

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the existing visual environment in and around the project area. The analysis assesses the potential for aesthetics and light and glare impacts using accepted methods of evaluating visual quality, as well as identifying the type and degree of change the proposed project would likely have on the character of a landscape. The project analysis is primarily based on information provided by the project applicant and verified through site visits and aerial photographs. Where additional information has been used to evaluate the potential impacts, that information has been referenced. The following analysis of the potential aesthetic, light and glare impacts is derived primarily from the listed sources.

- MacKay & Soms Tentative Tract Map, August 2017.
- Propel Vallejo 2040 General Plan.
- City of Vallejo Code of Ordinances.
- Economic Impact Analysis and Fiscal Impact Analysis, DTA, 2019.

The following discusses impacts associated with the potential for the proposed project to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings through changes in the existing landscape. Potential effects are evaluated relative to important visual features and the existing visual landscape and its users. Degradation of the visual character of a site is usually addressed through a qualitative evaluation of the changes to the aesthetic characteristics of the existing environment and the proposed project-related modification that would alter the visual setting.

Issues of visual blight are addressed by considering the potential for urban decay that may be precipitated or exacerbated in Vallejo and its environs by considering the indirect changes in visual quality that could occur as a result of the proposed project. Visual blight related to urban decay is defined as a general deterioration of the urban landscape that is characterized by long-term building vacancies, poor building maintenance, and increased vandalism. This definition of urban decay is based on the *Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield* (2004) (124 Cal. App. 4th 1184) decision.

The term visual blight, as referred to in this Draft EIR, is a condition where real property, by reason of its appearance, is detrimental to the property of others or to the aesthetic value of adjacent properties or reduces the aesthetic appearance of the neighborhood. The analysis regarding potential impacts from urban decay is based on the Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) prepared by DTA, Inc. (2019), which is provided in Appendix B.

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL SETTING

The City of Vallejo is approximately 53 square miles and is bordered by the City of American Canyon and unincorporated Napa County to the north, the City of Benicia and unincorporated Solano County to the east, the Carquinez Strait to the south, and the Napa River and San Pablo Bay to the west. The project site is located approximately 1.5 miles from the northern Napa County border. The western boundary of Vallejo lies along the east margin of San Pablo Bay, which is the northeastern lobe of San Francisco Bay and is close to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The Solano County Land Trust's Lynch Canyon Open Space is located approximately one mile north of the City. Other visual open space includes Suisun Bay in the south-central portion of the County as well sparsely populated and mostly undeveloped lands in the eastern part of the County, some of which is used for wind energy production. The topography in the region is highly varied, and ranges from flat low-lying areas, which include marshes and estuarine environments to coastal hills up to approximately 1,000 feet above mean sea level.

LOCAL SETTING

The City of Vallejo is largely urbanized and built out with the exception of the western portions of the City and some of the waterfront areas, in which development is constrained due to environmental and coastal zone considerations. The environment along Mare Island and parts of the east margin of the Napa River includes gently sloping terrain in the central part of the City (especially the area along I-80 north of Curtola Parkway); hillier terrain dominates the east-central and northeast parts of the City and include the East Bay Hills and Briones Hills to the southwest; and Sulphur Springs Mountain in the northern part of the City. Elevations range from near sea level on the shores of the Carquinez Strait to nearly 1,000 feet above mean sea level along the crest of Sulphur Springs Mountain.

Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is approximately 51.3 acres of undeveloped, vacant land. The site is square-shaped on the north, east, and southern boundaries; the western boundary is angled to the southwest following the alignment of the undeveloped City right-of-way adjacent to Admiral Callaghan Lane. The western portion of the site ranges from approximately 85 to 130 feet above mean sea level (amsl) and includes an approximately 20-foot hill in the northwesterly portion of the site. The eastern portion of the site is generally flat and is situated at an elevation of approximately 97 feet amsl. Both of these areas drain to the central area of the site and to its lowest point near the northwest corner at approximately 83 feet amsl. The majority of the site (over 44 acres) is covered in non-native annual grassland with some elements of mixed woodland and coyote brush scrub intermixed. A seasonal wetland traverses the site flowing from south to north and ultimately drains to two existing culverts that convey water off the property underneath Turner Parkway. A perennial stream traverses the southwestern corner of the property and surface water flows on and off the property through existing underground culverts.

The project site is bordered by urban land uses and major roadways and freeways. To the north is Turner Parkway and a major commercial shopping center; to the east is a single-family residential development; to the south is a multi-family residential development and auto dealership; and adjacent to the west is Admiral Callaghan Lane and I-80.

Figure 4.1-1: Visual Character – Surrounding Land Uses, shows the urbanized area near the project site. Surrounding land uses are described in Section 3.0, Project Description, including Table 3-1. In summary, land uses include:

- To the North: The approximately 130-acre Gateway Plaza Shopping Center is located north of Turner Parkway.
- To the South: Land uses include automotive, commercial, and residential uses. An auto dealership is on the southeast corner of Admiral Callaghan Lane at Rotary Way and is immediately to the southwest boundary of the project site. Condominiums and apartments are to the east of the auto dealership and are immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the project site. South of Rotary Way is a Plaza neighborhood commercial center. A two-building office complex and a KinderCare facility are east of Redwood Plaza along Rotary Way.
- To the East: Single-family residences are east of the project site.
- To the West: Immediately to the west of the project is Admiral Callaghan Lane and immediately to the west of Admiral Callaghan is I-80. To the west of I-80 is a mix of uses including a mobile home park, commercial uses, and the Solano County Fairgrounds.

Economic Environment and Urban Decay

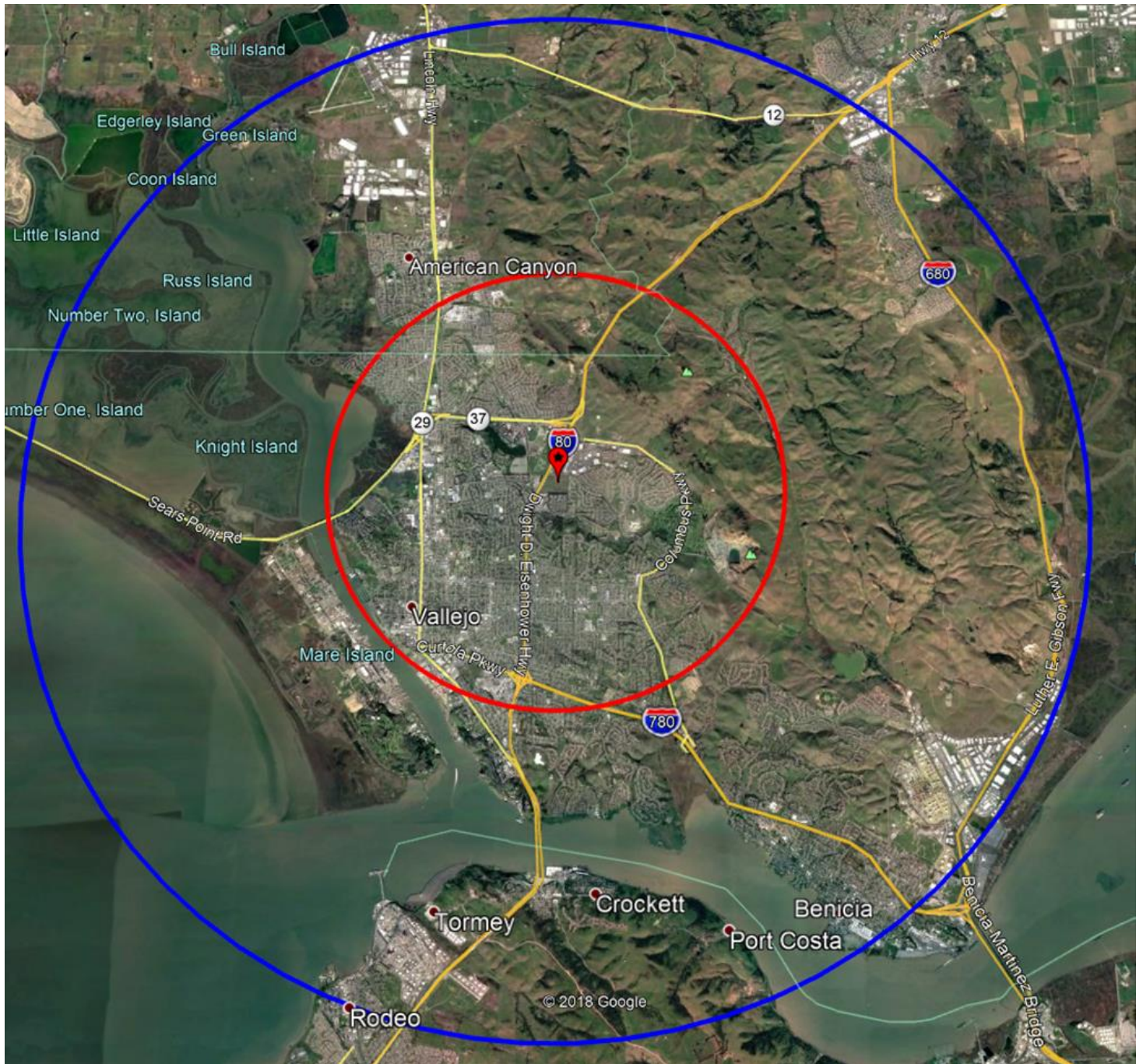
Urban Decay is an environmental, economic, and social problem that may be caused by the abandonment of existing retail development that results from highly competitive new retail development. This abandonment can lead to higher vacancy rates and deferred maintenance of existing retail square footage by its owners, who no longer receive the level of rental income necessary to maintain their properties. This in turn can lead to lower property values, higher crime rates, a damaged business environment, and a continuing cycle of events that can cause a variety of economic and social problems for a municipality.

To determine whether the proposed project would create conditions for urban decay, the local market and the economic character of existing commercial development were evaluated in the EIA by DTA. The environmental setting, or existing conditions, used for the EIA are based on data from 2019, the most recent annualized data available. The EIA assumes that the retail and residential components will be completed by October 2022 and October 2023, respectively, but that stabilized sales within the project will first occur in 2024.

The EIA uses a Primary and Secondary Trade area and the existing retail buildings throughout these areas. The Primary Trade Area encompasses a 3-mile radius from the proposed project site and the Secondary Trade Area extends this boundary out to a 7-mile radius, where the vast majority of the proposed project patrons will reside. The Primary and Secondary Trade Areas are shown in **Figure 4.1-2: Primary and Secondary Trade Areas**.



FIGURE 4-1.1: Visual Character - Surrounding Land Uses
Fairview at Northgate Project



Source: DTA, 2019



FIGURE 4.1-2: Primary and Secondary Trade Areas
Fairview at Northgate Project

Existing retail demand within the trade areas was derived from consumer expenditure survey data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS). The total 2019 retail demand generated by residents in the Primary Trade Area was approximately \$1.7 billion and combined with the Secondary Trade Area was approximately \$3.3 billion. *Table 4.1-1: Existing Retail Demand for the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas*, shows these numbers and additional information, below.

Table 4.1-1: Existing Retail Demand for the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas

Category	Primary Trade Area Demand	Combined Primary and Secondary Trade Area Demand
Food	\$231,501,607	\$428,657,897
General Merchandise	\$300,104,714	\$559,452,736
Apparel	\$70,376,520	\$135,676,667
Eating and Drinking Places	\$225,766,492	\$431,249,339
Building Materials & Farm Implements	\$99,425,900	\$195,992,737
Automotive	\$311,599,734	\$610,011,153
Other Retail	\$310,448,333	\$600,141,065
Home Furnishings and Appliances	\$37,961,513	\$74,792,322
Service Stations	\$144,720,654	\$264,120,061
Total	\$1,731,905,467	\$3,300,093,977
Source: DTA, 2019		

Table 4.1-2: Existing Retail Supply - Primary and Secondary Trade Areas summarizes the total sales, which were estimated at \$1.5 billion in the Primary Trade Area (approximately \$222 million less than demand), and \$2.6 billion in both the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas (approximately \$690 million less than demand).

Table 4.1-2: Existing Retail Supply for the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas

Category	Primary Trade Area Demand	Combined Primary and Secondary Trade Area Demand
Food	\$284,404,493	\$481,721,997
General Merchandise	\$243,731,258	\$391,671,520
Apparel	\$34,327,950	\$56,401,820
Eating and Drinking Places	\$177,332,841	\$317,153,275
Building Materials & Farm Implements	\$79,005,885	\$153,579,804
Automotive	\$434,296,924	\$593,819,248
Other Retail	\$114,829,376	\$329,281,084
Home Furnishings and Appliances	\$25,074,263	\$56,148,654
Service Stations	\$114,193,517	\$229,338,915
Total	\$1,509,196,507	\$2,609,116,317
Source: DTA, 2019		

The retail vacancy rate in an area is also an important indicator of current market conditions, as well as the area's susceptibility to urban decay. A retail vacancy rate of 5 percent is considered to be a normal level expected in a healthy real estate market. *Table 4.1-3: 2018 Vacancy Statistics Within the City of Vallejo*, provides an overview of the vacancy rates for commercial mixed-use properties within the City. In order to approximate the vacancy rate for the project, vacancy rate statistics were evaluated for a variety of retail segment categorizations, including commercial mixed-use retail, retail exclusive, and shopping center for the City of Vallejo. Given that the Costco site offers a variety of non-retail commercial uses such as optometry offices, gas service stations, tire centers, and pharmacies, commercial mixed-use retail was identified as the most appropriate comparative category for the purposes of this analysis.

Table 4.1-3: 2018 Vacancy Statistics Within the City of Vallejo

City	Vacancy Rate	Vacant Square Foot	Availability Rate	Available Square Feet.
Commercial Mixed-Use	4.8%	306,000	5.30%	341,000
Source: DTA, 2019				

Employment Indicators

Existing retail stores within the affected area that provide similar food and beverage retail sales as the proposed project include the existing Costco store to be relocated to the proposed project, as well as a Wal-Mart and Target locations within the Primary Trade Area. The Wal-Mart averages approximately \$400 in sales per square foot and nets average annual retail sales of approximately \$40.0 million while the Target averages approximately \$295 per square foot and nets average annual retail sales of \$37.4 million. Costco currently employs approximately 163,000 full and part-time employees within the U.S. over 528 locations, or approximately 309 employees per location. In comparison, Wal-Mart employs approximately 1.5 million full and part-time associates within the U.S. at over 4,761 locations (including supercenters, discount stores, and neighborhood markets), or approximately 315 employees per location, whereas Target employs 345,000 full and part-time employees within the U.S. over 1,846 locations, or approximately 187 employees per location.

Wage Standards

As of June 11, 2018, Costco's starting wage for its U.S. employees is \$14.50 an hour, and among its total number of U.S. employees, the average hourly wage is \$22.50 an hour. Costco's employees also have access to health insurance benefits, for which the company covers 90 percent of the annual costs.

Pipeline Projects

The Primary Trade Area has two small-scale food service additions – a 4,150-square-foot Panera Bread and a 3,867-square-foot In-N-Out Burger, which opened in November 2018 and January 2019, respectively. Both are in the immediate vicinity of the project. There are currently no other proposed or pending superstores in the City of Vallejo.

4.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

FEDERAL

There are no federal regulations that would be applicable to the proposed project.

STATE

California Scenic Highway Program

State Scenic Highways are designated by Caltrans to promote the protection and enhancement of the natural scenic beauty of California's highways and adjacent corridors. Caltrans is the State agency responsible for the planning, construction, and maintenance of highway, bridge, and rail transportation. California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. The State laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. There are no Officially Designated Scenic Highways in the City designated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). SR-37, located approximately 2.5 miles west of the proposed project, is designated as an Eligible State Scenic Highway but is not Officially designated (Caltrans, 2019).

California Building Standards Code

Title 24 in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) is the California Building Standards Code. Part 2 of Title 24 is the California Building Code (CBC), which is based on the International Building Code and combines three types of building standards. The CBC also includes standards authorized by the California legislature, that constitute extensive additions not covered by the International Building Code that have been adopted to address particular California concerns.

One example of a code that is specific to California pertaining to aesthetics is Part 6 of Title 24 of the California Energy Code. It includes standards for lighting that are intended to improve energy efficiency and reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness and sensor controls. The CBC includes standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to improve energy efficiency, and to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL

The project site is in the City of Vallejo. There are no regional regulations applicable to the proposed project.

Propel Vallejo 2040 General Plan

The City of Vallejo General Plan (General Plan) includes sections describing aesthetic and visual resources and provides policies and goals, and action items related to scenic resources. Although there are no officially designated scenic views near the project site, the General Plan discusses scenic views and notes that views contribute to the character of the community and can be both sources of local pride and tourist

attractions. These views, such as panoramic views within the City, are provided from hilltops and elevated roadways and include views of areas like San Pablo Bay, Mare Island Strait, the waterfront, Sulphur Springs Mountain, the Vaca Mountains, White Slough, the Napa River Wetlands, Sky Valley, and the City itself.

Related to highways, the visual resource discussion in the General Plan notes that SR-37 west of Highway 29 is eligible for designation as a State Scenic Highway. Much of the General Plan discussion related to the scenic quality of resources focuses on natural and environmental elements such as attractive landscapes and open space, hillsides, and views of the bay from elevated areas and roadways and trails. The following General Plan goals and policies are applicable to the proposed project:

Goal NBE-1:	Beautiful City. Preserve and enhance the natural, historic, and scenic resources that make Vallejo special.
Policy NBE-1.1	Natural Resources. Protect and enhance hillsides, waterways, wetlands, occurrences of special-status species and sensitive natural communities, and aquatic and important wildlife habitat through land use decisions that avoid and mitigate potential environmental impacts on these resources to the extent feasible.
Policy NBE-1.5	Scenic Vistas. Protect and improve scenic vistas, including views from Interstate 80 and State Route 37 in Vallejo.
Action NBE-1.5C	Continue to administer the residential view district regulations intended to preserve panoramic views of the surrounding natural and human-made environment from residential neighborhoods located on hills.
Policy NBE-2.3	Inviting, Compatible Design. Promote attractive development that is compatible with surrounding uses.
Policy NBE-3.13	Neighborhood Character. Preserve the character of existing single-family residential neighborhoods.
Action NBE-3.13A	Continue to carefully review development proposals to preclude substantial increases in density and new land uses in order to minimize the impact to the character of existing single-family neighborhoods.
Action NBE-3.13B	Continue to allow a mix of housing types along the interconnected linear street grid that contributes to the charm and walkability of Vallejo's central residential neighborhoods, where appropriate.
Action EET-3.4D	Collaborate with business owners, property owners, and/or BIDs to seek funding for and provide incentives to facilitate facade/streetscape/access improvements, improve signage, and provide for public art and gathering places along commercial corridors.

City of Vallejo Municipal Code

The City of Vallejo Municipal Code is organized by Title, Chapter, and Section. The Municipal Code is Codified through Ordinance No. 1817 N.C.(2d), passed July 23, 2019 (Update 7-19). Title 16 is the Zoning Ordinance and contains development requirements for the City's Zoning Districts that regulate several aspects of development that affect visual character, such as building heights, landscaping, signage, yards, and lot coverage.

The following chapters and sections of the Zoning Ordinance are applicable to aesthetics:

Chapter 16.36 – Residential View District provides regulations to ensure that the existing one-story and two-story development pattern is maintained within residential view districts. These visual resources are significant neighborhood amenities and include views of San Pablo Bay, Mare Island Strait, the waterfront, Sulphur Springs Mountain, the Vaca Mountains, White Slough, the Napa River Wetlands, Sky Valley, and the City itself. The purpose of this chapter is to protect, enhance, and perpetuate these views and establishes a design review process to ensure new development would not significantly obstruct views. The district may be applied to residential neighborhoods with significant panoramic views as designated by neighborhood development plans, by specific area plans, or by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council. Any residential zoning district or a portion thereof may be designated as a residential view district.

Chapter 16.64 – Sign regulations are intended to improve the image of the City by creating a more pleasing environment in which to shop, work, and live; enhancing property values; minimizing the potential hazards to motorists and pedestrians; promoting public health, safety, and welfare; and making businesses easier to identify and locate by eliminating unnecessary clutter. The Chapter includes standards for reviewing the size, height, location, and type of sign materials.

Chapter 16.70 – Screening and Landscaping Regulations provides standards for screening, fences, walls, and landscaping within the City for the conservation and protection of property, the assurance of safety and security, the enhancement of privacy, the control of dust, the abatement or attenuation of noise, and the improvement of the visual environment, including the provision of a neat appearance in keeping with neighborhood character. Specific regulations apply to property along Springs Road between Modoc Street and Rollingwood Drive.

Chapter 16.72 – Performance Standards Regulations provide standards for humidity, heat, cold, and glare. Section 16.72.100 requires that all commercial and industrial uses shall be operated to not produce glare that is readily detectable by the average person at the following points of determination for the following zones:

- Within any residential, commercial, or special purpose Zoning District, the point of determination is at or beyond any lot line of the lot containing the uses.
- Within the Intensive Use District, the point of determination is at or beyond the boundary of the zone.

This chapter requires that lights be directed and shielded so as not to glare onto adjoining residential properties and that lights are in a housing to protect against breakage. All defective or damaged lights must be replaced within forty-eight business hours.

The following chapters and section of the Zoning Ordinance are applicable to Urban Decay:

Chapter 16.76. – Requires an analysis of:

- An analysis of the short- and long-term effect the proposed superstore could have on the retail stores specified, which shall include an analysis of the proposed superstore’s potential impact on the following within the affected area: retail sales, food and beverage retail sales, store closures, jobs, and any food and beverage retail and/or retail stores that could potentially close, including an analysis of the potential for using the closed site(s) for similar or other use.
- An analysis of both the short- and the long-term potential effects of the proposed superstore on retail and food and beverage retail sales in the affected area, including a conclusion as to whether the proposed superstore would cause a net increase or decrease in retail and food and beverage retail sales in the affected area.
- An analysis of the proposed superstore’s potential short- and long-term net effect on the ability of consumers in the affected area to obtain a variety of food and beverage and retail products in light of the analysis concerning potential closure of retail and/or food and beverage retail stores within the affected area.

4.1.3 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the criteria set forth in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, except as provided in Public Resources Code 21009, a project would have a significant effect on aesthetic resources if it would:

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

Issues presented in the Appendix G checklist do not include Urban Decay impacts. However, State CEQA Guidelines §15131(a) provides guidance on consideration of social and economic effects:

Economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. An EIR may trace a chain of cause and effect from a proposed decision on a project through anticipated economic or social changes resulting from the project to physical changes caused in turn by the economic or social changes. The intermediate economic or social changes need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect.

Based on this guidance, the following threshold has been applied:

A project may create a significant impact if it would:

Trigger, individually and/or cumulatively, a downward spiral of retail closures and consequent long-term vacancies that ultimately result in urban decay (Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield [2004] [124 Cal. App. 4th 1184]).

4.1.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

IMPACT AES-1	WOULD THE PROJECT HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA? (LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT)
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A scenic vista is generally considered to be a location from which the public can experience unique and exemplary high-quality views—typically from elevated vantage points that offer panoramic views of great breadth and depth. The visual character of the site is that of a vacant property, consisting primarily of disturbed non-native vegetation. The site’s visual context is also greatly influenced by surrounding development, which consists of commercial uses, residential development of varying densities, and the adjacent Interstate 80 freeway. Views of the site are not unique to undeveloped or developed uses within and near to the City of Vallejo and do not constitute a scenic vista.

The approximately 51.3-acre project site does not have any characteristics that would qualify it as being a scenic vista such as providing distant or panoramic viewing opportunities, or views to or from substantially elevated areas, and does not provide views to or of a significant landform that would be considered scenic.

The General Plan does not designate official scenic view corridors or vistas; however, there are a number of areas within Vallejo that could provide views of scenic resources such as hilltops, waterways, and open areas that a person would consider scenic. The General Plan references scenic vistas and views in General Plan Policy NBE-1.5, which emphasizes protection and improvement of scenic vistas, including views from I-80 in Vallejo. While the proposed project site is visible from I-80, the project site is not a designated scenic vista or have any natural features that would generally be considered scenic in nature (e.g., unique landforms, rare habitats, or public open space).

Generally, scenic views are provided from elevated positions or are views of topographic features. Within the City, these views would be from hilltops and elevated roadways and also could include views of areas such as Sulphur Springs Mountain. Sulphur Springs Mountain is approximately 1,120 feet in elevation and is approximately 2.25 miles to the northeast of the project site. Sulphur Springs Mountain and lower-lying hills to the southeast of the highest point of the mountain are visible from I-80 and Admiral Callaghan Lane which are oriented north to south. The lower-lying hills to the southeast of Sulphur Springs mountain are visible from I-80 adjacent to the southerly portion of project site, but due to the grade separation between I-80 and Admiral Callaghan Lane, as drivers proceed north the views are screened by the intervening topography. Additionally, as seen by northbound travelers from this location, views of Sulphur Springs Mountain are partially obscured by existing vegetation, structures, utility poles, power lines, and traffic signals.

Development of the project site would result in some minor changes in foreground views as seen from I-80, but would not block views of Sulphur Springs Mountain. The northwestern portion of the project site is approximately 30 feet higher than Admiral Callaghan Lane. The project site would be graded to create building pads and parking lots at grade with adjacent roadways which would lower the elevation in western portion of the project site by approximately 25 feet, further reducing the visibility of the proposed buildings. The Master Plan would allow a maximum height of 40 feet in the commercial area of the project site. The largest building, the proposed Costco building, would be limited to 40 feet in height and located in the eastern portion of the commercial area setback approximately 450 feet from Admiral Callaghan Lane, and 490 feet from I-80. As such, northerly views of Sulphur Springs Mountain would not be obstructed, and impacts would be less than significant.

Temporary changes to the visual character of the project site would occur during the construction period. Views during construction would be typical of construction and include sights of construction equipment, earthmoving and grading activities that would alter the existing landforms and building of proposed structures and interior project elements such as parking areas, utilities, and installation of landscaping. Upon completion of project construction, a permanent change to the existing views of the site from I-80, particularly for northbound traffic would occur. Views of the project site from southbound traffic are largely blocked by the existing concrete median barrier. As discussed above, to minimize visual impacts, the proposed project has been designed with a large setback for the proposed Costco and would be separated from Admiral Callaghan Lane by the parking lot. Although the proposed project would result in changes to the existing visual environment of the project site as seen from I-80 and other off-site areas, the changes would not detract from views of any scenic vista and would be consistent with other easterly views provided along the I-80 corridor. Therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

As part of the State Highway System, SR-37 is eligible for listing as a scenic highway but is not officially designated. SR-37 is located approximately 2.5 miles west of the project site and is not visible from the project site nor is the project site visible from SR-37. The area between the highway and project site is developed and views are blocked due to intervening structures, vegetation, and topography. Therefore, there would be no impacts on views to or from SR-37.

**IMPACT
AES-2** **WOULD THE PROJECT SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGE SCENIC RESOURCES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, TREES, ROCK OUTCROPPINGS, AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS WITHIN A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY?**

(NO IMPACT)

A scenic highway is any stretch of public roadway that is designated as a scenic corridor by a federal, State, or local agency. The project is not adjacent or proximate to a State scenic highway. There are no officially designated State scenic highways in the City. As previously addressed, SR-37 is as an eligible scenic highway; however, the project site is not visible from SR-37 and SR-37 is not visible from the project site due to elevation changes and intervening development and vegetation. No impacts would occur with respect to designated State Scenic Highways.

**IMPACT
AES-3** **IN NON-URBANIZED AREAS, WOULD THE PROJECT SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS? (PUBLIC VIEWS ARE THOSE THAT ARE EXPERIENCED FROM PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE VANTAGE POINTS). IN AN URBANIZED AREA, WOULD THE PROJECT CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE ZONING AND OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING SCENIC QUALITY?**

(LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT)

The project site is located in an area characterized by urban development and is bordered by commercial and residential uses, and roadways and highways. North across Turner Parkway is the Gateway Plaza shopping center, to the east is the Hunter Ranch residential development, to the south are the Quail Ridge Condominiums, and a Honda dealership, and further south is the Redwood Plaza Commercial Center. To the west, the project site is adjacent to Admiral Callaghan Lane and further west separated by an approximate 20-foot median vegetated with ruderal plants, is I-80.

The General Plan provides general guidance related to protection of scenic views. As discussed in Impact AES-1 above, the proposed project would not result in a substantial change to the existing viewshed as seen from I-80 as discussed in General Plan Policy NBE-1.5. Because the project site does not constitute a significant visual resource, nor would the proposed project alter viewing opportunities of a significant visual resource. Therefore, potential impacts are less than significant.

In relation to the Vallejo Municipal Code, the proposed project is not in a residential view district and would not block views of significant resources. The project site would be rezoned to Mixed Use Planned Development for consistency with the General Plan designations established by the General Plan. Development standards have been established to provide high-quality design and continuity throughout the project. Design requirements such as street widths, building setbacks, architectural guidelines and landscape materials are included in the standards. Although views from some of the existing single-family homes to the east and from some of the condominiums to the south of the project site would change, the

proposed project site does not constitute a significant visual resource with significant visual quality because views of the site are not unique to undeveloped or developed uses within or near the City and do not constitute a scenic resource. The proposed project also would conform to requirements for signage, preserve and maintain a majority of the existing seasonal wetland located in the center of the project site, and provide substantial landscaping including ground covers and trees that would screen and provide visual contrast to help break up views of the new uses.

The project has been designed to ensure it is of similar visual character to adjacent developments. For motorists traveling along I-80 or Admiral Callaghan Lane, the project would appear to be a continuation of adjacent land uses and would not present unexpected or otherwise unpleasant aesthetic character within the general project vicinity. Thus, the change in character of the project site, once developed, would be visually compatible with surrounding commercial development to the north and south, and existing residential neighborhoods to the south, and east. Therefore, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and this impact would be less than significant.

IMPACT AES-4	<i>TRIGGER, INDIVIDUALLY AND/OR CUMULATIVELY, A DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF RETAIL CLOSURES AND CONSEQUENT LONG-TERM VACANCIES THAT ULTIMATELY RESULT IN URBAN DECAY?</i> <i>(LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT)</i>
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Urban decay is a term for the physical and social degeneration of urban uses which in turn results in visual blight within an area. For the purposes of this analysis, urban decay is defined as physical effects including, deterioration of buildings and improvements, visual and aesthetic impacts related to physical deterioration, increased instances of property crimes including graffiti, and increased demand for police and emergency response services, which result from individual or cumulative increases in retail closures and consequent long-term vacancies caused by a surplus of retail market supply.

The potential short- and long-term economic impacts of the proposed project were analyzed under the framework provided by Section 16.76.040 of the Vallejo Municipal Code (VMC). Therefore, this urban decay analysis section focuses on “superstores” which are defined in the VMC as stores that are over 75,000 square feet or more gross floor area and devote ten thousand square feet or more of the gross floor area to the sale of nontaxable merchandise, including but not limited to food and beverage retail sales. In other words, most of this analysis is related to the proposed Costco store as it is the project component that triggers the need for the analysis.

To evaluate the potential for the project to cause urban decay due to closures of existing retail stores, the supply and demand for each specific retail category (e.g., general merchandise, food stores, etc.) in each of the geographic areas that would be impacted by the project, otherwise known as the project’s Trade Areas were evaluated. The analysis conservatively assumed that the proposed project’s retail and residential components will open by 2022 and 2023, respectively, but that stabilized sales within the project will first occur in 2024.

The retail vacancy rate in an area is also an important indicator of current market conditions, as well as the area's susceptibility to urban decay. The vacancy rate for commercial mixed-use retail properties is currently only 4.8 percent, down from 6.6 percent in 2018, with an overall downward trend since 2014. The proposed Costco would be relocated to a new site within the Northgate area of the City approximately 0.75 miles from its current location and immediately surrounded by other residential and commercial development. This analysis also considered the re-use of the existing Costco site. Furthermore, as the real estate market becomes more competitive within the Bay Area and the draw toward the East Bay and Vallejo rises due to relatively affordable housing prices, increasing retail demand is likely to further reduce any likelihood of urban decay related to the construction of the project.

Additionally, as shown in *Table 4.1-4: Existing Surplus/Leakage – Primary Retail Trade Area*, the current annual retail demand of \$1.7 billion in the Primary Trade Area exceeds the \$1.5 billion in sales by \$222.7 million each year. This indicates that overall, there is a current leakage of approximately 12.9 percent of the Primary Trade Area resident expenditures to retail stores outside of the area. The leakage (surplus) appears to be occurring in most retail categories and is most severe within Other Retail (\$195.6 million), General Merchandise (\$56.4 million), Eating and Drinking Places (\$48.4 million), and Apparel (\$36.0 million). To a lesser extent, Service Stations (\$28.5 million), Building Material and Farm Implements (\$20.4 million), and Home Furnishing and Appliances (\$12.9 million) are also categories that fail to fully capture potential spending. This data indicates that current retail businesses within the Primary Trade Area are failing to capture all the possible retail expenditures of their population. Thus, households residing within this area must travel elsewhere in order to meet their current retail needs as the vast majority of retail categories in the Primary Trade Area are underserved.

Table 4.1-4: Existing Surplus/Leakage – Primary Retail Trade Area

Category	Primary Trade Area Demand	Primary Trade Area Supply	Excess/ (leakage)
Food and Beverage Retail	\$231,501,607	\$284,404,493	\$52,902,886
General Merchandise	\$300,104,714	\$243,731,258	(\$56,373,456)
Apparel	\$ 70,376,520	\$34,327,950	(\$36,048,570)
Eating and Drinking Places	\$225,766,492	\$177,332,841	(\$48,433,651)
Building Material & Farm Implements	\$99,425,900	\$ 79,005,885	(\$20,420,015)
Automotive	\$311,599,734	\$434,296,924	\$122,697,190
Other Retail	\$310,448,333	\$114,829,376	(\$195,618,957)
Home Furnishing and Appliances	\$3 7,961,513	\$25,074,263	(\$12,887,250)
Service Stations	\$144,720,654	\$116,193,517	(\$28,527,137)
TOTAL	\$1,731,905,467	\$1,509,196,507	(\$222,708,960)
Source: DTA, 2019			

Combining the primary and secondary trade areas also generates an overall existing leakage of retail demand, as shown in *Table 4.1-5: Existing Surplus/Leakage – Combined Primary and Secondary Retail Trade Areas*. The current annual retail demand in the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas is estimated to be approximately \$3.3 billion in total retail goods per year. This compares to a current annual retail supply estimate of \$2.6 billion, which indicates an overall leakage of retail expenditures in the amount of \$691.0

million per year within the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas. The leakage appears to be occurring in most of the retail categories and is most severe within Other Retail (\$270.9 million), General Merchandise (\$167.8 million), Eating and Drinking Places (\$114.1 million), and Apparel (\$79.3 million). This data indicates that current retail businesses within the combined Primary and Secondary Trade Areas are also failing to capture all the possible retail expenditures of their population. Thus, households residing within this combined area must travel elsewhere in order to meet their current retail needs as nearly every retail category in the Trade Areas is underserved.

Table 4.1-5: Existing Surplus/Leakage – Combined Primary and Secondary Retail Trade Areas

Category	Combined Primary and Secondary Trade Area Demand	Combined Primary and Secondary Trade Area Supply	Excess (leakage)
Food and Beverage Retail	\$428,657,897	\$481,721,997	\$53,064,100
General Merchandise	\$559,452,736	\$391,671,520	(\$167,781,216)
Apparel	\$135,676,667	\$56,401,820	(\$79,274,847)
Eating and Drinking Places	\$431,249,339	\$317,153,275	(\$114,096,064)
Building Material & Farm Implements	\$195,992,737	\$153,579,804	(\$42,412,933)
Automotive	\$610,011,153	\$593,819,248	(\$16,191,905)
Other Retail	\$600,141,065	\$329,281,084	(\$270,859,981)
Home Furnishing and Appliances	\$74,792,322	\$56,148,654	(\$18,643,668)
Service Stations	\$264,120,061	\$229,338,915	(\$34,781,146)
TOTAL	\$3,300,093,977	\$2,609,116,317	(\$690,977,660)

Source: DTA, 2019

Specifically, with respect to food and beverage retail establishments (not eating and drinking places), there is a relatively minor surplus of \$4.5 million in the Primary Trade Area and a shortfall of \$61 million in the Secondary Trade Area. Costco's business operations include selling groceries, which falls under the Food categorization, as well as running a limited-service restaurant/snack bar, which falls under the Eating and Drinking categorization. As such, for the purpose of this analysis, the DTA report combined the Food and Eating and Drinking categories to better reflect the supply this project will contribute to these related categories. When solely examining the Food category, there is oversupply of \$52.9 million in the Primary Trade Area, however given the fact that the project is merely the relocation and expansion of an existing Costco, and only half of the additional 26,701 square feet will be used for grocery items, there is no evidence to indicate that the project would exacerbate the already existing surplus. This analysis also assumes it is unlikely that a big box store would be re-occupied as a restaurant, and thus there would be no impact on the variety of food services currently offered in the Primary Trade Area. Additionally, the project would not remove any existing food and beverage and retail services from operation; therefore, the relocation and expansion of the existing Costco would have no effect on the long-term or short-term abilities of consumers to obtain a variety of food and beverage and retail products. The project is also not expected to compete with other typical grocery store chains, such as the nearby Safeway, because although both stores offer food and beverage items, each location has a different use to the average

consumer depending on their needs. Therefore, there would be no impact on the variety of food services in the project area.

The analysis in the DTA report also recognizes that the \$122.7 million surplus in the Automotive category, is likely due to the high concentration of motor vehicle dealers within the Primary Trade Area, which inflates and distorts these figures. According to the DTA report, new and used car dealerships comprise 87 percent, or \$379.4 million, of the \$434.3 million total supply in the Automotive category. The majority of dealership revenue is from vehicle sales, while the vast majority of the goods and services offered by Costco are not similar to those of a car dealership. As previously mentioned, because the project is the relocation and expansion of an existing Costco and approximately 25 percent of the additional 26,701 square feet would be used for non-grocery retail items, there is no evidence to indicate that the project would exacerbate the already existing surplus or cause urban decay or market saturation within the Trade Areas. Overall, the retail sales figures represent a healthy supply and demand equilibrium, which is very unlikely to be upset by the expanded Costco's sales, and any existing surpluses will not be worsened by the project.

As such, the relocation and expansion of the existing Costco, and the reuse of the existing Costco site, would not trigger a downward spiral of retail closures and consequent long-term vacancies due to a surplus of retail market supply such that urban decay and related adverse significant visual impacts would occur. Potential impacts from urban decay are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

IMPACT AES-5	WOULD THE PROJECT CREATE A NEW SOURCE OF SUBSTANTIAL LIGHT OR GLARE WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT DAY OR NIGHTTIME VIEWS IN THE AREA? (LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED)
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Lighting effects are 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). Light introduction can be a nuisance to wildlife and adjacent residential areas, diminish the view of the clear night sky and, if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances. Uses such as residences are considered light-sensitive because occupants have expectations of privacy during evening hours and may be subject to disturbance by bright light sources. Excess nighttime lighting within the proposed open space area could adversely affect wildlife such as nesting birds by disrupting nesting patterns or make other animals more susceptible to nighttime predation. Light spill is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. 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 by highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad

expanses of light-colored surfaces. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is typically related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Glare-sensitive uses include open space areas, residences, hotels, transportation corridors, and aircraft landing corridors.

The project site is vacant with no existing sources of light. The project site is in an urban environment with existing light sources associated with residential and commercial uses, as well as from vehicle headlights and roadway lighting. Implementation of the project would introduce new lighting to a currently vacant site with no light sources. Lighting would be used for the commercial center and residences, including parking areas and roadway lighting. Light sources would consist of exterior and interior building lighting including signage and security lighting including commercial and pedestrian-scale pole lights, bollard lights, exterior wall lights, to provide security lighting for the commercial and residential areas including walkways, buildings, and parking areas. The project would also include in-ground up-lights to illuminate and accent landscaping.

With respect to building materials, although the Development Code does not speak to reflective or shiny materials, the proposed project would be built with materials to reduce these effects. The structures constructed as part of the proposed project would not include the use of highly polished or reflective surfaces on project facades. The proposed commercial and residential developments would use building materials that are similar in nature to the existing commercial and residential developments in the surrounding area. Preliminary architectural designs included in the proposed Master Plan do not include buildings or residences with large amounts of glazing or other highly reflective surfaces. The Master Plan specifies commercial exterior wall materials as utilizing multiple materials, color, and textures in a coordinated way. Exterior residential building materials are identified as containing one or more of the following: stucco, stone veneer, cementitious lap siding, cementitious board and batt siding. None of these materials are known to be highly reflective because they are made of hard solid materials and do not have shiny surfaces.

To ensure that the proposed exterior lighting from the proposed project, the applicant would be required to implement Mitigation Measure AES-1 which requires submittal of a lighting plan as part of the building permit review process. The lighting plan would be reviewed by City staff to ensure that the project does not adversely affect the visual quality of the area or create a substantial new source of light and glare, and to ensure light does not spill offsite including within the proposed open space area which could adversely affect wildlife including nesting birds. With the implementation of AES-1, potential impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure:

MM AES-1: **Lighting Plan.** Prior to issuance of a building permit, the project applicant shall submit, to the satisfaction of the Planning & Development Services Director, a lighting plan for the project site demonstrating that outdoor lighting fixtures will not cause substantial glare and light spillover to surrounding properties including the open space area. At the

Director's discretion the lighting plan can be broken up into commercial and residential components. The plan shall include photometric contours, manufacturer's specifications on the fixtures, and mounting heights.

4.1.5 CONCLUSION

Given the location of the proposed project site and the present land use characteristics, the project site does not exhibit characteristics of significant visual resources. The project site does not contain any prominent features including trees, rock outcroppings, steep hillsides, and does not constitute a scenic vista. In addition, the project site does not provide views of any defined scenic vista and would not block views of a defined scenic vista. While the proposed project would alter some views of Sulphur Springs Mountain, the changes would not substantially affect the existing visual character and views provided, and therefore, are not considered significant. In addition, due to the presence of similar neighboring uses, while views of the project site would change as seen by off-site viewers, these changes also would not constitute a significant impact. The proposed project would not conflict with any existing General Plan goals, policies, or actions, and it would not conflict with the City Zoning Code regarding preservation or views or creation of light and glare. Lastly, the proposed project includes a landscaping plan that would blend the project elements and soften the potential visual intrusion at the project site. Therefore, in terms of aesthetic resources (including urban decay), impacts would either not occur or would be less than significant.

4.1.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

When evaluating cumulative aesthetic impacts, a number of factors must be considered. The cumulative study area for aesthetic impacts is the viewshed that includes the project site and surrounding areas. The context in which a project is being viewed will also influence the significance of the aesthetic impact. The contrast a project has with its surrounding environment may actually be reduced by the presence of other cumulative projects. If most of an area is or is becoming more urbanized, the contrast of a project with the natural surrounding may be less since it would not stand out in contrast as much. In order for a cumulative aesthetic impact to occur, the proposed elements of the cumulative projects would need to be seen together or in proximity to each other. If the projects were not near each other, the viewer would not perceive them in the same scene.

Development of the proposed project and future development undertaken in accordance with the City's General Plan would result in continued changes to the aesthetic and visual environment. The General Plan envisions increased development throughout the City. However, there are no known cumulative projects near or within the viewshed of the project site. Property bordering the project site is developed with urban land uses. Should properties close to the project site redevelop, it is expected that other development would be consistent with existing land uses and zoning development standards. The proposed project has been designed to be sensitive to and implement applicable goals, policies and action items of the General Plan. The proposed project and all other projects would be subject to the City's

design review process, which also would ensure that all proposed lighting conforms to requirements and all facades would be designed to minimize the potential for glare. Thus, cumulative impacts to the long-term character and quality of the site and City would be less than significant, and the proposed project would not significantly contribute to cumulative long-term visual impacts.

Urban Decay

No other individual projects within one mile of the project site have been identified that would cumulatively contribute to urban decay in combination with the proposed project. However, for this cumulative impact analysis, the area of consideration was expanded to the Primary Trade Area and thus considered projects within a 3-mile radius of the project site. The estimated demand for the Primary Trade Area is expected to increase to \$1.8 billion in retail expenditures per year. Including all future proposed projects, the projected supply is only expected to reach a level of approximately \$1.6 billion under the Future Conditions. These figures indicate that even with the additional sales generated by the project and other future projects, there is still significant leakage of retail sales, with a total of \$186.1 million in unmet retail demand within the Primary Trade Area.

The overall leakage expected within the Primary Trade Area under the Future Conditions is reflective of the current level of insufficient retail supply. As a result, the future retail demand in the Primary Trade Area is more than sufficient to support the project without significantly diverting sales from existing merchants. The development of the project will only serve to benefit the market within the Primary Trade Area and expand on the limited retail shopping opportunities currently available. As shown in *Table 4.1-6: Retail Surplus/Leakage Under Future Conditions – Primary and Secondary Trade Areas*, significant consumer spending is still not being met in the Primary Trade Area, even after the addition of the project. In the combined Primary and Secondary Trade Areas, the projected excess of consumer demand increases to approximately \$684 million per year under the Future Condition.

Any potential for Urban Decay due to the projected surplus in the Food and Automotive categories is limited due to several mitigating factors. First, the tenants that choose to locate in these planned retail developments will be oriented towards retail areas in which there is a shortage of supply in the combined Primary and Secondary Trade Areas. Second, there is no certainty that future proposed projects within the Trade Areas would actually be constructed by the year 2024. Third, the cumulative supply figures are more than likely overstated due to the fact that the analysis applies the same Trade Area of the proposed project to other proposed retail projects, when in reality the other proposed retail projects will have their own Trade Areas which are not exactly coterminous with the project's Trade Areas. Thus, total retail demand for these other projects will not be entirely derived from the project's Trade Area populations, as assumed in the conservative approach to this leakage analysis. Fourth, as stated previously, Costco's business operations fall under both the Food and Eating and Drinking categorizations and it is reasonable to combine these categories for the purpose of this analysis to better reflect the supply the proposed project will provide to these related categories.

As such, the data indicates the project has the potential to operate successfully and not result in cumulatively considerable urban decay. Potential impacts are less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Table 4.1-6: Retail Surplus/Leakage Under Future Conditions – Primary and Secondary Trade Areas

Category	Trade Area Balance 2019	Trade Area Balance 2024
PRIMARY TRADE AREA		
PROJECTED DEMAND	\$1,731,905,467	\$1,755,515,018
PROJECTED SUPPLY	\$1,509,196,507	\$1,569,367,545
EXCESS/(LEAKAGE)	(\$222,708,960)	(\$186,147,473)
COMBINED PRIMARY & SECONDARY TRADE AREA		
PROJECTED DEMAND	\$3,300,093,977	\$3,353,294,913
PROJECTED SUPPLY	\$ 2,609,116 ,31 7	\$ 2,669,287,355
EXCESS/(LEAKAGE)	(\$690,977,660)	(\$684,007,557)
Source: DTA, 2019		

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