

### 3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the visual character of the project site and views from surrounding public areas. This section also evaluates the change to visual resources in the area, including change in visual character, view obstruction, and night lighting, as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Sources of information used in this analysis include:

- California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Program;
- Placer Vineyards Specific Plan prepared by Placer County;
- Placer Vineyards Specific Plan EIR prepared by Placer County;
- Placer County General Plan prepared by Placer County;
- Placer County Design Guidelines Manual prepared by Placer County;
- Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines Manual prepared by Placer County;
- Placer County Sign Ordinance; and
- Light standards prepared by the International Dark Sky Association.

### 3.1.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1.2.1 Regional and Local Setting

Placer County is located in the Sacramento Valley and Sierra Nevada regions of Northern California. The project site is located in southwestern portion of Placer County near the City of Roseville, and borders Sacramento County on the south and Sutter County on the west. The western portion of Placer County is a transitional zone between the flat, open terrain of the Sacramento Valley to the west and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east.

As indicated in **Figure 3.1-1**, areas to the north and west of the project site are generally characterized by open land containing grazing, field crops, and other agricultural uses. The land adjacent to the project site on the west is located within the South Sutter County Commercial/Industrial Reserve, a portion of which is currently planned for development. To the east is the City of Roseville, land that is undergoing conversion to urban uses, and scattered rural residential uses. To the south is the Sacramento urbanized area; however, considerable open land remains in this area, including Sacramento County's Gibson Ranch Park and open space areas along Dry Creek. Southeast of the project site in Sacramento County is the unincorporated community of Antelope, which includes a mix of single-family and multiple-family residential, retail commercial and industrial uses. West of Watt Avenue to the south, the project site is bordered by the unincorporated community of Elverta, which contains primarily rural residential uses similar in character to those located within portions of the project site. A significant amount of open land remains in the Elverta area, a portion of which is included within the proposed Elverta Specific Plan, which would permit densities ranging from rural residential at its northern extremity adjacent to the project site to urban densities in the south along Elverta Road (Placer County 2006).

Long-range views of the Sierra Nevada, Sutter Buttes, and the Coast Range are available throughout western Placer County. No prominent natural features are located in the vicinity of the project site. Prominent manmade features on and in the vicinity of the project site include power lines owned and operated by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and the Western Area Power Authority (WAPA).

No state or locally designated scenic highways or corridors are located in the vicinity of the project site (CSHP 2010).

### 3.1.2.2 Project Site – Existing Conditions

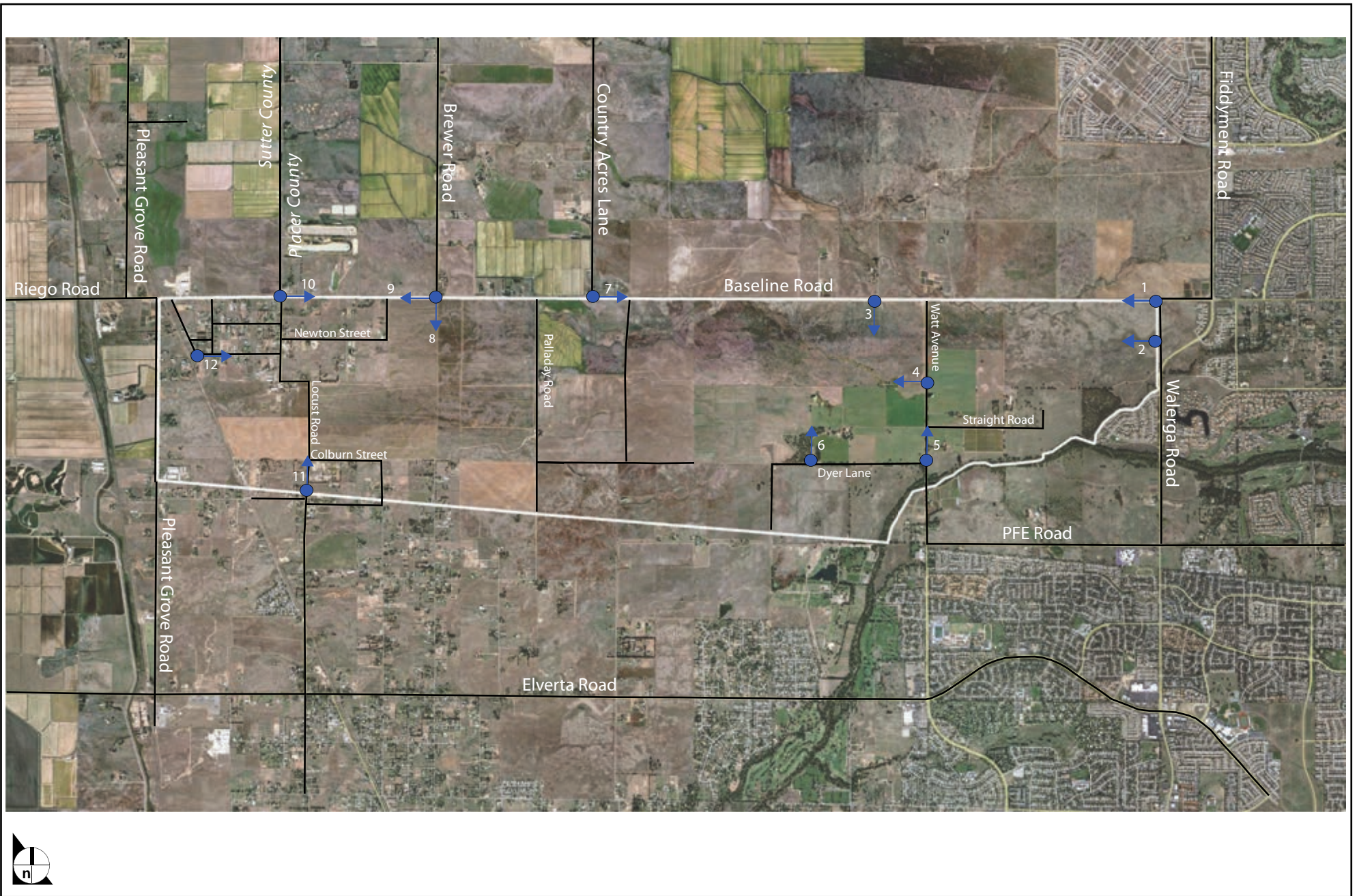
#### *Site Characteristics*

The project site is generally flat and is primarily composed of open land containing a mixture of grazing land and other agricultural uses. Curry Creek traverses a portion of the project site to the northeast while Dry Creek abuts the project site to the southeast. Approximately 150 rural residences are located within the project site, mostly in the northwest corner in the area known as Riego. An extensive riparian forest abuts the southeast boundary of the project site with Dry Creek. Other watercourses on the project site are seasonal and generally have few trees. Dyer Lane west of Watt Avenue is bordered on both sides by Valley oaks, remnants of a much greater riparian forest that existed prior to the clearance of trees for firewood and agriculture. Another remnant stand of oaks is present near the western end of Dyer Lane (Placer County 2006).

The project site is traversed by three major utility line corridors. The most westerly corridor runs in a north-south direction west of Locust Road. It contains two lines of lattice towers, some in excess of 150 feet (46 meters) in height. A second corridor diagonally bisects the project site, entering the site near its midpoint on Baseline Road and exiting near the site's southwestern corner, where it enters Sacramento County. This corridor contains three lines of towers similar in height to the first set. A third corridor runs in a generally north-south direction near the center of the project site east of Palladay Road and contains a single row of towers similar to the others described above (Placer County 2006).

Lands surrounding the project site are mostly undeveloped and the topography of the surrounding area is similar to that of the project site. Land to the north of the project site is undeveloped dry pastureland with some rural residential uses. Single-family residential uses are located to the east and undeveloped grazing and irrigated cropland (field crops and orchard) to the southeast. Lands to the south, located in Sacramento County, can be characterized (moving west to east) as rural residential, agriculture (undeveloped grazing), open space (Gibson Ranch Park), and low-density residential (community of Antelope). Lands to the west, located in Sutter County are predominantly rural residential (Placer County 2006).

The off-site utility corridors traverse open space areas, including Dry Creek, agricultural areas, and areas adjacent to and within existing roadways such as Watt Avenue, Elverta Road, Pleasant Grove Road, and PFE Road (Placer County 2006).



SOURCE: Quad Knopf – February 2005

FIGURE 3.1-1

Location of Photos

## *Viewsheds*

Off-site views from the project site and on-site views of the project site are limited given the flat nature of the terrain in this portion of western Placer County. Views from the project site to the north consist of rangeland and rural residences within the proposed Sierra Vista Specific Plan area. Views from the project site to the east include residential development while views to the southeast include rangeland and some cropland and orchards. On clear days, long distance views of the Sierra Foothills and the Sierra Mountain Range are also available to the east. Views to the south into Sacramento County consist of rural residential development, rangeland, and open space. Views to the west into Sutter County consist of rural residences.

Views of the project site are available from the roadways that border and bisect the site. Major roadways that carry a considerable amount of traffic that border the project site include Baseline Road to the north and Walerga Road to the east. Watt Avenue, a roadway that carries a substantial amount of traffic, bisects the site in the middle. The views from Baseline Road are typical of most roadways and properties in western Placer County and surrounding rural areas. A perception of generally featureless open space predominates, with an occasional view of a distant tree or group of trees. As the western portion of the project site is approached from Baseline Road, a number of rural residences and outbuildings form the dominant view. Watt Avenue crosses Dry Creek at the project site's southern perimeter, passing through an area of roadside blue oak and willows. The view from Walerga Road also includes the crossing of Dry Creek, which provides topographic relief and a close-up view of the riparian oak woodland. During the wetter portion of the year, temporary ponding of water may be visible from the roadways (Placer County 2006). **Figures 3.1-1 through 3.1-5** illustrate views throughout the project site.

Besides the existing open space, the most significant feature with the on-site as well as off-site viewshed is the presence of utility transmission towers as described above. The three corridors tend to be very visible during daylight hours. A second vertical element that is quite visible from the eastern portion of the project site is a telecommunications tower located east of the project site south of Baseline Road. The tower is approximately 300 feet (91 meters) in height and is visible for several miles (Placer County 2006).

Nighttime views (light sources) include a red blinking light and a steady red light on the communications tower described above, and more distant lighted towers to the southwest of the project site in Sacramento County. Other distant sources of light include homes and street lighting in the residential areas east of Fiddymont Road and along the northern end of Walerga Road in the City of Roseville and the Antelope area of Sacramento County. Views to the north and west from the project site are generally dark, with the exception of traffic on Baseline Road. The nighttime view of the site is generally dark, with the exception of lights from occasional residences (Placer County 2006).

### 3.1.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK – APPLICABLE LAWS, REGULATIONS, PLANS, AND POLICIES

This section summarizes relevant policies contained in the Placer County General Plan, Placer County Design Guidelines Manual, and Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines Manual.

#### 3.1.3.1 Placer County General Plan

The following is a list of goals and policies found in the Land Use Chapter of the Placer County General Plan relating to aesthetics.

##### *Visual and Scenic Resources:*

- Goal 1.K.** To protect the visual and scenic resources of Placer County as important quality-of-life amenities for county residents and a principal asset in the promotion of recreation and tourism.
- Policy 1.K.3.** The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.
- Policy 1.K.4.** The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines:
- a. Limit cuts and fills;
  - b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land;
  - c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time;
  - d. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on-site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development.
- Policy 1.K.5.** The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to fit the natural terrain.

##### *Development Form and Design:*

- Goal 1.O.** To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer County.
- Policy 1.O.1.** Except as otherwise provided in the Design Guidelines of an approved Specific Plan, the County shall require all new development to be designed in compliance with applicable provisions of the Placer County Design Guidelines Manual.



1

Baseline Road Looking West from Walerga Road Intersection

Project Site Looking West from Walerga Road

2



3

Project Site from Baseline Road at Curry Creek

SOURCE: Placer County – 2006

FIGURE 3.1-2



## Existing Views of the Project Site and Vicinity



4

Project Site Looking West  
from Watt Avenue

Looking North on Watt Avenue  
at Dyer Lane Intersection

5



6

Looking North from Dyer Lane  
at Oak Woodland Cluster

SOURCE: Placer County – 2006

FIGURE 3.1-3



## Existing Views of the Project Site and Vicinity



7

Looking East on Baseline Road from Country Acres Lane Intersection



8

Looking South at Project Site from Baseline Road / Brewer Road Intersection



9

Looking West Along Baseline Road from Brewer Road

SOURCE: Placer County – 2006

FIGURE 3.1-4



Existing Views of the Project Site and Vicinity





10

Looking East along Baseline Road at Placer County / Sutter County Line

Looking North on Locust Road at Placer County / Sacramento County Line

11



12

Looking East on Browning Street in Riego

SOURCE: Placer County – 2006

FIGURE 3.1-5

## Existing Views of the Project Site and Vicinity

- Policy 1.O.2.** The County shall require that specific plans include design guidelines for all types of development within the area covered by the plan.
- Policy 1.O.3.** The County shall require that all new development be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area. Structures, especially those outside of village, urban and commercial centers, should be designed and located so that:
- a. They do not silhouette against the sky above ridgelines or hilltops;
  - b. Rooflines and vertical architectural features blend with and do not detract from the natural background or ridge outline;
  - c. They fit the natural terrain; and
  - d. They utilize building materials, colors, and textures that blend with the natural landscape (e.g., avoid high contrasts).
- Policy 1.O.4.** The County shall require that new rural and suburban development be designed to preserve and maintain the rural character and quality of the county.
- Policy 1.O.6.** Historically or architecturally significant buildings should be preserved and not be substantially changed in exterior appearance in ways that diminish their historical character, unless doing so is necessary to avoid or mitigate hazards, and other means of mitigation are infeasible. Such structures should be preserved and used as focal points of community design.
- Policy 1.O.7.** The County shall require that mixed-use areas include community focal points to serve as gathering and/or destination points. Examples of focal points include civic centers, parks, fountains, monuments, and street vistas. On-site natural features, such as wetlands and streams, can also function as focal points.
- Policy 1.O.8.** The County shall, where appropriate, require new development to provide activity pockets along public sidewalks as pedestrian amenities, including such features as benches, sitting ledges and mini parks.
- Policy 1.O.9.** The County shall discourage the use of outdoor lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.

**Policy 1.O.10.**

The County shall require that in downtowns/Village Centers the tallest buildings be clustered in the core area and that building heights transition down to the scale of buildings in the surrounding area.

**3.1.3.2 Placer Vineyards Specific Plan Design Guidelines**

The Placer Vineyards Specific Plan contains design guidelines that supersede the County's Design Guidelines, and are intended to provide design guidance for the physical form and visual character of the Proposed Action. These guidelines address general community-wide design elements such as landscape design, streetscapes, community gateways, signage systems, and lighting. In addition, the guidelines address the design of the town center, village centers, commercial centers, Baseline Road Regional Commercial Corridor, neighborhood commercial centers, and residential neighborhoods.

**3.1.4 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY****3.1.4.1 Significance Thresholds**

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance requires an evaluation of a proposed action's effect on the human environment. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has determined that the Proposed Action or its alternatives would result in significant adverse effects related to aesthetics if the Proposed Action or an alternative would:

- substantially alter a scenic vista;
- substantially affect a scenic resource;
- substantially degrade the visual character of the site and its surroundings; or
- create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

**3.1.4.2 Analysis Methodology**

The USACE evaluated project conditions against the existing visual character of the project site in the context of topography, vegetation, existing uses, and visual character. The USACE evaluated the potential impacts to the visual character of the site and surroundings in terms of massing, size, or scale of development, and type of land use. The USACE also evaluated the potential for each alternative to introduce substantial new lighting and/or create new sources of glare that could affect nearby existing uses in order to determine potential impacts to visual resources.

### 3.1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Impact AES-1 Effect on Scenic Vistas

**No Action Alt.** Implementation of the No Action Alternative would result in a **significant** effect on scenic vistas. As explained below, views of open rangeland and the foothills and Sierra Nevada would no longer be available from Baseline Road, Walerga Road, and Watt Avenue with implementation of the No Action Alternative. Implementation of the No Action Alternative would adversely affect the human environment by altering these views that may be considered valuable by some.

A scenic vista is generally defined as an expansive view of a highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. Key publicly accessible areas in the project vicinity include Baseline Road, Walerga Road, and Watt Avenue. Other lands in the project vicinity are privately owned and not publicly accessible. Descriptions of the scenic vistas as available from these three roadways are presented below along with the changes in the views from these roadways as a result of the implementation of the No Action Alternative.

For viewers traveling eastbound, Baseline Road provides views of open space with the occasional view of a distant tree or group of trees in the fore and middle ground, and the foothills and Sierra Nevada range in the distant background. In addition, views of transmission corridors that pass through the project site are also available from this vantage point. For viewers traveling northbound, Walerga Road and Watt Avenue provide similar views of the project site as those obtained on Baseline Road. In addition, viewers traveling northbound on Walerga Road are also provided a view of Dry Creek and riparian oak woodland while viewers traveling northbound on Watt Avenue are also provided views of blue oak and willows alongside the roadway where the roadway enters the southern portion of the project site.

Implementation of the No Action Alternative would result in the development of the project site that would interrupt these views by placing buildings within these view corridors. Although a total of 1,937 acres (784 hectares) of open space would be retained under the No Action Alternative and some of this open space would be visible from Baseline Road, Walerga Road and Watt Avenue thus preserving some short-range viewsheds, this retained open space would exist in an altered condition within an urban setting. Therefore, scenic vistas would no longer be available. Furthermore, while views would be available along the open space corridors, these views would no longer appear expansive.

Development under the No Action Alternative, if approved by Placer County, would be required to comply with General Plan policies and the County's Design and Landscape Design Guidelines, all of which are intended to reduce aesthetic impacts. However, views of open rangeland and the foothills and Sierra Nevada would no longer be available from

Baseline Road, Walerga Road, and Watt Avenue, which would be a **significant** effect. No feasible mitigation is available to address this effect.

Concerning off-site infrastructure, off-site roadway widening and construction of several off-site utility lines will be required for the No Action Alternative. Most of the infrastructure would be placed underground, and the infrastructure that is left above ground would not be of substantial height to interrupt views of surrounding scenic vistas. Therefore, the effect from the construction of off-site infrastructure would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required.

**Proposed  
Action (Base  
Plan and  
Blueprint  
Scenarios)**

The Proposed Action would construct a larger mixed-use development on the project site as the development footprint would be increased from 3,294 acres (1,588 hectares) under the No Action Alternative to 4,522 acres (1,830 hectares) under both the Proposed Action-Base Plan scenario and the Proposed Action-Blueprint scenario, an increase of approximately 37 percent. The effect on scenic vistas from Baseline Road, Walerga Road, and Watt Avenue would be greater as less open space would be visible, especially along Baseline Road. While PVSP Design Guidelines would help reduce this adverse effect, based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action Alternative, the effect on scenic vistas under the Proposed Action would be **significant**. As with the No Action Alternative, no feasible mitigation is available to address this effect.

For the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, effects to scenic vistas from the construction of off-site infrastructure would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required.

**Alts. 1  
through 5**

Alternatives 1 through 5 change the proposed land uses and increase the amount of open space on five parcels within the project site compared to the Proposed Action. However, these alternatives combined would still decrease the amount of open space on the project site by approximately 59 percent compared to the No Action Alternative. The effect on scenic vistas from Baseline Road, Walerga Road, and Watt Avenue would still result under these alternatives as less open space would be visible, especially along Baseline Road. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, the effect on scenic vistas under these alternatives would be **significant**. No feasible mitigation is available to address this effect.

For the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, effects to scenic vistas from the construction of off-site infrastructure would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required.

## Impact AES-2      Effect on Scenic Resources

**No Action Alt.** The project site does not contain any scenic natural resources, such as rock outcroppings and/or distinctive trees. In addition, no historic structures are located within the project site and the project site is not located within the view corridor of a scenic highway. The same holds true for the alignment and sites of off-site infrastructure improvements. Therefore, implementation of the No Action Alternative will not damage scenic resources. The effect would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required.

**Proposed Action (Base Plan and Blueprint Scenarios)** Compared to the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would construct a larger mixed-use community on the project site. Because the project site does not contain any scenic resources, development of the site and off-site infrastructure improvements would result in a **less than significant** effect on scenic resources. Mitigation is not required.

**Alts. 1 through 5** Development of Alternatives 1 through 5 individually or combined along with off-site infrastructure improvements would result in a **less than significant** effect on scenic resources as scenic resources are not present on the site or in the area of off-site improvements. Mitigation is not required.

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## Impact AES-3      Degradation of Visual Character

**No Action Alt.** The conversion of undeveloped rangeland and limited areas of active agriculture (pasturelands and farmlands) and rural residences to urban development under the No Action Alternative would result in a **significant** effect on the visual character of the project site. **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a** and **4.2-6b** would be implemented but even with mitigation, the effect would remain **significant**.

The project site is primarily undeveloped open rangeland with some farmlands concentrated in the eastern portion of the site along Watt Avenue and some present south of Baseline Road and east of Palladay Road. Development of the project site under the No Action Alternative would convert 3,294 acres (1,333 hectares) of undeveloped land to urban uses and maintain 1,937 acres as open space. The introduction of residences, commercial uses, and infrastructure in an area that is presently undeveloped would change the existing visual character of the project site. The area to the east of the site has been developed with residential uses while the areas to the north, south, and west are planned for development. Development of the No Action Alternative would extend this urban edge.

Development of the No Action Alternative would be subject to Placer County approval. Policies addressing development form and design in the Placer County General Plan are intended to promote the visual compatibility of developments with adjacent uses. Specifically, General Plan Policy 1.O.3 requires that all new development be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area. Implementation of General Plan

policies would help reduce the severity of effects associated with new development. However, the conversion of undeveloped rangeland to urban development would represent a substantial change in the visual character of the project site, which would be a **significant** direct effect.

Concerning off-site infrastructure, off-site roadway widening and construction of several off-site utility lines would be required for the No Action Alternative. Because utilities would be placed underground, visual impacts will be related to the period of construction and revegetation, with the potential exception of utility line access sites, pump stations, and similar facilities where some portion of the facility may remain above ground. Roadway widening would occur adjacent to existing roadways and will not introduce a new visual element. While visual impacts during construction are temporary in nature and are minor, visual change related to the removal of vegetation and permanent aboveground structures could result in a potentially **significant** effect.

**PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a** and **4.2-6b** would address this effect. The USACE assumes that Placer County would impose these mitigation measures on the No Action Alternative to address this effect. These measures require that all areas containing natural vegetation that are disturbed during utility line and roadway construction be revegetated upon completion of work and that all permanent utility line-related structures extending above ground be screened where feasible using a combination of berms, mounds, landscape material, decorative fencing/walls, or other screening features, consistent with applicable design guidelines of the local jurisdiction. In the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan EIR, Placer County found that it cannot compel other jurisdictions, such as in Sutter County, Sacramento County, and/or the City of Roseville, to implement these mitigation measures on the infrastructure improvements located in other jurisdictions. For these reasons the effect would remain **significant and unavoidable**. The USACE has reviewed the analysis and also finds that this effect would remain **significant** after mitigation.

**Proposed  
Action (Base  
Plan and  
Blueprint  
Scenarios)**

The Proposed Action would develop 4,522 acres (1,830 hectares) on the project site with urban uses and maintain 709 acres (287 hectares) as open space. As a result, less open space, especially in the central and western portions of the site, would be maintained and the effect of the Proposed Action (under either scenario) on the visual character of the project site would be greater than under the No Action Alternative. While adherence to PVSP Design Guidelines and compliance with General Plan policies would reduce this adverse effect, based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action Alternative, the effect on visual character would be **significant**. In addition, the off-site infrastructure improvements under the Proposed Action would result in similar effects as described above for the No Action Alternative. **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a** and **4.2-6b** would address this effect.

These mitigation measures were adopted by Placer County at the time of project approval and will be enforced by the County. As explained in the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan EIR,

these mitigation measures would be required by Placer County and applied to Specific Plan related utilities and roadway improvements within Placer County. However, as noted above, Placer County cannot compel other jurisdictions, such as in Sutter County, Sacramento County, and/or the City of Roseville, to implement these mitigation measures. For these reasons, the County concluded that the effect would remain **significant and unavoidable**. The USACE has reviewed the analysis and also finds that this effect would remain **significant** after mitigation.

**Alts. 1  
through 5**

Alternatives 1 through 5 combined would develop 4,431 acres (1,793 hectares) on the project site with urban uses and maintain 799 acres (323 hectares) as open space. In comparison, the No Action Alternative would convert 3,294 acres (1,333 hectares) of undeveloped land to urban uses and maintain 1,937 acres (784 hectares) as open space. Development of Alternatives 1 through 5 combined or individually would increase the amount of urban development on the project site and change its character substantially. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, the effect on visual character would be **significant**. The off-site infrastructure improvements required under Alternatives 1 through 5 individually or combined would result in similar effects as described above for the No Action Alternative.

**PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a and 4.2-6b** would address this effect. The USACE assumes that Placer County would impose the same mitigation measures on Alternatives 1 through 5 (individually or combined) to address this effect. For the same reasons presented above, the USACE finds that this impact would remain **significant** after mitigation.

**PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6a: Revegetation**

*(Applicability – Proposed Action and All Alternatives)*

*PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6a requires that all areas containing natural vegetation that are disturbed during utility line and roadway construction be revegetated upon completion of work. The full mitigation measure text is available in Appendix 3.0.*

**PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6b: Screening and Lighting**

*(Applicability – Proposed Action and All Alternatives)*

*PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6b requires that all permanent utility line-related structures extending above ground be screened where feasible using a combination of berms, mounds, landscape material, decorative fencing/walls, or other screening features, consistent with applicable design guidelines of the local jurisdiction. The full mitigation measure text is available in Appendix 3.0.*



## Impact AES-4      Effects from New Sources of Light and Glare

**No Action Alt.** The No Action Alternative would result in **less than significant** direct and indirect effects from new sources of light and glare.

The project site is primarily undeveloped open rangeland with very few sources of light and glare present in the area. The No Action Alternative would result in the development of the project site with a wide variety of urban land uses, including residential, commercial, and business uses, although the pattern of development would be discontinuous. This urban development will result in the introduction of significant additional sources of light and glare. These include automobile headlights, structure lighting, streetlights, signs, park and athletic field lighting, and lighting at the proposed County-owned corporation yard. Because much of the project site is essentially devoid of light sources at the present time, this change will be substantial. Additionally, daytime glare would result from light reflecting off pavement, vehicles, and buildings.

Development of the site under the No Action Alternative would require approval from Placer County. Given the size of the project site and the scale of development, it is reasonable for the USACE to assume that a specific plan similar to the specific plan adopted for the Proposed Action would be adopted for the No Action Alternative, and that the design standards and policies outlined in the specific plan for the No Action Alternative would be similar to the design standards and policies contained in the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan that are discussed below. As the new development would be required to comply with the design standards and policies, including those focused on minimize light and glare, the effect related to new sources of light and glare would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required.

Concerning off-site infrastructure improvements, some of the pump stations and similar facilities required for the No Action Alternative would be illuminated. These sources of light and glare are minimal and the effect would be **less than significant**. **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6b** would further reduce any light and glare impacts from off-site improvements.

### Proposed Action (Base Plan and Blueprint Scenarios)

The Proposed Action would result in **less than significant** direct and indirect effects from new sources of light and glare.

The Proposed Action would construct a larger mixed-use development on the project site than the No Action Alternative. Similar to the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action under either scenario would also result in the introduction of significant additional sources of light and glare to the project site.

The Specific Plan contains significant detail concerning project lighting design, including street lighting, pedestrian pathway lighting, recreation areas and athletic facilities lighting, parking lot lighting, landscape lighting, service areas and security lighting, and building

identification and street number lighting. Additionally, the Specific Plan contains numerous policies concerning control of light and glare associated with these lighting features in the proximity of residential and other areas. The Specific Plan also contains a number of design guidelines and standards controlling the use of building materials and painted surfaces, which are intended to control glare from sources such as unpainted metal, or other reflective surfaces (Placer County 2006). All design standards and policies listed in the Specific Plan would apply under either scenario.

Illumination of signs is addressed in the Placer County Zoning Ordinance in Section 17.54.170F. The Placer County General Plan Policy 1.O.9 also discourages lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky (Placer County 2006). A common source of technical information on the effects and mitigation of light and glare is the International Dark Sky Association. The International Dark Sky Association recognizes the necessity for night lighting to maintain security, safety, utility and an attractive environment and has identified a number of impacts from poor night lighting, including urban sky glow, glare, light trespass, a trashy appearing environment, and energy waste. The Association recommends use of quality lighting designs, shining lights down, use of timing controls, the use of the correct amount of light, and the use of energy efficient light sources (Placer County 2006). The lighting standards and guidelines in the proposed Specific Plan under both scenarios were reviewed by the County against adopted County policy and the standards maintained by the International Dark Sky Association, and were found by the County to be in substantial conformity.

As the Specific Plan contains policies and design guidelines designed to minimize light and glare impacts and the Proposed Action would adhere to Placer County General Plan Policy 1.O.9 which discourages lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky and conforms to standards maintained by the International Dark Sky Association, the effect related to new sources of light and glare on the project site would be **less than significant**. Mitigation is not required. **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6b** would further reduce any light and glare impacts from off-site infrastructure improvements.

**Alts. 1  
through 5**

Alternatives 1 through 5 would place additional acreage in open space and alter the types of land uses proposed on five parcels on the project site compared to the Proposed Action. If only one on-site alternative is considered, the amount of open space that would be preserved would range from a minimum of 1 additional acre (0.4 hectare), under Alternative 4, to a maximum of 47 acres (19 hectares) under Alternative 3. However, Alternatives 1 through 5 would still result in the introduction of significant additional sources of light and glare to the project site.

Development under these alternatives would also be guided by the same lighting standards and guidelines as the No Action and the Proposed Action. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action

Alternative and the Proposed Action, the effects of new, on and off-site light and glare sources would be **less than significant**. **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measure 4.2-6b** would further reduce any light and glare impacts from off-site improvements.

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**Impact AES-5      Indirect Effects on Aesthetics from Off-Site Infrastructure Not Constructed as Part of the Project**

**No Action Alt., Proposed Action (Base Plan and Blueprint Scenarios), and Alts. 1 through 5**

The construction and operation of off-site water pipeline infrastructure by the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) which may be used by the No Action Alternative, Proposed Action, and Alternatives 1 through 5, would result in **less than significant** effects to aesthetics with implementation of mitigation.

As construction at night would be restricted, there would be temporary light and glare effects from construction. Therefore, effects due to light and glare would be less than significant.

The corridors where the water infrastructure would be constructed are primarily along existing roadways and utility corridors. The infrastructure would mostly be underground and not visible, except at utility line access points. Once constructed, the corridor would be revegetated as necessary. The temporary disturbance of pipeline corridors in addition to aboveground permanent water pipeline structure would degrade the visual character in the area. The effects from permanent above ground pipeline infrastructure and revegetation would be potentially significant.

Placer County identified **PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a** and **4.2-6b** to reduce these effects to less than significant. However, in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the PVSP EIR, the County acknowledged that it did not have the authority to impose these mitigation measures on PCWA's project and the impact would remain significant. USACE concurs with the County that if the PCWA imposes these or similar mitigation measures on the infrastructure project, the effects to aesthetics would be less than significant. However, USACE also does not have the authority to impose mitigation measures on a project that would be built by the PCWA and finds that the effects would remain **significant**.

### 3.1.6 RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

There are no mitigation measures available to reduce adverse effects related to loss of scenic vistas, resulting in a significant and unavoidable effect.

**PVSP EIR Mitigation Measures 4.2-6a** and **4.2-6b** would reduce degradation of visual character for facilities that are built in areas under Placer County jurisdiction. However, the impact would remain **significant and unavoidable** because neither Placer County nor the USACE can compel other jurisdictions to implement the mitigation measures.

### 3.1.7 REFERENCES

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