

3.1 AESTHETICS

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the visual character of the project site and views from surrounding public areas to the project site. For each alternative, it evaluates the change to visual resources in the area, including; change in visual character, view obstruction, and/or night lighting, and identifies its potential impacts on aesthetics. This section also evaluates the potential impacts on the visual character from the implementation of the Applicant's proposed compensatory wetlands mitigation plan that includes wetland restoration activities on three off-site mitigation properties.

Sources of information used in this analysis include:

- Amoruso Ranch Specific Plan (ARSP) EIR prepared by the City of Roseville (City of Roseville 2016a);
- City of Roseville General Plan 2035 (City of Roseville 2016b); and
- California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Program (CSHP 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. The northwest portion 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 site vicinity and is evident throughout western Placer County. In some areas of the region, the historically rural character associated with agricultural production and ranching, has been completely taken over by development. 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. The open rangeland is dominated by non-native grasslands and is dry for most of the year (from June to early spring), resulting in earth tone colors. In the spring, vernal pools appear throughout the landscape, bringing colorful flowers to the area for a few brief months (City of Roseville 2016a).

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 Toad Hill Ranches residential subdivision immediately to the north across Sunset Boulevard West, urban development in the West Roseville Specific Plan (WRSP) to the southeast, the Roseville Energy Park (REP) and Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant (PGWWTP) located to the south, and the Placer County Regional Landfill operation northeast (City of Roseville 2016a).

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

3.1.2.2 Project Site – Existing Conditions

The project site and surrounding area is characterized by gently rolling hills and large, open, annual grassland areas. The project site generally slopes from west and south. The northeast portion of the project site includes a small unoccupied ranch house, associated outbuildings, and previously irrigated cropland. Minor drainages flow in a radial pattern from a slight rise in the northeastern quadrant of the property. With little topographical variation, the site provides lengthy views in all directions (City of Roseville 2016a).

Views of the Project Site

The project site is visible from existing residential properties within the Toad Hill Ranches residential subdivision immediately to the north and from Sunset Boulevard West, a rural paved road that runs along the northern boundary of the project site. The project is also visible from portions of the WRSP area, approximately one mile to the southeast. The current views of the site mostly consist of undeveloped lands, although the ranch house located on the northeastern portion of the property is visible from Sunset Boulevard West.

Views from the Project Site

Views to north consist of the Toad Hill Ranches residential subdivision and agricultural land while views to the east consist of open area with gently rolling grassland. Views to the west are open and include flat grasslands and the Pleasant Grove Creek riparian corridor while views to the south and southeast include underdeveloped open space within the Creekview Specific Plan (CSP) area and developed land with the WRSP area.

Light and Glare

The project site is undeveloped with no source of light and glare. Sources of light and glare within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project include residences to the north within the Toad Hill Ranches residential subdivision, which produce some light at night and some glare during the day, and vehicles traveling along Sunset Boulevard West. However, the greatest existing source of nighttime lighting in the project vicinity is urban development within the City of Roseville to the south/southeast.

3.1.3 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

3.1.3.1 Significance Thresholds

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance requires an evaluation of a proposed action's effect on the human environment. The Corps has determined that Proposed Action, or an alternative, would result in a significant adverse effect, related to aesthetics, if it 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

3.1.3.2 Analysis Methodology

The Corps compared the conditions under each alternative against the existing visual character of the project site in the context of topography, vegetation, existing uses, and visual character and evaluated their 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. Furthermore, each alternative was evaluated for their potential to introduce substantial new lighting and/or create new sources of glare that could affect nearby existing uses. The methodology for evaluating cumulative visual impacts is outlined in **Section 4.0**.

3.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact AES-1 Effect on Scenic Vistas

No Action Alt. A scenic vista is generally defined as an expansive view of a highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. There are no designated scenic roads or vistas within or adjacent to the project site or the three mitigation sites, nor is the project site or the mitigation sites designated as a scenic area by the City of Roseville.

Under the No Action alternative, the project site would be altered from its current state and developed with a large-scale, mixed-use development. For viewers traveling on Sunset Boulevard West, the views to the south 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 between the project site's eastern boundary and the Westbrook Boulevard by placing buildings within the view corridor and scenic vistas would not be available. West of Westbrook Boulevard, there would not be any development on the project site near Sunset Boulevard West and views of open rangeland would still be available although urban development would be visible in the far distance from the roadway. 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, because views of open rangeland would no longer be available from portions of Sunset Boulevard West, the No Action alternative would result in a **significant indirect** effect to the scenic vista of the site. No feasible mitigation has been identified to address this effect; therefore, a **significant indirect** effect to the scenic vistas that includes the project site would occur as a result of implementing the No Action alternative. **No direct** effect was identified.

As no wetland mitigation would be necessary under the No Action alternative, there would be no temporary or permanent changes in scenic vistas that include the three wetland mitigation sites. **No direct** or **indirect** effects related to scenic vistas for wetlands or other waters of the United States were identified.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1, 2, 3 Compared to the No Action; the Proposed Action, as well as Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, would construct larger areas of development on the project site. With the implementation of any one of these alternatives; the scenic vistas from Sunset Boulevard West would be eliminated by continuous development adjacent to this roadway. Therefore, the effect on scenic vistas as viewed from Sunset Boulevard West would be substantially greater than described above for the No Action alternative. Based on the significance criteria listed above, implementation of the Proposed Action, or Alternatives 1, 2, or 3, would result in a **significant indirect** effect to the scenic vistas that include the project site. No feasible mitigation has been identified to address this effect; therefore, a **significant indirect** effect to scenic vistas would occur as a result of implementing the Proposed Action, or Alternatives 1, 2, or 3. **No direct** effect was identified.

The construction of seasonal wetlands and/or wildlife habitat within the mitigation sites may provide the public with a beneficial long-term visual effect, such that the constructed, enhanced, and/or restored habitat may display aesthetically and visually pleasing seasonal wetland flora and fauna at certain times of the year, and thereby have a beneficial effect on scenic vistas that include the mitigation sites. Although there could be some temporary, short-term visual effects as a result of grading activities associated with restoration activities, those would be limited in aerial extent and temporary. **No direct or indirect** effects related to scenic vistas were identified.

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. Therefore, **no direct or indirect** effects on scenic resources under the No Action alternative were identified.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1, 2, 3 Based on the significance criteria listed above, and for the same reasons presented under the No Action alternative, **no direct or indirect** effects on scenic resources under the Proposed Action, or Alternative 1, 2, or 3 were identified.

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

No Action Alt. The project site is primarily undeveloped open grassland. Development of the project site under the No Action alternative would convert approximately 283 acres of undeveloped land to urban uses and conserve about 305 acres as open space. The construction of housing, commercial buildings, and public infrastructure in an area that is presently undeveloped would change the existing visual character of the project site. Most of the area to the north of the site is developed with residential housing and the area to the southeast in the WRSP area is partially developed. In addition, the areas to the east and south are expected to be developed with similar mixed uses in the near future. Although

the No Action alternative would be visually compatible with the existing development to the north and southeast and future development to the east and south, 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 indirect** 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, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the effect to a negligible level. Thus, a **significant indirect** effect to the visual character of the site would occur under the No Action alternative. **No direct** effects to the visual character of the site were identified.

As no wetland mitigation would be necessary under the No Action alternative, there would be no temporary or permanent changes in the visual character of the three wetland mitigation sites. **No direct** or **indirect** effects related to the visual character of the mitigation sites were identified.

**Proposed
Action, Alts. 1,
2, 3**

The Proposed Action, as well as Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, would substantially degrade the visual character of the site by constructing large-scale, mixed-use master planned communities on the project site that would increase the amount of land developed on the project site by 57 to 72 percent, compared to the No Action alternative. These alternatives would set aside less open space acreage (92 to 142 acres) than the No Action alternative, resulting in a substantially greater build-out of the project site. Based on the significance criteria listed above, and for the same reasons discussed under the No Action alternative, the **indirect** effect on the visual character of the site would be **significant**. No feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the effect to a negligible level. Thus, a **significant indirect** effect to the visual character of the site would occur under the Proposed Action, or Alternative 1, 2, or 3. **No direct** effects to the visual character of the site were identified.

As noted above, the construction of seasonal wetlands and/or wildlife habitat within the mitigation sites may provide the public with a beneficial long-term effect on the visual character of the area, such that the constructed, enhanced, and/or restored habitat may display aesthetically and visually pleasing seasonal wetland flora and fauna at certain times of the year. Although there could be some short-term visual effects as a result of grading activities associated with mitigation construction, those would be limited in extent and temporary. **No direct** or **indirect** effects related to the visual character of the mitigation sites were identified.

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

No Action Alt. As construction would occur on the project site up to 7 PM on weekdays and up to 8 PM on weekends, it is possible that some nighttime construction requiring light would be required, and residences located in the Toad Hill Ranches residential subdivision adjacent to the north of the project site could be affected. However, this effect would be temporary and would cease upon completion of construction. In addition, construction lighting would be shielded and/or aimed so that no direct beam illumination would fall outside of the project site. For these reasons, **no direct** or **indirect** effects from new light sources during construction under the No Action alternative were identified.

The project site is currently undeveloped and includes no source of light, as the rural residence located in the northeastern corner of the site is unoccupied. The No Action alternative would result in the development of portions of the project site with a 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 new nightlight to the area. Additionally, new 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 **significant indirect** effect.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a, AES-4b, and AES-4c would address the effects related to light and glare. These measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1, 4.14-2, and 4.14-3 in the ARSP EIR and are highly likely to be imposed by the City of Roseville under the No Action alternative to address this effect. However, the project site would still be visibly changed in the context of nighttime lighting and daytime glare. **No indirect** effects on light and glare under the No Action alternative were identified.

As no wetland mitigation would be necessary under the No Action alternative, there would be no temporary or permanent impacts related to light and glare at the three wetland mitigation sites. **No direct** or **indirect** effects related to light and glare associated with wetland mitigation were identified.

Proposed Action, Alts. 1, 2, 3 Based on the significance criteria listed above, and for the same reasons presented under the No Action alternative, **no direct** or **indirect** effects from new light sources during construction under the Proposed Action, or Alternative 1, 2, or 3 were identified.

The Proposed Action, as well as Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, would construct larger projects than the No Action alternative; thus, their effects related to light and glare would be similar to or greater than the No Action alternative. Based on the significance criteria listed above, including the reasons discussed under the No Action alternative; the Proposed Action, as well as Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, would result in a **significant indirect**

effect related to light and glare.

Mitigation Measures AES-4a, AES-4b, and AES-4c would address the effects related to light and glare. As noted above, these measures are the same as Mitigation Measures 4.14-1, 4.14-2, and 4.14-3 in the ARSP EIR and have been imposed on the Proposed Action and are highly likely to be imposed on Alternatives 1 through 3 and enforced by the City of Roseville to reduce this effect. **No indirect** effects on light and glare were identified.

The construction of seasonal wetlands and/or wildlife habitat within the mitigation sites would not result in the addition of any permanent light and glare sources to the mitigation sites. **No direct** or **indirect** effects related to light and glare associated with wetland mitigation were identified.

Mitigation Measure AES-4a: Site Lighting to Minimize Nuisance
(Applicability – No Action, Proposed Action, and Alternatives 1, 2, and 3)

Light-producing uses, such as ball fields, within the ARSP Area (i.e., Amoruso Ranch 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. Light poles shall be designed using either 100 watt or LED light bulbs, and shall use the best technology that maximizes glare and spill reduction.

Mitigation Measure AES-4b: Use of Low Glare Materials for New Development
(Applicability – No Action, Proposed Action, and Alternatives 1, 2, and 3)

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

Mitigation Measure AES-4c: Avoid Light Spill Over into University Creek and Open Space Areas
(Applicability – No Action, Proposed Action, and Alternatives 1, 2, and 3)

Outdoor lighting shall be placed, designed, and directed so as to avoid light spillover into the habitat of University Creek, Open Space Preserve Areas, and the Al Johnson Wildlife Area. These parcels include those immediately adjacent to the open space and shown on the Land Use Map as parcels, AR-3, AR-4, AR-7, AR-8, AR-11, AR-20, AR-24, AR-37, AR-56, AR-57, AR-60, and AR-63.

3.1.5 REFERENCES

California Department of Transportation. 2010. "California Scenic Highway Program." Available online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/lap/livability/scenic-highways/>, accessed October 26, 2017.

City of Roseville. 2016a. *Amoruso Ranch Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report SCH No. 2013102057*. May.

City of Roseville. 2016b. City of Roseville General Plan 2035. Adopted June 15, 2016.