual resources that include human-constructed features (e.g., architecture and street layout) and open areas. The City's urban/suburban visual resources are characterized both by diversity and harmony in terms of shape, size, color, and style. Distinct urban/suburban viewsheds include the City's central plaza commercial area, Northtown commercial area, the Cal Poly Humboldt campus along the eastern wooded hillside, and a number of city parks that provide open space. Schoolyards and playgrounds, cemeteries, residential yards, setback areas, and undeveloped lots also provide open space viewsheds within urban/suburban areas. The City's viewsheds also include industrial and commercial areas, such as the businesses along Samoa Boulevard west of US 101 and businesses along US 101 and US 299, Giuntoli Lane, and West End Road in the northern part of town.

## VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The project site is a component within a larger landscape that also encompasses single-family residential and industrial land uses, the US 101 corridor, and silhouetted stands of trees. The project site is located on an elevated terrace, approximately 15-20 feet above the level of existing residential development to the west and possesses industrial and residential characteristics associated with the Craftsman's Mall, which includes two wood-framed warehouses remaining from the former mill that operated on the site (Arcata Manufacturing Company), three single-family residences, and several smaller structures used for storage. The project site is also used for the storage of vehicles, storage containers, mobile homes, and construction and scrap materials. The majority of the project site is not paved but is surfaced with compacted gravel, although some paved areas are provided adjacent to buildings and near St. Louis Road. The western portion of the project site is approximately 15-20 feet lower in elevation than the majority of the project site and consists of open space containing grasslands and riparian vegetation. Janes Creek and the riparian corridor lining it mark the northwestern boundary of the project site.

The project vicinity has a low-density urban/suburban and forested character, given the presence of scattered low-rise development and dense stands of trees surrounding a four-lane highway corridor. Land uses surrounding the project site include single-family residential development to the north, west, and south; industrial uses to the north; and US 101 to the east. As noted above, the Janes Creek Meadows riparian/open space area borders the project site to the northwest and includes a section of Janes Creek and one of its tributaries. Arcata Elementary School occurs to the southwest of the site. The Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks are located to the east of the site, parallel to St. Louis Road.

## Public Views: Representative Viewpoints

Four vantagepoints in proximity to the project site were chosen to represent views from which the project site is most visible to the public and most appropriate for the analysis of impacts. There are no designated public viewpoints or trails with views of the project site in proximity to the project site. The Janes Creek Meadows Park provides open space and a gravel trail along the north side of Janes Creek adjacent to the project site; however, views of the project site from this trail are precluded by existing vegetation. The planned Annie & Mary Rail Trail will be located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the project site along US 101, which is also an eligible scenic highway. As the planned trail has yet to be constructed and the current rail alignment is overgrown with vegetation, views from Viewpoints 3 and 4 (as described below) are considered representative of the future trail. The visual character and quality of the views from the four viewpoints are described in the following sections. Figure 3.1-1 shows the locations from which the photographs were taken and the viewpoints referenced in this analysis.

### Viewpoint 1 (Hilfiker Drive, Looking Southeast)

Viewpoint 1 is from Hilfiker Drive, between Baldwin Street and Maple Lane, looking southeast toward the project site (Figure 3.1-1). The existing view from Viewpoint 1 is shown in Figure 3.1-2a. The visual character from Viewpoint 1 is that of a residential neighborhood against a wooded hillside in the background. The foreground from this viewpoint is dominated by single-story residences with lawns and ornamental trees and shrubs; Hilfiker Drive and Maple Lane, sidewalks, and utility poles and overhead lines. The dominant hues are muted, including roadway asphalt; the neutral colors of several of the residential buildings; and vegetation.

Views of the Craftsman's Mall in the midground are largely obstructed by intervening residences, vegetation, and topography. However, the primary Craftsman's Mall warehouse building, which sits at an elevation approximately 30 feet higher than the elevation at Viewpoint 1, is visible to the southeast. There are distant views of trees along the US 101 corridor and of the wooded hillside to the east of US 101, which sit at a higher elevation than the elevation at Viewpoint 1.

Vividness (i.e., the degree to which views might be considered distinctive or memorable) from this viewpoint is moderate because, while the trees in the background create a pleasant and memorable backdrop, the view is partially obstructed by intervening residential and industrial development. Intactness (i.e., the visual integrity of the landscape and absence of encroachment by incongruous elements) is moderately low because of the intervening development. Unity (i.e., the visual coherence of the landscape) is moderately high because the residential and industrial development are relatively small-scale, low density, and do not occupy a large part of the field of view from this vantage point. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 1 is moderately affected.

### Viewpoint 2 (St. Louis Road, Looking Southwest)

Viewpoint 2 is located on St. Louis Road, west of the US 101 overpass, looking south toward the project site (Figure 3.1-1). The existing view from Viewpoint 2 is shown in Figure 3.1-2a. The visual character from Viewpoint 2 is that of small-scale commercial/industrial lumber mill operations against a forested background that still dominates views. The foreground and midground from this viewpoint include offices, lumber processing and storage areas, on the Mad River Lumber Company property and utility poles and lines along St. Louis Road. The Craftsman's Mall is also in the midground, which includes buildings and outdoor spaces for storage and one-story single-family residences. Views of the Craftsman's Mall are partially obstructed by large trees. The future Annie & Mary Rail Trail will follow the St. Louis Road alignment along the eastern boundary of the project site and may be visible in the background from Viewpoint 2. There are distant views of trees along the US 101 corridor and a wooded hillside east of US 101.





Source: Image from Google Earth in 2019; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

**Figure 3.1-1**      **Representative Viewpoints**





Source: Image by Google in 2012; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

Viewpoint 1 (Hilfiker Drive, Looking Southeast)



Source: Image by Google in 2012; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

Viewpoint 2 (St. Louis Road, Looking Southwest)

### Figure 3.1-2a Representative Viewpoints

California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt  
Student Housing Project Final EIR

The dominant hues are muted, including the asphalt roadway; the neutral brown, gray, and beige colors of the buildings and structures; and vegetation. Views of the existing project site are partially obstructed by intervening buildings and structures and vegetation.

Vividness (i.e., the degree to which views might be considered distinctive or memorable) is moderately low because the trees in the background create a pleasant and memorable pattern, but the view is dominated by intervening residential and industrial development. Intactness (i.e., the visual integrity of the landscape and absence of encroachment by incongruous elements) is moderately low because views of the wooded hillside in the distance are limited due to the human-built elements associated with on-site commercial and industrial operations within the otherwise natural view. Unity (i.e., the visual coherence of the landscape) is also moderately low because the visual elements of the intervening development, such as stored lumber, cars, residential buildings, and other structures, are not uniform in style and design and do not contribute to compositional harmony within the viewpoint. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 2 is moderately low.

### **Viewpoint 3 (Southbound US 101, Looking Southwest)**

Viewpoint 3 is located on southbound US 101, just south of the St. Louis Road overpass, looking southwest toward the project site (Figure 3.1-1). The existing view from Viewpoint 3 is shown in Figure 3.1-2b. The view is of a transportation corridor within a forested setting; the visual character is semi-rural, with scattered low-density residential and industrial development on either side of the highway in a rural setting. From this viewpoint, the foreground, midground, and background include the asphalt pavement associated with US 101 and vegetation within and adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way, including ruderal grasses and ornamental shrubs and mature trees. The viewpoint primarily consists of the highway pavement and markings, median strip fencing, utility lines and poles, fence posts, and tree lines. The dominant hues are muted, including the asphalt roadway and vegetation. Views of the project site are largely obstructed by intervening topography and vegetation. Further, development of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail in 2024 will be visible from Viewpoint 3. Views from the Annie & Mary Rail Trail will also be analogous to Viewpoint 3 for pedestrians and cyclists proceeding in a southerly direction along the trail.

Vividness (i.e., the degree to which views might be considered distinctive or memorable) and intactness (i.e., the visual integrity of the landscape and absence of encroachment by incongruous elements) are moderate because the trees along the highway create a pleasant and memorable pattern, but the view is dominated by US 101. Unity (i.e., the visual coherence of the landscape) is moderately high because, although the roadway is an encroaching element, its lines are in harmony with the natural lines of the landscape. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 3 is moderately high.

### **Viewpoint 4 (Northbound US 101, Looking Northwest)**

Viewpoint 4 is on northbound US 101, just north of the Sunset Avenue on-ramp, looking northwest toward the project site (Figure 3.1-1). The existing view from Viewpoint 3 is shown in Figure 3.1-2b. The visual character from Viewpoint 4 is that of a transportation corridor within a forested setting. From this viewpoint, the foreground, midground, and background include the asphalt pavement associated with US 101 and vegetation within and adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way, including ruderal grasses, shrubs, and mature trees. Views of structures are obscured by vegetation. The view consists primarily of highway pavement and markings, median strip fencing, sign and fence posts, and tree lines. The dominant hues are muted, including the asphalt roadway and vegetation. Views of the project site are largely obstructed by intervening topography and vegetation. Further, development of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail in 2024 will be visible from Viewpoint 4. Views from the Annie & Mary Rail Trail will also be analogous to Viewpoint 4 for pedestrians and cyclists proceeding in a northerly direction along the trail.

Vividness (i.e., the degree to which views might be considered distinctive or memorable) and intactness (i.e., the visual integrity of the landscape and absence of encroachment by incongruous elements) are moderate because the trees along the highway create a pleasant and memorable pattern, but the view is dominated by US 101. Unity (i.e., the visual coherence of the landscape) is moderately high because, although the roadway is an encroaching element, the highway alignment follows the natural topography. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 4 is moderately high.





Source: Image by Google in 2020; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

Viewpoint 3 (Southbound US 101, Looking Southwest)



Source: Image by Google in 2021; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

Viewpoint 4 (Northbound US 101, Looking Northwest)

### Figure 3.1-2b Representative Viewpoints

California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt  
Student Housing Project Final EIR

## SCENIC RESOURCES

### Scenic Byways and Highways

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated State scenic highways in the project vicinity; however, there are two eligible state scenic highways in the vicinity of the project site. US 101, from Route 1 near the community of Leggett to Route 199 near Crescent City, is an eligible State scenic highway located adjacent to the project site (Caltrans 2019). The project site is within the viewshed of this eligible State scenic highway.

US Highway 299, from US 101 near the City of Arcata to US Highway 96 near the community of Willow Creek, is an eligible State scenic highway located 0.8 mile northeast of the project site (Caltrans 2019). This portion of Highway 299 is also called the Trinity Scenic Byway and was designated as a National Forest Scenic Byway by the US Forest Service in 1991. Due to the distance and intervening development and topography, the project site is not within the viewshed of this eligible State scenic highway.

### Locally Designated Scenic Resources

As noted above, Cal Poly Humboldt, as a statutorily and legislatively created, constitutionally authorized State entity, is not subject to local plans, regulations, or designations. However, the following information regarding locally designated scenic resources is provided because it indicates the general aesthetic conditions of the area surrounding the project site.

The Design Element of the *Arcata General Plan* identifies scenic routes within the City. The US 101 corridor from the southern City boundary to the Mad River is designated as a coastal scenic highway in the *Arcata General Plan* (Policy D-3a). Additionally, L.K. Wood Boulevard from the St. Louis Road overcrossing to 14<sup>th</sup> Street is designated as a noncoastal scenic highway in the *Arcata General Plan* (Policy D-3b). The project site is within the viewshed of these locally designated scenic routes. Additionally, the Design Element of the *Arcata General Plan* encourages the preservation of hedgerows along US 101 in proximity to the project site. The project site offers views of hedgerows surrounding the US 101 corridor and the wooded hillside east of US 101.

The *Arcata General Plan* identifies the following scenic resources and landscape features for protection because they are important aesthetic components of the built environment and visual and associative links to nature (City of Arcata 2008):

- ▶ open waters, shoreline, and tidal marshes of Arcata Bay;
- ▶ views of Arcata Bay and the Pacific Ocean from vantage points along public streets in hillside areas of the city;
- ▶ views of wooded hillsides forming the City's eastern edge from vantage points along public streets west of US 101;
- ▶ views of farmlands and open countryside in the Arcata Bottom, which is an expanse of flat pastures starting approximately 1 mile west of the project site;
- ▶ windrows, hedgerows, and groves of trees at various locations in the City, including along the US 101 corridor; and
- ▶ streamside riparian areas.

## LIGHT AND GLARE CONDITIONS

The project site is currently developed with the Craftsman's Mall and three single-family residential properties. The project site contains outdoor security lighting fixtures in several locations, which are visible from off-site locations (primarily from the residential neighborhood to the west) at night. The northwestern portion of the project site is undeveloped and does not contain light sources. Light sources in the vicinity of the project site include lights from vehicles on US 101 and from adjacent residential and industrial uses (e.g., lights from residences to the north, west, and south, or from Mad River Lumber to the north); however, these light sources are not strong enough to illuminate the project site. The project site does not contain any structures that generate noticeable sources of glare. The amount of glare experienced in the surrounding vicinity is typical for a residential and industrial setting.

## VIEWER GROUPS AND SENSITIVITY

Viewer groups include (1) motorists, such as those who are commuting, touring, or transporting goods on roadways, and (2) neighbors, such as those occupying residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Viewer sensitivity is affected by proximity (i.e., the distance from the viewer to the scene), extent (i.e., number of viewers observing the scene), and duration (i.e., how long viewers spend looking at the scene). The viewer groups and their sensitivity to visual changes in the environment are summarized as follows:

- ▶ **Motorists:** Motorists are those traveling on US 101. Because motorists would be passing the project site at relatively fast speeds, the duration and frequency of exposure to the project site for this viewer group would be low. However, this segment of US 101 is an eligible State scenic highway and a locally designated scenic highway. Therefore, motorists may be more perceptive to changes in the visual environment along this segment of highway. Therefore, the overall visual sensitivity of motorists would be moderate.
- ▶ **Residents:** The nearest residential neighbors are located to the south and west of the project site. The overall visual sensitivity of these residential viewers is high because of the close proximity, high number of viewers, and extended duration of time spent looking at views of the project site.
- ▶ **Recreationists:** Parks and recreational areas that have views of the project site include Cahill Park, Larson Park, and Janes Creek Meadows Park. The overall visual sensitivity for this viewer group is high because one of the reasons why recreationists visit these locations is to enjoy the scenery and visual quality.
- ▶ **Workers and Customers:** The nearest commercial business, Mad River Lumber Company, is located north of the project site. The overall visual sensitivity of workers and customers is low because workers and customers are focused on other activities and are in the locations for purposes other than enjoying the scenery or visual quality.

### 3.1.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### METHODOLOGY

The methodology for evaluating impacts related to aesthetics was adapted from FHWA's *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (2015). Visual impacts are evaluated based on the changes to the environment (measured by the compatibility of the impact) or to viewers (measured by sensitivity to the impacts). Together, the compatibility of the impact and the sensitivity of the impact yield the degree of the impact to visual quality:

- ▶ **Compatibility of the Impact:** Defined as the ability of the environment to absorb the project as a result of the project and the environment having compatible visual characters. The project can be considered compatible or incompatible.
- ▶ **Sensitivity to the Impact:** Defined by the ability of viewers to see and care about a project's impacts. The sensitivity to impact is based on viewer sensitivity to changes in the visual character of visual resources. Viewers are either sensitive or insensitive to impacts.
- ▶ **Degree of the Impact:** Defined as either a beneficial, adverse, or neutral change to visual quality. A project may benefit visual quality by either enhancing visual resources or creating better views of those resources and improving the experience of visual quality by viewers. Similarly, it may adversely affect visual quality by degrading visual resources or obstructing or altering desired views.

Lighting effects are typically associated with the use of artificial light during the evening and nighttime hours. There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). The introduction of lighting can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, can limit the view of the clear night sky and, if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances. Residential land uses are considered light sensitive because occupants have expectations of privacy during nighttime hours and may be subject to disturbance by bright light sources. Spillover lighting is defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property causing illumination. With



respect to lighting, the degree of illumination may vary widely depending on the amount of light generated, height of the light source, presence of barriers or obstructions, type of light source, and weather conditions.

Glare is primarily a daytime occurrence caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light on highly reflective surfaces, such as window glass, stainless steel, aluminum, and photovoltaic panels. Daytime glare generation is common in urban/suburban areas and is typically associated with buildings with exterior facades largely or entirely composed of highly reflective glass. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Mid- to high-rise buildings with large surface areas of reflective or mirrorlike materials are a common source of daytime glare, especially around sunrise and sunset. Glare-sensitive land uses include residences (primarily outdoor areas), hotels, transportation corridors, and aircraft landing corridors.

## THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

An impact on aesthetics would be considered significant if implementation of the project would:

- ▶ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- ▶ damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;
- ▶ in nonurbanized 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) and in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- ▶ create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

## ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

All issues applicable to aesthetics listed in the significance thresholds above are addressed in this section.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Impact 3.1-1: Result in a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

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The project would involve development of the site with a seven-story student housing complex, consisting of two separate buildings. Construction and operation of the project would intensify development on the project site and partially obstruct distant views of hills and forestlands, notably from south and west of the project site. Therefore, the project would result in a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas. This impact would be **significant**.

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Due to the surrounding topography and intervening development and vegetation, the project site is not visible from most areas of scenic importance to the City, such as from the public vantagepoints of Arcata Bay, the Pacific Ocean, the Arcata Bottom, and riparian areas. However, the project site is generally visible from the south and west, including from two locally designated scenic roadways, US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard. In the vicinity of the project site, these roadways offer views of wooded hillsides to the east. The potential for the project to result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista during construction and operation is discussed in the following sections.

#### Construction

Construction activities would occur on the project site for a period of approximately 18-24 months. During this time, construction activities could be visible to travelers on US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard. Before construction activities begin on any project component, temporary fencing would be installed around the construction area. During the construction period, various types of construction equipment (e.g., backhoes, forklifts, graders, and pavers) would be present on-site. The initial phases of project construction would include site grading and excavation, utility trenching,

and building foundation pouring. These initial construction phases would not be perceptible to travelers because these activities would occur at ground level and would be obscured by fencing and existing vegetation. Additionally, these activities would not result in a noticeable change to the existing setting because the project site is currently being used for light industrial operations and contractor storage.

However, construction activities would become more perceptible as the construction period advances. During the building construction phase, construction activities would occur above ground level and impede some long-distance views. Taller construction equipment (e.g., tower cranes, boom and scissor lifts, and construction elevators) would be needed to construct the upper stories of the buildings. Site fencing and existing vegetation would not be tall enough to screen views of construction equipment and activities or prevent their impedance of long-distance views. Therefore, project construction would alter the natural forested condition of long-distance views in the area, including views along US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard. This would constitute a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas from US 101 (Viewpoints 3 and 4) and from L.K. Wood Boulevard, located parallel to the eastern border of US 101. This would be a significant impact.

### **Operation**

The project would introduce a new student housing complex (i.e., seven-story apartment-style buildings) to the project site. The proposed buildings would generally increase in height as it trends west to east, up to approximately 75 feet in height along the project site's eastern boundary. Existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the project site would be maintained/enhanced to provide screening of the proposed development from off-site viewpoints, including US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard. However, the landscaping and trees would not be able to provide full screening of the project given the proposed height of the proposed buildings. The project would be a prominent feature within the local landscape due to its massing and height and would represent a substantial adverse change from the current natural condition of long-distance views of and through the area. Therefore, the project would result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. This would be a significant impact.

### **Summary**

The project would introduce a seven-story student housing complex to the project site, which would alter long-distance views in the project area during both construction and operation of the project. The project would also represent a change from a more natural, forested condition to a more urbanized (i.e., densely developed) quality of the project site. Therefore, the project would result in a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas located along US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard. This would be a **significant impact**.

### **Mitigation Measures**

As described above, existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the project site would be maintained/enhanced to provide screening of the proposed development. However, the proposed buildings would still be a prominent feature within the local viewsheds, including along US 101 and L.K. Wood Boulevard, due to its massing and height. The scale of the proposed on-site buildings is needed to achieve the project goal and objective of meeting on-campus housing needs, and as a result, no feasible mitigation is available to fully screen the buildings, maintain existing views, or preserve the natural feeling of the existing landscape and long-distance views in the area.

### **Significance after Mitigation**

As described above, no feasible mitigation is available to reduce project impacts on scenic vistas. Therefore, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

## **Impact 3.1-2: Damage Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway**

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The project site is adjacent to a segment of US 101, which is listed as an eligible State scenic highway and is notable for scenic views of forested landscapes. The project would not damage scenic resources, such as trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings, within a State scenic highway and would not affect the eligibility of US 101 for official designation as a State scenic highway. Although views of the project site would be fleeting, the project would introduce urban/suburban, human-made elements that would alter the current condition of the project site, which is considered part of the scenic highway corridor. This impact would be **significant**.

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As described in Section 3.1.2, "Environmental Setting," the project site is visible from US 101, which is an eligible State scenic highway. A highway may be designated as scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. Although US 101 is not officially designated as scenic, it is considered a State scenic highway for the purposes of this analysis.

### Construction

Construction activities at the project site would be primarily limited to the privately owned parcels that encompass the project site. The project would not require improvements within Caltrans right-of-way, including removal of any mature trees from the existing hedgerow. Therefore, project construction would not damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway and would not affect the eligibility of US 101 for official designation as a State scenic highway. However, as described under Impact 3.1-1, construction activities would change the natural condition of the forest landscape as viewed from US 101. As a result, this would be a significant impact.

### Operation

Following construction, views of the project would be partially visible from US 101 through landscaping and intervening trees. Existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the site would be maintained or enhanced as part of the project (as well as additional landscaping that may be provided as part of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail) and would provide additional screening of the proposed development from off-site viewpoints, including US 101. The project would not introduce elements within Caltrans right-of-way, including through removal of trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings. Therefore, the project would not damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway and would not affect the eligibility of US 101 for official designation as a State scenic highway. However, as described under Impact 3.1-1, the project would introduce human-made elements that would urbanize and alter the natural condition of the existing landscape and would introduce a greater degree of contrast with surrounding low-rise, low-density development and forested background. Additionally, the proposed developed site would occupy a larger proportion of the field of view from US 101 than existing development. These elements would intensify development on the site and change it from vacant/lightly developed to more densely developed (e.g., buildings, hardscape, and landscaping). This would be a significant impact.

### Summary

The project would not damage scenic resources, such as trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings, within a State scenic highway and would not affect the eligibility of US 101 for official designation as a State scenic highway. However, the project would intensify development on the project site and replace the existing temporary buildings, which would alter the project site. Although views of the project site are fleeting from US 101, the project would be visible and would alter the nature of existing views of the otherwise rural setting. This would be a **significant impact**.

### Mitigation Measures

As described above, existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the project site would be maintained/enhanced to provide screening of the proposed development. However, the proposed on-site buildings would still be a prominent feature within the viewshed of US 101 due to its massing and height. The scale of the buildings is needed to achieve the project goal and objective of meeting student housing needs proximate to campus. No feasible mitigation is available to fully screen the project, maintain existing views, or preserve the forested condition of the existing landscape.

### Significance after Mitigation

As described above, no feasible mitigation is available to reduce project impacts on State scenic highways. Therefore, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.



### Impact 3.1-3: Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public Views of the Site and Its Surroundings

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Project implementation would introduce new human-made elements that would be prominent within viewsheds of the project site due to the massing and height of the proposed buildings. The project would alter the existing low-density urban/suburban and forested character of the landscape to one that is more densely developed. Additionally, the proposed on-site buildings would impede views of the wooded hillside from publicly available viewpoints and open space, especially to the south and west of the project site. Therefore, the impact would be **significant**.

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#### Construction

As described under Impact 3.1-1 above, construction activities would occur on the project site for a period of approximately 18 months. Before construction activities begin on any project component, temporary fencing would be installed around the construction area. During the construction period, various types of construction equipment (e.g., backhoes, forklifts, graders, and pavers) would be present on-site. The initial phases of project construction would include site grading and excavation, utility trenching, and building foundation pouring. These initial construction phases would not be noticeable from the representative viewpoints because these activities would occur at ground level and would be obscured by fencing and existing vegetation. Additionally, these activities would not result in a noticeable change to the existing setting because the project site is currently being used for light industrial operations and contractor storage.

However, construction activities would become more perceptible from the representative viewpoints shown in Figure 3.1-1 as the construction period advances. During the building construction phase, construction activities would occur above ground level. Taller construction equipment (e.g., tower cranes, boom and scissor lifts, and construction elevators) would be needed to construct the upper stories of the proposed buildings. The temporary fencing and existing vegetation would not be tall enough to screen views of construction equipment and activities from nearby viewpoints. Therefore, project construction, although short-term, would change the visual character and quality of views from each of the representative viewpoints compared to the existing conditions. This would be a significant impact.

#### Operation

The following discussion focuses on potential long-term changes in visual character from the four viewpoints identified above.

##### **Viewpoint 1 (Hilfiker Drive, Looking Southeast)**

Upon completion of construction, the project site would include a multistory student housing complex that would generally increase in height and massing as the building trends from west to east. The sixth and seventh floors would be located near the eastern edge of the project site, away from the existing residential neighborhoods located to the west and south of the project site. The proposed design, which would place the highest part of the buildings toward the northeast corner of the project site, is intended to reduce the perceived scale of the project, as viewed from existing development to the west (e.g., from Viewpoint 1). Figure 3.1-3 provides a rendering of the project from Viewpoint 1 (west of the project site). As shown in the image below, the project would introduce two new buildings that would be greater in mass and scale than nearby development. As a result, views of the buildings would be prominent from this viewpoint.



Source: Figure by SCB in 2022; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

**Figure 3.1-3 Visual Simulation of Project As Seen from Viewpoint 1 (Hilfiker Drive, Looking Southeast)**

As noted in Chapter 2, "Project Description," existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the project site would be maintained/enhanced to provide screening of the proposed development from off-site viewpoints, including the existing residential neighborhoods to the south and west. As part of the project, Cal Poly Humboldt would maintain on-site vegetation (especially trees along the site periphery) to the extent feasible. However, some tree removal may be necessary to allow for site preparation and construction. Consistent with Cal Poly Humboldt's practice at the main campus, any tree that is removed would be replaced at a minimum 1:1 ratio by planting trees elsewhere on the project site. However, the landscaping and trees would not be able to provide full screening of the project given the height of the proposed on-site buildings.

As shown in Figure 3.1-3, the project would block views of the wooded hillside in the background. The project would create a more densely developed character within Viewpoint 1, which would contrast with the existing low-density development and forested character of the existing landscape. Vividness and intactness from Viewpoint 1 would be reduced from moderate and moderately low to low because the buildings would obstruct scenic views of the wooded hillside in the background. Unity would be reduced from moderately high to moderately low because the new buildings would be substantially taller and would have a different massing and architectural style than the existing one-story residential homes in the foreground. Therefore, the new buildings would alter the general character of this viewpoint. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 1 would be reduced from moderate to low. Furthermore, residential viewers are the primary viewer group from this viewpoint. This viewer group has a high viewer sensitivity to changes in visual character and quality because of the close proximity, high number of viewers, and extended duration of time spent looking at views of the project site. Because of the high viewer sensitivity and high degree of change in visual character and quality of the project site from Viewpoint 1, the impact from this viewpoint would be significant.

#### **Viewpoint 2 (St. Louis Road, Looking Southwest)**

As discussed under Viewpoint 1 above, the project would introduce two new buildings that would be up to seven floors in height (approximately 75 feet). The highest part of the buildings would be located in the northeast corner of the project site, which would be partially screened by existing vegetation but still perceptible from this viewpoint.

Although landscaping would be maintained/enhanced around the periphery of the project site, the buildings would be prominent from this viewpoint due to its massing and height.

From Viewpoint 2, the new buildings would not block views of the wooded hillside to the extent it would from Viewpoint 1. The new buildings would contribute to a more densely developed character from Viewpoint 2, which would contrast with the existing low-density residential and industrial character of the landscape. The project would introduce more elements to an area that is already developed with residential and industrial land uses. Therefore, vividness and intactness would be reduced from moderately low to low. Unity would also be reduced from moderately low to low because the new buildings would be substantially taller and would have a different massing and architectural style than the existing residential and industrial land uses. However, the buildings and landscaping would have a more pleasing design and greater compositional harmony than the existing warehouse buildings and storage areas at the Craftsman's Mall. The proposed Annie & Mary Rail Trail follows the St. Louis Road alignment along the eastern periphery of the project site and would provide limited views from Viewpoint 2. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 2 would be reduced from moderately low to low. Viewer groups from this viewpoint are primarily limited to motorists, workers, and retail clientele, who have a low to moderate viewer sensitivity to changes in the visual environment. Because of the low to moderate viewer sensitivity and small degree of change in visual character and quality of the project site from Viewpoint 2, the impact would be less than significant.

### **Viewpoint 3 (Southbound US 101, Looking Southwest)**

As discussed under Viewpoint 1 above, the project would introduce two new buildings that would be up to seven floors in height (approximately 75 feet). The highest part of the buildings would be located in the northeast corner of the project site, which would be partially screened by existing vegetation and topography but would still be perceptible from this viewpoint. Although landscaping would be maintained/enhanced around the periphery of the project site, the buildings would be prominent from this viewpoint due to its massing and height. Further, the proposed development of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail, located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the project site, would be visible from Viewpoint 3.

From Viewpoint 3, the new buildings would not block views of existing features (e.g., hillsides) to the west. No human-made structures are currently visible from the transportation corridor; therefore, the new buildings would be a prominent change compared to the existing conditions in this viewpoint. The new buildings would contrast with the existing rural forested character of the landscape and introduce more urban/suburban elements. Vividness would be reduced to moderately low because the new buildings would contrast with the rural forested character of the existing view. Intactness would be reduced to moderately low because the new buildings would dominate views from this vantage. Unity would be reduced to moderately low because the new buildings would be a new element that is substantially taller than other vertical features in the landscape. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 3 would be reduced from moderately high to moderately low. Viewer groups from this viewpoint are primarily limited to motorists, who have a moderate viewer sensitivity to changes in the visual environment. Because of the moderate viewer sensitivity and moderate degree of change in visual character and quality of the project site from Viewpoint 3, the impact would be significant.

### **Viewpoint 4 (Northbound US 101, Looking Northwest)**

As discussed under Viewpoint 1 above, the project would introduce two new buildings that would be up to seven floors in height (approximately 75 feet). The highest part of the buildings would be located in the northeast corner of the project site, which would be partially screened by existing vegetation and less perceptible from this viewpoint. Although landscaping would be maintained/enhanced around the periphery of the project site, the proposed buildings would be prominent from this viewpoint due to its massing and height. Further, the proposed development of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail, located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the project site, would be visible from Viewpoint 4, similarly to Viewpoint 3.

From Viewpoint 4, the new buildings would not block views of the wooded hillside to the west. Human-made buildings and structures are barely visible from the transportation corridor due to intervening vegetation; therefore, the new buildings would be a new prominent element in this viewpoint. The new buildings would contrast with the existing rural forested character of the landscape. Vividness would be reduced to moderately low because the new buildings would detract from the rural forested character of the existing views. Intactness would be reduced to



moderately low because the new buildings would dominate the view. Unity would be reduced to moderately low because the new buildings would be substantially taller than other vertical features in the landscape. Overall, the visual quality at Viewpoint 4 would be reduced from moderately high to moderately low. Viewer groups from this viewpoint are primarily limited to motorists, who have a moderate viewer sensitivity to changes in the visual environment. Because of the moderate viewer sensitivity and moderate degree of change in visual character and quality of the project site from Viewpoint 4, the impact would be significant.

### Summary

The project would introduce two new buildings that would be prominent within viewsheds of the project site due to its proposed massing and height. The project would change the low-density urban/suburban and forested character of the landscape to one that is more densely developed. Additionally, the new buildings would alter the visual quality of the landscape because it would block views of the wooded hillside, would be substantially taller, and would have a different massing and architectural style than existing buildings within the landscape. Furthermore, the predominant viewer groups, such as motorists and residential neighbors, would have a moderate to high sensitivity to visual changes in the landscape, and thereby resulting in a significant adverse effect to views from Viewpoints 1 through 4. Therefore, the impact would be **significant**.

### Mitigation Measures

As described in the sections above, the project would include design features to minimize visual impacts. The building and site design, including the massing, articulation, materials, and colors, would be consistent with the design guidelines in Cal Poly Humboldt's 2004 Master Plan. Additionally, the proposed design would place the highest part of the buildings toward the northeast corner of the project site, which is intended to reduce the perceived scale of the project, as viewed from residences to the west and south. Furthermore, existing landscaping and trees along the periphery of the project site would be maintained/enhanced to provide screening of the proposed development from off-site viewpoints, including the existing residential neighborhoods to the south and west. Despite these design features, the buildings would still be prominent from each of the representative viewpoints due to its massing and height. The scale of the buildings is needed to achieve the project goal and objective of meeting on-campus housing needs. No feasible mitigation is available to fully screen the buildings, maintain existing views, or preserve the natural feeling of the existing landscape.

### Significance after Mitigation

As described above, no feasible mitigation is available to reduce project impacts on the visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

## **Impact 3.1-4: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare Which Would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area**

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The project would not include new materials or surfaces that would create substantial new sources of glare. However, the project would introduce substantial new sources of nighttime lighting, including interior building lighting and exterior lighting needed for the safety and visibility of the project site. Project lighting would have spillover effects to adjacent residential land uses along the western and southern boundaries of the project site that are sensitive to nighttime lighting. This would be a **significant impact**.

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### Lighting

#### **Construction**

Construction activities would occur during the daytime between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, with the potential for weekend construction on Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Security lighting may be used on-site at nighttime to deter unauthorized access and promote site safety. Construction lighting would have potential for spillover effects to adjacent properties that could be sensitive to nighttime lighting, such as single-family residences to the west and south of the project site. Due to the size of the construction site,

construction-related light sources would represent a substantial, albeit temporary, new source of lighting at the project site. This would be a **significant impact**.

### Operation

The project would include new lighting within, on, and surrounding the proposed seven-story buildings. Due to the height of the buildings, interior lighting would be noticeable at night through building windows. Building lighting would comply with the most current California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24 of the CCR) at the time of construction, which require the use of light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures with lighting controls. Moreover, lighting fixtures will be shielded and deliberately located, and thereby reducing potential spillover light onto adjacent properties.

The project would also introduce new exterior lighting that would be visible at night from off-site vantages surrounding the project site, consisting of exterior building illumination, safety lighting along pedestrian and bicycle paths, and lighting throughout on-site parking areas. The project would include only the minimum amount of outdoor wayfinding and security lighting necessary to maintain safety and comfort. Additionally, existing landscaping and trees around the periphery of the project site would be maintained and enhanced through the provision of additional landscaping along the western and southern edges of development to provide screening and minimize spillover effects to adjacent properties.

Although the project would be designed to minimize spillover lighting to the extent feasible, exterior lighting (including direct illumination from parking vehicles) at the project site would still be visible from adjacent residential development. The proposed lighting would represent a substantial increase in existing lighting due to the height and massing of the proposed buildings, the amount of exterior lighting proposed, and the proximity to residential land uses (primarily to the west and south of the project site) that are sensitive to nighttime lighting. As a result, this would be a **significant impact**.

### Glare

#### Construction

During construction, glare would be introduced to the project site as a result of increased vehicular presence at the site (e.g., from windshields of vehicles and construction equipment). These sources of glare would be limited to the ground level. Additionally, temporary fencing would be installed around the construction area, which would reduce the amount of glare that is reflected onto adjacent properties. Glare from project construction would be minor and would not adversely affect daytime views of the area. This impact would be **less than significant**.

#### Operation

Upon completion of construction, the project would include two seven-story buildings within the central portion of the project site that would conform to the design guidelines in Cal Poly Humboldt's 2004 Master Plan. The proposed buildings would include the use of textured, nonreflective surfaces, nonreflective (mirrored) glass, and downward shielded lighting to minimize glare and prevent spillover effects onto adjacent properties and roadways. Vehicles within the project site would be minimally visible from off-site locations due to existing topography and vegetation. Furthermore, on-site vehicles would reflect minimal amounts of sunlight, introducing marginal sources of spillover glare towards adjacent viewers/receptors. Therefore, glare sources from project operation would be minor and would not adversely affect daytime views of the area. This impact would be **less than significant**.

### Summary

The project would not include new materials or surfaces that would create substantial new sources of glare; however, project construction and operation would introduce substantial new sources of nighttime lighting in proximity to sensitive (e.g., residential) uses. As a result, this would be a **significant impact**.

## Mitigation Measures

### Mitigation Measure 3.1-4: Reduce Light Pollution from Exterior Lighting

During project design and construction, Cal Poly Humboldt shall ensure that the following requirements are implemented as part of construction and prior to operation:

- ▶ Outdoor light fixtures, including temporary fixtures used during construction, that are not attached or interior to a building shall be limited to a maximum height of 14 feet.
- ▶ Outdoor lighting shall utilize energy-efficient fixtures and lamps and motion sensors and/or daylight sensors.
- ▶ Outdoor lighting fixtures, including temporary fixtures used during construction, shall be shielded or recessed to reduce light spillover to adjoining properties.
- ▶ Each light fixture shall be directed downward and away from adjoining private properties and Janes Creek, so that no on-site light fixture directly illuminates an area off the site.
- ▶ No lighting on private property shall produce an illumination level greater than 1 foot-candle on any property within a residential zoning district except on the site of the light source.
- ▶ No permanently installed lighting shall blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness.
- ▶ An exterior barrier/fence shall be installed along the project site's southern boundary and along the western edge of the proposed parking lot that shall prevent headlights from on-site vehicles from directly illuminating off-site residences.

#### **Significance after Mitigation**

As a statutorily and legislatively created State entity, Cal Poly Humboldt is not subject to local regulations, such as the Arcata Land Use Code. However, Cal Poly Humboldt is committed to reducing the effects of light and glare on adjoining properties in a manner that is largely consistent with Section 9.30.070, "Outdoor Lighting," of the Arcata Land Use Code. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-4 would reduce impacts from exterior lighting that can be shielded and directed downward, such as lighting used during construction and some types of lighting associated with the project once built. Additionally and as previously stated, additional landscaping would be provided along the edges of development on all sides of the project that would further screen the proposed development from view by adjacent uses. Therefore, with implementation of this measure, off-site light spillage would be prevented such that the project would not represent a substantial source of light and glare. With incorporation of mitigation, impacts would be **less than significant**.