

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the visual character of the project site, the alternative site, and views from surrounding public areas to these two sites. 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 (CSHP 2010); and
- Sierra Vista Specific Plan EIR prepared by the City of Roseville (City of Roseville 2010).

3.1.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1.2.1 Regional Setting

Placer County is located in the Sacramento Valley and Sierra Nevada regions of Northern California. The project site is located in the northwestern portion of the City of Roseville, in western Placer County. The northwest side of the City 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.

Development predominates the visual setting of the City, and is evident throughout western Placer County. In some areas of the region, development has completely eliminated the historically rural character associated with regional ranching and agricultural operations. In other areas of western Placer County, development has segmented or isolated open space areas, thereby heightening the aesthetic value of remaining contiguous open space (City of Roseville 2010). Areas that are not developed are dominated by non-native grasslands. This open rangeland is dry most of the year (from June to early spring) resulting in earth tone colors. Vernal pools appear throughout the non-native grasslands during the early spring until June. Flower production associated with the vernal pools provides some color contrasts on a seasonal basis (City of Roseville 2010).

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 man-made features in the vicinity of the project site include the Roseville Energy Park (REP) and the Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant (PGWWTP) located north of the City, and the Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) corridor located south of the project site (City of Roseville 2010).

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

3.1.2.2 Project Site – Existing Conditions

The project site is characterized by gently rolling topography and large, open annual grassland areas. All of the project area has been disked, plowed, and dry farmed.

Features of the human environment present on the site include a 50-foot-wide City of Roseville electrical easement that crosses the site in a north-south direction (along the proposed alignment of Westbrook Boulevard). There are no existing structures or current agricultural activities on the site.

Lands to the north and east of the project site are located in the Westpark portion of the West Roseville Specific Plan (WRSP) area. Only the portion of the WRSP to the east of the project site has been developed. Land to the north, although approved for development, is currently undeveloped grassland with topography similar to the project site. Land to the west is located in the Regional University and Community Specific Plan area and the Curry Creek Community Plan area which is located in unincorporated Placer County. The land to the west is presently under rice production. Land to the south is located in the Sierra Vista Specific Plan (SVSP) area and consists of undeveloped dry pastureland with topography similar to the project site.

Public views of the project site are available from Market Street in the Westpark development which borders the site to the east. Views from this roadway consist primarily of grasslands.

Views from the Westbrook project site to the north consist of undeveloped grassland while views to the east consist of Market Street and residential uses associated with the Westpark development. On clear days, long distance views of the Sierra Foothills and the Sierra Mountain Range are also available to the east. Views to the west consist of ponds associated with rice production in the proposed Regional University and Community Specific Plan area and undeveloped dry pastureland. Views to the south consist of undeveloped dry pastureland located within the SVSP area.

The project site is undeveloped with no source of light and glare. Residences to the east within the Westpark development produce minimal light at night. Vehicles along Market Street produce some glare during the day. The greatest existing source of nighttime lighting in the project vicinity is the urban development within the City of Roseville.

3.1.2.3 Alternative Site – Existing Conditions

The alternative site is located approximately 3 miles northeast of the project site. The site has flat to rolling topography and land cover comprising of annual grassland. Views of the site are available from Sunset Boulevard and Foothills Boulevard which pass through the site. Views from these locations consist primarily of annual grassland. Sources of light and glare in the vicinity of the alternative site include industrial uses to the east and residences associated with the City of Roseville's North Industrial Plan area and North Roseville Specific Plan to the south. Sources of glare include vehicles using roadways near the site.

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

3.1.3.1 City of Roseville General Plan Community Design Goals and Policies

- Goal 1:** Achieve a consistent level of high quality aesthetic and functional design through the development of, and adherence to, superior design concepts and principles as defined in the Communitywide Design Guidelines.
- Goal 3:** Encourage the planning and building of a city which sensitively integrates open space and natural resources, and promotes compatibility within and between natural and the urban environment.
- Policy 1:** Through the design review process, apply design standards that promote the use of high quality building materials, architectural and site designs, landscaping signage, and amenities.
- Policy 2:** Continue to development and apply design standards that result in efficient site and building design standards that result in efficient site and building designs, pedestrian friendly projects that stimulate the use of alternative modes of transportation and the establishment of a functional relationship between adjacent developments.
- Policy 3:** Encourage designs that strike a balance between the incorporation of aesthetic and development requirements, and the economic considerations associated with development.
- Policy 4:** Promote flexibility in the design review process to achieve design objectives, and encourage projects with innovative, unique, and creative architectural style and design.
- Policy 5:** Encourage, promote, and support art in public spaces and programs to enhance the design of the City.
- Policy 6:** Through the design review process, encourage site and building designs that are in scale and compatible with adjacent development with respect to height, bulk, form, mass, and community character.
- Policy 7:** Encourage project designs that place a high priority and value on open space, and the preservation, enhancement and incorporation of natural resources and other features including consideration of topography, vegetation, wetlands, and water courses.
- Policy 8:** Encourage and promote the preservation of historic and/or unique culturally and architecturally significant buildings, features, and visual environments.
- Policy 9:** The location and preservation of native oak trees and oak woodlands shall be a primary factor in determining site design, building location, grading, construction, and landscaping and in establishing the character of projects through their use as a unifying element in both new and existing development.

3.1.3.2 City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines

The City's Community Design Guidelines, which specify site layout and design, architectural treatments, specific exterior materials, and lighting guidelines, ensure that design is taken into consideration at the time development is proposed.

Design Goals

- Foster project designs that create and enhance a sense of identity and place.
- To promote site designs that preserve, enhance, and incorporate the natural features of a site as an element within the overall design.
- Ensure project designs that are attractive and safe for customers, yield a variety of retail and business opportunities, and contribute to creating active gathering places for the community.
- Create projects of superior architectural and visual interest, while recognizing the need for balance between form, function, and economic limitations.
- Incorporate environmentally sustainable features into project design.
- Consider and respond to the relationship and context of adjacent projects.
- Natural topography should be integrated into site design to the extent feasible.

3.1.3.3 Sierra Vista Specific Plan Design Guidelines

The SVSP¹ contains design guidelines that supplement the City's Community Design Guidelines, and are intended to provide design guidance for the physical form and visual character of the Proposed Action. These guidelines address landscape architecture, entry features and signage, walls and fencing, street lighting, paseos, and special design consideration for the village node district, residential areas, commercial areas, parks, and fire stations.

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;
- create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; or

¹ The City has amended the Sierra Vista Specific Plan to include the Westbrook project. Therefore, the design guidelines contained in that specific plan are applicable to the Westbrook project.

- result in an unmitigated substantial cumulative impact to the visual character of the study area or an unmitigated substantial increase in light and glare.

3.1.4.2 Analysis Methodology

The USACE evaluated project conditions against the existing visual character of the project site and alternative 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. The methodological approach to evaluating cumulative visual impacts is outlined in **Section 3.0**.

3.1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact AES-1 Effect on Scenic Vistas

No Action Alt. Under the No Action Alternative, the project site would be altered from its current state and developed with a moderate scale, mixed use development. As a result, views of open rangeland would no longer be available from Market Street to the east of the project site. As these views may be considered valuable by some, this change in the human environment would be a **significant direct** effect of the No Action Alternative. There would be **no indirect** effects. No feasible mitigation is available to address the significant direct effect.

A scenic vista is generally defined as an expansive view of a highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. The only publicly accessible area in the project vicinity is Market Street, which is located nearly adjacent to the project site to the east. Other lands in the project vicinity are privately owned and not publicly accessible.

For viewers traveling northbound on Market Street, the views to the west are of vast, open rangeland. 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. The only exception would be a small amount of open space in the southeastern corner of the project site that would be visible from Market Street. However, views of this open space would be limited and no long-range views would be available. Therefore, scenic vistas would no longer be available.

As the project site is located within the City of Roseville, development under the No Action Alternative would be required to comply with the City's Design Guidelines and General Plan policies, all of which are intended to reduce aesthetic effects. However, views of open rangeland would no longer be available from Market Street, which would be a **significant direct** effect. No feasible mitigation is available to address this effect.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1 through 5 The Proposed Action and all of the on-site alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 5) would construct a moderate scale, mixed use development on the project site. The scenic vistas from Market Street would no longer be available because there would be practically continuous development adjacent to this roadway under the Proposed Action and on-site alternatives. The only exception would be a small amount of open space preserved in the southeastern corner of the project site that would be visible from Market Street under Alternative 4 (One Acre Fill Alternative) and Alternative 5 (Half Acre Fill Alternative). However, views of this open space would be limited and no long-range views would be available. Therefore, the effect on scenic vistas as viewed from Market Street would be substantially the same as described above for the No Action Alternative. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the effect on scenic vistas would be a **significant direct** effect of the Proposed Action and all of the on-site alternatives. No feasible mitigation is available to address this effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

Off-Site Alt. The Off-Site Alternative would construct a project broadly similar to the Proposed Action on the alternative site. Sunset and Foothills Boulevards are publicly accessible locations from where expansive views that include the alternative site are available. The Off-Site Alternative would affect views from Sunset and Foothills Boulevards by locating structures adjacent to the roadway and replacing open rangelands with urban development. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the effect on scenic vistas would be a **significant direct** effect of the Off-Site Alternative. No feasible mitigation is available to address this effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

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, the project site is not located within the view corridor of a scenic highway. The No Action Alternative would have **no direct** or **indirect** effects on scenic resources. No mitigation is required.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1 through 5 The Proposed Action and all of the on-site alternatives would also have **no direct** or **indirect** effects on scenic resources based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative. No mitigation is required.

Off-Site Alt. The alternative site does not contain any scenic natural resources such as rock outcroppings or distinctive trees, nor is the site within the view corridor of a scenic highway. The Off-Site Alternative would have **no direct** or **indirect** effects on scenic resources based on the significance criteria listed above. No mitigation is required.

Impact AES-3 Degradation of Visual Character of the Project Site

No Action Alt. The conversion of undeveloped rangeland to urban development under the No Action Alternative would represent a substantial degradation of the visual character of the project site. The effect would be **significant**. No feasible mitigation measures are available to fully address this **significant direct** effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

The project site is primarily undeveloped open rangeland. Development of the project site under the No Action Alternative would convert approximately 276 acres (112 hectares) of undeveloped land to urban uses and conserve about 122 acres (49 hectares) 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, and the areas to the north, south, and west are planned for development. Development of the No Action Alternative would extend the boundary of this urban area. Although the No Action Alternative would be visually compatible with existing development to the east and planned development to the north, south, and west, it would substantially and permanently degrade the existing visual character of the project site by introducing a roadway network, homes, offices, commercial, and other urban facilities into an undeveloped area. This represents a **significant direct** effect. The City of Roseville General Plan Policies for Community Design serve to promote the visual compatibility of developments through the application of community design standards. Specifically, Policy 6 requires site and building designs that are in scale and compatible with adjacent development. Implementation of the General Plan policies would help reduce the severity of effects associated with new development. However, the **direct** effect would still be **significant** and no feasible mitigation measures are available to fully address this effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1 through 5 The Proposed Action and all of the on-site alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 5) would substantially degrade the visual character of the site. The Proposed Action and on-site alternatives would construct a project broadly similar to the No Action Alternative, although in all cases the density of on-site development would be greater than it would be under the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action would set aside less open space acreage (36 acres [15 hectares]) than the No Action Alternative (122 acres [49 hectares]). As a result, the project site would be substantially built out and the Proposed Action would change the character of the site substantially. The on-site alternatives would preserve an equal amount or more acreage (ranging from 126 to 174 acres [51 to 70 hectares]) as open space than the No Action Alternative, and Alternative 3 (Central Preserve Alternative) would preserve a large swath of land in the central portion of the project site as open space. However, despite these differences, the on-site alternatives would still substantially build out the project site and degrade its character substantially, altering the site from undeveloped open rangeland to urban development. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the **direct** effect on visual character would be **significant** under the Proposed Action and all the on-site alternatives. No feasible mitigation measures are available to address this effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

Off-Site Alt. The Off-Site Alternative would construct a project broadly similar to the Proposed Action on the alternative site. The Off-Site Alternative would set aside less open space acreage (60 acres [24 hectares]) than the No Action Alternative (122 acres [49 hectares]). As a result, development of the alternative site would substantially alter the visual character of the site and its surroundings by facilitating the change of rural agricultural lands to urbanized development. The alternative site is bordered by development to the east and south. While the Off-Site Alternative would be visually compatible with surrounding development, it would substantially and permanently degrade the existing visual character of the alternative site. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the **direct** effect on visual character would be **significant** under the Off-Site Alternative. No feasible mitigation measures are available to address this effect. **No indirect** effects would occur.

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

No Action Alt. The No Action Alternative would result in **significant direct** effects from new sources of light and glare. Mitigation would partially mitigate these effects, but not to less than significant. A residual **significant** effect would remain after mitigation. **No indirect** effects would occur.

The project site is primarily undeveloped open rangeland. No source of light is currently present on the project site. The No Action Alternative would result in the development of

the project site with a wide variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, and business uses. Night lighting would be required in residential neighborhoods, schools, parks and recreational facilities, parking lots, and along streets for safety and recreational use. Therefore, development associated with the No Action Alternative would introduce a substantial amount of nightlight in the area. Additionally, daytime glare would result from light reflecting off pavement, vehicles, and buildings. The addition of this light and glare would alter the rural landscape and nighttime views of the project site and its vicinity, and possibly inhibit views of the nighttime sky. This is considered a **direct significant** effect.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a and **AES-4b** are proposed to address the effects related to light and glare. These measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1(a) and (b) in the Sierra Vista Specific Plan EIR. The USACE assumes that the City of Roseville would impose the same mitigation measures on the No Action Alternative to address this effect. However, because the project site, which currently lacks light and glare sources, would still be visibly changed in the context of nighttime lighting and daytime glare, these mitigation measures would not reduce the effect to less than significant. The USACE finds that a residual **direct significant** effect would remain after mitigation. **No indirect** effects would occur.

**Proposed
Action**

The Proposed Action would construct a larger project than the No Action Alternative. The effect related to light and glare would be similar and based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the **direct** effect would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a and **AES-4b** are proposed to address the effects related to light and glare. As noted above, these measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1(a) and 4.14-1(b) in the Sierra Vista Specific Plan EIR. These measures were adopted by the City of Roseville at the time of its approval of the Westbrook project and will be enforced by the City. However, for the same reasons presented above, the City determined that these mitigation measures would not reduce the effect to less than significant (City of Roseville 2010). The USACE agrees with the City's conclusion and finds that a residual **significant** effect would remain after mitigation. **No indirect** effects would occur.

**Alts. 1
through 5**

All of the on-site alternatives would construct a project broadly similar to the No Action Alternative. The effect related to light and glare would generally be similar to that described above for the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action and based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the **direct** effect would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a and **AES-4b** are proposed to address the effects related to light and glare. The USACE assumes that the City of Roseville would impose the same mitigation measures on the on-site alternatives to address this effect. As noted above, these measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1(a) and 4.14-1(b) in the Sierra Vista

Specific Plan EIR. For the same reasons presented above, these mitigation measures would not reduce the effect to less than significant. The USACE finds that a residual **significant** effect would remain after mitigation. **No indirect** effects would occur.

Off-Site Alt. The Off-Site Alternative would construct a project broadly similar to the Proposed Action on the alternative site. The effect related to light and glare would be similar to that of the No Action Alternative. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented above for the No Action Alternative, the **direct** effect would be **significant**.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a through **AES-4c** would address this effect. The USACE assumes that the City of Roseville would impose the same mitigation measures on the Off-Site Alternative to address this effect. As noted above, these measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1(a) and 4.14-1(b) in the Sierra Vista Specific Plan EIR. For the same reasons presented above, these mitigation measures would not reduce the effect to less than significant. The USACE finds that a residual **significant** effect would remain after mitigation. **No indirect** effects would occur.

Mitigation Measure AES-4a: **Site Lighting to Minimize Nuisance**
(Applicability – Proposed Action and All Alternatives)

Light-producing uses, such as ball fields, within the SVSP Area (i.e., Westbrook project) shall be located and oriented to minimize visual impacts on adjacent residential areas. Lighting shall be shielded and designed to distribute light in the most effective and efficient manner, using the minimum amount of light to achieve the necessary illumination for the use, as defined by suggested lighting standards for competitive play.

Mitigation Measure AES-4b: **Use of Low Glare Materials for New Development**
(Applicability – Proposed Action and All Alternatives)

In order to reduce the effects of daytime glare from development of commercial or office uses within the SVSP Area (i.e., Westbrook project), building developers should make use, when feasible, of low-glare materials.

3.1.6 RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The **direct** effects under **Impacts AES-1** and **AES-3** would remain **significant** under the Proposed Action and all alternatives as no feasible mitigation measures are available. A residual **significant** effect would remain under the Proposed Action and all alternatives for **Impact AES-4** after mitigation. All of the other effects would be **less than significant**.

3.1.7 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative Impact AES-1 Effect on Visual Resources

No Action Alt., Proposed Action, Alts. 1 through 5 All of the on-site alternatives, including the Proposed Action, would have a **significant** cumulative effect on scenic vistas and the visual character of the project vicinity by altering views of open rangeland, foothills, and Sierra Nevada, and by converting undeveloped rangeland to urban development as viewed from Market Street.

With the development of the Proposed Action or any of the alternatives and the development of the Sierra Vista Specific Plan area to the south, West Roseville Specific Plan to the north, and Placer Vineyards Specific Plan to the far south of the project site, the area would change from a primarily rural landscape to urban development, thereby permanently altering the visual character of the area, both under daytime conditions and at night. The on-site alternatives, including the proposed action Proposed and the nearby specific plan developments would also introduce new sources of light and glare. Although the on-site alternatives would be required to meet the City's Community-wide Design Guidelines, ensuring that proposed development would be visually compatible with surrounding development, it would, in conjunction with existing and other proposed projects, nonetheless permanently and substantially alter the visual environment. No feasible mitigation measures are available to fully address the effect. Therefore, the contribution of the No Action Alternative, Proposed Action, and Alternatives 1 through 5 to the cumulative effect would be **significant**.

Off-Site Alt. The Off-Site Alternative would construct a moderate scale community on the alternative site. Sunset and Foothills Boulevards are publicly accessible locations from where expansive views that include the alternative site are available. The Off-Site Alternative would affect views from Sunset and Foothills Boulevards by locating structures adjacent to the roadway and replacing open rangelands with urban development. The contribution of the Off-Site Alternative to cumulative effects on aesthetics would be similar to that of the No Action Alternative. Based on the significance criteria listed above and for the same reasons presented for the No Action Alternative, the contribution of the alternatives to the cumulative visual change in the area would be a **significant** effect. No feasible mitigation measures are available to fully address the effect.

3.1.8 REFERENCES

- California Department of Transportation. 2010. "California Scenic Highway Program."
http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm.
- City of Roseville. 2010. *Sierra Vista Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report*.