

# 4

# AESTHETICS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR describes existing aesthetic resources for the proposed project area and the region, and evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the project. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) describes the concept of aesthetic resources in terms of scenic vistas, scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) within a State Scenic Highway), the existing visual character or quality of the project area, and light and glare impacts. The following analysis is based on information drawn from the Placer County General Plan,<sup>1</sup> the Placer County General Plan EIR,<sup>2</sup> the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan (DCWPCP),<sup>3</sup> the Placer County Design Guidelines,<sup>4</sup> and the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines.<sup>5</sup>

## 4.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

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The following setting information provides an overview of the existing conditions of visual resources in the proposed project area, which is located within the southeast portion of the DCWPCP, west of the City of Roseville city limits in unincorporated Placer County. The proposed project site consists of a total of 110.1 acres.

### Visual Character of the Region

The area covered by the DCWPCP encompasses approximately 9,200 acres in the southwest portion of Placer County, California. Currently, the project region is developed with a variety of scattered rural single-family homes, as well a small number of residential subdivisions. The most dominant natural feature in the DCWPCP area is Dry Creek and its associated woodlands and riparian habitats. Dry Creek and the creek's associated tributaries generally trend east to west through the central portion of the region, punctuating the open grassland areas present in the eastern portion of the DCWPCP area and the residential subdivisions to the west. The topography is generally flat.

### Scenic Highways

According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) map of designated and eligible scenic routes under the California Scenic Highway Program, officially-designated State Scenic Highways do not exist within the vicinity of the proposed project site or in Placer County.

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<sup>1</sup> Placer County. *Countywide General Plan Policy Document*. August 1994 (updated May 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Placer County. *Countywide General Plan EIR*. July 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Placer County. *Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan*. Amended May 12, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Placer County. *Design Guidelines*. Adopted September 24, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Placer County. *Landscape Design Guidelines*. Adopted May 7, 2013.

Furthermore, there are no National Scenic Byways or All American Roads within Placer County (FHWA, 2015).

### **Visual Character of the Project Site and Surrounding Area**

The following information provides an overview of the existing conditions of the project site and surrounding area in relation to visual character.

#### Project Site

The proposed project site comprises an assemblage of properties owned by four different titleholders: Haight, Ogg, Pruett, and Placer Greens. The existing aesthetic character and quality of each of the four properties are discussed below.

#### *Haight Property*

The Haight property has been previously developed with a commercial nursery and wholesale grower (Haight Nursery). The property includes greenhouses, a single-family residence, Quonset huts, various outbuildings, potted plants, and a small irrigation pond (see Figure 4-1). Access to the nursery is provided by a private drive that extends southward from PFE Road to the north. In general, the existing on-site development is not visible from Antelope Road, which is located approximately 650 feet east of the property. The topography of the site is characterized by gently rolling terrain with surface elevations of approximately 145 to 160 feet mean sea level (msl).

#### *Ogg Property*

The eastern portion of the Ogg property includes a single-family residence, a wooden-sided pump house, a wooden-sided two-car garage, and a mobile home with an adjoining carport. The remainder of the property consists of annual grasslands, scattered trees, and a fallow almond orchard. Portions of the site have been disced for weed abatement. The topography of the site is characterized by gently rolling terrain with surface elevations of approximately 140 to 155 feet msl. Figure 4-2 below provides an example of existing views of the fallow almond orchard on the property.

#### *Pruett Property*

The Pruett property includes two distinct areas: a 25-acre area located to the west of the Haight property, and a smaller six-acre area to the east. Both areas have been heavily disturbed as a result of past agricultural operations.

The 25-acre area consists primarily of fallow fields, now open grassland, with one building situated on the far western edge of the area. The single building consists of a one and one-half story structure with metal siding and a metal roof. In addition, the 25-acre area includes approximately one acre of land in the southeast portion of the area that is associated with the Haight Nursery. An unpaved private aircraft landing strip is located on the western portion of the area, and a low-lying tributary associated with Dry Creek traverses the northern portion of the area (see Figure 4-3).

**Figure 4-1**  
**Existing View of Haight Property**



**Figure 4-2**  
**Existing View of Ogg Property**



**Figure 4-3**  
**Existing View of 25-Acre Pruett Property**



The landing strip was installed in the 1940's and was last used in March of 2001. The tributary contains dense, weedy vegetation. A truck, three trailers, an empty 500-gallon above-ground storage tank (AST), chain-link fencing, fence posts, drain pipes, empty 55-gallon drums, and various metal pipes are currently located near the southern end of the landing strip. The topography of the 25-acre area is characterized by gently rolling terrain with surface elevations of approximately 130 to 150 feet msl.

The six-acre area is currently undeveloped and covered with ruderal grasses (see Figure 4-4). A fire break of disced land is located on the northern, eastern, and southern portions of the site, while the remainder of the site is covered in dense, low-lying vegetation. A capped well is located near the central portion of the site. A number of trees are located along the western boundary of the area, and a single tree is located in the center of the southern portion of area. The southwestern portion of the property is elevated approximately four to five feet higher than the remainder of the parcel, which is relatively flat, and has an average elevation of approximately 135 feet msl.

#### *Placer Greens Property*

The Placer Greens property is dominated by grasslands and oak woodlands, and does not contain any existing structures or other development (see Figure 4-5). A riparian corridor lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the property and parallels two unnamed tributaries to Dry Creek.

**Figure 4-4**  
**Existing View of Six-Acre Property**



**Figure 4-5**  
**Existing View of Placer Greens Property**



The tributaries flow northward through a box culvert under PFE Road and into Dry Creek to the north of the site. The topography of the Placer Greens property is characterized by gently rolling terrain with surface elevations of approximately 110 to 140 feet msl.

### Surrounding Areas

The 25-acre Pruett, six-acre Pruett, and Haight properties are bordered to the south by the Sacramento County line beyond which is an existing single-family residential development. The subdivision includes both one and two-story homes. Roseville Storage, an industrial truck storage facility, is located to the south of the Placer Greens property. The Roseville Storage facility consists primarily of uncovered truck and RV parking spaces, as well as a one-story office building located near the entrance to the facility. Additional industrial land uses are located to the east of the Placer Greens property.

PFE Road forms the majority of the northern boundary of the project site, with the exception of the central portion of the project site, which is bordered to the north by large-lot rural residential properties. The area to the north of PFE Road, within the project vicinity, consists primarily of undeveloped grassland interspersed with a limited amount of rural single-family residential development. The open grassland area is transected by a tributary to Dry Creek, the banks of which support a variety of riparian vegetation and oak woodland. Further west of the project site, PFE Road is bordered to the north by a large-lot, single-family residential development and a golf course.

The site is bounded on the west by Cook Riolo Road, the now-closed Dry Creek Elementary School, which is currently used as the Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District's (DCJESD's) offices, and single-family residences. Two rural single-family residences are located to the northwest, between the project site and the offices. A parcel with two single-family residences is located adjacent to the project site's southwestern boundary, south of the offices.

### Off-Site Improvement Areas

The proposed project would include construction of various off-site improvements along Antelope Road and PFE Road, as well as sewer force main improvements either at a private drive off PFE Road or along Atkinson Road to the east of the site. Off-site improvements required for the proposed project would be primarily limited to areas which have been subject to previous disturbance, including PFE Road and Antelope Road. Such areas consist of paved surfaces, gravel, and/or weedy vegetation.

### **Viewer Types**

Viewer types with views of the project site include motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and residents, which are discussed in further detail below.

*Motorists* along PFE Road and Antelope Road have existing views of the project site while driving past the site. In addition, limited views of the site are provided from Cook Riolo Road.

Pedestrians and bicyclists in the area would include nearby residents and visitors that use the public roadways to walk or bike to their destination. Such pedestrians would have views of the project site from PFE Road and Antelope Road. In general, views experienced by pedestrians and bicyclists would be similar to views experienced by motorists. However, because sidewalks are not provided along either roadway, the amount of pedestrian traffic along the roadways is relatively limited. Neither roadway includes dedicated bike lanes.

Residents of the existing subdivisions to the west and south have permanent views of the site. In addition, residents of the large lot single-family homes located north of the 25-acre Pruett property, and north of the Ogg property, have permanent views of the site. Permanent views are also afforded to the two homes on the parcel at the southwest corner of the 25-acre Pruett property.

### Public Versus Private Views

Travelers along nearby roadways, as well as the nearby residences north, west, and south of the project site, would be considered sensitive visual receptors. However, it is important to distinguish between public and private views. Private views are views seen from privately-owned land and are typically viewed by individual viewers, including views from private residences. Public views are experienced by the collective public. In the case of the proposed project, public views would include views from PFE Road, Antelope Road, and Cook Riolo Road in the project vicinity. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) case law has established that only public views, not private views, are protected under CEQA. For example, in *Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah* (1991) 2 Cal.App.4th 720 [3 Cal. Rptr.2d 488] the court determined that “we must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general. As recognized by the court in *Topanga Beach Renters Assn. v. Department of General Services* (1976) 58 Cal.App.3d 188 [129 Cal.Rptr. 739]: “[A]ll government activity has some direct or indirect adverse effect on some persons. The issue is not whether [the project] will adversely affect particular persons but whether [the project] will adversely affect the environment of persons in general.” Therefore, it is appropriate to focus the aesthetic impact analysis on potential impacts to public views. In addition to analyzing potential impacts to public views, however, this analysis will also discuss potential impacts to private views due to comments received to this effect during the scoping period for the EIR.

### **Existing Conditions of Key Viewpoints**

Because analysis of all the views from which the proposed project can be seen is not feasible, a number of key viewpoints that would most clearly display the project’s potential visual effects must be selected for in-depth analysis. Figure 4-6 provides an overview of the eight key viewpoint locations from which photographs were taken in and around the proposed project site relative to each of the properties comprising the site. The photographs are presented in Figure 4-7 through Figure 4-12. The existing visual character and quality of the site from the key viewpoints is discussed below.

**Figure 4-6**  
**Photo Locations and Orientations**



1. Existing View of Project Site from Cook Riolo Road Looking East (see Figure 4-7)
2. Existing View of Project Site from Single-Family Residence Looking East (see Figure 4-8)
3. Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking South (see Figure 4-9)
4. Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking Southwest (see Figure 4-10)
5. Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking East (see Figure 4-11)
6. Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking East (see Figure 4-12)
7. Existing View of Project Site from Rural Residence Looking South (see Figure 4-13)
8. Existing View of Project Site from Residential Neighborhood Looking North (see Figure 4-14)

**Figure 4-7**  
**Viewpoint 1: Existing View of Project Site from Cook Riolo Road Looking East**



**Figure 4-8**  
**Viewpoint 2: Existing View of Project Site from Single-Family Residence Looking East**



**Figure 4-9**  
**Viewpoint 3: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking South**



**Figure 4-10**  
**Viewpoint 4: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking Southwest**



**Figure 4-11**  
**Viewpoint 5: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking East**



**Figure 4-12**  
**Viewpoint 6: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking East**



**Figure 4-13**  
**Viewpoint 7: Existing View of Project Site from Rural Residence Looking South**



**Figure 4-14**  
**Viewpoint 8: Existing View of Project Site from Residential Neighborhood Looking North**



#### Viewpoint 1: Existing View of Project Site from Cook Riolo Road Looking East

Figure 4-7 provides an example of views of the proposed project site from Cook Riolo Road to the west of the site. As shown in the figure, views include chain-link fencing, the existing single-family residence located adjacent to the western site boundary, and vegetation associated with the Haight and Ogg properties on the project site. The foreground is dominated by the rolling, fallow terrain of the Pruett property, while the background is characterized by trees on the Haight and Ogg properties, in between which, limited views of the Sierra Nevada foothills can be seen in the distant background.

#### Viewpoint 2: Existing View of Project Site from Single-Family Residence Looking East

As shown in Figure 4-8, rural views across the proposed project site from the existing single-family residence adjacent to the western site boundary include ruderal grassland associated with the 25-acre Pruett property, as well as the unpaved landing strip on the property. Vegetation associated with the Haight Nursery facility is visible just beyond the Pruett property. Existing vegetation associated with the Ogg property, as well as the adjacent off-site property to the north, is visible further to the east, below the horizon line. Views of the distant Sierra Nevada foothills are available beyond the project site, although such views are partially obscured by the aforementioned vegetation.

#### Viewpoint 3: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking South

As shown in Figure 4-9, existing rural views of the project site from PFE Road consist of the disked, undeveloped land on the 25-acre Pruett property. Traces of the vegetated swale on the property are present in the foreground of the photo. The background of the photo consists of the single-family residential neighborhood to the south of the proposed project site (in Sacramento County), the single-family residence located adjacent to the western site boundary, and the metal shed located on the western portion of the 25-acre Pruett property. The vegetation present in the rightmost portion of the photo is not located on the proposed project site but, rather, on an adjacent property to the north.

#### Viewpoint 4: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking Southwest

Figure 4-10 presents typical rural views of the Ogg and six-acre Pruett properties as viewed from Antelope Road. As shown in the figure, the viewshed includes scattered trees located on the eastern portion of the Ogg property and the existing barbwire fence along the eastern boundary of the Ogg and six-acre Pruett properties. Existing structures on the Ogg property are partially visible through the trees. Utility poles and vegetation associated with the single-family residential neighborhood to the south of the proposed project site are visible in the background.

#### Viewpoint 5: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking East

Figure 4-11 provides existing views of the Placer Greens property from Antelope Road. Ruderal grasses present on the Placer Greens property dominate the foreground and middleground of the viewpoint, while vegetation associated with the Dry Creek tributaries is prominent in the

background. Views of existing industrial development to the east of the project site are partially screened by the vegetation. The Sierra Nevada foothills are present in the distant background.

#### Viewpoint 6: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking East

Figure 4-12 includes views of the Placer Greens property from PFE Road. Ruderal grasses present on the Placer Greens property dominate the foreground and middleground of the viewpoint, while vegetation associated with the Dry Creek tributaries is prominent in the background. The barbwire fence along the northern Placer Greens property boundary is visible, as is the mowed fire break on the inside of the fence. As shown in the figure, the narrow strip of land between the barbwire fence and PFE Road consists primarily of dense, weedy growth. It should be noted the hill along the northern project boundary currently screens views of portions of the site.

#### Viewpoint 7: Existing View of Project Site from Rural Residence Looking South

Figure 4-13 includes views of the project site from the existing single-family rural residence located north of the Ogg property along Antelope Road. As shown in the figure, views from the residence consist primarily of ruderal grasses and orchard trees on the Ogg property. The orchard trees block views beyond the project site. As such, views from the residence do not include any distant scenic elements.

#### Viewpoint 8: Existing View of Project Site from Residential Neighborhood Looking North

Figure 4-14 includes views of the six-acre Pruett property looking north from the existing single-family residential subdivision located south of the project site within Sacramento County. Grasses present on the six-acre Pruett property dominate the foreground and middleground of the viewpoint, while orchard trees on the Ogg property are visible in the background. Similar to views from Viewpoint 7, the orchard trees on the Ogg property block views beyond the project site.

It should be noted that views of the project site from a substantial number of the single-family residences located south of the proposed project site are partially obscured by existing vegetation along the project site boundary. In addition, the single-family residential neighborhood includes a mix of single-story and two-story homes. While upper-floor windows of the two-story homes may have more expansive views of the project site, the existing fencing along the project site boundary block views from most first-floor windows. Therefore, relative to the views shown in Figure 4-14, views from many of the single-family residences are more restricted.

### **Light Pollution and Glare**

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky could be an important part of the natural environment, particularly in communities surrounded by extensive open space. Excessive light and glare could also be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species.

With the exception of the limited existing development on the Ogg, Haight, and 25-acre Pruett properties, the proposed project site is primarily characterized by undeveloped, unlit properties.

As such, relatively few sources of light and glare currently occur on the project site. However, the project site is bounded by existing development to the east, south, and west. Lighting associated with such residential and industrial development contributes to the overall nighttime lighting environment of the project area.

### 4.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

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Applicable federal or State laws or regulations pertaining to the aesthetics of the project area do not exist. However, the existing goals and policies established in the Placer County General Plan and the DCWPCP are listed below, as applicable. In addition, this section includes a summary of various Placer County guidelines related to aesthetic resources.

#### Placer County General Plan

The relevant goals and policies from the Placer County General Plan related to aesthetics are presented below.

#### *Land Use Goals and Policies*

Goal 1.K To protect the visual and scenic resources of Placer County as important quality-of-life amenities for County residents and a principal asset in the promotion of recreation and tourism.

Policy 1.K.3 The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.

Policy 1.K.4 The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines:

- a. Limit cuts and fills;
- b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land;
- c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time;
- d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season;
- e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development; and
- f. Provide and maintain site-specific construction Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Policy 1.K.5 The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to conform to the natural terrain.

- Goal 1.O To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer 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.9 The County shall discourage the use of outdoor lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.

*Natural Resources Goals and Policies*

- Goal 6.D To preserve and protect the valuable vegetation resources of Placer County.
- Policy 6.D.12 The County shall support the retention of heavily vegetated corridors along circulation corridors to preserve their rural character.

DCWPCP

The relevant goals and policies from the DCWPCP related to aesthetics are presented below.

*Community Design Element*

- Goal 1 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 2 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 3 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 6 It is a goal to create residential development which allows the following elements: human interaction, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, an 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 site of historical or archaeological significance, etc.).
- Goal 8 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 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 15 In place of sound wall construction, require, wherever possible, the use of greater setbacks to provide a scenic corridor for all parcels fronting on all the major circulation routes (2, 4, or 6 lanes of traffic). Long expanses of sound walls are not consistent with the desired character of the Plan area and the use of open space setbacks and landscaping instead, will be a major difference between this area and surrounding areas to the north and south.

#### Placer County Design Guidelines

The Placer County Design Guidelines contain discretionary guidelines and standards intended for use by developers, designers/architects, and Placer County to guide applicable development in the western portion of the County. The Design Guidelines manual is a document which can be used by developers, their designers, the Design/Site Review Committee, County staff, and the Planning Commission in working toward positive community images which make Placer County more cohesive and attractive to shoppers, residents, and builders of quality developments.

#### Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines

The overall purpose of the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines is to provide County staff, prospective developers and stakeholders with a basic framework for designing landscaped areas within unincorporated Placer County and to ensure continuity, consistency and design excellence. The Landscape Design Guidelines are intended to ensure that public places are attractive, function

efficiently, and provide an inviting and comfortable pedestrian environment. Included in the Landscape Design Guidelines are standards for street trees, neighborhood entry features, fencing and screening design, planting and irrigation standards, etc.

#### **4.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

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This section describes the standards of significance and methodology utilized to analyze and determine the proposed project's potential impacts related to aesthetics. The following analysis is based on field observations and photos, aerial photography, and review of the topographic conditions from GIS maps for the project site and surrounding area, as well as the preliminary grading plans prepared for the proposed project.

##### **Standards of Significance**

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the County's General Plan, the DCWPCP, and professional judgment, a significant impact would occur if the proposed project would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

##### **Method of Analysis**

The section below gives full consideration to the development of the project site and acknowledges physical changes to the existing setting. Impacts to the existing environment of the project area are to be determined by the contrast between the site's visual setting before and after buildout of the proposed project. The standards of significance listed above will be used to delineate the significance of any visual or aesthetic alterations of the site, including alterations that would impact the key viewpoints identified above.

##### **Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The following discussion of impacts related to visual resources is based on implementation of the proposed project in comparison to existing conditions and the standards of significance presented above.

##### **4-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Based on the analysis below, the impact is *less than significant*.**

A scenic vista, as defined in this EIR, is an area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. A scenic vista includes any such areas designated by a federal, State, or local agency. Federal and State agencies

have not designated any such locations within Placer County for viewing and sightseeing. Similarly, Placer County, according to the Placer County General Plan, has determined that the Planning Area of the General Plan does not contain officially designated scenic highways, corridors, vistas, or viewing areas.

Given that established scenic vistas are not located on or adjacent to the proposed project site, the proposed project, including all off-site improvements, would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and a *less-than-significant* impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

*None required.*

- 4-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway. Based on the analysis below, the project would have *no impact*.**

Officially designated State Scenic Highways are not located in Placer County. Therefore, the proposed project, including all off-site improvements, would not substantially damage any scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a State Scenic Highway, and *no impact* would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

*None required.*

- 4-3 Degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the project site and/or the site's surroundings. Based on the analysis below, the impact is *less than significant*.**

The following includes a discussion of potential impacts related to degradation of the existing visual character and quality of the project site and/or the site's surroundings due to project construction and operations.

Construction

Construction activities associated with the proposed project and associated off-site improvements would include demolition of existing structures, mass grading of the site, trenching for utilities, and other temporary activities that would be visible from PFE Road and Antelope Road. The three proposed Villages would be constructed in separate phases, starting with the East Village. The Central Village and West Village could be developed in either order, or concurrently.

All construction-related effects on the visual character and quality of the project site and/or surrounding area would be temporary. In addition, the DCWPCP and the Placer County General Plan have previously accounted for construction-related aesthetic effects associated with development of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in new or more severe construction-related impacts to visual character and quality beyond what was analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

## Operation

The proposed project would include the subdivision of the project site and the development of 308 one- and two-story single-family homes, 4.2 acres of on-site parks, and various associated on- and off-site improvements. A 16.8-acre open space area would be located along the Dry Creek tributaries on the eastern portion of the project site, on the Placer Greens property. The project would include three residential villages (West, Central, and East). The West Village would include 94 units, the Central Village would include 121 units, and the East Village would include 93 units. Residential densities would transition from west to east with the larger lots ranging from approximately 7,500 to 10,000 square feet (sf) in the West Village and decreasing to 8,900 sf in the Central Village and 6,000 sf in the East Village. All residential units in the West Village would be single-story and approximately 50 percent of the residential units on lots that back onto PFE Road and Antelope Road would be single-story.

### *Anticipated Long-Term Changes to Key Viewpoints*

As discussed previously, eight key viewpoints have been identified within the proposed project area. The key viewpoints include the following:

1. Existing View of Project Site from Cook Riolo Road Looking East (see Figure 4-7);
2. Existing View of Project Site from Single-Family Residence Looking East (see Figure 4-8);
3. Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking South (see Figure 4-9);
4. Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking Southwest (see Figure 4-10);
5. Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking East (see Figure 4-11);
6. Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking East (see Figure 4-12);
7. Existing View of Project Site from Rural Residence Looking South (see Figure 4-13; and
8. Existing View of Project Site from Residential Neighborhood Looking North (see Figure 4-14).

The effect of the proposed development on each of the key viewpoints identified within the project area is discussed below. As noted above, the following analysis assumes full buildout of all proposed project phases, including off-site improvements.

#### Viewpoint 1: Existing View of Project Site from Cook Riolo Road Looking East

Development of the proposed project would alter the rural open setting of the project site as viewed by motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling on Cook Riolo Road, as well as single-family residences to the west. The 25-acre Pruet property, which is currently visible from the roadway, would be developed with single-story, single-family residences. Existing vegetation currently visible on Haight and Ogg properties would be removed. The distant views of the Sierra

Nevada afforded to sensitive viewers are anticipated to be partially obscured by proposed single-family residences. However, as shown in Figure 4-7, such views are currently substantially limited such that individual elements of the Sierra Nevada are difficult to discern, and are only a small component of the overall viewshed.

The proposed project site contains limited existing development, and the surrounding areas to the south and west of the project site include extensive single-family residential development. The proposed single-family subdivision would be visually congruous with the surrounding development in the area. Therefore, while a noticeable change to the views currently afforded to the motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and residents west of the site would occur, the overall visual character and quality of the site would not be substantially degraded.

#### Viewpoint 2: Existing View of Project Site from Single-Family Residence Looking East

Development of the proposed project would change the rural open setting of the project site as viewed by residents of the single-family home adjacent to the western boundary of the 25-acre Pruett property. Views of the distant Sierra Nevada foothills are anticipated to be partially obscured as a result of the proposed development. However, such views are currently limited due to the intervening vegetation associated with the Haight and Ogg properties. Furthermore, the project has been designed so as to provide for larger lot single-story development within the West Village (adjacent to the existing single-family residence), as compared to the Central and East Village areas. The proposed single-story massing would reduce the visual impact of the project when viewed from the west. In addition, the area of the project site directly adjacent to the south side of the single-family residence would be dedicated as a 0.4-acre common area. The common area would be extensively landscaped, and would provide a visual buffer between the existing residence and a proposed internal street that would be located directly to the south.

As discussed above, the County has previously considered buildout of the 25-acre Pruett property with residential uses, and thus, changes to the visual character and quality of the site have been anticipated. The proposed project would be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. Based on the above, views currently afforded to the residents of the existing single-family residence would not be substantially degraded.

#### Viewpoint 3: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking South

Development of the proposed project would alter the rural open setting of the project site as viewed by motorists and bicyclists traveling on PFE Road to the north of the 25-acre Pruett property. Sidewalks are not provided along PFE Road,

and, thus, the amount of pedestrian traffic along the roadway is limited. The existing metal-sided barn on the western portion of the 25-acre Pruett property would be demolished, and the property would be developed with single-story, single-family residences. Close-range views of the site from the roadway would change from the existing grassy, rural terrain and the existing subdivision to the west to views of the proposed single-family homes and associated landscaping elements. It should be noted that views of the proposed residences would be partially screened by a landscaped common area, as well as the hill along the northern project boundary. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 4-6, only portions of the developed site would be visible from PFE Road. The Ogg property is buffered by the intervening property. Therefore, other viewpoints from PFE Road, west of Antelope Road, are not necessary to be analyzed.

The proposed development would be visually congruous with the existing residential development to the south and west, which currently serves as a backdrop for the 25-acre Pruett property when viewed from PFE Road. The County has previously planned for buildout of the 25-acre Pruett property with low-density residential uses, and thus, changes to the visual character and quality of the site have been anticipated. While the project would result in an increased development density, all of the proposed homes within view from this location are in the proposed West Village area, and thus, would be one-story with larger lots, ranging from approximately 7,500 to 10,000 sf. Furthermore, it is important to note that motorist and bicyclist views from PFE Road are not permanent views, but are only passing views. Accordingly, such viewers would not be expected to be highly sensitive to changes in the visual character or quality of the project site, as views would only be temporary as they pass the site. Therefore, while a noticeable change to the views currently afforded to motorists and bicyclists travelling on PFE Road would occur, the overall visual character and quality of the site would not be substantially degraded for such viewers.

#### Viewpoint 4: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking Southwest

The proposed project would include removal of the existing structures and vegetation on the Ogg property. Both the Ogg and six-acre Pruett properties would be developed with single-family residences and associated landscaping. Along the west side of Antelope Road, the proposed buildings include a mix of one- and two-story homes. All of the residences backing onto Antelope Road would be separated from the roadway by a 26- to 35-foot landscaped strip of land with a meandering, detached sidewalk. A six-foot-tall sound wall would be constructed between the landscaped area and the proposed residences. The gated project entry on Antelope Road would be landscaped with native vegetation and marked with enhanced hardscape features. In addition, Antelope Road would be widened to include two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction and a 14-foot center turn lane. A four-foot bike lane would be provided along both sides of the roadway.

The proposed landscaping features would help screen the proposed residences from view and improve the visual quality of the Antelope Road streetscape. All of the proposed frontage improvements would be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines and the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. Furthermore, motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian views from Antelope Road are not permanent views, but would only occur as such viewers pass by the site. Based on the above, views of the Ogg and six-acre Pruett properties currently afforded to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling along Antelope Road would not be substantially degraded.

It should be noted that Policy 15 in the Community Design Element of the DCWPCP discourages the use of sound walls, where possible. However, given the cost of the infrastructure improvements included in the proposed project, provision of setbacks to provide a scenic corridor along major street frontages, in place of sound wall construction, would require elimination of a substantial number of dwelling units, thus rendering the project economically infeasible. As noted in Chapter 12, Noise, of this EIR, construction of sound walls would be necessary to provide for noise attenuation on-site. The sound wall would be designed to minimize adverse effects to the visual quality of the environment, and would be screened by landscaping along the project frontage to the maximum extent feasible. Consequently, conflicts with the County's established guidelines and policies in the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines related to aesthetic impacts of sound walls would not occur.

#### Viewpoint 5: Existing View of Project Site from Antelope Road Looking East

The Placer Greens property is currently undeveloped, and consists primarily of ruderal grasses. The property is currently designated Commercial and Industrial in the DCWPCP.

Along the east side of Antelope Road, the Placer Greens property would be developed with a mix of one- and two-story single-family residences. Similar to the west side of the roadway, the residences would be separated from the roadway by a six-foot-tall sound wall and a 26- to 35-foot landscaped strip of land with a meandering sidewalk. The sound wall would incorporate brick and plaster elements designed to minimize adverse visual effects to the environment and would be partially screened by landscaping features. Thus, the sound wall would not conflict with the County's established guidelines and policies.

Two access points would be provided along the east side of Antelope Road; both would be landscaped with native vegetation and marked with enhanced hardscape features, including stamped concrete, decorative pilasters and project identification monuments. A larger pilaster with an arbor would be incorporated into the vehicular gates at each entry. Antelope Road would be widened to include two 12-foot travel

lanes in each direction and a 14-foot center turn lane. A four-foot bike lane would be provided along both sides of the roadway.

The proposed project could potentially obscure views of the existing vegetation on the eastern portion of the Placer Greens property and beyond. In addition, distant views of the Sierra Nevada foothills could be partially blocked; however, such views are relatively limited due to the topography of the site, and are only a small component of the overall distant viewshed. The proposed improvements along the project frontage would be consistent with the visual character and quality of other residential neighborhoods in the surrounding area, and would be designed to be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. As discussed above, motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian views from Antelope Road are not permanent views, but would only occur as such viewers pass by the site. Based on the above, views of the Placer Greens property currently afforded to motorists and bicyclists traveling along Antelope Road would not be substantially degraded.

#### Viewpoint 6: Existing View of Project Site from PFE Road Looking East

Development of the proposed project would change the rural open setting of the Placer Greens property as viewed by motorists and bicyclists travelling east on PFE Road. The project would include widening of PFE Road east of the Antelope Road intersection to include one 12-foot westbound travel lane, one 14-foot center lane/westbound left turn lane, and two 12-foot eastbound travel lanes. In addition, the project would add a four-foot bike lane and an eight-foot meandering walk along the south side of the roadway. Along the project frontage, a mix of one- and two-story single-family homes would be constructed. Similar to Antelope Road, the homes would be separated from the proposed meandering walkway by a six-foot-tall sound wall and extensive landscaping features, which would provide visual screening. A signature element, in the form of a stonework with a steel engraved depiction of a windmill intended to represent the agrarian nature of the project area, would be located at the southeast corner of Antelope Road and PFE Road. Views of the sound wall would be partially obscured by the associated landscaping features, and the sound wall would be designed to minimize adverse effects to the environment. Thus, the sound wall would not conflict with the County's established guidelines and policies.

The proposed improvements along the project frontage would be consistent with the visual character and quality of other medium-density residential neighborhoods in the surrounding area, and would be designed to be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. In addition, the eastern portion of the Placer Greens property would be retained as open space, and thus, the existing

views of the riparian corridor along the eastern portion of the property would be preserved for viewers traveling eastward along PFE Road. Therefore, views of the Placer Greens property currently afforded to motorists and bicyclists traveling along PFE Road would not be substantially degraded.

#### Viewpoint 7: Existing View of Project Site from Rural Residence Looking South

Development of the proposed project would include removal of the existing orchard trees on the Ogg property and development of the project site with single-family residences and associated improvements. At the northern boundary of the Ogg property, the project would include the construction of a six-foot-tall wooden fence on a retaining wall in order to provide privacy for residents of the existing large lot single-family homes located to the north of the Ogg property.

A noticeable change would occur from this viewpoint as a result of the project, and while the current view is natural in setting, the expanse of the view is relatively limited due to the dense orchard trees. Scenic features or prominent views to the south, beyond the project site, that would be obstructed by the proposed residences do not exist. As discussed above, the County has previously considered buildout of the Ogg property with residential and industrial uses, and thus, changes to the visual character and quality of the site have been anticipated. The proposed project would be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. Based on the above, views currently afforded to the residents of the existing rural residence would not be substantially degraded.

#### Viewpoint 8: Existing View of Project Site from Residential Neighborhood Looking North

The current view shown in Figure 4-14 reflects a view of the six-acre Pruett Property from the southerly homes in Sacramento County. Viewpoint 8 was selected as it illustrates the most open, natural view of the project site from the single-family homes south of the project site. However, it is important to note that this view is not representative of the view seen by all existing homes to the south of the project site. For example, approximately half of the length of the southern boundary is currently made up of the commercial Haight nursery, which has structures in various states of disrepair. Therefore, a large number of existing homes have fore- and middleground views of the commercial nursery, rather than the open view shown in Figure 4-14.

As noted previously, the existing single-family residential neighborhood includes a mix of single-story and two-story homes. While upper-floor windows of the two-story homes may have more expansive views of the project site, particularly for those homes backing up to the 25- and 6-acre Pruett properties, the existing fencing along the project site boundary block views from most first-floor windows. As

such, while changes to the visual character of the project site would be apparent from second-floor windows, views from single-story homes south of the project site would not be substantially altered.

As discussed above, the County has previously considered buildout of the properties west of Antelope Road with residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and thus, changes to the visual character and quality of the site have been anticipated. The proposed project would be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. Based on the above, views currently afforded to the residents of Sacramento County, south of the project site, would not be substantially degraded.

#### Anticipated Changes to Off-Site Improvement Areas

As discussed above, the proposed project would include construction of various off-site improvements along Antelope Road and PFE Road. In addition, the project would include construction of an underground storm drain pipe along PFE Road, relocation of an existing flow meter station currently located west of Antelope Road on the south boundary of the site, and extension of an underground sewer force main along PFE Road. From PFE Road, the force main would either be extended northward through a private driveway and under Dry Creek by way of a bore and jack crossing, or further east along PFE Road, which turns into Atkinson Road. The lift station would be partially screened from view by a landscaped common area that would be located adjacent to the west side of the station. The proposed storm drain and sewer force main improvements would be undergrounded, and thus, would not be visible to sensitive viewers. Based on the above, the proposed off-site improvements would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the improvement areas.

#### Conclusion

As discussed above, the proposed project site currently consists of a combination of a variety of landscapes, including the existing Haight Nursery, fallow orchards, and grasses, as well as single-family homes and various other structures. With the exception of the riparian corridor and oak woodland on the eastern portion of the Placer Greens property, which would be preserved by the proposed project, the project site does not contain any distinctive scenic resources. Thus, the visual quality of the overall site is not high. Therefore, while development of the project site would change the existing rural visual character of the site to a more urban landscape, the project would not substantially degrade the character of a site having high visual quality. Furthermore, the visual quality of views beyond the site from surrounding receptors is limited.

In addition, the project would be designed to maximize the visual quality of all project frontages, as well as areas of the project site which would be visible from the existing

single-family residences to the west of the site. Specifically, such areas would include landscaped common areas and various hardscape features to help screen the proposed single-family homes from view. The proposed pedestrian walkways along PFE Road and Antelope Road would improve pedestrian connectivity for residents of existing homes to the north, west, and south of the project site. Furthermore, as discussed above, all components of the proposed project would be designed to be consistent with the Placer County Design Guidelines, the specific design guidelines contained in the DCWPCP, and all applicable sections of Article 17.54, General Development Regulations, of the Placer County Code. For example, consistent with Policy 1.O.5 in the Placer County General Plan, all project entries on PFE Road and Antelope Road would include native vegetation, enhanced hardscape features, and a landscaped median. Project-identification monuments would be located at the project entries.

It should be noted that a portion of the project site adjacent to Antelope Road are currently zoned with the Design Scenic Corridor (-Dc) combining district. The stated purpose of the -Dc combining district is to provide special regulations to protect and enhance the aesthetic character of lands and buildings within public view; to minimize any adverse impacts of conflicting land uses; and to provide special project review procedure for lands and uses which by their nature require special attention to landscaping, circulation, and/or energy conservation. Upon approval of the proposed rezone, the existing -Dc designation would be removed. However, as discussed above, the proposed project would be designed consistent with all applicable design guidelines, and would be generally consistent with the Placer County General Plan and the DCWPCP.

Thus, construction and operation of the proposed project, including all off-site improvements, would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and/or the site's surroundings, and a *less-than-significant* impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

*None required.*

**4-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Based on the analysis below and with implementation of mitigation, the impact is *less than significant*.**

With the exception of the limited existing development on the Ogg, Haight, and 25-acre Pruett Property, the proposed project site is primarily characterized by natural habitats, such as oak woodlands and annual grassland. As such, relatively few sources of light and glare currently occur on the project site. Thus, development of the proposed project with 308 single-family residences and associated improvements would introduce additional sources of light and/or glare to a site where few currently exist.

Potential sources of light and glare associated with the proposed project would include interior light spilling through windows, exterior lighting on homes, street lighting on the internal street system, lighting within the proposed parks, entry feature lighting, and light reflected off windows. Per Section 17.54.070(A)(2)(i) of the Placer County Code, the project would be subject to compliance with the applicable sections of the Placer County Design Guidelines related to light pollution, including, but not limited to, shielding of fixtures such that direct rays do not pass property lines.

However, because the types of lighting and the specific locations have not yet been determined, the proposed project could increase the amount of light and glare generated on-site, which could be visible from the surrounding residential development and roadways in the project vicinity. Therefore, the proposed project could be considered to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and a *significant* impact could occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the above impact to a *less-than-significant* level.

4-4 *Prior to the issuance of building permits for any development on the project site, the project applicant shall submit a lighting plan for the project to the Placer County DRC for review and approval, demonstrating that proposed lighting is Dark-Sky compliant as specified by the International Dark-Sky Association. The lighting plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following provisions:*

- *Shield or screen lighting fixtures to direct the light downward and prevent light spill on adjacent properties;*
- *Place and shield or screen flood and area lighting needed for construction activities and/or security so as not to disturb adjacent residential areas and passing motorists;*
- *For public lighting, prohibit the use of light fixtures that are of unusually high intensity or brightness (e.g., harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs) or that blink or flash;*
- *Use appropriate building materials (such as low-glare glass, low-glare building glaze or finish, neutral, earth-toned colored paint and roofing materials), shielded or screened lighting, and appropriate signage to prevent light and glare from adversely affecting motorists on nearby roadways.*