CHAPTER 8 VISUAL RESOURCES

8.0 VISUAL RESOURCES

8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section describes the existing visual resources in the study area.

8.1.1 Regional Landscape Setting

The proposed Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan area (also referred to as specific plan area or Plan Area) is located near the eastern edge of the Central, or Sacramento, Valley as it adjoins the Sierra Nevada foothills. The dominant landscape type in the region is Central Valley grassland and agriculture, typified by broad views of level to rolling, largely open terrain punctuated by corridors of tall valley oak and willow riparian forest. The Plan Area is located at the northwestern boundary between the broad urbanizing area of the Interstate 80 (I-80) corridor to the northeast of Sacramento and the rural, relatively undeveloped agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley that extend to the north and west, which characterize the southwestern portion of Placer County and adjoining Sutter and Yuba counties. Typical land uses in the rural portions of the viewshed include grazing, rice farming, and other agriculture. East of the Plan Area, a pocket of rural low-density agricultural and rural residential land use remains within the unincorporated Placer County that represents a remnant of earlier land uses and is surrounded to the north, east, and south by intensive suburban development of the I-80 corridor. Suburban residential development of Sacramento County is visible a short distance to the south of PFE Road.

8.1.2 Local Landscape Setting

The Plan Area is a relatively undeveloped area of open, gently rolling pasture and grassland, with vineyards and some remnant orchard. The site lies just north of the Sacramento County/Placer County line, which marks the limit of existing suburban residential development that is visible just south of PFE Road, the proposed project's southern boundary. The Plan Area's northern boundary is defined by Dry Creek, whose prominent riparian woodland is the vicinity's most outstanding scenic feature. Despite the site's proximity to the Sierra Nevada foothills, the high peaks of the Sierras are not visually evident from most of the site and its surrounding public roadways, due in part to intervening higher terrain in the eastern portion of the site.

Dry Creek represents the principal scenic feature of the area and is currently visible to motorists in the project vicinity from Watt Avenue, PFE Road, and Walerga Road. Views from PFE Road are seen at distances of roughly ½ mile. At this distance, the riparian canopy is scenic but visually less prominent and dominant than other features in the view and less dominant than at immediate foreground distances, such as seen from Walerga Road and Watt Avenue near where they cross Dry Creek.

In addition to Dry Creek, other visual features in and around the site include the following:

- Tall hedgerows of eucalyptus lining the entrance drive to the Riolo property off of PFE Road, which have recently experienced extensive fire damage;
- A large fencerow of 17 tall valley oaks east of the entrance road and south of PFE Road; tall valley oaks along Watt Avenue on the site's western boundary;
- Fencerows of walnut trees lining the north side of PFE Road east of the existing access drive to the Riolo residence, which have also experienced extensive recent fire damage;
- Walnut fencerows on the west side of Walerga Road along much of the site's eastern boundary;

- The Riolo vineyards, located northeast of the main Riolo residence but not highly evident from public roadways;
- Remnants of an abandoned almond orchard; and
- Various native and ornamental trees around farm structures east of the main residence.

In addition, a large area of recently planted native oak trees is located adjacent to Dry Creek in the northeastern portion of the site, on the Pulte property. Though small now, these will eventually mature into a substantial extension of the existing native riparian oak woodland. The Roseville Cemetery is located within the boundary of the specific plan area east of Watt Avenue and north of PFE Road. The cemetery is marked by large stands of old native oak trees, which create a vivid, scenic setting enhanced by views to the tall canopy of the Dry Creek riparian corridor roughly ½ mile to the north. Much of the existing PFE Road corridor is visually dominated by prominent, unsightly utility lines (Figure 8-1).

The visual quality of the Dry Creek riparian corridor and the Roseville Cemetery are high. The visual quality of the Riolo vineyard, orchard, and farmstead are moderately high. The visual quality of the remainder of the specific plan area, primarily open pastureland, is moderate, lacking in vividness or distinctiveness. Visual quality on the adjoining public roads varies from moderate in general, to moderately high in portions dominated by large native oaks.

8.1.3 Sensitive Receptors: Key Viewsheds

A characteristic feature of the proposed project landscape setting is that visual exposure tends to be limited (because of its rolling topography): long views of large areas of land are few and easily obstructed by foreground trees, structures, or terrain. The viewshed or area of potential visibility of the site is thus essentially limited to the site itself and its surrounding roadways. Beyond this area, sensitivity or awareness of visual changes to the site is necessarily limited due to lack of visual exposure.

Potential receptors to the project include motorists on the adjacent major roadways, PFE Road (Key Viewshed 1), Walerga Road (Key Viewshed 2), and Watt Avenue (Key Viewshed 3); future viewers within the Plan Area; and visitors to the Roseville Cemetery (Key Viewshed 4). Of these, visitors to Roseville Cemetery would be expected to have moderately high levels of visual expectation and sensitivity due both to high existing visual quality and the scenically sensitive nature of their activities. The visual sensitivity of motorists on surrounding roadways would be moderate. The vicinity is not a scenic or recreational destination and the activities of most motorists would be related to day-to-day activities such as commuting, work, or shopping.

Viewers on adjacent properties north of Dry Creek would be unable to see the proposed project, which would be completely screened by the very dense and continuous riparian canopy of Dry Creek. Viewers within the Plan Area, as its beneficiaries, are not typically considered as part of the CEQA analysis of potential impacts but would be affected by the quality of the proposed project design and its consistency with applicable Placer County Design Guidelines. These concerns would be addressed under the County design review process and are also discussed in relation to project consistency with applicable, design-related plans and policies, below.

Views from Key Viewsheds are shown in Figure 8-2.



Plan Area from PFE Road



View of eucalyptus at site entrance on PFE Road



View of Dry Creek from PFE Road



Row of mature oaks south of PFE Road, east of site entrance

SITE SETTING PHOTOS

January 2008 28066896





Vineyards from within site.
Vineyards are not prominently visible from offsite viewpoints.



Roseville Cemetery



Existing farmstead from PFE Road



Young oaks on Pulte property near Dry Creek

SITE SETTING PHOTOS

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View toward site from PFE Road, looking north



View into site from PFE Road and Watt Avenue, looking northeast



Burned fencerow of walnut, south side of site from PFE Road, looking northeast



Fencerow of large oaks, south side of PFE Road



Burned eucalyptus, utility poles at site entrance, from PFE Road looking northeast



Existing residential development, from PFE Road, looking south

KEY PROJECT VIEWSHEDS – PFE ROAD

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View into site from Walerga Road, looking northwest



Walnut hedgerow on eastern site boundary, Walerga Road looking northwest



View toward site from Watt Avenue, looking northeast toward Dry Creek



Oaks north of existing cemetery, at proposed Watt Avenue entrance



View toward site, proposed expansion area, from Roseville Cemetery looking east



View toward creek, proposed entry drive off of Watt Avenue, from Roseville Cemetery, looking north

KEY PROJECT VIEWSHEDS – WALERGA ROAD, WATT AVENUE, AND ROSEVILLE CEMETERY

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8.2 REGULATORY SETTING

8.2.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations applicable to visual resources in the study area.

8.2.2 State

State Scenic Highway Program

The California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) identifies a state system of eligible and designated scenic highways that, if designated, are subject to various controls intended to preserve their scenic quality. There are no state-eligible or designated scenic highways within the viewshed of the proposed project.

8.2.3 Local

Placer County General Plan

The proposed project's consistency with applicable *Placer County General Plan* policies is evaluated in Appendix D. General Plan policies and goals applicable to the proposed project include the following:

Land Use

- 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.5 Requires roads, parking and utilities to minimize visual impacts through utility undergrounding and grading to fit the natural terrain.
- Policy 1.L.4 Requires the County to provide for landscaping and/or landscaped mounding along designated scenic corridors where desirable to maintain and improve scenic qualities and screen unsightly views.

Development Form and Design

- Goal 1.O To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer County.
- Policy 1.O.1 Requires new development to conform with the Placer County Design Guidelines.
- Policy 1.O.3 Requires 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. Roof lines 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).

(Items a and b do not apply to this project, which is located on level terrain. Item c applies primarily to hillside development.)

- 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.5 The County shall require that new development at entrances to rural communities be designed to include elements such as signage, landscaping, and appropriate architectural detailing to help establish distinct identities for such communities.
- 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.

Natural Resources

Because riparian woodland of Dry Creek and other existing trees represent the principal visual resource of the project area, several County policies on vegetation are relevant to the conservation and mitigation of impacts to visual resources.

Vegetation

- Goal 6.D To preserve and protect the valuable vegetation resources of Placer County.
- Policy 6.D.1 The County shall encourage landowners and developers to preserve the integrity of existing terrain and natural vegetation in visually-sensitive areas such as hillsides, ridges, and along important transportation corridors.

- Policy 6.D.2 The County shall require developers to use native and compatible nonnative species, especially drought-resistant species, to the extent possible in fulfilling landscaping requirements imposed as conditions of discretionary permits or for project mitigation.
- Policy 6.D.10 The County shall encourage the planting of native trees, shrubs, and grasslands in order to preserve the visual integrity of the landscape, provide habitat conditions suitable for native wildlife, and ensure that a maximum number and variety of well-adapted plants are maintained.
- Policy 6.D.12 The County shall support the retention of heavily vegetated corridors along circulation corridors to preserve their rural character.

Placer County Design and Landscape Design Guidelines

The Placer County Design Guidelines and Landscape Design Guidelines are not directly applicable to the CEQA evaluation of significant environmental impacts. The County Design Review Committee's (DRC) interpretation of these guidelines during design review will be considered the ultimate determination of policy conformance in these areas. The DRC's application of these rules is discretionary, and the DRC has the authority to impose more stringent controls than explicitly outlined in the guidelines, as necessary to ensure conformance with the County's overall intent and policy for this site. In general, the project would appear to conform to applicable guidelines, including those regarding selection of plant material, and landscaping along site perimeters.

Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan

The Plan Area is within the *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Area*, which was adopted in 1990. The proposed project's consistency with applicable Community Plan policies is evaluated in Appendix D. Community Plan policies and goals applicable to the proposed project include the following:

Community Design

Goal	This plan strives to preserve the natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural
	resources of the area as much as possible, while also recognizing the deleterious effects
	of intense development in the surrounding areas.

Goal It is a goal of the plan to encourage and support projects which exemplify good design characteristics when judged against the goals and policies of this plan as well as other applicable design and landscape guidelines.

Goal The plan encourages the development of commercial project designs that contain elements which complement the more rural character of the area, i.e., low building silhouette, large setbacks, extensive landscaping and a pedestrian orientation.

Goal It is a goal to maintain the heavily vegetated corridors that exist along circulation routes to preserve their rural nature and their value as natural noise buffers.

Goal It is a goal to create residential development, which allows the following elements: Human interaction, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and appropriate relationship to existing development in the area, and the creation of a neighborhood identity and/or focus (i.e., parks, schools, natural open space areas, creek sites of historical or archaeological significance, etc.).

- Goal A major goal of the plan is to utilize and improve the Dry Creek environs as a focal point of existing and new neighborhoods to be created in the area through the placement of park facilities, roadways, trails, interpretive areas, visibility, etc.
- Policy 1 Wherever possible, natural features should be retained as buffers between different, potentially incompatible uses. Where natural features are not available, landscaped buffer yards shall be provided to minimize the adverse effects of higher intensity uses upon lower intensity uses.
- Policy 3 Preservation of natural features, noise exposure, road access, and relationship to the surrounding properties shall be considered in preparing subdivision designs. Subdivision density, or total number of lots, will ultimately be determined by these factors. The development of the maximum number of lots permitted by the zoning will not be possible in most cases due to these and other design considerations required by this Plan.
- Policy 4 Lots in subdivisions shall be of adequate size and appropriate shape for the range of primary and accessory uses which are designated for the area without:
 - a) creating a feeling of overcrowding;
 - b) creating measurable negative environmental impacts;
 - c) creating the need for variances to ordinance requirements such as setbacks, lot size, height, length-to-width ratios, etc.;
 - d) violating the goals and policies of this Plan;
 - e) violating the intent of the Plan to create a type of living environment different from that found in the surrounding Antelope and Roseville areas.
- Policy 6 Commercial and residential structures should be designed with the intent to encourage human interaction, and to be compatible with the surrounding environment, versus designs which solely accommodate automobile usage.
- Policy 9 Night lighting, visible from the exterior of buildings shall be limited to that necessary for security, safety, and identification.
- Policy 10 Projects within the Plan area will comply with: the Placer County Landscape Guidelines, the Placer County Design Guidelines, and the specific design guidelines contained in the Plan.
- Policy 11 Landscaping shall be used to reduce the visual impact of all structures, including solid fences. Natural vegetation should dominate where possible. Where existing vegetation is inadequate the use of native plant materials is encouraged. Landscaping materials provide an informal character and smooth transition between buildings, parking lots, adjoining roadways and open areas.
- Policy 12 Large, bulky and unscreened structures shall be discouraged, particularly if they are visible from the road.
- Policy 13 The use of natural materials (i.e., wood siding, brick, block, and field stone) is required. Primary exterior colors shall blend with the surrounding natural landscape. The use of "earthtones" or natural finishes which blend with the natural background is encouraged.
- Policy 14 Where possible preserve native trees and support the use of native drought tolerant plant materials in all re-vegetation/landscaping projects.

The *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan* Community Design Element contains illustrative figures of "entries and streetscapes that should be incorporated into project design within the Plan area." These include typical residential project entry configurations, and typical residential street cross-sections.

Goal To conserve the visual resources of the community, including the important vistas and wooded areas, and in particular, the riparian habitat of Dry Creek and its intermittent streams and natural drainage channels which are important in providing low cost natural flood control.

Policy 14 The scale of building, the siting of structures, and the design and materials of construction shall be harmonious with the natural setting so that the visual quality of open spaces will not be unreasonably impaired.

Policy 20 A variety of vistas shall be provided and preserved, ranging from the small enclosed private views to the more distant views shared by many people.

Policy 42 Require residential developers to provide frontage trees, on a per lot basis, with the goal of providing canopy coverage of a neighborhood's roads.

8.3 IMPACTS

This section identifies and discusses the environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project, and suggests mitigation measures to reduce the levels of impact. A detailed discussion of mitigation measures is included in Section 8.4.

8.3.1 Significance Criteria

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the environment to mean a "substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including . . . objects of historic or aesthetic significance" (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, § 15382).

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, under Aesthetics, lists the following four questions to be addressed regarding whether the potential impacts of a project are significant.

- 1. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- 2. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- 3. Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- 4. Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

The determination of which changes cross a threshold of "substantial adverse effect" or degradation is based on the criteria described in the following methodology summary and in Table 8-1. Following professionally accepted practice in visual analysis, visual impacts are defined as a consequence of three primary factors: (a) the existing scenic quality of an area; (b) the level of viewer exposure and concern with visual change; and (c) the level of actual visual change caused by the project as seen by a given viewer

group. The overall *visual sensitivity* of each location is first established, as described in Section 8.1, Environmental Setting, based on existing visual quality, viewer exposure, and viewer concern. This rating is then considered together with the level of expected visual change or contrast, and scenic view obstruction caused by the proposed project to arrive at an assessment of potential impacts and their significance. Visual change is an overall measure of contrast in basic visual attributes such as form, line, color, and texture as a result of the project. Scenic view obstruction refers to the degree to which the proposed project would block or intrude upon scenic view corridors, especially those recognized in public policies. Thus, a substantial adverse effect can occur when viewers with high levels of overall *visual sensitivity* (i.e., high viewer concern and visual exposure, in settings of high existing visual quality) encounter high levels of *visual change* (contrast) or scenic *view obstruction* as a result of the project.

Table 8-1
Visual Impact Significance Criteria

Overall Visual Change	Overall Visual Sensitivity					
	High	Moderate to High	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	
Very Strong	Significant (Class I or II)	Significant, May Be Mitigable (Class I or II)	Potentially Significant, Mitigable (Class II)	Less than Significant (Class III)	Less than Significant (Class III)	
Strong	Significant, May Be Mitigable (Class I or II)	Potentially Significant, Mitigable (Class II)	Potentially Significant, Mitigable (Class II)	Less than Significant (Class III)	Insignificant (Class III)	
Moderate	Potentially Significant, Mitigable (Class II)	Potentially Significant, Mitigable (Class II)	Less than Significant (Class III)	Insignificant (Class III)	Insignificant (Class III)	

8.3.2 Project-Level Impacts

IMPACT 8-1: Temporary and long-term visual impacts due to construction

SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially Significant

MITIGATION: Mitigation Measures 8-1a through 8-1c **Proposed:** Mitigation Measures 8-1a, 8-1b, and 8-1c

Significance After

Proposed Mitigation: Potentially Significant

Recommended: None

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially Significant

Various temporary visual impacts could occur as a result of construction activities, such as grading, equipment and material storage, and staging. Though temporary, some of these impacts could last for several months during any single construction phase, and could occur multiple times as phases are built out. Because impacts would be temporary and viewer sensitivity in the majority of cases would be moderate, significant impacts are not anticipated in general. However, because viewers at the Roseville Cemetery could have high sensitivity, even relatively short-term construction impacts could potentially be significant. Mitigation Measure 8-1a requires that all construction activities in the vicinity of the

cemetery shall be restricted to the shortest feasible period of time, and that equipment and material storage and staging shall take place outside of the visual foreground of the cemetery (greater than ¼ mile distance). If construction staging is unavoidable in the vicinity of the cemetery, temporary visual screening shall be installed. With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to viewers at the Roseville Cemetery would remain potentially significant.

In addition, secondary impacts could occur as a result of project roadway construction-related grubbing and grading activity. One or more of the potentially affected residences could be relocated as a result of County widening projects. However, at residences south of PFE Road and west of Watt Avenue that are not relocated, secondary visual and glare impacts could occur due to removal of existing landscape screening along the roadway as a result of project-related roadway construction. Existing landscape screening could require removal, thus exposing homes to new views of an expanded roadway, and to increased glare from automobile headlights. Because residents are typically considered to have high sensitivity to visual impacts, this potentially strong impact could be significant. Mitigation Measure 8-1b requires that screening removed due to construction activities be replaced in kind with replacement shrub and tree planting and other screening measures, sufficient to provide screening of headlight glare and increased visual exposure in the shortest feasible time.

Similarly, a fencerow of 17 mature valley oaks to the south of PFE Road could be removed due to project roadway-related construction activities. This would represent a strong adverse change to landscape character on PFE Road, particularly in combination with other project-related changes in this viewshed as described under Impact 8-2 below. Mitigation Measure 8-2c requires that tree planting within the roadway corridors adjoining the Plan Area consist of a combination of fast-growing ornamental 'orchard' species (flowering fruit trees) to provide short-term mitigation, and native oaks to provide long-term restoration of community character. Native oaks would be preserved wherever feasible. Where preservation is not feasible, they would be replaced within the roadway right-of-way, subject to fair share reimbursement related to the overall widening of these roadways. This measure would address overall project impacts to community character due to loss of oak trees and enable compliance with policies of the Natural Resource Element of the County General Plan, and of the Community Design Element of the *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan*, as described above in Section 8.2.3.

With recommended Mitigation Measures 8-1a, 8-1b, and 8-1c, both temporary short-term and secondary long-term construction would remain potentially significant.

Key Viewsheds 1, 2 and 3: Adjacent Roadways

IMPACT 8-2: View obstruction and change to landscape character for motorists on

adjacent roadways

SIGNIFICANCE: Significant

MITIGATION: Mitigation Measures 8-2a through 8-2c Proposed: Mitigation Measures 8-2a, 8-2b, and 8-2c

Significance After

Proposed Mitigation: Short Term: Less than Significant

Long Term: Beneficial

Recommended: None

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Short Term: Less than Significant

Long Term: Beneficial

Key Viewshed 1: PFE Road

The existing landscape character as seen from PFE Road would be altered by obstruction of existing views of the Dry Creek riparian canopy; extensive tree removal at the roadside and on the site; and by the transformation of views of the site from grassland, vineyards, and orchard to a residential community. While PFE Road and its views of the creek are not a designated scenic view corridor, these views are an important local resource, and this change would represent a strong change to the existing landscape character and a decline in visual quality.

View Obstruction. Existing views of Dry Creek from PFE Road would be largely blocked by the proposed project development. Although it is the principal scenic resource of the vicinity, at these distances (a little over ½ mile) the riparian canopy would be visible but visually co-dominant with other features in the view, that is, less prominent and less a focus of viewers' attention than in other, near-foreground views (e.g., as seen from Walerga Road and Watt Avenue).

Tree Removal. Removal of trees within the site would alter the character of views from PFE Road in the short term. Trees to be removed would include the eucalyptus hedgerows at the existing farmstead entry road, trees around the existing barn and farm buildings west of the Riolo residence, and trees of the existing abandoned almond orchard.

Secondary Impacts of Roadside Tree Removal Due to Road Widening. Secondary impacts from removal of trees along adjoining public roads would be caused by the proposed public road widening in accordance with Placer County's long-term plans for roadways surrounding the Plan Area. These impacts could include both project-related construction impacts, as described previously under Impact 8-1, and cumulative impacts due to planned future County roadway improvements. On PFE Road, these could include the removal of walnut fencerows on the north side of PFE Road and a fencerow of 17 mature valley oaks to the south of PFE Road.

Change of Visual Character Due to Construction of Residences. In the long run, the proposed residential community when fully built out would strongly alter the existing rural character to one of a suburban residential community.

Key Viewshed 2: Walerga Road

In the southern ¼ mile portion of the Walerga Road frontage, the limited existing creek views would be obstructed by commercial and residential development of the proposed project. However, these existing views are few and limited due to the existing dense walnut fencerows that screen much of the site's eastern boundary. Potential view obstruction impacts in this viewshed would thus minor. These roadside walnut fencerows and a small number of oak trees in the vicinity of Dry Creek would be removed to accommodate proposed future road widening by the County, but would not be affected by interim project-related roadway improvements. Thus, the proposed project residential development would alter the existing rural character established by the walnut fencerow to a moderate degree in the short term because it would remain largely screened by the existing walnut hedgerow. In the long term, the cumulative impact of removing the tree screening by future County road construction would result in a strong change in landscape character, from the more rural image of the tree hedgerow to one of a suburban residential community in the southern ¼-mile portion of the Walerga Road frontage north of PFE Road.

Key Viewshed 3: Watt Avenue

From Watt Avenue, views of the Plan Area would be altered by high-density residential housing at the intersection of PFE Road, and by the removal of a number of large oak trees immediately north of the

Roseville Cemetery to accommodate a new entry road. Portions of homes east of the cemetery expansion area could be visible from Watt Avenue but would remain highly filtered and visually very subordinate to the dense cemetery oak groves in the foreground, as well as to future landscape planting in the cemetery expansion area. These latter changes would have a minor effect on views from the Watt Avenue frontage. In addition, a small number of native oak trees on both sides of Watt Avenue could be removed as a secondary impact of proposed road widening.

Overall Impacts on Adjacent Roadways (Key Viewsheds 1, 2, and 3)

Overall, the combination of these visual effects of the proposed project to motorists on the three adjoining roadways would represent a strong change to the existing landscape character and a potential decline in visual quality.

Viewer sensitivity of motorists on PFE and Walerga Roads are considered to be moderate: activities of the majority of viewers on PFE Road are not primarily recreational or scenery-oriented, but likely to be part of day-to-day activities including commuting and work. Nevertheless, the strong change in visual character as experienced by viewers of moderate sensitivity is considered to be potentially significant.

The *Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan* contains various proposed mitigation measures to address adverse visual impacts of the proposed project. Under the proposed project, 123.9 acres of the site would be preserved as open space. The project frontage bordering PFE Road from the new entrance to roughly ½ mile to the west, including the area now occupied by the entry road and hedgerows, would be left as open space. A 35-foot (Watt Avenue) to 50-foot (PFE Road and Walerga Road) setback landscaped corridor would line adjoining public roadways on those frontages where new residential development is proposed On PFE and Walerga Roads, this setback corridor would include landscaped berms and visual screening walls. Roadside trees in the public roadways would be replaced under the Specific Plan, restoring an important scenic element over the long term.

In the long term, landscaping in the landscaped setback areas along PFE Road would restore a moderately high degree of visual quality, providing screening of the new development and introducing tree canopies at the roadside. With the inclusion of native oaks in these plantings as recommended in Mitigation Measure 8-2c, a strong element of the local landscape character could be restored and, in the long term, enhanced. However, these effects would take a considerable period (up to 20 years) to have full effect.

The proposed entrances off of adjoining roadways would consist of landscaped gateways and incorporate various design features to reflect a vineyard theme. These would represent distinctive visual elements in the new streetscape. The landscaped areas of these entrances would represent a partial replacement of the existing trees lost to road widening and project construction, and a partial long-term restoration of visual quality lost to project tree removal.

The Applicant-proposed landscape and design measures would have substantial mitigating effects on visual impacts resulting from tree loss in the long term as the tree plantings mature. These and other proposed design measures would substantially mitigate many of the adverse effects of change in visual character and quality due to home and roadway construction. In addition, the proposed east-west collector road that would bisect the Plan Area connecting Watt Avenue and Walerga Road would be bounded to the north by open space, largely open agricultural parcels, and proposed park sites. This would provide publicly accessible roadside views to the Dry Creek corridor that would, in effect, replace the views lost on PFE Road with nearer and less obstructed views.

The Applicant has proposed construction of a 10,908-foot-long Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail (Dry Creek Trail) along the south side of the Dry Creek corridor within open space areas of the Plan Area. This

would consist of a 12-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian trail, a 4-foot-wide equestrian trail separated from the bicycle/pedestrian trail by a 10-foot-wide minimum buffer, and a 2-foot-wide bench strip on each side, all within a 30-foot-wide trail easement. Because there are currently no developed trail facilities to provide access to the Dry Creek corridor, these new views of open space within the Plan Area would represent a beneficial impact and provide access to the creek corridor for the first time. Views from the new trail would include views of new homes at distances of roughly 800 to 1,200 feet. These homes would be buffered by tree plantings along the boundary of the open space area facing the creek, thereby reducing their visual prominence to trail users in the long term, as well as the open space buffer of vineyards between the two uses, which would provide a pleasing visual foreground of rural character.

Construction of bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails along the length of Dry Creek within the Plan Area would substantially offset the adverse effects of view obstruction from PFE Road by providing new, superior public visual access to the creek corridor. With these measures, view obstruction impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Although impacts would largely be reduced to less-than-significant levels with these mitigation measures, replacement planting with native tree species within roadway rights-of-way and at gateway features, as described in recommended Mitigation Measure 8-2c, is also recommended to comply with policies of the Natural Resources Element of the General Plan, and of the Community Design Element of the Community Plan. Landscaping on the proposed project boundaries with nonnative species alone could compensate for project-caused loss of vegetation in general, but would result in a change of character from the strong community visual image of existing native oaks. In order to provide both short-term mitigation for tree loss and long-term restoration of the existing native-oak image, landscaping in the landscape corridors along the site boundaries and at gateways would consist of a combination of fast-growing ornamental orchard species (flowering fruit trees) to provide short-term mitigation, and native oaks to provide long-term restoration of community character. Native oaks would be preserved wherever feasible. Where preservation is not feasible, they would be replaced within the roadway right-of-way.

With Applicant-proposed mitigation measures, impacts to views from adjacent roads would be reduced to less-than-significant levels in the long term. With Mitigation Measure 8-2c, consistency with policies of the General Plan and Community Plan emphasizing native vegetation would be encouraged, and long-term effects of the proposed project on the community landscape could ultimately be beneficial.

Key Viewshed 4: Roseville Cemetery

IMPACT 8-3: Visual intrusion and adverse change in visual character due to new

residences in views from Roseville Cemetery

SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially Significant
MITIGATION: Mitigation Measure 8-3a
Proposed: Mitigation Measure 8-3a

Significance After

Proposed Mitigation: Short Term: Less than Significant

Long Term: Beneficial

Recommended: None

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Short Term: Less than Significant

Long Term: Beneficial

The proposed project would create adjacencies between the existing Roseville Cemetery and new residences. The latter would include single-family housing east of the proposed expansion area and high-density housing south of the existing cemetery, under both the proposed project and program-level medium-density residential development on the Frisvold property. The proposed Specific Plan would also add approximately 2.8 acres of expansion area to the east of the existing cemetery. In addition, a landscape corridor would be maintained north of the cemetery to serve as a visual buffer to the proposed eastern entry road off of Watt Avenue. While this would create a buffer between the two uses to the east in the short term, visually dominant views of nearby homes would remain to both the east and south of the cemetery without sufficient additional visual screening by large trees and other vegetation. Viewers at the cemetery are assumed to have high sensitivity to visual changes. These moderately strong visual changes would thus be potentially significant.

An additional visual buffer is recommended at the eastern edge of the proposed cemetery expansion area and along the southern boundary of the existing cemetery. Under this measure, oak trees and other large-scale vegetation compatible with the existing cemetery landscape would be required in sufficient quantity to completely screen views of residences from the cemetery in the long term. In order to provide adequate mitigation in the short term, large-scale, fast-growing shrubs would also be planted in the buffer area to provide screening within a short period of time; this buffer would then be enhanced over the long term with the maturation of oaks and other trees. Alternative visual buffer designs would be considered as part of the design review process for individual projects. Any alternative would need to achieve the above objectives, which include completely screening views of surrounding residences, and compatibility with the existing cemetery landscape. An alternative design may include a masonry wall with landscaping to soften the effect of the wall.

With implementation of this mitigation, impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level in the short term and would be beneficial in the long term.

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Night Light and Glare

IMPACT 8-4: Increase in night light and glare

SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially Significant

MITIGATION: Mitigation Measures 8-4a and 8-4b
Proposed: Mitigation Measures 8-4a and 8-4b

Significance After

Proposed Mitigation: Less than Significant

Recommended: None

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Less than Significant

New night lighting introduced by the proposed project could have site-specific glare impacts due to offsite light trespass and could contribute incrementally to community-wide nighttime light pollution due to ambient light and upwardly-directed light. Project-related light trespass impacts could be potentially significant if unmitigated. Cumulative light-pollution impacts are discussed under Cumulative Impacts in Chapter 16 of this Draft EIR.

The proposed *Riolo Vineyard Specific Plan* includes various lighting guidelines to mitigate potential light and glare impacts. These measures are broad, however, and could potentially allow significant impacts to occur in some instances without further specification.

With implementation of all mitigation measures, project light and glare impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Electrical Substation

IMPACT 8-5: Visual intrusion due to the project's proposed electrical substation

SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially Significant

MITIGATION: Mitigation Measures 8-5a through 8-5c **Proposed:** Mitigation Measures 8-5a, 8-5b, and 8-5c

Significance After

Proposed Mitigation: Less than Significant

Recommended: None

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Less than Significant

An electrical substation would be located on 0.5 acre in the eastern portion of the site, just north of the designated commercial area. It would be surrounded by residential units on the west and north and a landscaped corridor and Walerga Road. A community wall is proposed on the south and east sides of this lot. The Specific Plan's Design Guidelines (September 2006) proposes the split-face style of wall along the Plan Area and residential neighborhoods' perimeters. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is recommended that SMUD consider this style of fencing on the north and west sides of the substation parcel to shield the substation from public view, when the agency seeks environmental clearance for its substation. Additionally, to minimize adverse impacts of the proposed substation to viewers on Walerga Road and from adjacent residences, landscaped buffer areas shall be established between the substation parcel, the roadway, and adjacent residences. With implementation of these mitigation measures, this impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

8.3.3 Program-Level Impacts

Applicants for program-level parcels would need to undergo the County's Subsequent Conformity Review Process to ensure that their development proposals conform to the Riolo Vineyard Specific Plan, CEQA regulations, and program-level mitigation measures identified in this Draft EIR. Upon conclusion of the Subsequent Conformity Review Process, the County will determine whether the proposed development entitlement is consistent with the Specific Plan, whether additional environmental review is required, and if so, the scope of such additional review.

Program-Level Impacts from Construction Activities

Various temporary visual impacts could occur as a result of construction activities when the Elliott, Lund, and Frisvold parcels develop, including grading, equipment and material storage, and staging. Though temporary, some of these impacts could last for several months during any single construction phase. Because impacts would be temporary and viewer sensitivity in the majority of cases would be moderate, significant impacts are not anticipated in general. However, viewers at the Roseville Cemetery could have high sensitivity and even relatively short-term construction impacts could potentially be significant. Impacts to views from Roseville Cemetery (Key Viewpoint 4) caused by development of program-level parcels would be similar to those discussed in Impact 8-1 above. Mitigation Measure 8-1a would address both project- and program-level impacts; it requires that all construction activities in the vicinity of the cemetery be restricted to the shortest feasible period of time. With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to viewers at the Roseville Cemetery would remain potentially significant.

Program-Level Impacts to Adjacent Roadways (Key Viewsheds 1, 2, and 3) Due to View Obstruction and Change to Landscape Character

Impacts related to view obstruction and change to landscape character for motorists on adjacent roadways resulting from development of program level parcels are addressed in Impact 8-2 above. Mitigation would be similar, and no additional mitigation is proposed or recommended.

Program-Level Impacts to Roseville Cemetery

Proposed program-level development on the Frisvold parcel would create adjacencies between the existing Roseville Cemetery and new medium-density residential development. Impacts to views from Roseville Cemetery (Key Viewpoint 4) from development of program-level parcels are discussed in Impact 8-3 above. Mitigation Measure 8-3a addresses both project- and program-level impacts, and no additional mitigation is proposed or recommended.

Program-Level Night Light and Glare Impacts

Impacts related to an increase in night lighting and glare from development of program-level parcels are addressed in Impact 8-4 above. Mitigation would be similar, and no additional mitigation is proposed or recommended

8.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

This section discusses mitigation measures that will be implemented to reduce project-related impacts to visual resources. Mitigation measures are separately identified as those "Proposed" by the Applicant and those "Recommended" by County staff.

Mitigation Measure 8-1a: Limit construction activities in the vicinity of the Roseville Cemetery (Proposed)

In order to minimize potential visual quality construction impacts to the Roseville Cemetery, construction activities in the vicinity of the cemetery shall be restricted to the shortest feasible period of time. If staging in vicinity of the cemetery is unavoidable, temporary visual screening will be installed between the cemetery and staging area.

Mitigation Measure 8-1b: Replace visual and glare screening of adjacent residences affected by project road-related construction (Proposed)

To mitigate the loss of existing screening from road-related construction on adjacent residences, such screening shall be replaced in kind with replacement shrub and tree planting and other screening measures sufficient to provide screening of headlight glare and increased visual exposure in the shortest feasible time (no more than 3 to 5 years).

Mitigation Measure 8-1c: Replace/plant native oaks within roadway rights-of-way and at gateway features (Proposed)

Replacement planting with nonnative tree species would compensate for project-related loss of vegetation in general, but would result in a change of character from the strong community visual image of existing native oaks. In order to provide both short-term mitigation for tree loss and long-term restoration of the existing native-oak image, landscaping in the landscape corridors along the site boundaries and at gateways/ entrances shall consist of a combination of fast-growing ornamental orchard species (flowering

fruit trees) to provide short-term mitigation and native oaks to provide long-term restoration of community character. Native oaks shall be preserved wherever feasible.

Mitigation Measure 8-2a: Implement open space preservation, tree replacement, site landscaping, and project design measures (Proposed)

Under the proposed specific plan, 123.9 acres of the site would be preserved as open space, including a roughly ¼-mile frontage along PFE Road. Fifty-foot landscape setback corridors, including landscaped berms and screen walls, and replacement tree planting, would be introduced along PFE and Walerga Roads on all frontages where new residences are proposed.

Mitigation Measure 8-2b: Implement construction of Dry Creek Trail, other trails, and vineyards (Proposed)

The Applicant has proposed construction of an approximately 10,950-foot-long Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail along the south side of the Dry Creek corridor within open space areas of the Specific Plan Area. This would consist of a 12-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian trail, a 4-foot-wide equestrian trail separated from the bicycle/pedestrian trail by a 10-foot-wide minimum buffer, and a 2-foot-wide bench strip on each side, all within a 30-foot-wide trail easement. Also proposed are approximately 5,540 feet of a 5-foot wide pedestrian path, approximately 11,290 feet of an 8-foot-wide paved bicycle/pedestrian trail, and about 31,590 feet of Class II bicycle lanes, which would provide additional public access to views of open space and the creek corridor. These trails would be dedicated to Placer County and maintained by the County. In addition, about 124 acres of the Plan Area are designated as open space and would provide a scenic resource and buffer between trail users and the proposed residential development.

Mitigation Measure 8-2c: Implement Mitigation Measure 8-1c (Replace/plant native oaks within roadway rights-of-way and at gateway feature) (Proposed)

Mitigation Measure 8-1c is described above.

Mitigation Measure 8-3a: Provide a visual buffer between cemetery and adjacent homes (Proposed)

Under Mitigation Measure 8-3a, oak trees and other large-scale vegetation compatible with the existing cemetery landscape shall be planted to form a visual buffer between the cemetery and proposed residences to the east and south, sufficient to completely screen views of residences from the cemetery in the long term. In order to provide adequate mitigation in the short term, large-scale, fast-growing shrubs shall also be planted in the buffer area to provide screening within a short period of time; this buffer would then be enhanced over the long term with maturation of oaks and other trees. Newly planted trees in the buffer area shall be monitored for 5 years. All new plantings will be irrigated for the first 2 years of growth to ensure successful establishment. Alternative visual buffer designs would be considered as part of the design review process for individual projects. Any alternative would need to achieve the above objectives, which include completely screening views of surrounding residences, and compatibility with the existing cemetery landscape. An alternative design may include a masonry wall with landscaping to soften the effect of the wall.

Mitigation Measure 8-4a: Implement proposed light and glare mitigation measures (Proposed)

The Applicant proposes the following lighting guidelines as mitigation measures that would apply to lighting placed within public right-of-ways and within open space areas.

- Lights on arterials will use American Electric Lighting, Roadway Series catalog number 325_S MR DT1 R2 FG Caltrans 4B or equivalent
- ii. Primary Residential and Secondary Residential Street lights will use Holophane outdoor lighting Hscape series, catalog number GE 100HP_2 B S 72 N H; CVC 27" 1 CA BK or equivalent.

These ornamental lighting styles shall be installed throughout the specific plan area with the exception of the following street corridors:

- PFE Road
- Walerga Road
- Watt Avenue

Standard "cobra head" street lighting may be provided along the street corridors listed above.

- iii. Bollards for trails will use Holophane outdoor lighting Hscapes series catalog number BOL/C 45/13/LW CA BK or equivalent. The source, wattage, and voltage will be determined by Placer County's Department of Public Works
- iv. Street lighting standards shall be spaced dependent upon County requirements.
- v. Lighting shall be provided to ensure a safe environment but shall not cause areas of intense light or glare.
- vi. Lighting shall be sensitive to adjacent land uses and viewsheds. Architectural features or lighting fixtures that provide down-lighting and lighting that is shielded from adjacent uses shall be implemented.

Mitigation Measure 8-4b: Implement light and glare measures to eliminate all direct uplighting and direct offsite light trespass (Proposed)

To minimize project contributions to cumulative, areawide night light pollution, no upward lighting shall be permitted, and all light standards shall include shielding to direct illumination downward. All lighting shall be of minimum brightness consistent with safety.

No direct offsite light trespass shall be permitted; all lighting shall use shielded and directed light standards such that no direct offsite illumination will occur.

Mitigation Measure 8-5a: Install a community wall along the south and east sides of the lot where the electrical substation would be located (Proposed)

Implement Mitigation Measure 4-6a (Install a community wall along the south and east sides of the lot where the electrical substation would be located). See Section 4.4 of this Draft EIR.

Mitigation Measure 8-5b: Provide landscaped buffer plantings around substation (Proposed)

To minimize adverse impacts of the proposed substation to viewers on Walerga Road and from adjacent residences, landscaped buffer areas shall be established between the substation parcel, the roadway, and to adjacent residences. Buffer areas shall be of sufficient area to allow planting of screening trees. Trees be planted shall be of sufficient height and density to provide substantial visual screening of the taller substation components over the long term, as seen from both Walerga Road and adjacent residences.

Mitigation Measure 8-5c: Implement Mitigation Measure 4-6b (Install a split-face style wall along the north and west sides of the lot where the electrical substation would be located) (Proposed)

See Mitigation Measure 4-6b (Install a split-face style wall along the north and west sides of the lot where the electrical substation would be located) in Section 4.4 of this Draft EIR.