

## **CHAPTER 2.0 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

This chapter of the EIR provides a discussion of those subject areas for which project implementation would result in either (1) significant impacts that cannot be avoided and/or (2) significant impacts that can be avoided, reduced, or minimized through mitigation measures that would be implemented by the proposed project. This chapter includes information developed during the Initial Study process, the response period for the Notice of Preparation, and the scoping meeting. Visual resources, air quality, and transportation/traffic are the issues that would incur significant and unavoidable adverse impacts. Agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise would be the issues for which mitigation would reduce project impacts to less than significant levels.

### **2.1 Visual Resources**

A Visual Resources Report was prepared by Development Design Services & Graphic Access, Inc. and RECON Environmental, Inc. (2013) for the project and off-site improvement areas and is summarized below. The full report is included as Appendix C to this EIR.

#### **2.1.1 Existing Conditions**

##### **2.1.1.1 *Regulatory Framework***

Visual resources may be subject to plans and policies developed to ensure that adequate consideration is given to preserving and/or enhancing the visual qualities of an area. The project is subject to the following guidelines and policies.

##### **California Scenic Highway Program**

California adopted a Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq.) in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the visual quality of areas that are adjacent to highways. The scenic designation is based on the amount of natural landscape visible by motorists, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the motorist's enjoyment of the view. I-15 is classified as an "eligible" California scenic highway from SR-76 north to SR-91 near the city of Corona. The project site is 1,450 feet east of I-15, approximately two miles south of SR-76, and therefore, is not located within the scenic highway corridor. Four officially designated state scenic highways (routes 75, 78, 125, and 163) exist in the County, but are not in proximity to the project site (Caltrans 2007).

##### **San Diego County General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element**

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the San Diego County General Plan includes a Scenic Corridors section, which establishes a County Scenic Highway System. The goal of the County Scenic Highway System is to protect and enhance the aesthetic quality of the natural landscape within the viewshed of all scenic highway corridors.

County Scenic Highway System roads near the project site include I-15 (Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line), SR-76, Lilac Road and Valley Center Road (S6) (SR-76 to SR-76), Camino Del Rey, Gird Road/Reche Road/Live Oak Park Road/Mission Road, and Old Castle Road/Gopher Canyon Road. Due to distance and topography, the site is not visible from any of these roadways except I-15. The project site is 1,450 feet east of I-15 with northbound motorists having a distant view of the site for approximately 1,600 feet or 16 seconds.

The Goals and Policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element include the following:

### **GOAL COS-11**

**Preservation of Scenic Resources.** Preservation of scenic resources, including vistas of important natural and unique features, where visual impacts of development are minimized.

**COS-11.1 Protection of Scenic Resources.** Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes.

**COS-11.3 Development Siting and Design.** Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:

- Creative site planning
- Integration of natural features into the project
- Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape
- Minimal disturbance of topography
- Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character
- Creation of contiguous open space networks.

### San Diego County Zoning Ordinance

The project site is subject to the following regulations relevant to visual resources pursuant to the County Zoning Ordinance:

#### Scenic Area Regulations

The Scenic Area Regulations of the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance (Sections 5200-5212) serve to regulate development in areas of high scenic value, to exclude incompatible uses and structures, and preserve and enhance the scenic resources present in adjacent areas. The regulations apply to areas of unique scenic value including, but not limited to, scenic highway corridors designated by the San Diego

County General Plan and areas adjacent to significant recreational, historic, or scenic resources, including, but not limited to, federal and state parks. The designation for scenic areas is identified on a parcel-by-parcel basis by the special area designator “S.”

#### Design Review Area Regulations

The San Diego County Zoning Ordinance (Sections 5900-5910) includes provisions to ensure that future structures and development of a site would complement not only the site to be developed, but also the surrounding areas and existing development. The provisions require that a site plan be submitted for certain discretionary project applications within those areas having a “D” zoning designator, indicating the need for design review. The regulation requires that specific criteria be reviewed to achieve the objectives of the approving authority. These criteria include a review of building characteristics, building structure and placement, landscaping, roads, pedestrian walkways, parking and storage areas, grading, signs, and lighting. Applicable community planning or sponsor groups have an opportunity to review such site plans and to represent their recommendations.

Additionally, the designation for community design review areas is identified on a parcel-by-parcel basis by the special area designator “B” and can be found in Zoning Ordinance Sections 5750–5799. The “B” designator requires the preparation of a site plan for any type of development permit, including building permits for single-family dwellings, in accordance with these Guidelines and as further described in the County Zoning Ordinance. Such site plans are to be reviewed in part by a Design Review Board established especially for this purpose.

#### San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances

The project site is subject to the following regulations, relevant to visual resources, pursuant to the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances:

##### Subdivision Ordinance

The project site is subject to regulations relating to design standards, minimum lot sizes, setbacks designators, and lot configurations appropriate for supporting each proposed land use.

##### Grading, Clearing, and Watercourses Ordinance

Section 87.417 of the County’s grading ordinance states that the face of all cut and fill slopes, in excess of 3 feet in vertical height, but only final slopes of any borrow pit, shall be planted and maintained with a ground cover or other planting to protect the slopes against erosion and instability. Planting shall commence as soon as slopes are completed on any portion of the site and shall be established upon all slopes prior to the final approval of the grading. In order to minimize the period during which a cut or filled surface remains exposed, such planting shall provide for rapid short-term coverage of the slope as well as long-term permanent coverage.

Additionally, all slopes to be constructed shall be provided with an irrigation system which shall be used to promote the growth of the slope plantings to protect the slopes against erosion (Section 87.418).

### Light Pollution Code

The San Diego County Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.101–59.115 of the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance) seeks to control undesirable light rays emitted into the night sky in order to reduce detrimental effects on astronomical research. The ordinance designates the unincorporated portions of the county into two zones based on distances from both the Palomar Observatory and the Mount Laguna Observatory. Areas within 15 miles of either observatory are designated Zone A, while the remaining areas are designated Zone B. The project site is located more than 15 miles from Mt. Palomar and Mt. Laguna and is, therefore, within the Zone B.

### Resource Protection Ordinance

As explained in subchapter 3.1.4, Land Use Planning, the project site is subject to the regulations contained in the RPO. In order to protect the aesthetics of steep slopes, the RPO limits development on steep slope lands through density restrictions and through requirements for preservation of steep slope areas within dedicated open space easements. The project site contains approximately 20 acres of RPO steep slopes (Figure 2.1-1).

### Valley Center Community Plan/Valley Center Design Guidelines

The project site lies partly within the VCCP area, and is subject to the Valley Center Design Guidelines. The Valley Center Design Guidelines were adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1986 and amended once in 1990. Design review is administered by the County's Department of Planning and Development as part of the development review process. Projects are evaluated by the Valley Center Design Review Board, a five-person panel of citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Design review is a required step in the development review and approval process for the following types of projects: all commercial development, industrial development, multi-family residential development, along with various types of Major Use Permits, which also require the issuance of building permits for new or alterations to existing structures. The Design Guidelines include three parts: (1) community design objectives; (2) the design review process and how the process works; and (3) the design guidelines.

### I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan and Scenic Preservation Guidelines

The VCCP includes the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan (Corridor Plan) and Scenic Preservation Guidelines. The I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines apply to the unincorporated portions of the I-15 corridor extending from the northern Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. The purpose of the Guidelines is to: (1) protect and enhance scenic resources, (2) establish standards to regulate visual quality, and (3) encourage scenic preservation consistent with the standards. The standards address site design measures and include site planning, parking and circulation design, site lighting, landscape design, public utilities and safety, development standards for steep topography and natural features, and architectural design standards.

Common visual elements along this corridor consist of foreground manufactured slopes that are planted with native and/or naturalizing plant material and open expansive middle and background views consisting of rolling topography primarily covered with a mix of natural, domestic, and grove type vegetation, and rural and estate residences.

The project site is not located within the I-15 Subregional Plan or Design Review Corridor. The project site is, however, visible from a portion of the County-designated scenic highway I-15 located 1.25 miles to the southwest.

Bonsall Community Plan/Bonsall Design Guidelines.

The project site lies partly within the BCP and is subject to the Bonsall Design Guidelines. The Bonsall Design Guidelines were adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1991. The design review process within the community of Bonsall is generally the same as within the community of Valley Center as described above. The Design Guidelines include three parts: (1) the design review process; (2) Bonsall community design objectives; and (3) the guidelines for community design review.

### **2.1.1.2 Existing Visual Environment**

The visual character and quality of the project site and its surrounding area is described in detail in Appendix C and summarized below.

Generally, a visual environment can be described by physical and perceptual quality factors. Physical factors are the physical pattern elements of which the landscape unit is built. It is the relationship of these elements that create the visual character of a particular view. Physical pattern elements include form, line, color, and texture. Distinctions in visual character are generally traced to four aspects of pattern character: dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity, as described below.

- Specific components in a landscape may be visually dominant because of position, extent, or contrast of basic pattern elements.
- Scale is the apparent size relationship between a landscape component and its surroundings; an object can be made to look smaller or larger in scale by manipulating its visual pattern elements.
- Visual diversity is a function of the number, variety, and intermixing of visual pattern elements.
- Continuity is the uninterrupted flow of pattern elements in a landscape and the maintenance of visual relationships between immediately connected or related landscape components.

The quality of a view is determined by perception and is based upon a viewer's cognitive assimilation of landscape elements into a memorable image, distinguishable from other views within the region. Perceptual quality factors include vividness, intactness, and unity, as described below.

- Vividness is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
- Intactness is the visual integrity of the natural and man-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements.
- Unity is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole.

Areas with high visual quality are those where all three perceptual quality factors are high. Areas with moderate visual quality are those where one of these factors is low. Areas with low visual quality are those where two or more of these perceptual factors are low.

The visual sensitivity of a view is based on its ability to absorb changes in character and quality. Areas with a high sensitivity to visual change are those that have distinctive pattern elements, are visually prominent, or contain a dominant visual character component, and have high visual quality. Areas with moderate sensitivity to visual change are those that contain several varying visual character pattern elements and have a moderate visual quality. Areas with low sensitivity to visual change are those that contain several varying visual character pattern elements but have a low visual quality.

Additional details relating to defining visual character and visual quality are discussed in the Visual Resources Report (see Appendix C).

### Project Viewshed

A viewshed is an analytical tool used to aid in the identification of views that could be affected by a project. The viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the project is likely to be seen. The project's viewshed boundary, shown on Figure 2.1-2, was determined through an analysis of aerial photographs and topographic data. It represents the geographic limits and illustrates the generalized project viewshed on an aerial base. Figure 2.1-2 also shows the locations of key observation points (KOPs) used to assess views of the project site.

The project viewshed is generally confined to the areas located within the intermediate ridgelines and hillsides that surround the project site. Variations between potential visibility to the site and actual possible views boundaries are discussed below.

- The northern viewshed boundary is defined primarily by the West Lilac Road corridor, with a slight extension to the north along Mesa Lilac Road. The representative KOPs for the northern boundary are KOPs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (Figures 2.1-3 through 2.1-6), which all generally look south into the project site.
- The southern viewshed is defined by the east/west trending ridgeline along Nelson Way. The representative KOPs for the southern boundary are KOPs 11a-c and 16 (Figures 2.1-7 through 2.1-9), which look northwest and north, respectively into the project site.
- The western viewshed limits are defined by the north/south trending ridgelines, peaks, and ridgelines along Old Highway 395. The representative KOPs for the western boundary are KOPs 1,2,3,4 and 5 (Figures 2.1-10 through 2.1-13), which all generally look east into the project site.
- To the east, views are largely limited by the northeast/southwest trending ridgelines located north and south of Covey Lane. The representative KOPs for the eastern boundary are KOPs 11a-c and 12a and 12b (see Figures 2.1-7 and 2.1-8; Figure 2.1-14), both looking west into the project site.

## Existing Views

The project site can be viewed from the I-15, Old Highway 395, West Lilac Road, and several other local roadways including Covey Lane and Nelson Way. The project site is also visible to area residences, and the West Lilac Community Parkway.

### Interstate 15

Views of the project site are available to northbound motorists from I-15 for approximately 1,600 feet, or 16 seconds, when traveling at 70 miles per hour, as illustrated from KOP 1 (refer to Figure 2.1-10). Views toward the project site are not available to southbound travelers from I-15 due to view-blocking topography and vegetation (KOP 2, refer to Figure 2.1-11).

### Old Highway 395

Old Highway 395 lies west of the project site near the limits of the western viewshed. KOPs 3, 4, and 5 (refer to Figures 2.1-12 [KOP 3] and 2.1-13 [KOPs 4 and 5]) illustrate typical views looking southeast and northeast toward the site from Old Highway 395. Views of the project site from Old Highway 395 are blocked by existing topography and vegetation.

### West Lilac Road

KOPs 6 through 10 (refer to Figures 2.1-3, 2.1-4, 2.1-5 and 2.1-6) are taken from locations north of the project site along West Lilac Road. The curving nature of this roadway causes a frequent shifting of the viewers' focus, and therefore, limits lengthy views toward the project site. Fairly expansive views of the project site are available along brief segments of West Lilac Road (KOPs 13 and 14; refer to Figure 2.1-15) through gaps in mature vegetation and structures. These areas offer fairly broad views of the valley floor beyond a foreground of mature orchards. In the middle ground, views toward dense riparian vegetation, rolling hillsides covered with orchards or disturbed soil, and rural and estate residences, dominate. Background views consist primarily of rural and estate residential land uses, active row crops, agricultural structures, and prominent peaks and ridgelines.

### Other Area Roadways

Several local area private roads provide motorists and pedestrians with restricted views of the project site, depending on viewing location and the viewer activity. Motorists traveling along these roadways have brief views toward the project site between existing view-blocking vegetation, structures and topography that confines views to the immediate vicinity. The curving nature and narrow widths of these private roads limit available views toward the project site; however, some of these locations offer expansive views. KOPs 11 through 13 and 16 through 19 show views towards the project site from these locations (refer to Figures 2.1-7, 2.1-8, 2.1-9, 2.1-14, 2.1-15, 2.1-16, 2.1-17, and 2.1-18).

Views from Covey Lane and Nelson Way (KOP 11 and KOP 16; refer to Figures 2.1-7, 2.1-8 and 2.1-9, respectively) offer the most expansive views toward the project site.

## Area Residences

Several hundred homes are located within the project viewshed. Most residences in this area are situated at a higher elevation than the project site providing expansive views into the project site (KOPs 11c, 16, 17a, 18, 20 and 21; refer to Figures 2.1-8, 2.1-9, 2.1-16, 2.1-17, 2.1-18, 2.1-19, and 2.1-20, respectively).

## Public Recreational Facilities

While no public parks are located within the project viewshed, two Priority 3 Community Pathways, identified in the County's CTMP, are located on or near the project site. The first is planned along a substantial portion of the West Lilac Road corridor. The multi-use trail along West Lilac Road would be located north and east of the project site. This trail is planned to follow West Lilac Road east from the VCCP area boundary to Jay Jay Way. A second Community Pathway cuts across the southern portion of the project site, within the VCMWD water line easement, and ultimately connects to Old Highway 395, west of the project. Pursuant to the CTMP, both multi-use trails would be soft-surfaced and intended to serve both circulation (non-motorized) and recreation purposes.

### **2.1.2 Analysis of Project Impacts and Determination of Significance**

The project would result in a significant impact if it would:

1. *Scenic Vistas*. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. *Scenic Resources*. Result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or localized area.
3. *Visual Character or Quality*. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. *Light*. Create a new source of substantial light.
5. *Glare*. Install highly reflective buildings materials.
6. *Consistency with Policy and Planning Documents*. Not comply with applicable state or local goals, policies or requirements related to visual resources.

#### **2.1.2.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

According to the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a), a significant impact would occur if the project would substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from a public road, a trail within an adopted County or State trail system, a scenic vista or highway, or a recreational area.

### Impact Analysis

The project site is not visible from a designated state scenic highway or scenic vista and is not located within the I-15 Subregional Plan and Design Review Corridor. While the project site is not subject to the I-15 Guidelines, a portion of the project site is visible from a segment of I-15. This visible segment is designated as a County Scenic Highway pursuant to the County General Plan.

The visible project components would consist of natural hillsides and riparian open space, manufactured slopes in excess of 30 feet, and single-family residences. Visual simulation KOP 1 shows the views of the project from I-15. The view of the property from I-15 is very distant and does not dominate the overall view and would not substantially change the composition of the existing visual environment. Additionally, Section III of the Lilac Hills Ranch Specific Plan, Development Standards and Regulations, provides design guidelines for a landscape concept, the implementation of which would create a landscape theme encompassing the conservation and integration of the existing environment with existing open space resources. This theme would allow views from such a distance to blend into the existing visual environment. To further assure visual consistency, additional design guidelines strive to minimize grading, specify revegetation and plant palette requirements, and maintain architectural design standards. Together the distance of these views, timing of views available to travelers, and implementation of the proposed Development Standards and Regulations would reduce impacts to scenic vistas to **less than significant**.

#### **2.1.2.2 Issue 2: Scenic Resources**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

According to the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance: Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a), a significant impact would occur if the project would result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or localized area, including but not limited to landmarks (designated), historic resources, trees, and rock outcroppings.

##### Impact Analysis

No designated landmarks or historic trees are present within the project site. As described in subchapter 2.6, no significant historical resources were identified within the project site. Implementation of the project, therefore, would not impact any such scenic resources.

The project site contains steep slopes (see Figure 2.1-1), ridgelines, and undisturbed native vegetation. RPO-classified steep slopes (i.e., slopes with a 25 percent or greater slope gradient and with a 50-foot rise in elevation) are primarily located along the western edge of the project site. RPO slopes comprise approximately 20 acres on-site. The project has been designed such that development encroachment into these slopes

would be confined to a 1.6-acre area (or 8.0 percent), which is consistent with the RPO 10 percent encroachment allowance. The project would preserve approximately 18.4 acres with slopes of 25 percent or greater grade that meet the definition of RPO steep slopes. The development footprint containing RPO steep slopes is 0.3 percent of the project site. The disturbance of a relatively small area of steep slopes, which would be revegetated/landscaped, would not be visibly detectable from Covey Lane nor degrade the visual quality of that resource. Therefore, project impacts to scenic resources would be **less than significant**.

### **2.1.2.3 Issue 3: Visual Character or Quality**

#### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

According to the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a), a significant impact would also occur if the project would introduce features that would detract from or contrast with the existing visual character and/or quality of a neighborhood, community, or localized area by conflicting with important visual elements or the quality of the area (such as theme, style, setbacks, density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, building materials, etc.).

#### Impact Analysis

##### Project Build-out

In order to assess the project's impacts on the existing visual character within the project viewshed, the Visual Resources Report included the development of photosimulations of the project site from several KOPs, including public roadways, other local roadways, nearby public facilities and existing residential areas. The simulations, identified as Proposed Conditions, illustrate the change in the existing environment with implementation of the project. The following analysis describes the changes that would occur within the viewshed from the KOPs upon build-out of the project.

##### Interstate 15

As discussed above, the project site is not located within the I-15 Subregional Plan or Design Review Corridor. The project site is, however, visible from a portion of the segment of I-15 that is designated a County scenic highway. As shown in the Proposed Condition in Figure 2.1-10, because the visual elements of the project would appear visually similar to other elements in view and their contrast would be minimized, an imperceptible change in the visual environment to drivers on the I-15 is anticipated. Therefore, changes in the visual character resulting from project implementation, as perceived by motorists on I-15, would be **less than significant**.

##### Old Highway 395

As shown in the Proposed Condition in Figure 2.1-12, views of the project would be seen by southbound travelers on Old Highway 395 beginning from approximately KOP 3

extending for approximately 1,600 feet. A motorist traveling along this corridor at 55 miles per hour would be exposed to views of the project for approximately 20 seconds. Visible portions of the project would consist of a line of single-family residences, and manufactured slopes approximately 30 feet in height, located north of the existing water tanks (see Figure 2.1-12).

These brief views, along Old Highway 395, would not be visually prominent because they would be muted by a foreground of natural and non-native vegetation, structures, fencing, and steep slopes. Other existing visual elements along Old Highway 395 are varied and consist of traffic and directional signs, overhead utilities, temporary signs, a nursery, trailer park, buildings, undeveloped lots, and a mix of vegetation types.

Overall, changes in the visual character along Old Highway 395 resulting from project implementation would be partially visible; however, the contrast of this area with the existing visual environment would be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Planted slopes would relate visually to existing slope plantings and building colors would be earth toned and relate to other natural colors in view. As a result, visual impacts to the visual character of the area, as perceived by viewers traveling along the Old Highway 395 corridor would be **less than significant**.

#### West Lilac Road

The project would replace the existing views of domestic and grove vegetation along approximately 0.6 mile of West Lilac Road leaving perimeter portions of the project visible. Distant views of the project would be available between view blocking foreground structures. Cross sections B-B and H-H, provided on Figures 2.1-21 and 2.1-22, show the site generally drops in elevation, north to south. As a result, views of the project, beyond foreground development, are generally not available from the West Lilac Road corridor except between building setbacks and at project entries.

Visible portions of the project along West Lilac Road, east of the western entrance consist of single-family detached homes on 100-foot minimum width lots that range in size from 0.2 to 0.4 acre. These lots serve as a transitional feature by relating to the existing residences located north and east of the site (see Figure 2.1-5, KOP 9). Visible portions of the project along West Lilac Road, west of the western entrance consist primarily of single-family detached homes on lots ranging in size from 0.1 acre to 0.3 acre (see Figure 2.1-3, KOP 6). Consistent with Section III, D-4 of the Lilac Hills Ranch Specific Plan, single-family residential design guidelines would be implemented to assure variability in design, use of wider and/or larger lots along roads, and construction of walls. Section III also identifies specific requirements for landscaping along West Lilac Road to further reduce visual effects. These include the requirements that parkways and adjoining slopes of West Lilac Road reflect the agricultural history of the project site and California Foothills landscape theme. Formal groves of trees, with informal accent groupings of Oak and Sycamores, would form the primary landscape of West Lilac Road and adjoining slopes would additionally be planted with native and drought-tolerant species. Details such as rural themed rail fences, vine arbors, low stone walls, and decomposed granite trails would be used to further reinforce the design theme along this corridor. However, both these areas would introduce patterns of development at a scale and density that would contrast with the composition of the existing visual environment.

The parkway width along West Lilac Road would range in size from 12 to 15 feet. As shown in Figure 2.1-23, broad domed and vertical accent trees and shrubs would be placed along the West Lilac Road corridor. Maintenance of the landscaped areas is a specific responsibility pursuant to Section IV.D of the Specific Plan, which states that maintenance of the landscaped parkways be maintained by the property owners through the HOA or assessment mechanism such as a Landscape Maintenance District. While additional project features such as landscaping, building setbacks, and architectural details would help reduce the visual impacts associated with the project along the West Lilac Road corridor, its construction would still change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity. This would contrast with the existing visual environment and result in physical changes that adversely affect the viewshed. This would be a **significant impact** to views from West Lilac Road (**Impact V-1**).

At project entries, due to the higher elevation, more expansive views of the project would be available between proposed streetscape plantings and structures. Specifically, at the western entrance off West Lilac Road, the project's single-family detached houses, preserved riparian open space, and manufactured slopes (to 30 feet) would be visible. Likewise, views from the eastern entrance off West Lilac Road would include single-family detached and single-family attached residential areas, a park site, and the Town Center. Overall, however, these views would be buffered by planted streetscapes, and landscaped slopes. Additionally, background ridgelines and peaks would remain intact as dominant visual elements along West Lilac Road. Visual impacts at these locations would be **less than significant**.

#### Other Area Roadways

As seen in the Proposed Conditions KOPs 11c and 16, Figures 2.1-8 and 2.1-9, respectively, the project would be visible from Covey Lane (KOP 11c), and Nelson Way, which are private roads, (KOP 16), representing a change in the visual environmental from existing estate residences and agricultural land uses. Views from Nelson Way (KOP 16) would be more expansive but further away from the project. Views toward the project from these locations would encompass wetlands, natural hillsides, estate and rural residences, agricultural activities, graded slopes, domestic and transitional landscaping, along with the project's single-family detached structures. The visual portions of the project would be at a relative scale and density that would contrast moderately with the composition of the existing visual environment. Design and architectural guidelines required through implementation of the Specific Plan would minimize the contrast of the project with its surroundings to the greatest extent possible. Landscaping on slopes, along streets, and within HOA open space areas, would visually buffer and screen portions of the project from view while providing visual context by relating to foreground and background plantings. As the project's vegetation matures it would increasingly screen and buffer the project from view, enabling it, over time, to be integrated into the existing visual environment to the greatest extent possible.

The project, therefore, as seen from other area roadways, would not significantly alter the composition of the visual environment. As a result, visual impacts to the visual character of the area, as perceived by these viewers would be **less than significant**.

## Area Residences

Existing views of the project site from surrounding residences consist of large expanses of disturbed soil, active and abandoned orchards, wetlands and natural hillsides, row crops, residential structures and outbuildings, and distant peaks and ridgelines. Post construction, these residences would view patterns of development at a scale and density that would contrast with the composition of the existing visual setting. The design and architectural guidelines of the Specific Plan would ensure that the project's contrast is minimized and enable it to relate to the surrounding visual environment. For example, grading and roadways would be designed to follow the natural topography. Preserved riparian and agricultural open space would provide visual buffers and screening, serving as transitional elements between the project and surrounding areas while providing breaks in patterns of development. Residential and commercial areas would implement architectural treatments to enable them to better relate to other elements in the project viewshed.

Tall manufactured slopes would be softened with natural appearing plantings that relate to the surrounding hillsides while visually screening project elements from area residences. Informal patterns of medium-sized street trees with broad canopies would provide additional screening of project elements and offer visual context by relating to tree patterns in the surrounding area. Additionally, verdant pockets of domestic landscaping would visually buffer and screen project elements from view and provide additional visual context by relating to surrounding residential landscapes.

Fuel-modification/fire safety zones would be located between the outer edge of houses and the surrounding natural hillsides and riparian areas in accordance with the project's FPP. These areas would be pruned and thinned to remove combustible material. Tree spacing would be controlled within these areas such that dense tree groupings are not permitted and therefore screening opportunities are limited.

Overall, notwithstanding implementation of siting and architectural measures, and detailed landscape plan, the project would change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity as the area transitions from primarily agriculture and rural residential land uses to a more suburban pattern of development (refer to KOP-11c, 16, 17a; Figures 2.1-7, 2.1-9, and 2.1-16, respectively). This would contrast with the existing visual environment and would result in physical changes that would adversely affect the viewshed. This would be a **significant impact** to these views (**Impact V-2**).

## Construction (Short-Term)

The project would be graded and constructed in several different phases dependent on market conditions. Grading is anticipated to be done in phases per the Phasing Plan, as shown on Figure 1-17. Grading operations may be graded in individual phases or occur simultaneously on more than one phase at any given time. The County Grading, Clearing and Watercourses Ordinance requires that as grading is completed for each phase, ground cover would be planted and, if required, temporary irrigation installed. This would protect against erosion and instability while also providing a visual softening to the appearance of the graded areas until construction of homes and associated facilities are complete. As discussed above, views into the project site along West Lilac Road would be immediate and seen by all who use that roadway. These views will be

obscured by the construction of a noise wall as soon as grading would allow, blocking the view of construction along that road.

Visible construction activities during project build-out would contrast with existing conditions due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements, including raw soil, newly cut or filled slopes, construction fencing, construction equipment, and construction materials stockpiling and storage. These would be visible from each KOP location discussed above. Construction activities would disrupt the existing visual character of the project site for several years. Landscaping, installed subsequent to each construction phase, would help reduce adverse visual effects of grading activities and building construction. Immediately following project construction and sale, safety and other resulting lighting effects would result in increased glow over existing conditions. While street trees and internal landscaping, when mature, would help buffer the homes from views to the project from off-site areas, softening sharp edges, unifying the project, and diminishing project lighting and glare, this would not be the case in the short term. While temporary in nature and addressed through project design landscaping over the long-term, the construction-period visual character impacts would be **significant (Impact V-3)**.

#### Off-Site Improvements

Several off-site improvements would be required in conjunction with build-out of the project. Off-site improvements would consist mainly of improvements to surrounding area roadways and are described in detail in Chapter 1.0. Two of the options for fire service for the project would be the expansion of the existing Miller Station (also known as DSFPD Station 15) or co-location of a new DSFPD station on the Miller Station site. Miller Station is located midway along the project's northern boundary on West Lilac Road. Design of the station would be dependent on a final agreement, but anticipated construction could include an expansion of the existing or construction of a new building at approximately 7,000 square feet (2,500 square feet engine room and 4,500-square-foot living quarters).

Additional off-site improvements include several roadway segments and intersections in the vicinity that would be widened, repaved, and restriped. These would include the following:

- West Lilac Road from:
  - Old Highway 395 to I-15 Bridge
  - I-15 Bridge segment
  - I-15 Bridge to westerly roundabout at Main Street connection
  - Along northerly project boundary to easterly roundabout
  - Intersection West Lilac Road at Old Highway 395
- Covey Lane from:
  - Within project boundary
  - From project boundary to West Lilac Road
- Rodriguez Road from proposed Lilac Hills Ranch Road to Covey Lane
- Mountain Ridge Road from project boundary to Circle R.

A sewer and recycled water line extension would be constructed within the same trench from the southern boundary of the project site connecting to the Lower Moosa Canyon WRF. The initial development of the project would be provided wastewater service by the transfer of wastewater from a collection point on-site, to the Lower Moosa Canyon WRF up to a maximum of 250,000 gallons of wastewater. Thereafter, one of three wastewater treatment options would be selected by the VCMWD, including construction of the on-site WRF, as detailed previously in subchapter 1.2.1.7. The initial transfer of waste, and construction of facilities, would be covered within the capacity allowance of the existing MUP Modification issued to the Lower Moosa Canyon WRF in 1996 (P73-018W). The project applicant would be responsible for the cost of upgrading and installing the equipment required for the additional treatment processes to accommodate the project's waste. No expansion beyond the Lower Moosa Canyon WRF footprint, as approved in the MUP Modification, would be required.

Off-site road improvements include both private and public roadways. Sight distance is adequate, except for the intersection of Covey Lane and West Lilac Road. Because this location is within the future mapped ROW for West Lilac Road, sight distance was studied in the County's General Plan Update (GPU) EIR and clearing for sight distance is part of the County TIF improvements. This area is comprised of ornamental trees and a number of coast live oaks. The bank could require shaving and the oaks would need to be trimmed back. The project proponent would request an off-site Clear Space Easement from the property owners. As discussed in the biological resources report sight distance addendum letter (Attachment 13 to the Biological Resources Technical Report [see Appendix G]), **no impacts** would occur as a result of clearing for adequate sight distance.

The single off-site road improvement to a private road is to Mountain Ridge Road. That road would require minor grading to add two feet of paving to either side of the existing roadway and to fill an existing "dip". These improvements would extend from the southern property boundary to Circle R Road, a distance of 3,800 feet. The intent is to meet existing private road standards while changing the appearance of the road as little as possible.

All other off-site road improvements are to public roads, and would be constructed to public road standards, except as modified and accepted by the County. Covey Lane off-site would be graded to a width of 40 feet, with 28 feet of paving for a distance of approximately 600 feet.

Off-site improvements to West Lilac Road would include minimal grading from Old Highway 395 to the I-15 bridge, and would be done within the existing right-of-way. Over the I-15 bridge, improvements would consist of adding a curb and sidewalk to the south side. Additional minor improvements would be made to several intersections as noted in the Traffic Impact Study. These would consist of striping and the installation of traffic signals.

Overall, impacts to the visual character of the viewshed associated with off-site improvements would be **less than significant** because the improvements would be to existing roads and would not substantially alter the appearance of the roads by adding additional lanes.

#### **2.1.2.4 Issue 4: Light**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would create a new source of substantial light, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

##### Impact Analysis

Section III.D.10 of the Specific Plan identifies lighting concepts, describing how lighting throughout the project would be done in a manner that minimizes light intrusion onto adjacent properties through the use of fixtures that are compatible with the design of each planning area and that light be shielded and directed downward. Park P-10 would be designed per County Park Standards and could have pole-mounted lighting installed to light sports fields per County standards.

A photometric design concept was created for the project in order to assure compliance with both the Bonsall and Valley Center outdoor lighting ordinances. The project would use the latest technology LED light sources to offer preferred color temperature of 4500° Kelvin. Fixtures would have full cut-off with no lighting generated past the 90° nadir to meet all requirements of the Light Pollution Code Zone B requirements. For street lighting, single pole arm-mounted fixtures with a type III distribution would be used. These fixtures, in general, throw light ahead and in front of the fixture head and to each side, with minimal back lighting. Along the main entry road where a center median occurs, double pole arm-mounted fixtures would be used, with a pole-to-pole spacing of 120 feet.

All project lighting would be designed to minimize new sources of substantial light and would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code (Sections 59.108-59.110). Therefore, the project would result in **less than significant** lighting impacts that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

#### **2.1.2.5 Issue 5: Glare**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance:

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact if it would create a new source of substantial light, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

According to the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a), the project would have a significant impact if it would install highly reflective buildings materials, including but not limited to reflective glass or a high-gloss surface color that would create daytime glare and be visible from a roadway, pedestrian walkway, or areas frequently used for outdoor activities on adjacent properties.

### Impact Analysis

No highly reflective materials are proposed in conjunction with any permitted on-site use. Solar panels would be allowed on all buildings. Solar panels currently in use are not made of reflective materials. Such installations throughout the project would be per County regulations.

The exterior surfaces of buildings within the project generally would be covered stucco or concrete, and may include stone architectural accents. Within the non-residential portions of the project, the main color of all buildings would be earth tones, such as warm gray, off-white, or beige. Vegetation would also block some of the potential glare, particularly along roadways, pedestrian walkways, or where visible from neighboring properties. Therefore, the project would result in **less than significant** visual impacts due to the glare from highly reflective building materials.

#### **2.1.2.6 Issue 6: Consistency with Applicable Policies and Planning Documents**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on the *County's* Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a), the project would result in a potentially significant visual impact if it would not comply with applicable state or local goals, policies or requirements related to visual resources, including but not limited to the California Scenic Highway Program, San Diego County Scenic Highway Program, San Diego County General Plan (Conservation and Open Space Element), the Natural Community Conservation Plan, BCP, VCCP, and Design Guidelines including the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance (Scenic Area, Subdivision, and Design Review Area regulations) and the RPO.

### Impact Analysis

#### State of California Scenic Highway Program

The project site is not visible from a designated state scenic highway or scenic vista and is not located within the I-15 Subregional Plan and Design Review Corridor. While the project site is not subject to the I-15 Guidelines, a portion of the project site is visible from a segment of I-15. This visible segment is designated as a County Scenic Highway pursuant to the County General Plan. As discussed above, the project impact to views from I-15 would be **less than significant**.

#### County of San Diego General Plan Land Use Element

While this issue is discussed in greater detail in subchapter 3.1.4, Land Use Planning, it is relevant to address here that the project is designed to conform with the County's guiding principles for land use, notably the Community Development Model. The County has established this model for community development based on a physical structure where a Town Center is surrounded by less dense and intense land uses. The Community Development Model reflects higher density neighborhoods and a pedestrian-oriented center providing a focal point for commercial and civic life. Lower density, single-family neighborhoods, as well as a broad range of commercial or industrial uses, would surround the commercial core.

Consistent with Community Development Model, the project's Town and Neighborhood Centers contain the densest neighborhoods and a broad range of commercial and civic uses that are supported by a network of local roads containing bicycle lanes and walkways linking the central neighborhoods with parks, schools, and public areas. Outside of the Town and Neighborhood Centers, the project proposes areas of lower density. Because the project conforms to the Community Development, impacts associated with the project's conformance with the General Plan Land Use Element are **less than significant**.

#### County of San Diego General Plan – Conservation and Open Space Element

As discussed under Issue 1, above, the project site would be visible from one County-designated scenic highway. I-15 is located approximately a quarter of a mile from the site and northbound motorists have a distant view of the site for approximately 1,600 feet or 16 seconds. As discussed above in subchapter 2.1.2.1, the project impact to views from I-15 would be **less than significant**. Thus, the project would be consistent with County Policies COS-11.1 (Protection of Scenic Resources) and COS-11.3 (Development Siting and Design).

#### Valley Center Community Plan

The VCCP outlines goals and policies that seek to preserve the current community character. Consistency of the project with the community character goals and policies of the VCCP is discussed in subchapter 3.1.4, Land Use Planning, of this EIR.

#### Valley Center Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines designate specific types of development projects in which design review is a required step for the approval process. Single-family development is not a form of development that is subject to the Design Guidelines. All of the commercial, mixed-use, and civic use development identified by the Specific Plan located within the Town and Neighborhood Centers (15.3 acres) are subject to the Design Guidelines, and these areas have the C34 Use Regulation requiring a "B" Special Area regulator. This requires submittal and review of a Site Plan to assure conformance to the applicable guidelines. Additionally, development applications for single-family attached use would be subject to the application of the "D" Special Area Development Regulator requiring Site Plan approval. The Design Guidelines include several design objectives relevant to the projects, which are listed below.

#### *Preservation of Natural Features and Open Spaces*

- Clustering of higher density residential development to preserve the valley's open spaces and meadows.
- Guidelines to incorporate existing natural features into new site development.
- Hillside protection to reduce grading, large building pads and retaining walls.

Specific Plan Policy 8, Open Space/Conservation addresses the project's sensitivity to the preservation of sensitive resources and open space. The project, as proposed would cluster higher density residential development to preserve the sensitive wetlands

and riparian habitat. Over 103.6 acres of natural open space, including sensitive wetlands and biological open space, would be preserved as permanent open space throughout the development. Sensitive hillsides would be protected from development and grading would be minimized through the implementation of Grading Plan Development Standards, as set forth in Section III.F of the Specific Plan. These guidelines require landform grading techniques including the blending and rounding of slopes, roadways, and building pads to reflect the existing surrounding contours by undulating slopes and replicating the natural terrain.

#### *Architectural Character*

- Architectural continuity based on the elements of and character of early California buildings.
- Guidelines identifying the elements, but allowing sufficient design flexibility to achieve variety.
- Buildings sensitive to the natural landscape.

Specific Plan Policy 2, Community Design and Operation addresses the project's dedication to the development of an architectural palate that establishes a theme and character reminiscent of the diverse architecture present in many early California villages and towns. A variety of architectural styles are proposed that relate to the styles and character of early California buildings. As detailed in Section III.E of the Specific Plan, each type of development is required to adhere to specific architectural, site planning, and landscape requirements appropriate for the type of use. Implementation of these requirements would provide a framework for implementing the Valley Center Design Guidelines.

#### *Streetlight, Roadway, and Sidewalk Standards*

Specific Plan Policy 10, Circulation addresses the creation of an integrated circulation system that serves convenient and safe vehicular traffic, as well as providing alternative modes of circulation, such as transit, bikeways, and pedestrian paths and trails. County engineering standards would be modified when feasible to reinforce Valley Center's rural residential character. The following should be considered:

- A special streetlight standard.
- Rolled concrete curbs in road construction, except in the town center and industrial area.
- In areas where sidewalks are required, separate the sidewalk from the curb by a planting strip.

Where feasible, County engineering standards are modified to reinforce the project's rural residential character. Section II.D of the Specific Plan discusses the various types of roads, sidewalks, and trails to be included in the project. These are further illustrated in the "Typical Street Sections," Specific Plan Figures 25 through 51. The circulation system provides a variety of routes through the project site, including meandering sidewalks. Sidewalks along roads would be separated from curbs with a planting strip

and rural fencing along soft surface trails in accordance with County standards. Special pedestrian lighting is proposed for common areas throughout the project.

Therefore, as described, the project would be consistent with the Valley Center Design Guidelines, and **no visual impact** would result from implementation of the project.

#### Bonsall Community Plan

Like the VCCP, the BCP also provides policies and recommendations relevant to community character. Consistency of the project with the community character goals and policies of the BCP is discussed in subchapter 3.1.4, Land Use Planning, of this EIR.

#### Bonsall Design Guidelines

The Bonsall Design Guidelines includes the following guidelines relevant to the development of the project.

##### *Preserve the Rural Bonsall Landscape*

- Protect the undeveloped character of Bonsall's hillsides.
- Design residential developments to protect existing topography and other natural features in layout of streets, lots, and grading patterns.

Specific Plan Policy 8, Open Space/Conservation addresses the protection of steep slopes on-site and the commitment to contour grading techniques to protect the undeveloped character of Bonsall's hillsides. The project has been designed to reflect the existing topography with streets and neighborhoods following the natural layout of the land.

##### *Scenic Roads*

- Minimize road realignments and widening, consistent with public safety considerations to West Lilac Road.
- Create a "road edge zone" of consistent design to emphasize the natural rural character.
- Preserve existing natural landforms, rock outcroppings, and mature trees along these routes
- Encourage wooden equestrian and agricultural fencing along these roads.

Off-site roadway improvements include the following: West Lilac Road along the northern boundary of the project site; West Lilac Road from the project entrance west to the intersection of Old Highway 395; Lilac Hills Ranch Road connection between Phases 3 and 4; Covey Lane from the project to West Lilac Road; Fire Apparatus Access from the project to Rodriguez Road; Rodriguez Road from the intersection of Lilac Hills Ranch Road to Covey Lane, and Mountain Ridge Road from the project to Circle R Drive.

Minor improvements will be made to several intersections as noted in the Traffic Impact Study, including the following:

- West Lilac Road from:
  - Old Highway 395 to I-15 Bridge: widened, repaved, restriped
  - I-15 Bridge segment: restriped
  - I-15 Bridge to westerly roundabout at Main Street connection: widened, repaved, restriped
  - Along northerly project boundary to easterly roundabout: half-width widening, repaving, restriping
  - Intersection West Lilac Road at Old Highway 395: signalization
- Covey Lane
  - Within project boundary: realigned, widened, repaved, restriped
  - From project boundary to West Lilac Road: widened, repaved, restriped
- Rodriguez Road (from proposed Lilac Hills Ranch Road to Covey Lane): widened, repaved, restriped
- Mountain Ridge Road (from project boundary to Circle R): Widened, repaved, restriped. (170-foot vertical curve added at southern end of Mountain Ridge to accommodate 15 mph design speed; i.e., road slightly raised from existing)

These will consist of striping and the installation of traffic signals. Proposed sewer improvements would occur entirely within existing off-site roadways.

The frontage improvements along West Lilac Road would be made to the south side of West Lilac Road, within the dedicated right-of-way, consistent with the County guidelines and road standards for a 2.2F roadway. The project includes modifications to the standards, except as modified by Specific Plan Policies 9, 10(b) and 10(c) and accepted by the County.

#### *Site Planning Principles*

- Integrate new development within the landscape of valleys and canyons.
- Create wide, landscaped building setbacks along public roads.
- Minimize the visual impact of parking lots by dense perimeter edge planting and internal tree canopies.

Specific Plan Policy 2, Community Design and Operation addresses the project's integration with existing natural resources preserved on-site to the maximum extent practicable. Development adjacent to wetlands and natural hillsides would provide setback buffers and transitional plantings to respect these natural edge conditions. Expanded, landscaped parkways are proposed along primary public roadways. Section III.D of the Specific Plan provides detailed guidelines for landscaping of parking lots including the use of dense perimeter edge plantings and internal tree canopies.

#### *Architectural Character*

- Encourage architectural character that is sensitive to Bonsall's rural setting.
- Encourage exterior spaces, such as courtyards, verandas, arcades and balconies.

Specific Plan Policy 2, Community Design and Operation addresses the project's inclusion of an architectural palate that captures the design of California's early days and would be sensitive to Bonsall's rural setting. Architectural design requirements contained within Section III of the Specific Plan requires the provision of exterior spaces such as courtyards, verandas, arcades, and balconies within residential and mixed use areas.

Therefore, the project would be consistent with the Bonsall Design Guidelines, and **no visual impact** would result from the project.

*San Diego County Zoning Ordinance (Scenic Area, Subdivision, and Design Review Area regulations)*

As established in the Lilac Hills Ranch Specific Plan, all single-family residential development would be regulated by the application of the "D" Special Area Designator in the RU Zone, which would require that a detailed Site Plan be submitted and approved with each Tentative Map proposing single-family lots. The Site Plan would be required to ensure that the proposed lot setbacks, architecture, building materials and landscaping, would conform to the development standards established within the Specific Plan. Mixed-use residential development within the C34 Zone would require a Site Plan, and would be regulated by the application of the "V" Setback designator.

Site Plan approval also would be required for commercial areas and the mixed-use areas of the Village Center (identified with a "B," Special Area Designator) in order to ensure a compliance with the design standards in the Lilac Hills Ranch Specific Plan; therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

*RPO Steep Slopes*

As discussed under Issue 2 above, the project would preserve the surrounding ridgelines, although project grading would impact 1.6 acres of RPO steep slopes, this amount is within the 10 percent allowance permitted under RPO. The disturbance of a relatively small area of steep slopes would not degrade the visual quality of that resource; therefore, project impacts to scenic resources would be **less than significant**.

### **2.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Projects contributing to cumulative visual effects include those within the project viewshed or the area within which the viewer is most likely to observe both the project and surrounding land uses. As previously described, the project viewshed is generally confined to the areas located within the ridgelines that surround the I-15 corridor and the project site. From the northwest project corner, Old West Lilac Road serves as the northern boundary of the project site, while Rodriguez Road serves generally as the project boundary to the south and east. From the southwest project corner, the western boundary of the project runs along Old Highway 395 and extends to Palimo Drive. From there, the project site extends back to Shirey Road, which serves as the northwestern project boundary.

This viewshed is virtually contiguous with the Localized Cumulative Project Impact Study Area, illustrated on Figure 1-24. Table 1-5 provides a complete list of cumulative projects within the localized cumulative impact study area, which were used in assessing

cumulative visual impacts. This list includes five Property Specific Requests totaling 339 acres (identified as Map Key #9).

A cumulative impact to visual resources would result if the project, along with projects within the cumulative study area, would result in an overall change in the visual character of the viewshed. Of the 12 projects analyzed, five are minor residential subdivisions, proposing between one to five new single-family residences, most of which are located generally southeast of the project site. These residential subdivisions would be located within existing neighborhoods at (higher/lower) elevations and would not change the existing character of the viewshed. Two of the projects within the cumulative study area are major subdivisions. These projects propose the development of single-family residences over 62 acres of currently undeveloped lands. Similarly to the minor residential subdivisions, these projects would visually blend into the existing character of the viewshed.

Of the five Property Specific Requests, two are located adjacent to the project site: VC54 to the east and VC11 just south of Covey Lane. The remaining three are located just south of the project site. Each of these project sites have General Plan designations of SR-4 and have been referred to a General Plan Amendment to change their designation to SR-2. Approval of the requests would result in an increase in allowable dwelling units within the 339 acres. Like the proposed project, the Property Specific Requests illustrate an intention of the surrounding property owners to pursue residential opportunities.

These projects would combine with the proposed project and change the composition of the visual environment as the area transitions from primarily agriculture and rural residential land uses to a more suburban pattern of development. This would result in physical changes that would adversely affect the viewshed. The project therefore, in conjunction with cumulatively considerable projects, would result in a **cumulatively significant** adverse visual impact (**Impact V-4**).

#### **2.1.4 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation**

The following significant impacts related to visual impacts would occur with project implementation:

**Impact V-1:** The proposed project would change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity, as viewed from West Lilac Road. This would be a significant impact to views from West Lilac Road.

**Impact V-2:** The proposed project would change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity, as viewed from surrounding residential areas resulting in a significant impact.

**Impact V-3:** During project construction, the site would conflict with the surrounding visual characteristics. While this impact is temporary, short-term visual impacts would be significant.

**Impact V-4:** The composition of the project viewshed would be adversely affected by physical changes introduced by the project along with projects within the

cumulative project area. These changes would not be compatible with the existing visual character of the area resulting in significant cumulative visual impacts.

### **2.1.5 Mitigation**

**M-V-1:** Street trees shall be planted at close intervals to assure the overlapping foliage would provide adequate screening of the project site from views along West Lilac Road.

**M-V-2:** The commencement of construction of each subsequent phase will be lengthened to accommodate mature growth of landscaping of the previous phase.

### **2.1.6 Conclusion**

The project site would be briefly visible from a roadway designated as a County scenic highway, I-15 (Issue 1). Although it would be briefly visible to motorists on I-15, the project's visual elements would appear similar to existing elements, and the project would not substantially change the composition of the existing visual environment. The project would not result in a significant visual impact to viewers traveling along the I-15 corridor. Impacts associated with scenic vistas would be less than significant.

The project would not result in physical changes that would substantially degrade the quality of an identified scenic resource (Issue 2). The project would result in the elimination of a relatively small area of steep slopes but would not degrade the visual quality of that resource; therefore, project impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

The project would change the composition of the visual environment in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity (Issue 3). The project would replace the existing views of domestic and grove vegetation along approximately 0.6 mile of West Lilac Road and within areas viewed by local residences (Impacts V-1 and V-2). The project includes implementation of architectural measures and a detailed landscape plan, all included in the project's Specific plan, which are intended to reduce the visual impacts associated with such changes.

Implementation of M-V-1 would serve to assist the landscaping requirements found in the Specific Plan. This mitigation measure requires street trees planted at close intervals to assure the overlapping foliage would provide adequate screening of the project site from views along West Lilac Road. While implementation of this measure would assist in reducing this impact, the mitigation measure is infeasible due to the creation of potential fire hazards. Due to the proximity of the landscaped area to residential uses, brush management requirements including the provision of horizontal and vertical clearances, and shaping of trees greater than four feet in height. Conformance with fire regulations would negate the functional effect of the mitigation measure. Therefore, the measure is infeasible and impacts to existing views would remain significant and unavoidable.

Short-term construction activities, typical of projects of this nature, would contrast with the existing visual character due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements, including raw soil, newly cut or filled slopes,

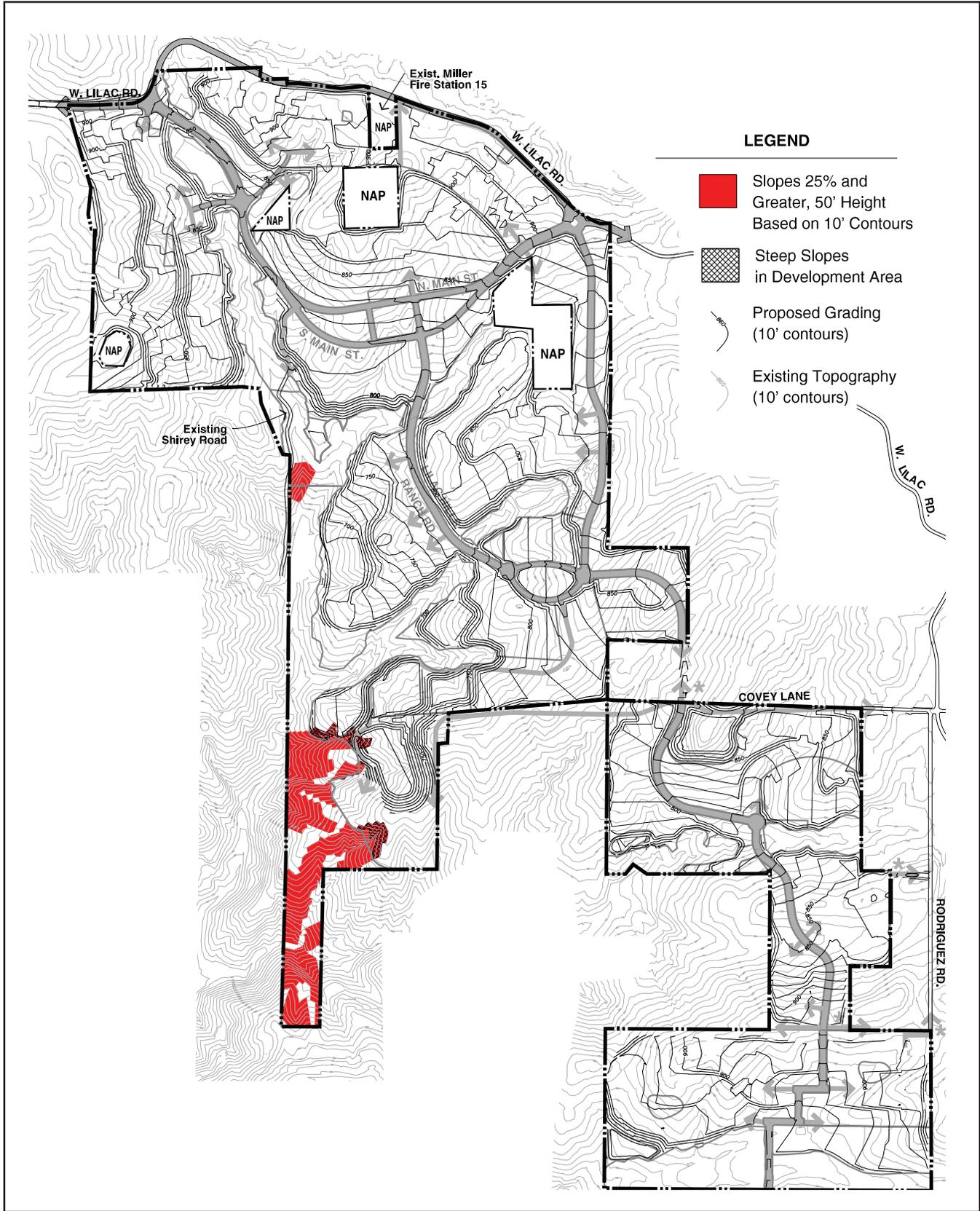
construction period fencing, construction equipment, and construction materials stockpiling and storage (Issue 3). While temporary in nature, short-term adverse impacts to visual character would be significant (Impact V-3). Implementation of M-V-2 would lengthen time between construction phases to allow landscaping of the previous phase to grow to maturity prior to commencement of the next phase. While this measure would serve to reduce the views of raw soil and construction activities during the interim period it is infeasible because construction and grading of each phase is dependent upon the infrastructure in another phase and no mitigation beyond project design features already incorporated is available for these impacts. Therefore, short-term construction-related visual impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

All outdoor light fixtures would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code, and highly reflective building materials would not be installed. Impacts associated with increased light and glare would be less than significant (Issues 4 and 5).

Additionally, the project would meet all applicable policies and be consistent with relevant planning documents (Issue 6).

Finally, the composition of the project viewshed would be adversely affected by physical changes introduced by the project along with projects within the cumulative project area. The changes associated with the cumulative projects within the viewshed would not be compatible with the existing visual character of the area (Impact V-4). While implementation of M-V-1 would reduce the project's contribution to the cumulative impact, this measure is infeasible as explained above. Cumulative visual impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

In accordance with Section 15126.6(a), Chapter 4.0 of the EIR includes an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project that would reduce or avoid significant impacts. Table 4-2 shows those alternatives that would reduce significant and unavoidable visual impacts associated with the project. Refer to Chapter 4.0 for a detailed analysis of the alternatives.

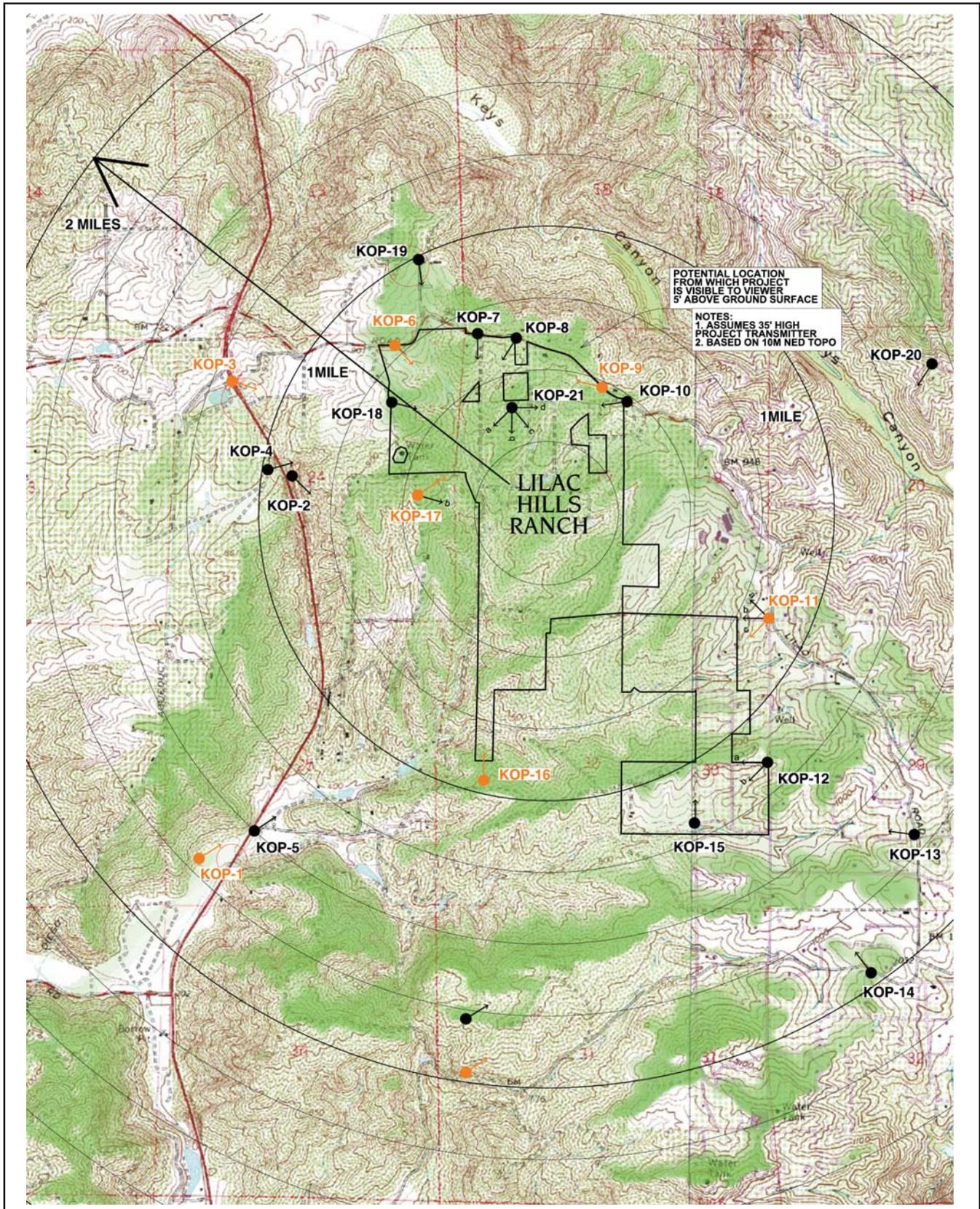


Not to Scale



FIGURE 2.1-1

RPO Steep Slopes on Project Site



Not to Scale



FIGURE 2.1-2  
Project Viewshed



KOP 6 - View looking southeast from a location on West Lilac Road near the northwestern project boundary.



Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

FIGURE 2.1-3  
Key Observation Point 6



KOP 7 - View from a location on West Lilac Road looking south toward project. Note biological open space and NAP parcel in middle ground.



KOP 8 - View from a location on West Lilac Road looking southwest toward project.



Existing Condition

KOP 9 - View looking northwest on West Lilac Road near the northwestern project boundary.



Proposed Condition

Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.



KOP 10 - View looking west on West Lilac Road near the northeastern project boundary and approximate limits of the eastern viewshed of West Lilac Road.



KOP 11a - View looking northwest from a location near the intersection of West Lilac Road and Covey Lane approximately 0.1 mile from project.



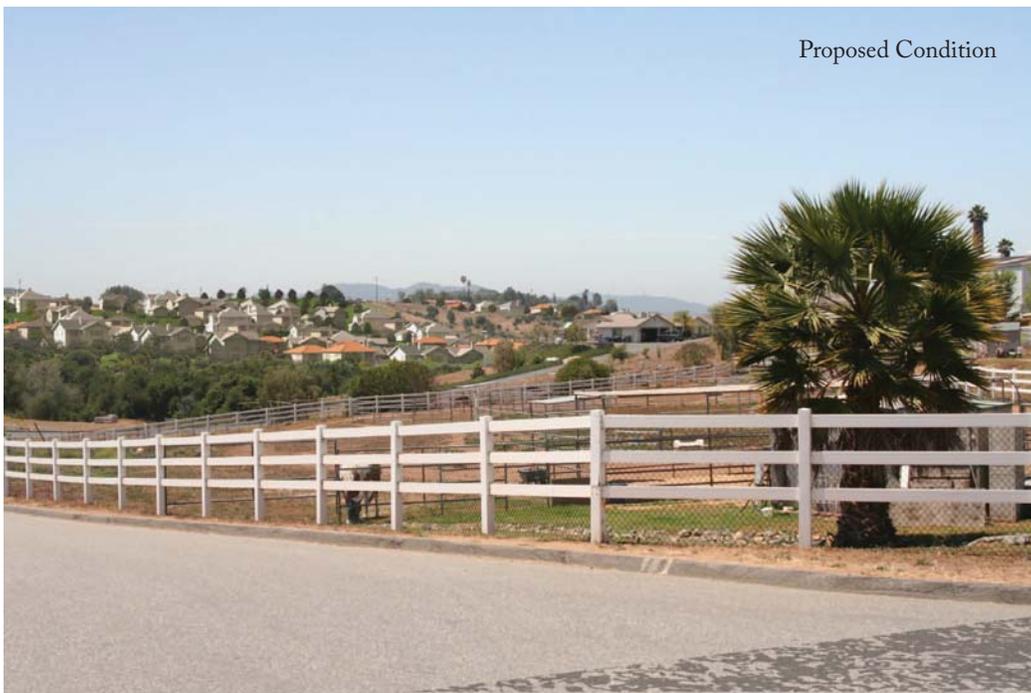
KOP 11b - View looking west from a location near the intersection of West Lilac Road and Covey Lane approximately 0.1 mile from project.

FIGURE 2.1-7

Key Observation Points 11a and 11b



KOP 11C - Private view looking southwest from a location near the intersection of West Lilac Road and Covey Lane approximately 0.1 mile from project.



Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

FIGURE 2.1-8  
Key Observation Points 11c



KOP 16 - Private view looking north from a location on Nelson Way, approximately 0.1 mile south of project boundary.



Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

FIGURE 2.1-9  
Key Observation Point 16



Existing Condition

KOP 1 - Zoomed view from a location on Interstate 15 looking northeast from a location approximately 0.6 mile from project.



Proposed Condition

Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.



KOP 2 - View from a location on Interstate 15 looking southeast from a location approximately 0.4 mile from project.

FIGURE 2.1-11  
Key Observation Point 2



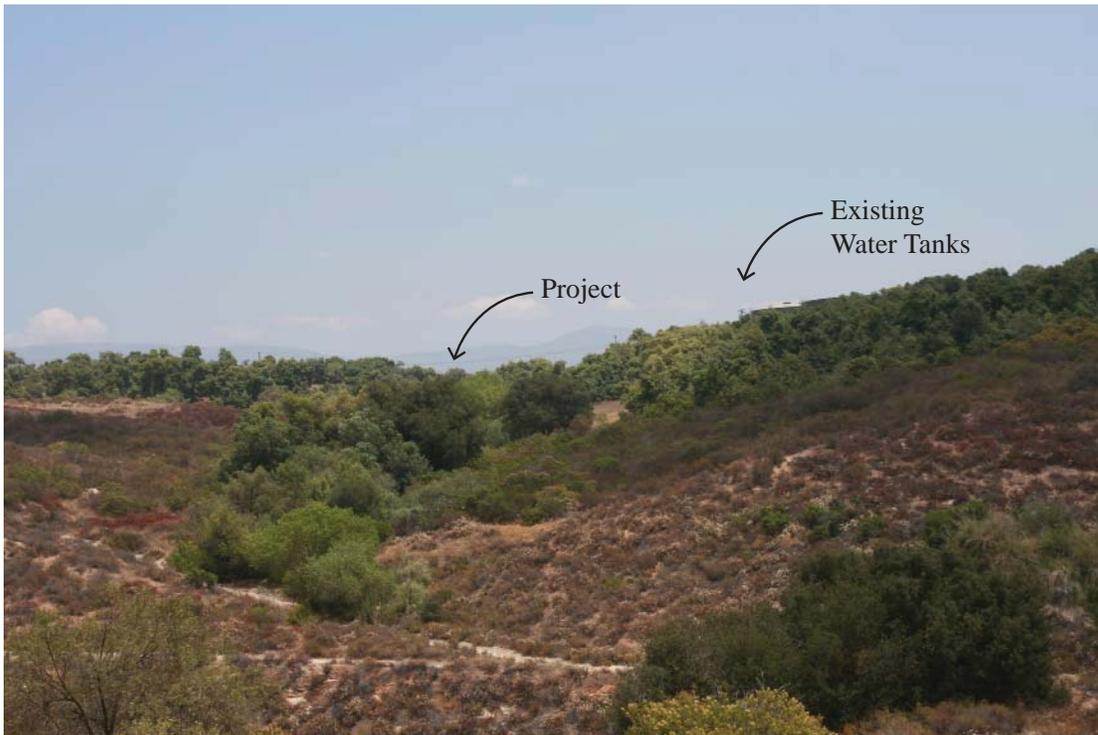
Existing Condition

KOP 3 - Zoomed view from a location on Old Highway 395 looking southeast from a location approximately 0.5 mile from project.



Proposed Condition

Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.



KOP 4 - View from Old Highway 395 looking northeast from a location approximately 0.4 mile from project.



KOP 5 - View from Old Highway 395 looking northeast from a location approximately 0.6 mile from project.



KOP 12a - Private view from the intersection of Rodriguez Road and Jay Jay Way looking west toward the project.



KOP 12b - Private view from the intersection of Rodriguez Road and Jay Jay Way looking west toward the project.

FIGURE 2.1-14

Key Observation Points 12a and 12b



KOP 13 - View from the intersection of West Lilac Road and Paseo de Flora, approximately 0.75 mile from project.



KOP 14 - View looking northwest from a location of West Lilac approximately 0.3 mile from project (not visible).

FIGURE 2.1-15

Key Observation Points 13 and 14



KOP 17a - Private view looking northwest towards project from a location southeast of the existing water tanks that are located within the overall project boundary.



Note: This simulation represents approximate project conditions based on information available at time of study.

FIGURE 2.1-16  
Key Observation Point 17a



KOP 17b - Private view looking southeast towards project from a location southeast of the existing water tanks located within the overall project boundary.



KOP 18- Private view from Stadel Lane looking southeast toward project.

FIGURE 2.1-17

Key Observation Points 17b and 18



KOP 19 - View looking south from a location of West Lilac Road, approximately 0.25 mile north of the project.



KOP 20 - Private view looking west from a location 1 mile east of the project. Views toward project blocked by dense foreground grove vegetation and view blocking topography.

FIGURE 2.1-18

Key Observation Points 19 and 20



KOP 21a - Private view looking southwest.



KOP 21b - Private view looking south.

FIGURE 2.1-19

Key Observation Points 21a and 21b



KOP 21c - Private view looking southeast.

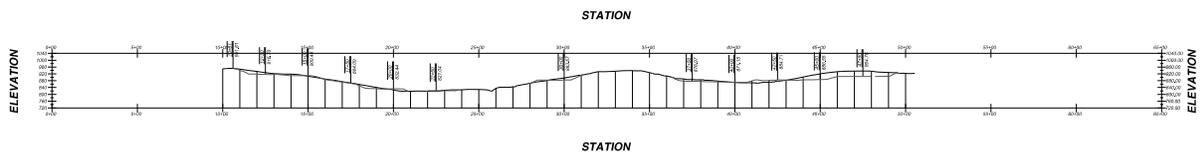


KOP 21d - Private view looking east.

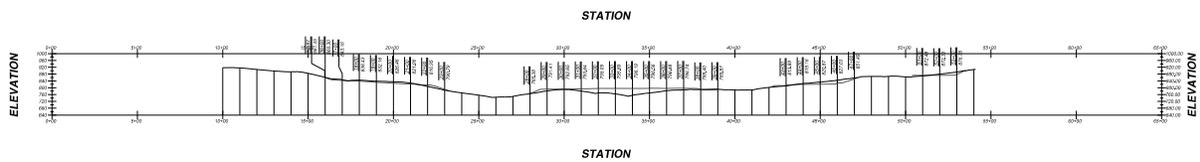
FIGURE 2.1-20

Key Observation Points 21c and 21d

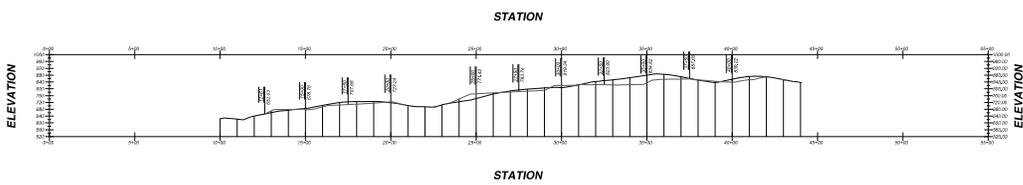
### PROFILE: SECTION A-A



### PROFILE: SECTION B-B



### PROFILE: SECTION C-C



### PROFILE: SECTION D-D

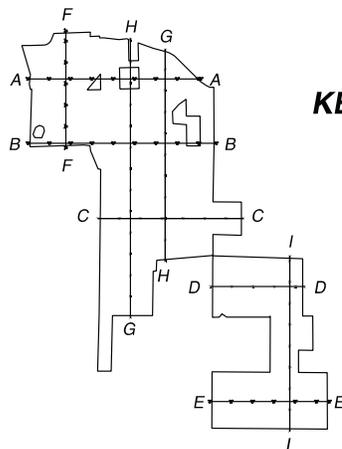
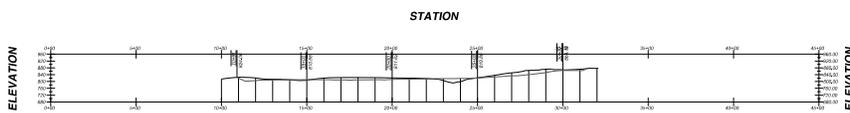
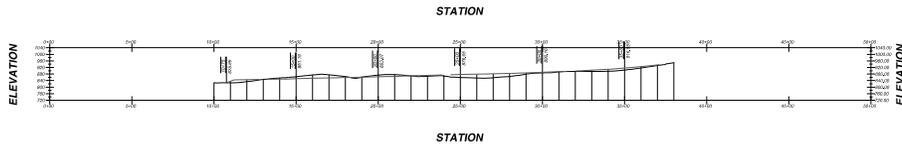


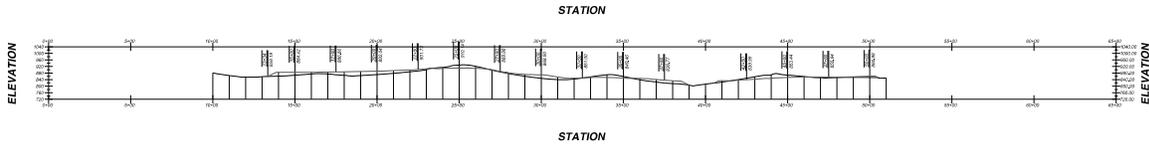
FIGURE 2.1-21

Cross Sections A, B, C, and D

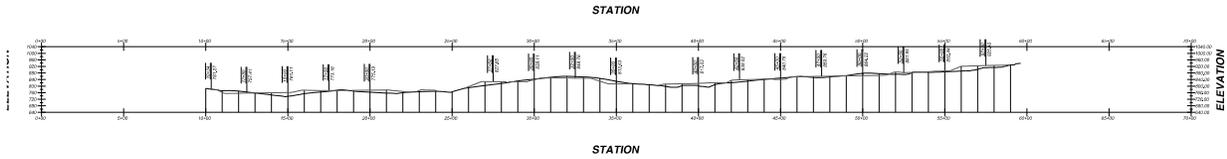
### PROFILE: SECTION E-E



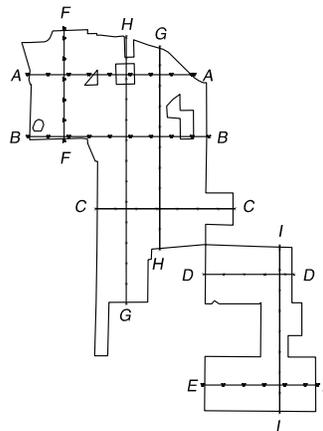
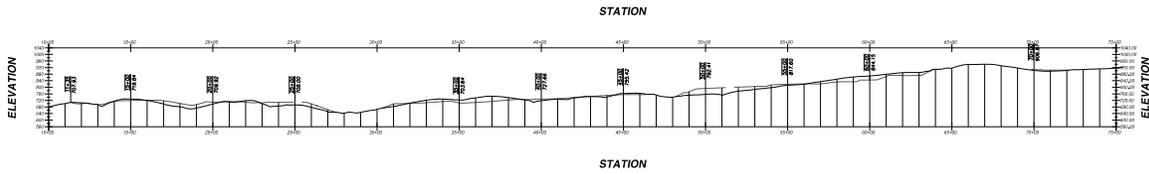
### PROFILE: SECTION F-F



### PROFILE: SECTION G-G



### PROFILE: SECTION H-H

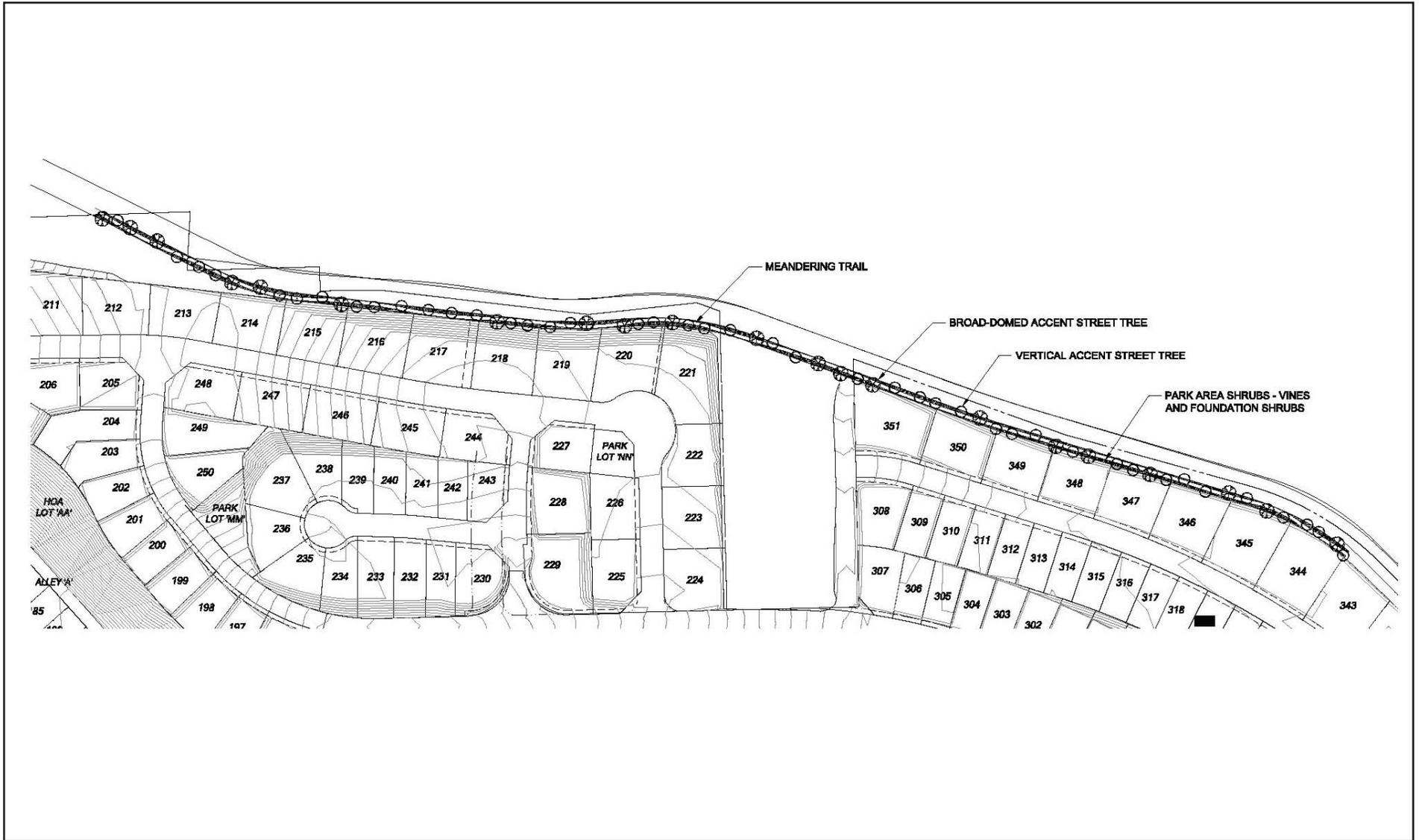


### KEY MAP

NO SCALE

FIGURE 2.1-22

Cross Sections E, F, G, and H



Not to Scale 

**FIGURE 2.1-23**  
West Lilac Road Corridor Conceptual Landscape Plan