

3.8 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

This section describes the existing aesthetic character and sources of light and glare onsite and in the surrounding area. The aesthetic character of the Proposed Action and alternatives is also discussed and the potential for aesthetic and light and glare impacts identified.

3.8.1 Affected Environment

Aesthetic Character of the Site and Surrounding Area

The project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. The site topography is relatively flat. The majority of the site is covered in native shrubs; stands of evergreen and deciduous trees are present in the northeast and southwest portions of the site. Kingswood Drive separates the southern 1/3 and northern 2/3s of the site. A Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) easement traverses the southern portion of the site. The larger site vicinity is a mix of vacant and developed properties. In the immediate site area, properties are primarily developed with large-scale, one-story buildings surrounded by surface parking areas. Adjoining the site to the north and south are large-scale retail developments; to the west is Littlerock Road and further west are two cemeteries and an auto junkyard operation; to the east is an industrial building and further east is Tyee Drive and the I-5 corridor. A multifamily residential development is located to the south of the site; a vacant, undeveloped property is located between this residential development and the site. Views to the site are possible from the uses and roadways that adjoin the site. Limited views of the site may be possible from I-5 and the multifamily development to the south.

Light and Glare

Light, in a strict sense, is the region of the electromagnetic spectrum that can be perceived by human vision. Glare is light emitted with intensity great enough to produce annoyance, discomfort, or a reduction in a viewer's ability to see. There are currently no sources of light and glare on the project site. There are a number of sources of light and glare in the site vicinity. The adjacent large-scale retail stores to the north and south of the site generate light from exterior building and parking lot lighting. The adjoining and nearby roads (i.e., Littlerock Road, Kingswood Drive and I-5) generate light from street lighting and vehicle lights. Paved surfaces and lighting in nearby parking areas and roads, vehicles, and reflective surfaces on nearby buildings are potential sources of glare.

3.8.2 Impacts

Proposed Action

Aesthetic Character

Under the Proposed Action, the undeveloped, vacant site would be converted to a large-scale (approximately 207,700 square-foot) retail store and associated surface parking. A future lease lot would be located in the southern portion of the site to accommodate a gasoline service station (see **Figure 2-3** for the proposed site plan).

The proposed building design is intended to be consistent with the Tumwater Municipal Design Review Guidelines (Chapter 18.43) to ensure that the proposal is visually compatible with surrounding uses and general community characteristics (see the **Section 3.6, Relationship to Existing Plans and Policies** for details). The scale of the proposed building would be similar to the other large retail stores in the vicinity, which include a Home Depot, Costco and Fred Meyer. The building would be one-story and approximately 30 feet in height. The building height would be modulated across the main building facades. The building elevations would be articulated with recessed entryways, awnings, varying rooflines, pilasters, changes in materials and colors, recesses, and an articulated cornice would add interest and reduce the perceived scale of the building. Exterior building materials would include: split-face concrete masonry units, simulated stucco in three earth-tone colors, and brick veneers in dark reds (see **Figure 2-4** for the proposed building elevations). These design features would be similar to, but with somewhat greater articulation than the adjacent Fred Meyer and Costco stores.

The proposed project would require clearing of the majority of the existing trees onsite; each tree cleared in excess of the Tumwater Municipal Code (Chapter 16.08) would be replaced at a 3:1 ratio. The code requires that the greater of 20 percent of the existing trees onsite (87 trees), or 12 trees per acre (258 trees, based on the 21.5-acre site) be retained; retention of less than the required number of trees is a discretionary decision for the Code Administrator. The proposed landscape plan calls for retention of 54 of the large diameter trees onsite, and planting of 612 trees both onsite and offsite, or contribution to the City's Tree Fund Program. This would result in a 3:1 replacement ratio for each tree cleared in excess of the standard, and would satisfy the requirements of Chapter 16.08 and DNR permit conditions. The proposed project would also comply with other applicable standards of Chapter 16.08 of the code (see **Section 3.3, Trees and Vegetation** and **Section 3.6, Relationship to Existing Plans and Policies** for details on tree retention/replacement). In addition to trees planted per TMC 16.08, 260 new trees would be planted onsite per applicable landscaping regulations of TMC 18.47.

The proposed landscape plan features plantings along the site perimeter, as well as in islands within the parking areas. A landscape berm ranging in height from one to three feet is proposed along the site's entire Littlerock Road frontage, and several large diameter (24 to 30-foot tall) evergreen trees would be planted along the site's Littlerock Road frontage to augment the retained trees and provide a visual buffer to drivers and pedestrians traveling along Littlerock Road, and to shield onsite shoppers from vehicular traffic. The placement of new trees throughout the parking lot, and the location of retained trees, would break up the mass of the parking lot and would be intended to provide a softer, more human scale to the development. The trees would also provide shade and would help minimize the glare from vehicles within the parking lot (see **Figure 2-5** for the proposed landscape plan).

Views of the proposed project would be possible from the uses and roadways that adjoin the site. The north, south and west elevations of the building would be visible from Littlerock Road. As part of the proposed building design, all three of these elevations would use one or more methods of articulation in order to avoid displaying blank walls (see above for a description of the proposed methods of articulation). Proposed landscaping along the perimeter of the site would partially screen views of the proposed building from this roadway. Limited views of the east building elevation would be possible from the industrial use and I-5, and views of the south building elevation would be possible from the multifamily development. All service areas would be located at the back (east side) of the store. The service areas and truck loading docks would be screened by concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls. This positioning would minimize visual impacts. Compressors and compactors located along the south side of the building would also

be screened by CMU walls. Screen walls would be designed to match the overall design of the building. Proposed landscaping along the perimeter of the site (and an 8-foot high site obscuring screenwall along the portion of the eastern site boundary adjacent to Albany International) would partially screen views toward the site from the east and south.

Light and Glare

The proposed project would add light and glare sources to the site. Light would be generated by parking lot lighting, exterior building illumination, and vehicular traffic (see **Figure 2-6** for the proposed lighting plan). The building and parking lots would be illuminated throughout the night for safety and security. Light from the project would be visible from the uses adjoining the site, and could be visible from more distant uses, such as the multifamily residential area to the south, depending upon the type of lighting fixture that is used. Lighting on the site would appear as a continuation of the existing lighting pattern along the east side of Littlerock Road. The proposed landscaping would provide screening for headlights at night.

The proposed lighting system would be designed to minimize impacts to offsite uses. A photometric analysis was prepared to determine the site lighting placement for the Tumwater retail project. Photometrics is a term to define how much light is perceived by the human eye, and is typically measured in foot-candles. A foot-candle refers to a standardized candle burning at one foot from a given surface. Wal-Mart's standard is to maintain at least 1.8 foot-candles within the parking spaces and 1.0 foot-candle in perimeter driveways of its retail stores. The City of Tumwater has requested that no more than 0.5 foot-candles be allowed at the site's property lines. The project's exterior lighting has been designed to ensure that lighting at all property lines, that are not abutted by a roadway, would not exceed 0.5 foot-candles.

Glare could be generated by the proposed project. New sources of glare could include building and parking lot lighting, building surfaces (particularly windows and other reflective surfaces) and paving. Vehicular traffic would also be sources of glare. Given the type of lighting, building materials that have been specified for the project (see above) and the amount of glazing proposed, minimal new glare would be generated by the proposed building. The proposed landscaping would help to minimize glare from vehicles in the parking lot and along the perimeter of the site.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, the undeveloped, vacant site would be converted to a large-scale retail store and associated surface parking, similar in size and character to under the Proposed Action (see **Figure 2-7**). Kingswood Drive would be relocated to along the southern boundary of the site. The realignment of Kingswood Drive would consolidate the two portions of the site into one contiguous area. Under this alternative, the future lease lot that would accommodate a gasoline service station would be located in the northern portion of the site. The design character of the proposed building would be the same as under the Proposed Action. A landscape plan has also been developed for this alternative, with plantings along the site perimeter, as well as in islands within the parking areas. This plan shows that 68 of the existing large diameter trees onsite would be retained and, as replacement for cleared trees under TMC 16.08, 549 trees would be planted both on and offsite, or contribution made to the City's Tree Fund program (see **Figure 2-8** for the Alternative 1 landscape plan). Further, an additional 208 new trees would be planted onsite consistent with landscaping regulations in TMC 18.47. Lighting would be provided

throughout the parking area and on the exterior of the building, similar to under the Proposed Action (see **Figure 2-9** for the Alternative 1 lighting plan).

As under the Proposed Action, views of the project would be possible from the uses and roadways that adjoin the site, including Littlerock Road. Limited views of the project would be possible from I-5 and the multifamily development to the south. These views would be partially screened by the proposed landscaping along the perimeter of the site (and an 8-foot high site obscuring screenwall along the portion of the eastern site boundary adjacent to Albany International).

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would continue in its current vacant undeveloped condition. The existing native shrubs and trees onsite would remain undisturbed. It is likely that development of the site, consistent with zoning and other regulations in place at the time, would occur at some point in the future, requiring some level of site clearing.

3.8.3 Mitigation Measures

- The proposed building has been designed to be consistent with the Tumwater Municipal Code Design Review Guidelines (Chapter 18.43) to ensure that the proposal is visually compatible with surrounding uses and general community characteristics (see **Section 3.6, Relationship to Existing Plans and Policies** for details).
- The proposed landscape plan has been designed in compliance with TMC 18.47, and features plantings along the site perimeter, as well as in islands within the parking areas. A landscape berm ranging in height from one to three feet is proposed along the site's entire Littlerock Road frontage, and several large diameter evergreen trees would be planted along the site's Littlerock Road frontage to create a landscape buffer.
- Exterior lighting fixtures would be shielded to reduce light spillage and glare, and lighting would be directed away from adjacent less intense land uses, consistent with TMC 18.50.
- Low-reflectivity building glazing and building materials would be used on the building surfaces to reduce the potential for glare.
- The proposed landscaping in and adjacent to the parking areas would help to minimize glare from onsite vehicles.
- The proposed exterior lighting system would be designed to ensure that lighting at all property lines that are not abutted by a roadway would not exceed 0.5 foot-candles, as requested by the City of Tumwater.
- An 8-foot high site-obscuring screenwall would be constructed along the portion of the eastern site boundary adjacent to the Albany International property.

3.8.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts are anticipated with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.