CHAPTER 2.0

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

SUBCHAPTER 2.1

AESTHETICS

CHAPTER 2.0 – SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This chapter of the EIR provides a detailed 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 required to be implemented as part of the Proposed Project.

At the beginning of each subchapter, there is a brief discussion of the extent to which the technical topic was addressed in the 1981 Sycamore Springs and 1983 Campus Park (Hewlett Packard) certified EIRs. A summary is presented regarding the significance identified for the impacts assessed in those documents, as well as whether mitigation was identified to lower significant impacts to less than significant levels. A brief assessment is then presented regarding the extent to which the earlier analyses are relevant, leading to a conclusion regarding whether or not new technical efforts were necessary for this subsequent EIR.

With regard to the impacts requiring new analyses, the subchapters below address existing conditions, set forth the technical analyses on which the section is based, present guidelines for the determination of significance (and the sources thereof), analyze the potential effects of Project implementation against existing and anticipated future conditions (including the potential cumulative effect of other likely projects also being implemented), identify potential mitigation measures, and assess whether or not implementation of those measures would lower identified significant impacts to less than significant levels. As appropriate, discussion in Chapter 2.0 also identifies issues specific to locations of on- or off-site Project effects, and any differences between development **Scenarios 1** and **2** as defined in Chapter 1 of this EIR.

In order to assist the reader in tracking between impacts and related mitigation measures, individual impacts and the associated mitigation measures have been given correlating numbers and letters. For example, for the issue of aesthetics, the first significant impact is identified in text in the analysis portion of the discussion as AE-1, representing aesthetics impact number 1. The measure designed to attenuate that impact is identified as M-AE-1 (i.e., mitigation for aesthetics impact number 1).

2.1 Aesthetics

The 1981 Sycamore Springs EIR addressed aesthetics in Subchapters 3.10 and 7.6. The analysis found impacts to be less than significant. Based on this analysis, the 1983 EIR addressed visual impacts wholly under "Effects Found Not to Be Significant." The 1981 document acknowledged the transition from agriculture and open space to suburban development, noted visibility from nearby SR-76, and addressed the preservation of on-site open space. The 1983 document summarized on-site topographic conditions, noted visibility from nearby scenic highways (SR-76 and I-15) as well as adjacent hillsides, addressed grading totals of approximately 2.5 million cy in the northern portion of the site, proposed landscaping of open space and manufactured slopes, disclosed manufactured slopes not to exceed 30 feet (with contour grading required of all slopes exceeding 20 feet in height), and retention of the southern third of the site as passive and active open space.

The 1983-proposed on-site uses (10.5 acres of commercial, a 150-unit townhouse area and a 226-unit mobile home park), have now been revised to include multi-family residential, mixed use, limited impact industrial, and general commercial uses as well as biological open space. Project water and sewer lines are proposed off site both east and west of the Project. All these uses require both different layout and grading requirements, including slope modification in both location and extent.

At this point, additional roads under the scenic highways program should be addressed, more detailed site planning and design guidelines are available (Fallbrook Design Guidelines [1989], I-15 Corridor Scenic Guideline and the Fallbrook Community Plan [available in 1974 but amended in 1988]), photographic simulations remove a level of uncertainty about ultimate Project configuration visibility/effect, and landscaping plans are available for the Proposed Project. In addition, since 1983, evaluation of construction-period effects, as well as cumulative impacts, has increased in importance.

These issues lead to the need for new subsequent analysis based on substantial changes in the Proposed Project requiring major revisions as well as new information of substantial importance which could result in significant effects not previously discussed.

The following sections address aesthetics evaluation summarized from the Visual Impact Analysis prepared by HELIX (2013), and presented in its entirety in Appendix B to this EIR. The reader is referred to text below for new and/or revised evaluation of all issues related to aesthetics for the Project.

2.1.1 Existing Conditions

The following sections address the current conditions at the Project site, including the existing environmental setting, viewer sensitivity with regard to visibility of the Project site, and the regulatory framework currently in place. The reader is referred to Figure 1-2 in Chapter 1.0 for an overview of the site location related to cultural and natural features discussed below.

2.1.1.1 *Existing Setting*

<u>The Project Site</u>

The portion of the site north of SR-76 encompasses gently sloped knolls and flat areas that are an average of approximately 40 feet above the site's drainages. Horse Ranch Creek, a tributary of the San Luis Rey River, abuts the northern and eastern site boundaries. Horse Ranch Creek also extends along the western boundary of the site parcels south of SR-76. The topography of these parcels generally is flat, and approximately 10 to 15 feet higher than the creek. The southern-most Project boundary encompasses portions of the northern banks of the San Luis Rey River. Topographic variation on the site is moderate (refer to Figure 2.1-1, Slope Analysis), with overall site elevations generally varying approximately 30 feet.

The majority of the Project site is undeveloped; historic active uses have included farming and horse breeding. The northern portion of the Project site currently supports a non-permitted

recreation center for radio-controlled model airplanes, and includes an airstrip and miscellaneous features, such as shade structures and fences. Unpaved roads occur in several portions of the site, and Pankey Road separates the three Project parcels south of SR-76.

The Project site is primarily dominated by disturbed and non-native vegetation. The vegetation is low-growing, brown most of the year, and green after receiving rainfall. Several large trees, which occur as individuals and in groups, occur on site. In addition, a variety of native vegetation occurs along the edges of the property and in its northernmost portion, primarily in the drainage areas. One of the parcels south of SR-76 continues to support a section of citrus orchard. Refer to the Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix B) and the Biological Technical Report (Appendix G) for further descriptions of Project site vegetation.

The Project site currently has no, or very low levels of, existing lighting; the existing remote control airplane and helicopter facilities generally are not used after dark. The County LPC (also known as Dark Sky Ordinance) identifies the location of the Project site as being outside the Zone A 15-mile radius of the Palomar Observatory.

A number of photographs are provided to illustrate the existing visual character of the Project site and the surrounding area. Figure 2.1-2, Photograph Location Map, is an aerial photograph of the Project site and the surrounding area, and shows the location from which each "typical view" (TV) photograph was taken. Detailed discussion regarding elements seen in each TV depicted at the back of this chapter is provided in Appendix B. TVs one through nine (Figures 2.1-3a through 2.1-3e, Typical Views) were taken on the Project site and depict the existing land forms, vegetation, and structures on site, as well as visible off-site background features of the surrounding area. This first set of TVs is more focused in nature; illustrating the existing rural and private recreational nature of the site, as well as showing the surrounding hills and mountains.

Surrounding Area

TVs 10 through 20 (Figures 2.1-3f through 2.1-3k) illustrate mid- and long-range views toward the Project site and illustrate the relationship of the site to the larger valley setting.

The Project site is located in a valley comprising a portion of the I-15 corridor north of the San Luis Rey River. The area surrounding the site is topographically varied and the immediate surroundings generally are undeveloped.

Located to the north of the Project site are Monserate Mountain and its foothills. A resource conservation area owned and managed by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy overlays a portion of the Monserate Mountain foothills. The highest point in the Monserate Mountain Range is 1,567 feet amsl. Neighboring peaks in this range step downward to the south, with the lowest peak reaching a height of 814 feet amsl. Rosemary's Mountain, located north of the San Luis Rey River and SR-76 east of the Project site, is a rocky mountain that reaches a height of 992 feet amsl.

Citrus and avocado groves and passive agriculture are the main land uses east of the Project site between the property and Monserate Mountain. Large-lot single-family residences also are present in this area. Numerous single-family homes and some nursery facilities are located among the hills north of the Project site.

Lancaster Mountain, with a peak at approximately 1,485 feet amsl, is located southeast of the Project site. The San Luis Rey River flows around the north side of Lancaster Mountain and trends southwestward, south of the Project site; the southernmost Project parcel abuts the northern portion of the river corridor. The area around the San Luis Rey River is an open space corridor, and the river is identified as a Resource Conservation Area in the County General Plan. Included in the open space and conservation area are large patches of riparian woodland vegetation. South of the river is the Lake Rancho Viejo residential subdivision. The hills comprising the southern edge of the valley are sparsely developed or undeveloped. I-15, the major north-sound roadway in the valley, transects these hills. The Lilac Road Bridge, a noted structural feature of the area, spans I-15 at the freeway's southern crest.

Another north/south trending series of peaks creates the valley's western boundary. The highest among these is a peak that rises to approximately 929 feet amsl. Development to the west of I-15 includes Pala Mesa Resort, located at the bottom of the hills to the west of I-15 and Old Highway 395, and northwest of the Project site. The eastern-facing slopes of the hills west of the Project site are developed with sparse single-family residences on large lots interspersed with small-scale agricultural facilities and pockets of preserved native vegetation (including the Beck Reservoir and the Engel Family Preserve; refer to Figure 1-2 of this EIR). Denser housing and other types of land uses are concentrated at the base of the hills along the west side of Old Highway 395, including housing developments with smaller lots, a hotel/restaurant, a gas station and other small restaurants or commercial buildings.

No public parks or recreation areas other than the north- and northeast-trending Monserate Mountain trail exist near the Project site on the east side of I-15. A trail owned and maintained by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy within the Engel Family Preserve is located near the top of the hills paralleling I-15 on the west. This trail is accessed from Sumac Road and overlooks the I-15 corridor and much of the Project site.

2.1.1.2 *Project Site Visibility/Viewshed*

A "viewshed" is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which a project is likely to be seen (see Figure 2.1-4, Project Viewshed).

The viewshed focuses on the Project site because the majority of long-term and visually notable Project elements (structures, landscaping, lighting, etc.) are associated with the development itself. The Project viewshed does not include isolated off-site improvement locations such as pipeline routes or focused roadway improvements as primary elements determining overall viewshed boundaries. These comprise ground level and/or generally small-scale elements such as a turn-lane or intersection signal; they are not sizable enough to "read" within a large-scale viewshed.

The viewshed boundary was determined through the computer analysis of local topographic maps. The areas highlighted in green shading on the map indicate areas that—based on topography and elevation relative to the site—potentially would see the Project site. This figure is based on topography only, without consideration for structures and vegetation, which often constrict views to the site in local areas (such as from Lake Rancho Viejo or from winding roads on the hills west of I-15). Other controlling features include distance (from some locations within the viewshed the Project site would be seen as one small aspect of a much larger view) and atmospheric conditions (haze/humidity can often diminish details of views).

TVs 10 through 20 illustrate views of the Project site from points within the viewshed, and represent the variety of views available that include the Project site, from close-in foreground views to panoramic views encompassing all or most of the Project site. Rosemary's Mountain and Lancaster Mountain generally form dominant landforms in the background to the east; mountains further in the distance (as well as to the south) are often visible.

2.1.1.3 *Visual Character*

Visual character is based on definition of attributes that are neither good nor bad in themselves. A change in visual character cannot be described as "good" or "bad" until it is compared with the viewer response to that change.

The visual character of the Project setting encompasses visually diverse forms, including the geometric and rectilinear structures in the residential and commercial areas, and more natural, complex vegetation in the riparian areas. The low-growing grasses in the flat portions of the valley are relatively smooth and simple, and the trees in the groves generally are of a standard shape and height. The Project site is relatively flat, and includes a few geometric structures and individual trees. The masses of trees in the drainages are visually dominant, but tend to hide the landform variations on the Project site.

This setting is encircled by the undulating, curved and irregular lines that comprise the horizon-line of the valley. These hills create a visually dominant background feature in almost any view of the Project site and surrounding area. The highways that extend through the area are strong linear visual elements with long, straight segments and sweeping curves. In closer views, the visual lines within the valley are more complex, such as the roads winding along the hillside on the west side of the valley and the boulders on Rosemary's Mountain and the hills on the east side of the valley. The Project site generally has few dominant, strongly geometric lines, as it encompasses mostly low-growing vegetation and trees that hide the slopes of the drainages. The airstrip on the Project site is a strongly geometric, short line when seen from higher elevations.

The visually dominant colors in the viewshed generally are the greens and browns of the vegetation, with occasional purple on the hills in the backgrounds. The structures in the area are often visible as white or light-color spots, and frequently have red roofs. They typically are small elements within the larger landscape unit, and generally are not massed in groupings large enough to be visually dominant within the landscape unit taken as a whole.

Seen as a whole, the hills and the valley within which the Project is located are visually smooth, with the vegetation screening structures and minute variations in landforms. Seen in more detail, the vegetation and other elements that comprise the visual environment of the valley are diverse and irregular. The valley encompasses undeveloped, open space areas and residential and commercial land uses; dense vegetation and sparsely vegetated areas; smooth hillsides and rough boulders; hard, developed highways and smooth, curved hills; and white or light colored developed structures and earth-toned hills and green or brown vegetation. The Project site has less diversity; the dominant visual elements on the site consist of flat areas covered with low-growing vegetation and drainages vegetated with taller trees. The individual trees growing on the flatter areas of the site tend to emphasize the general consistency of the visual elements on the site.

Most of these diverse elements are visually harmonious within the valley. Some of the seemingly dissonant elements emphasize the overall scale and form of the valley; for example, the highway curves on the north and south ends of the valley emphasize the curves and undulations of the hills. Some features, however, are visually contrasting elements, such as the Lake Rancho Viejo development, comprised of a group of residential structures with fewer trees than the neighboring river and groves. Most of the other visible structures in the valley are on the western hillsides, and are visually screened by mature vegetation. Rosemary's Mountain also is a contrasting element within the valley; it stands alone and has sparser vegetation and denser boulders. The Project site has high continuity, mostly due to the low diversity of elements.

The landforms that comprise the valley (e.g., the hills that make up the edges of the valley bowl and flat areas the make up the valley floor) are the most visually dominant feature. The structures within the valley, though at times visually contrasting, are not visually dominant due to the large scale of the landforms and the valley as a whole. The Project site is a small portion of the generally flat areas along the valley floor, and has few visually dominant elements, although the on-site airstrip and shade structures can be visually notable from some areas.

2.1.1.4 *Visual Quality*

Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness and unity present in the viewshed, defined as follows:

- **Unity** is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. It frequently attests to the careful design of individual components in the landscape.

- **Intactness** is the visual integrity of the natural and man-made landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. It can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.

- **Vividness** is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.

The valley within which the Project site is located has high unity; as a whole, the area has visible compositional harmony, even among the variety of features. Some visual elements, such as Rosemary's Mountain and I-15, are visually prominent, and somewhat contrasting. These features, however, tend to emphasize the overall coherence of the visual environment because they are not dissonant elements (as noted above, for example, the highway emphasizes the curves of the hillsides). The Project site also has moderately high visual unity, due mostly to its low diversity (flat areas covered with low-growing vegetation, drainages vegetated with taller trees, and the occasional building or individual tree). The individual trees growing on the flatter areas of the site tend to emphasize the general consistency of the visual elements on the site. Groves located south of SR-76 do not provide visual focal points in overall views due to their low elevation, low scale, and relatively restricted extent relative to larger grove areas in this part of the County. They are peripheral to the majority of the panoramic view from the west (being located at the southern extent of the view), in a generally fragmented state given location on small and disparate parcels. Iconic San Diego County hillside groves (constituting part of the valued focal point) are located within the viewshed, but these are sited on the western-facing slopes of the mountains on the east side of the basin.

The intactness of the area is moderately high. Although the diverse elements comprising the view do not detract from the visual coherence of the environment as a whole, when viewed more closely, the developed areas and structures encroach somewhat into the natural areas of the valley, reducing its intactness. Most of the structures are located along the hillside on the west side of the valley, but more have recently been built on the valley floor, visually extending developed areas into the (previously generally undeveloped) valley. The Project site also has moderately high intactness; the flat areas and drainages with trees are visually dominant on the Project site, yet the airstrip and related facilities, such as shade structures, contrast with the rest of the undeveloped area.

The approach into the valley from north or south along that highway provides long-reaching views of the entire area. Although currently comprising an undeveloped feature, the valley floor is not the feature that draws the eye. It does contribute to the impression of openness. Relatively flat and largely non-descript, it visually reads as the base to the view which is shaped by the scale and steep nature of the edging mountains. The dominant features, however, are the surrounding hills and mountains. It is these edging features that define the space in the first place. In other words, if the mountains were removed, the visual effect provided by the valley would be strongly diminished. If the valley floor were to be comprised of different elements, the surrounding hills and mountains would still provide dramatic visual effect.

Within that valley, the Project provides a relatively small piece of the overall visual environment, and in itself has moderately low vividness. The flat areas are not visually unique, although the airstrip is a distinct feature on the site. Riparian vegetation associated with Horse Ranch Creek is also notable.

2.1.1.5 *Viewer Response*

Viewer response to Project change is composed of viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure. *Viewer sensitivity* is defined both as the viewers' concern for scenic quality and the viewers'

response to change. Local values and goals may confer visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional. *Viewer exposure* is assessed by measuring the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of the view, position of the viewer, and the speed at which the viewer may move.

Motorists

The Project site is located at the interchange of I-15, a County Third Priority Scenic Highway and SR-76, which is a County Second Priority Scenic Highway west of I-15.[1] Generally, motorists on large highways have moderate sensitivity; however, the scenic highway listings for I-15 and SR-76 indicate that motorists may have higher sensitivity to the visual environment and potential changes to views from the highway than motorists on similar large highways not designated as scenic.

I-15 is heavily traveled, being one of the main north-south routes between the San Diego and the Los Angeles/Riverside areas. Currently, approximately 113,000 vehicles travel I-15 in the Project vicinity each day (Linscott, Law and Greenspan Engineers [LLG] 2013; pers. comm.). A car traveling at freeway speed (65 to 70 miles per hour [mph] or more) would pass through the valley in approximately two minutes. Based on the volume of traffic on I-15 and the extent of the viewshed, motorists on I-15 have high exposure. While the Project site is potentially visible from most of I-15 within the valley, the small hills between the freeway and the western Project boundary block views from a large portion (1.2 miles) of the freeway closest to the Project site (see TVs 10 and 11, Figure 2.1-3f). Next to the Project site, views from I-15 are peripheral to the direction of travel. Viewers along I-15 in areas farther from the Project site would have more direct views of the Project than those directly next to the site, although their views would be less detailed due to the greater distance. In general, drivers and passengers on I-15 are passing through the area. The transient nature of the viewers moderates their potentially high sensitivity.

Approximately 10,600 vehicles currently travel SR-76 between I-15 and Pankey Road (Appendix D). The Project site borders SR-76 for approximately one-quarter mile, and would be visible peripherally to the direction of travel. The viewshed analyses indicate up to two miles of SR-76 from which the site may be visible (barring screening vegetation), but views may be less detailed due to distance. Refer to TVs 12 and 13 in Figure 2.1-3g, and TV 14 in Figure 2.1-3h, for examples. The posted speed limit on SR-76 is 55 mph. Motorists traveling westward at the speed limit may have views toward the Project site for approximately two minutes. Viewers in vehicles at traffic lights near the I-15 interchange may have a longer view period. The volume of traffic and the extent of the views result in motorists on SR-76 having moderately high exposure. SR-76 would be used mainly by viewers passing though the area (there are few residential developments accessed via SR-76 in the vicinity). The transient nature of the viewers moderates their potentially high sensitivity.

The Project site is visible as well from Old Highway 395, which generally parallels I-15, but carries fewer motorists (5,000 to 7,100 in the vicinity of the Project). Views from Old Highway 395 are generally expansive since most of Old Highway 395 near the Project site and in

[1] Please refer to Section 2.1.1.4, Regulatory Framework, of this subchapter for information on scenic highways programs.

the southern portion of the Project viewshed is higher in elevation than I-15. Refer to TVs 15 and 16 on Figures 2.1-3h and 2.1-3i. Views from Old Highway 395 in the farther extents of the viewshed would be more direct, but would be less detailed. Old Highway 395 has a posted speed of 40 mph. Motorists on Old Highway 395 traveling north of SR-76 pass the Project site in approximately 1.5 minutes; they traverse the larger viewshed in approximately 4.5 minutes. This longer duration of views indicates that despite the lower number of viewers, motorists on Old Highway 395 have moderately high exposure. As Old Highway 395 provides access to residential and commercial areas west of I-15 and the project site, its travelers are more likely to be regular visitors to the area and their sensitivity is high.

The viewshed also includes smaller, private roads and public residential streets, particularly on the eastern facing hill in the west portion of the Project viewshed and in the far northern extent of the viewshed. On these roads, where multiple structures and vegetation do not block views, expansive views of the valley and the Project site are available. This is not the typical condition, however, and the brief duration of views and relatively low number of viewers results in a finding of moderate exposure for motorists on residential roads. Motorists on smaller, residential roads in the area generally have moderately high sensitivity.

Residents

Many area residents have elevated views of at least a portion of the Project site. These are long-term, stationary views toward a generally rural area with mountainous backdrop. Residential landscaping or nearby structures also provides frequent shielding of view elements. Where views exist, however, they can be expansive, and many homes are sited specifically to maximize these open views. In these instances, open views encompassing adjacent developed uses, the I-15 corridor valley, and the surrounding mountains to the east are visible, with Monserate Mountain and associated ridge features providing a dominant and natural background to the views from this area. Examples are provided in TVs 17 and 18, on Figures 2.1-3i and 2.1-3j, respectively. These viewers have high exposure, due to their long-term stationary views.

Residential viewers would be expected to be highly sensitive to changes in the viewscape. For these viewers, the Project area can provide an often-seen and intimately known view that contributes to the sense of home or the broader community. These viewers are expected to be extremely aware of all changes associated with Proposed Project improvements. While some are expected to welcome Proposed Project amenities that would be available to them, experience shows that a number of these residents will strongly desire retention of existing conditions.

Recreationalists

There are no public parks in the vicinity of the Project site. Several private golf courses exist within five miles of the Project site. The nearest is Pala Mesa Resort, directly west of the Project site and separated from it by I-15. The vegetation and landforms within this private golf course generally screen golfers' views of the highway and the Project site.

The Monserate Mountain Trail provides access for hikers to the Monserate Mountain Preserve and along the Monserate Mountain Foothills. Portions of the trail are included in the County of

San Diego Trail Master Plan. The trail, fire breaks and access roads, and water tank access roads Project are approximately two miles northeast of the Project site, and offer occasional unrestricted overviews of the Project site and the surrounding area (see TV 19, Figure 2.1-3j). Views currently are primarily natural and rural, and include natural vegetation, grassy areas, and citrus and avocado groves on neighboring properties, as well as residences, agriculture, highways, and natural areas in the background. Except for Monserate Mountain Trail, most of these paths are not easily accessible to the general public.

Fallbrook Land Conservancy's Engel Family Preserve, accessible from Sumac Road just south of Pala Mesa Drive is located in a mostly residential area west of I-15, approximately one-half mile west of the Project site. The Engel Family Preserve includes a trail with an extensive, elevated view of the San Luis Rey River Valley, the I-15 corridor, and the Project site (see TV 20, Figure 2.1-3k.) The existing view encompasses diverse elements—including buildings and developed areas, natural open space, and agricultural elements—but the scale of the agricultural areas and the hillsides and mountains in the background dominate the visual experience.

A proposed Priority 1 Community Trail in the Fallbrook Community Trails and Pathways Plan would provide a connection between this trail and a Priority 3 Community Pathway identified on the south side of SR-76. At this time, the portion of the trail alignment overlays private property and is not accessible to the public.

Another proposed Priority 1 Trail would extend along the eastern side of Old Highway 395 between SR-76 and Pala Mesa Drive, where it would turn westward. This corresponds to a Proposed Multi-use Trail in the San Luis Rey River Park Master Plan. The River Park Master Plan also identifies a Proposed Multi-use Trail extending east and west along each side of the San Luis Rey River. The Fallbrook Community Trails and Pathways Plan also identifies a Proposed Priority 3 Community Pathway on the south side of the river. The southernmost parcel of the Project site overlaps the northern banks of the river, including a portion that would support the trail. Refer to Figure 1-13 of this EIR, for the location of these pathways.

Despite the opportunity for expansive views of the Project site and surrounding area, recreationalists in the nearby conservancy lands and hiking on nearby trails have low exposure, mainly due to their low numbers. Per the Fallbrook Land Conservancy,[2] estimated users of the conservancy lands near the Project site average 20 to 25 people per day for the Monserate Mountain Trail, and 2 to 3 individuals per week for the Engel Family Preserve.

The other trails in the local planning documents do not currently exist. Although some bicyclists and hikers currently use SR-76 and Old Highway 395, their numbers, and therefore their exposure, also are low, particularly when compared to the high number of motorists in the area. Bicyclists in the area would have moderate awareness of off-road views. While they would have a longer duration of time to view the surrounding area, they would be expected to focus on navigating the small roads and avoiding vehicular traffic. Hikers in the nearby preserves would have a high awareness of the surrounding area and the available views. Regular visitors are expected to wish to retain the current, expansive views of mostly natural and rural areas, while

[2] Personal communication with Mike Peters, Executive Director of Fallbrook Land Conservancy, October 2012.

occasional or first time visitors may not expect the same visible conditions. Individuals using the cited trail system would be expected to be highly sensitive to changes in the immediate viewscape. Viewers using these trails would be moving at pedestrian rates of travel, or even sitting at overlooks (such as within the Engel Family Preserve). As a result, they are expected to be sensitive to Proposed Project modifications to the existing setting.

2.1.1.6 *Regulatory Framework*

A number of plans and policies address preserving and/or enhancing the visual qualities of an area, as discussed below. These policies aid in the evaluation of the planning agency and community perception of visual quality in an area, as well as providing guidance as to whether Proposed Project modifications would be visually compatible with County/community goals.

State of California

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. I-15 is classified as an "Eligible" California Scenic Highway from SR-76 north to SR-91 near the City of Corona.

County of San Diego General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan (2011) was established to support conservation, management, and utilization of natural and cultural resources; protect and preserve open space; and provide park and recreation resources. Scenic roadway corridors are included.

SR-76 from Oceanside east to I-15, and from I-15 to SR-79 andI-15 from SR-76 north to the Riverside County line are both scenic highways. Reche Road and Mission Road also are listed as scenic corridors between SR-76 and I-5. Both of these roads are west of I-15 and on the east-facing side of the slopes. Reche Road extends westward from Old Highway 395, west of I-15 and approximately 1.5 to two miles north of the Project site. Mission Road is an east-west trending road located approximately three miles north of the Project site.

Resource Protection Ordinance

The County's RPO provides special regulations applicable to certain types of discretionary applications, including tentative maps. The ordinance focuses on the preservation and protection of the County's unique topography, natural beauty, diversity, natural resources, and quality of life. It is intended to protect the integrity of sensitive lands including wetlands, wetland buffers, floodplains/floodways, sensitive habitats, cultural resources, and steep slopes (lands having a natural gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 vertical feet, unless said land has been substantially disturbed by previous legal grading), all of which are components of visual quality and community character.

There are no slopes on the Project property that meet the definition of steep slopes under the County's RPO. As discussed in Chapter 1.0 of this EIR, the County Planning Commission granted an RPO exemption for Campus Park West in July, 2004. This covers the Project parcels.

Dark Skies/Glare

The County of San Diego Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (Division 9, sections 59.101-59.15 of the Zoning Ordinance) seeks to control undesirable light rays emitted into the night sky in order to reduce detrimental effects on astronomical research. Zone A, defined as the area within a 15-mile radius centered on the Palomar Observatory and within a 15-mile radius centered on the Mount Laguna Observatory, has specific light emission restrictions. The unincorporated portions of San Diego County not within Zone A fall within Zone B, and are subject to lesser restrictions. Outdoor lighting, such as security or parking lot lighting, must be less than 4,050 lumens and fully shielded within Zone B. The Project site is located approximately 17 miles from the Palomar Observatory and even farther from the Mount Laguna Observatory, and is therefore within the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance Zone B.

County of San Diego Fallbrook Community Plan/I-15 Corridor Plan and County of San Diego Fallbrook Design Guidelines

The Project site is located within the Fallbrook Community Plan area, which encompasses a segment of I-15 identified for scenic preservation (the unincorporated portion of the I-15 Corridor from northern Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line). The purpose of these documents is to identify standards and guidelines for planned development and retention of important cultural or natural elements that contribute to the lifestyle and community character of this part of the County. Specific to the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines, the document states that:

> The purpose of the following scenic and planning quality guidelines is to: (1) protect and enhance scenic resources within the I-15 Corridor planning area while accommodating coordinated planned development which harmonizes with the natural environment; (2) establish standards to regulate the visual quality and the environmental integrity of the entire corridor; and, (3) encourage scenic preservation and development practices compatible with the goals and policies of the five community and Subregional Planning areas encompassed by the I-15 Corridor area, when appropriate (County of San Diego 1988:24).

The standards are specifically noted as addressing both man-made and natural features with the potential to affect scenic quality of the I-15 Corridor area. Also noted in these documents is the need for development of more detailed design criteria, to be applied to areas with a "B" designator and requiring preparation of a Site Plan in order to obtain a development permit (as is the case for the Proposed Project). The Fallbrook Design Guidelines were in fact developed, and are implemented via a design review process, in which a Project Applicant works to ensure that a potential project is consistent with the guidelines.

Applicable goals and policies within the Fallbrook Community Plan/I-15 Corridor Plan, and the Fallbrook Design Guidelines, are presented in the Project GPA Report and are additionally discussed in Section 3.1.5, Land Use. Standards relating to site planning; walls, fences and berms; landform; vegetation retention; parking and circulation; lighting; landscaping; non-motorized circulation; building equipment and services; architecture; and signage are included. These guidelines were created to guide the anticipated growth and development of land within the corridor in such a way as to maintain the scenic eligibility of the roadway as well as visual elements important to community character.

2.1.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

2.1.2.1 *Potential Conflict with Important Visual Elements or Inconsistency with Applicable Design Guidelines*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

1. 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.) or by being inconsistent with applicable design guidelines.

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (July 30, 2007).

Analysis

Conflict with Important Visual Elements

The primary visual elements that comprise the site setting are four-fold: major transportation corridors, agricultural references (groves and pasture), the Horse Ranch Creek riparian corridor and the dominating surrounding hills and ridgelines.

The Proposed Project would be visible from approximately two miles away (Figure 2.1-4). From the outlying portions of the viewshed, the Project site is a small feature within a larger view that encompasses existing development such as Lake Rancho Viejo, Pala Mesa Resort, and the residential areas west of I-15. The Proposed Project buildings and landscaping would visually extend these developed areas onto the valley floor. The memorability of the area, however, primarily relies on the distinct visual patterns created by the area topography. Proposed Project development would not change large landforms or the overall geographical configuration of the viewshed. The creek and existing linear transportation elements would remain. These are the

majority of, and determinative, elements in the visual experience of the site; and particularly so when the viewer is at distance from the site.

In order to ensure a full understanding of potential visual effects related to Project implementation, Project analysts coordinated with County staff regarding locations from which to simulate projected conditions following construction. Four locations were chosen as representative of potential future views seen by the greatest number of viewers. The locations include SR-76 westbound, SR-76 eastbound, Old Highway 395 looking easterly and I-15 southbound.

Key View 1, Figure 2.1-5, depicts **Scenario 1** development simulated from westbound SR-76, just east of Pankey Road. This view looks southwestward at the general commercial parcels south of SR-76 and on either side of Pankey Road. A six-foot-high fire protection wall would be placed along the northern edge of each of these lots. This simulation incorporates the fire wall, as well as a restaurant building, a retail building, a gas station, and a convenience store, based on information provided by the Project Applicant and the SPA and GPA Report (PDC 2014). An additional parcel south of the general commercial areas (PA 6, south of Pankey Road and west of Shearer Crossing and not visible in this view) would remain undeveloped. Pankey Road also would be realigned to extend more directly southward, perpendicular to SR-76. It would align with existing Shearer Crossing south of the simulated retail and restaurant buildings. This ground-level modification would not be highly noticeable even without the structures, and would be visually absorbed by other Project additions upon construction.

The majority of the background is comprised of a hill southeast of the SR-76 and I-15 interchange. The hill also supports citrus trees, which are visible as a dark green mass of color. Lighter green riparian trees are growing at the base of the hill. SR-76 extends from the foreground of the view and curves around the north (right) side of the hill. A hill west of I-15 comprises the background of the right side of the photograph.

From this view point, the buildings east of Pankey Road would be visible and they would block views of the parcel west of Pankey Road. These buildings would become visible as the viewer travels westward at which point the retail building to the viewer's left in this simulation would not be visible (and the restaurant would be only partially visible). Only a glimpse of buildings west of Pankey Road would be visible to westward travelers, until the viewer is nearer to the intersection at Pankey Road. This is due to the setback of the buildings west of Pankey, the angle of SR-76, and the proposed locations of the buildings east of Pankey Road. Proposed development north of SR-76 would not be visible from this viewpoint and angle.

All four buildings and the fire protection walls would be visible for motorists traveling eastward. Development of the Proposed Project would replace citrus trees and open space that currently exists on the property parcels. Buildings and walls would be located in front of remaining citrus groves, with a background of local hills and mountain slopes. The structures would have stronger geometric forms and lines, fewer green or natural colors, and harder textures than the vegetation that currently exists within the view. The development, however, would include landscaping that would be sparser than the grove, but which would provide more variety of color and texture than currently exists; most of the vegetation that would be visible would be between

the shoulder of the road and the fire protection wall. The canopies of some trees within the lot beyond the wall would be visible. The scale of the buildings would be approximately the same height or slightly taller than the existing trees. The wall would be shorter than the buildings, but would serve to obscure views to parking lots and vehicular activity associated with the commercial uses. The structures would not, therefore, obstruct features in the background of this view. The proposed elements, however, would not be distinctly vivid or create vivid visual patterns in the Key View.

The Proposed Project would cause a moderately high change within the visual environment of Key View 1, based on the degree of change to the visual environment and the anticipated viewer response. The key view is looking west and south of SR-76. The existing condition focuses on the four-lane state route, adjacent signage and fencing, disturbed dirt, and some areas of disturbed vegetation with a vegetated nobbed hill in the midground and larger hills to the west with development on them. The elements that compose this view are not unique landmarks or visual elements with high visual quality. The most vivid elements within the view are the hills in the background, which would not be obstructed by Proposed Project features. In fact, the inclusion of a uniform built element would visually intensify the more natural nature of the midground hill. Change to this view, therefore, would not highly conflict with important visual elements or the quality of the area, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Under **Scenario 2,** the easterly portion of this simulation (PA 4) would remain the same, but development similar in its relationship to SR-76 would occur on PA 5. In other words, rather than the set back of disturbed vegetation/ground currently visible in the Caltrans right-of-way west of Pankey Road, PA 5 would extend northerly to SR-76. A similar firewall and vegetative screening would be provided as shown in Figure 2.1-5. Part of the northern extending hill would be additionally screened by this scenario that is visible in **Scenario 1**. As can be seen by the scale of the hill relative to the simulated structures, however, the extension of the site northerly would not obscure views of the top of the hillside, nor would potential structures obscure views to the hill's northern extent (or, the larger and intermittently developed hills to the west). Although more built elements would be present in **Scenario 2** than in **Scenario 1**, project implementation would still not highly conflict with important visual elements or the quality of the area, and impacts would remain **less than significant**.

SR-76 is elevated near I-15, and eastbound travelers on SR-76 near I-15 would have more encompassing views of the Project elements. Key View 2, Figure 2.1-6, represents such a view. Undeveloped land north of SR-76 is visible in the center of the view. Dense, dark green trees are located in the lower areas between the hills. The Monserate Mountains make up the majority of the background.

Figure 2.1-6 depicts the **Scenario 1** largest proposed buildings within the general commercial areas north of SR-76, a six-foot-high fire protection wall that would edge the western and southern boundaries of PA 2, and some proposed graded slopes. The proposed buildings would be sited approximately 500 feet north of SR-76. The simulation depicts general commercial and mixed-use core buildings up to 35 feet in height. As shown, some buildings could have articulated corners with towers, domes, turrets (or similar structures) that would comprise elements rising above the general roof height. As described in Section 1.0 of this EIR, there is

the potential for a single higher structure (up to 45 feet overall) to house a community commercial use such as a movie theatre.[3] The fire protection wall would be placed along the southern and western edge of the lots visible from this viewpoint, and is represented in the simulation by a band of color along the lower visible edge of the buildings. A portion of the south-facing slope that would be created by Proposed Project grading would be visible as well, depicted as the low vegetated area between the firewall and the intermittent line of trees. The Proposed Project would not change the drainages and low hills immediately abutting SR-76. The vegetation that would remain undisturbed within these drainages would visually screen a portion of the buildings and the fire protection wall.

The Proposed Project elements would be more geometric, have more rectilinear lines and hard surfaces, and fewer natural green and brown colors than the existing visual environment. The proposed buildings would be large in scale and massing (particularly width and depth) compared to the existing visual elements. The buildings, however, would be approximately as tall as the existing trees on the site, and would not extend above the horizon line, or obscure views of the hills in the background, which are a distinctive feature of the visual environment in the viewshed and near the Project site. The proposed fire protection wall would be a small scale element, especially when compared to the proposed buildings.

The buildings, the wall, and the grading necessary to create the building pads would require the removal of some of the existing trees on the Project site. The Proposed Project would include landscaping, however, on the graded slopes in front of the wall, as well as on Project streets and interior to the lots and surrounding the buildings. This landscaping, in particular the required trees, would break up the structural massing and soften the "hard edge" or rectilinear view elements that would be visible.

Proposed Project elements would result in a moderately high change to the visual character and quality of the visual environment of Key View 2. Combined with an anticipated moderately high response from westbound travelers, the Proposed Project is assessed as resulting in a moderately high change to Key View 2. As noted above, however, the existing non-permitted airstrip and related facilities, such as shade structures, visually contrast with undeveloped portions of the site. As indicated in Figure 2.1-11, Cumulative View, below, the approach into the valley from north or south along that highway provides long-reaching views of the entire area. The Project is a relatively small piece of the overall visual environment, and in itself has moderately low vividness. The flat areas and drainages are not visually unique, although the airstrip is a distinct feature on the site. Closer in, as shown in the Figure 2.1-6 existing condition, although it is undeveloped, the disturbed nature of the site is notable. The vibrant and memorable elements of this view are the dense vegetation of Horse Ranch Creek and the impressive shift to the height and more natural aspect of the hills and mountains to the north and east. As shown in the Figure 2.1-11 simulation, most of the dense vegetation associated with Horse Ranch Creek

[3] If the NCFPD acquires upgraded facilities that provide the ability to serve structures exceeding the 35-foot height limit, a height exception (up to 45 feet overall, including any architectural projections) may be granted to accommodate a specific use (e.g., a movie theatre). This increase in specific structure height is expected to be limited on site (as indicated by the specific use restriction), and would be subject to NCFPD approval. Given the overall size and massing of structures and the slight visual variation provided within the general commercial categories. A taller structure and additional articulation would not have a negative aesthetic effect, and might even be perceived as having a beneficial visual effect as it could provide additional visual interest.

would be retained. Given the higher existing (and retained) topography to the west, and the rising nature of the topography to the east, the developed portions of the Project would nestle into the lower portions of the valley; minimizing structure height and retaining views to the western foot of slope associated with the higher hills and mountains. As such, the visually important hills in the background of this view would not be blocked from view, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Under **Scenario 2**, part of the Caltrans right-of-way toward the right-hand side of the photograph would be decertified and incorporated into Campus Park West. That parcel would remain in open space, however, with only a low profile entry monument in the vicinity of the SR-76/Pankey Road intersection. There would be no discernible difference to the simulation from this viewpoint.

In addition to roadway viewers, a few private residential parcels are located north of SR-76, approximately one-quarter mile east of the Project site. Figure 2.1-4 indicates that these viewers would be able to see the site based on topography alone. Dense trees and landscaping surround these parcels, however, and views toward the site are not readily available. Project landscaping additionally would screen visible portions of the proposed development from this area. Identified impacts would be **less than significant**.

Key View 3, Figure 2.1-7, represents **Scenarios 1** and **2** views (identical from this viewpoint) from the western portion of the viewshed. The photograph was taken approximately 500 to 600 feet south of the Pala Mesa Drive Bridge from the eastern shoulder of Old Highway 395 where the road parallels and abuts I-15. The photograph looks due east into the heart of the proposed development north of SR-76.

The Project site is evident due to the contrast between the mowed, more brightly-colored vegetation on the site and the brown low-growing plants immediately abutting I-15. The two power poles in the left half of the photograph are located on the Project site.

Proposed Project grading would abut the I-15 right-of-way and the proposed buildings would be the closest to the freeway in this area, at approximately 125 feet from the edge of the property/I-15 right-of-way. Portions of the mixed-use core buildings in the center of the Proposed Project would be visible behind the general commercial buildings. Each of the elements discussed for Figure 2.1-6 with regard to variation in building height and design would also pertain to this view. The northernmost portion of the site would be zoned industrial. Research facilities and office buildings up to 35 feet tall could be built in this area, and are represented on the left side of the simulation.

Most of the Project site would be graded—including the existing, generally flat portions of the Project—to create flatter pads for buildings and their surrounding parking lots. The trees, buildings, and utility poles on the Project site would be removed. New trees would be placed in the parking lots (each parking space would be within 30 feet of the trunk of a canopy tree) and at each corner of the buildings, as well as along the façades of the longer buildings. The slopes resulting from grading would be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and ground cover as described in

Chapter 1.0. Utilities would be located underground, eliminating views to overhead lines that currently exist.

Introduction of the Proposed Project features would cause a moderately high degree of change in the visual environment of Key View 3. The new buildings would introduce geometric, hard-textured, forms with fewer green and brown colors than exist on site. The buildings would be taller and/or larger in scale than a number of currently existing on-site features, but would be approximately the same height as the trees on the site. Trees that would remain next to the northern portion of the site (the left side of the view) would screen views of some of the proposed buildings. The Proposed Project elements would create more diversity within the view than existing on-site elements due to their visual contrast with the embankments next to the freeway and the mountains in the background. Lancaster Mountain in the background, however, would remain a dominant feature, and the Proposed Project elements would not obstruct views of the mountain or hills that comprise the valley walls.

Viewers on Old Highway 395 would have moderately high sensitivity and exposure, and a moderately high response to changes in the visual environment. Old Highway 395 is at a higher elevation than I-15 and approximately 10 feet higher than the Project site. Relative to this Key View, motorists and their passengers on I-15 would be approximately 10 feet lower than the Project site. After Project development, viewers on I-15 would see fewer Proposed Project features than viewers on Old Highway 395. Additionally, due to their lower viewing angle, the more northerly/westerly buildings they would see would block views to the buildings that would be in the interior of the site.

The moderately high degree of change to the visual environment and the moderately high anticipated viewer response indicate that the Proposed Project would result in a moderately high degree of change to Key View 3. The important visual elements that dominate the visual environment of Key View 3 (Lancaster Mountain), however, would not be obscured from view or changed by the Proposed Project. The Project, therefore, would not significantly conflict with the important visual elements and quality of the area. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Also from areas west of the site, views toward the Project are available from surrounding residences. These are similar to those available from the public roads just discussed, but are stationary and long term. As noted, Project implementation would change the Project site from primarily open, undeveloped or agricultural parcels to a suburban pattern of development, with roadways, parking lots, and rooftops overlaying the Project site. The density of structures within the Project would be greater than the residential lots from which the Project would be viewed. The Proposed Project, however, would not modify other view elements integral to the current visual experience, including intervening development between the residential viewer, vegetation surrounding the Project site, or the background natural horizon of the mountains and hills.

Residential lots also are located at the base of the slope that comprise the western edge of the valley, west of the Project site and I-15; in particular, a single family residential development is located directly west of the southbound I-15 to SR-76 ramp, and another is located north of Pala Mesa Road, surrounding portions of the Pala Mesa Resort golf course. These are closer to the Project site and nearer in elevation than most of the residential areas west of I-15. The eastern

edge of each of these clusters of houses, however, is planted with dense vegetation that blocks eastward views. Some views are available from higher points within each cluster; however, the vegetation serves to screen views of the Project site. The Proposed Project generally would not be visible from these residential areas due to intervening structures and vegetation, and the Monserate Mountains in the east remain dominant features from each of these areas.

These considerations combined result in a finding consistent with the above analysis. Residents would be expected to find Project-related changes adverse in nature. Given the existing elements of the major roadways, the retained Project elements of the Horse Ranch Creek drainage (which would continue to provide natural riparian elements and soft edges to the eastern edge of the development when viewed from higher elevations), the Project-mandated landscaping plan, and the continued dominance of the more distant topographical features, impacts to these viewers are identified as **less than significant.**

Key View 4, Figure 2.1-8, represents a **Scenario 1** and **2** view from I-15. The Project site, located to the viewer's left, is not highly distinguishable. Tall trees and vegetation on the left side of the photograph are growing in the I-15 right-of-way. Despite what appears to be relatively low visibility to the site, Key View 4 represents the most open and visible view to the Project along I-15.

This area of the Project would contain light industrial office or research buildings. The simulation indicates that the roofs of these buildings would be the most visible portion of the Project from this viewpoint. Proposed landscaping around the buildings and in the parking lots would provide some screening of the buildings and the parking lots. A small portion of buildings within the interior of the Project site also would be visible behind the office buildings. Some of the trees on the Project site would be removed due to Project grading. Some of the manufactured slopes resulting from Project grading would be visible from I-15 as well. A maximum of 15 feet of fill slope (sloping to less) would be visible from Key View 4 between the buildings and the northbound lanes. Additional Project slopes would be visible in the distance, closer to the Pala Mesa Drive overcrossing. Proposed Project landscaping would include trees, shrubs, and groundcover on the slopes as well as surrounding the buildings and parking lots; the plants would help to screen the slopes and provide some visual blending with the surrounding area.

The changes resulting from introduction of Proposed Project features into Key View 4 would cause a moderate level of change to the visual environment of views from I-15 near the Project site. The buildings would comprise geometric forms with rectilinear lines, hard textures, and could include bright or neutral colors, such as red roofs and white or light-color walls. Proposed buildings would be moderately scaled features within the view; they would not be as tall as the large trees that would remain visible on either side of the freeway, but would be taller than the Project berms abutting the freeway. The Proposed Project would change views of the background; the buildings would block a small portion of the hills, while the grading and change in vegetation would reveal different portions of the hills.

The new features would increase the diversity of elements within the view—currently the only structural feature visible is the Pala Mesa Drive overcrossing in the distance. This would create

contrast within the view, although the buildings would not be visually dominant elements. Consistent with its size and visual importance, views to Lancaster Mountain in the background on the left would not be obstructed.

The only viewers of Key View 4 are motorists and passengers on I-15. Despite their travel speed, which would limit duration of their views, this viewer group has high exposure to such views due to the high number of vehicles on I-15 each day. Viewers on this Scenic Highway are assumed to have a moderately high response to changes in the visual environment. The moderate degree of change to the visual environment and the anticipated viewer response indicate that the Proposed Project would cause a moderately high change to the visual environment of Key View 4. The elements would contrast with the existing visual environment, but would not obstruct views of the visually dominant and defining mountains and hillsides in the background. For southbound viewers, therefore, the Project would result in **less than significant impacts**.

The situation would be somewhat different for northbound viewers. The hills enclosing the northeastern portion of the valley are less prominent than those to the east and south. The northbound lanes are closer to the Project site, and in the northernmost portion of the Proposed Project, the PA 1 and PA 2 buildings would be the closest to the freeway. In the areas highlighted on the detailed viewshed map (Figure 2.1-4), Proposed Project buildings may dominate views from the northbound lanes closest to the Project site and partially obstruct views of the hills in the background, due to northbound viewers' relatively close proximity to the Project site. These close-up views of the proposed buildings and Project slopes and landscaping from the highway would be brief, however, because viewers would be traveling at highway speeds up to 70 mph. As mentioned above, travelers would drive next to the Project site for less than one minute, and would see the Project site only through the view "windows" between the existing berms east of the freeway. This would lessen the impact of the changes to the visual environment for viewers traveling next to the Project site on I-15. Due to the brevity of viewing opportunities, impacts to views seen by northbound travelers are identified as **less than significant.**

Off-site Facilities

If the adjacent approved project Campus Park does not complete installation of sewer lines and a pump station prior to Campus Park West implementation, the Proposed Project would install a small sewer pump station east of Pankey Road and north of SR-76, on a parcel owned by the abutting Campus Park project. The structure would be placed at an elevation lower than Pankey Road, the Project site, and SR-76. Placement of the station would require the removal of some of the trees in the area, while retaining most of the riparian vegetation surrounding it. The retained vegetation and the elevation of the structure in relation to the surrounding roadways would limit views toward the structure, and it would not result in a significant visual impact. A small pump station being environmentally cleared for RMWD at the northern end of the project also would result in minimal visual effect relative to its setting. If located in Campus Park West, it would be sited in the developed limited impact area north of Pala Mesa Drive, and would be incorporated into the larger developed setting. If located west of I-15, it would be sited between Old Highway 395 and I-15, in an area already disturbed by road construction. The small station

(with structural shielding measuring approximately three feet by three feet by four feet) would be observable between the two roads but would be too small to conflict with important visual elements or the quality of the area (see Figure 1-22).

Long-term Sound Barriers Proposed as Noise Mitigation. As discussed in Section 2.5.5 of this EIR, a 5.5-foot-high sound barrier is proposed as mitigation for long-term on-site traffic noise impacts. The wall would be located along the eastern edge of Pankey Road abutting PA 3 and would not be highly visible from the surrounding area. It would be, at the closest, approximately 875 feet from SR-76. In northwesterly views from SR-76 toward the Project, the noise attenuation barrier would be screened by riparian vegetation that would remain undisturbed in Horse Ranch Creek and the open space areas surrounding the site. Where small portions of the wall may be visible between these elements, they would be smaller in scale than the proposed buildings, and would be similar in appearance to privacy fences in other nearby residential areas. In northeasterly views toward the Project site from SR-76, the fire protection wall that would be placed along most of the south and west edges of the lots and Project elements such as buildings and landscaping would obscure or block views of the wall. Potential noise attenuation barriers potentially proposed to attenuate traffic noise within PA 2 would be smaller than their surrounding mixed-use structures would generally read visually as balcony features, and largely would not be visible (if at all) in northeastern views from SR-76. Visual impacts associated with the noise attenuation barriers recommended as mitigation in Section 2.5.5, therefore, would be **less than significant**.

As discussed in Sections 2.6.2.1 and 2.6.5 of this EIR and in Appendix G, sound barrier/ separation of residential uses from the open space may be provided by placement of two 5.5-foot barriers (solid on the bottom and transparent on the top for visibility to the open space) or fencing on the east side of the northern and southern sections of PA 3, in order to minimize indirect impacts to sensitive species. If implemented, sound walls would not be visible to public viewers on Pankey Road as they would be placed between future PA 3 multi-family residential uses (shielding viewers to the west) and the biological open space (shielding potential more distant viewers to the east). Relatively small in size (length and height), as noted, they would contain transparent panels; and therefore also would not block views for PA 3 residents. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Off-site Visual Effects

Off-site Road Improvements. The Proposed Project includes changes to off-site roadways to provide access to the Project site; including realignment of Pankey Road north of SR-76 between SR-76 and the Project site, realignment of Pankey Road and Shearer Crossing south of SR-76 adjacent to the Project parcels, the addition of turn lanes to SR-76 at the Pankey Road intersection, the addition of turn or through lanes to Old Highway 395 at Pala Mesa Drive, and surface improvements to the existing (unused) Pala Mesa Drive overcrossing structure at I-15.

These roadway realignments and the addition of turn lanes would be changes to the surface of the roads, and while some widening would occur in some areas, the improvements generally would occur within the respective rights-of-way. The realignment of Pankey Road both north and south of SR-76 would shift the roadway away from its current alignment, but would retain

the current intersection with SR-76. Due to the low-profile nature of the proposed off-site roadway improvements, the changes would not be highly noticeable within the viewshed, and would not conflict or contrast with the existing visual environment. Any associated visual impacts would be **less than significant**.

Off-site Grading. Some off-site grading would occur to support the connection of Project roadways to existing Pala Mesa Drive on the east side of I-15. This would result in small north- and south-facing slope up to approximately 20 feet in height at the Pala Mesa Drive bridge juncture with roadway. Immediately to the north, an approximately 10-foot slope would extend north-south along the Project boundary for approximately 370 feet. These would be visible from I-15 as well as from the eastbound Pala Mesa Drive overcrossing. These slopes would be planted per Project-mandated landscaping. They would be approximately the same height as the berms that currently exist along the east side of I-15 and the west side of the Project site. Although they would be highly visible to motorists (the largest viewer group) on I-15, they would generally have the same form, scale, and vegetation as existing landforms, and would not change the visual character of the area or obstruct views toward distinctive features in the viewshed. From further distances, they would a small detail within the larger view. These slopes would result in **less than significant impacts**.

Traffic Mitigation Measures. Several off-site mitigation measures are proposed for Project-related traffic impacts. Potential visual effects of these features also must be reviewed under CEQA. A traffic light would be installed at Reche Road and Live Oak Park approximately three miles northwest of the Project site. Reche Road is a County Scenic Corridor. Reche Road and Live Oak Park meet in a Y-intersection. There are dense eucalyptus, pine and oak trees surrounding the intersection and a steep bank approximately 10 to 15 feet high on the south side. Power lines are located at the intersection, approximately as tall as the noted trees. Each of the roads curves just beyond the intersection, so it is not visible from long distances. Assuming that the signal would be approximately as tall as the existing trees, and the trees would generally be retained, the signal would not exceed tree or horizon height. It therefore would not obscure visual elements of the area or change the character of the intersection. Restriping and minor widening in the vicinity of Pala Mesa Drive and Old Highway 395 intersection would largely occur within existing pavement/right-of-way. Focused in nature (in the vicinity of the intersection) and adjacent to I-5, the visual change would not be notable. These traffic mitigation measures, therefore, would result in **less than significant impacts.**

Short-term Construction-related Visual Effects

Construction phasing for the Proposed Project would be market driven and cannot be known with specificity at this time. As noted in Section 1.2.2.6 of this EIR, however, a likely projection of the order of development has been developed (see Figure 1-27). Following mass grading of PAs 2, 4 and 5, infrastructure (roads, utilities) installation would occur site-wide. Building, or "vertical," construction would follow infrastructure installation, and may be phased if the mass grading is phased to prioritize PAs 2, 4 and 5, with completion of grading for PAs 1 and ~~2~~ 3 at a later date. Regardless of mass grading timing, this plan anticipates that vertical buildout would occur generally south to north, with the commercial parcels south of SR-76 developed first (PAs 4 and 5), the general commercial area north of SR-76 (PA 2) developed second, the

residential area (PA 3) developed third, and the northernmost light industrial/office area (PA 1) developed last.

Construction activities would visibly contrast with existing conditions due to removal of existing vegetation and the introduction of new, visually dominant elements, including raw soil; newly graded building pads and cut or filled slopes; construction-period fencing; construction equipment; and construction materials stockpiling and storage. These elements would be visible from each key view location discussed above, including the views from I-15 and other area roadways, the Engel Family Preserve, the Monserate Mountain trail, the future recreational trail along the San Luis Rey River, and from area residences. If the phasing of mass grading is implemented, a smaller portion of the site would contain raw soil at any one time; i.e., PAs 2, 4 and 5 would be graded while PAs 1 and 3 would remain generally in their current state. At some point following completion of vertical construction and installation of landscaping, PAs 1 and 3 would be graded. Activities on PA 3, in particular, would be screened for some westerly viewers by the intervening PA 2 general commercial development.

Similar to the overall discussion for permanent Project elements, the construction-period impacts would not obscure views to the surrounding dominant landforms. The site is also often screened by vegetation or topography and, given the scale of the valley within view, a relatively small portion of the overall viewscape. Additional screening is not feasible for viewers from elevated locations relative to the site and at distance. Such screening would require placement of built features on off-site private property or within off-site open space public reserves and would also break current views to the larger eastern slopes and mountains as well as the expansive valley floor (far larger than the Project).

Construction effects ultimately would be temporary and addressed through Project-required landscaping in the long-term. Landscaping installed subsequent to each construction phase also would help lessen visual effects of grading activities by providing cover of graded slope and pads. Street trees and internal landscaping, when mature, would help buffer the structures from views to the Proposed Project from off-site areas by softening sharp edges and unifying the Project.

Despite these attenuating effects, the size of the Project, and the potential length of the construction period (between approximately 12 to 17 years overall from initiation of mass grading through ultimate project completion) result in construction-period impacts being identified as **significant**. (**Impact AE-1**)

Conflict with Area Visual Quality

This threshold focuses on introduction of features that would conflict with visual quality of the area based on such development elements as overall theme and style, combined with appropriate setbacks, density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, building materials, etc.

The Applicant has coordinated closely with County staff to design a project that would meet Project goals, as well as substantially conform to Fallbrook community and County goals for this area. To that end, the Applicant has committed to Community Design Guidelines outlined

within the SPA (and summarized below) that are reflective of (and largely adhere directly to) the Fallbrook Community Plan Design Guidelines, the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan, and the County's Dark Sky Ordinance. Setbacks, density, building size and massing, lot coverage, and relative scale also would be guided by local zoning regulations as specified in the Project SPA.

Architectural guidelines prepared for the development and outlined in the SPA and GPA Report provide general design criteria. Each land use area would include unique architecture with shared characteristics consistent with the overall community theme. For example, the buildings' architectural styling would be Mediterranean, rustic ranch, cottage or urban Victorian, inspired by architectural themes of nearby downtown Fallbrook, and would include colors and building materials consistent with the Fallbrook Community Plan.

Building form, mass and elevations would be articulated to create interesting roof lines, shadow patterns, and architectural detailing. As a general rule, building façades over 50 feet in length would incorporate changes in plane and architectural features that provide visual interest (projections, recesses, cornices, balconies, etc.). Blank unarticulated (or large uninterrupted expanses of) walls would not be permitted for building sides visible from a street or common area. Façade articulation would consist of changes in the wall plane, use of openings and projections, cornice details, overhangs, and/or material and color variations. Where structure function requires a box-like building form, exterior articulation would be provided on façades visible from public streets through use of elements such as: offsets, projections, overhangs, horizontal and vertical color bands, windows, recesses, and cornice detailing. Varied roof pitches, gables, tower elements, arches, and roof structures also would be encouraged. Together, these elements would result in levels of architectural variation consistent with "typicals" depicted for appropriate architectural styles on Figure 1-6, thereby ensuring that the theme, style, size, massing, coverage, scale, etc., would be consistent with the applicable design guidelines.

To encourage walkability along roadways, architecture would include pedestrian-scale elements, such as façades and walls that would incorporate offsets, balconies, deep openings and entryways, and windows. To the extent feasible, buildings would be sited parallel to the street and abutting streetscape. Sidewalks along Project roads would be linked to walkways within the separate land uses as well as trails and pathways, where possible. Bicycle parking facilities would be provided to encourage alternative transit, particularly for employees, shoppers, and residents.

The conceptual Landscaping Plan includes a plant palette that conforms to County mandates with regard to fire resistance and drought tolerance/use of natives as appropriate. Shade trees are incorporated into path areas, parking areas and perimeter landscaping in numbers and spacing consistent with the Fallbrook Design Guidelines. This would result in a Project more comfortable and aesthetically pleasing for the resident/visitor—but also more aesthetically pleasing for off-site viewers of the Project.

Although the details would not be visible in detail from the surrounding area, such design guidelines would ensure that the Proposed Project would not have a significant visual impact related to overall consistency in terms of style and design. The Proposed Project design options would guide the development of a variety of uses, separate and consistent within each use, but

still bound by a consistent set of over-arching design principles. The variety of potential styles echoes those in the immediate vicinity of the Project, as well as in the downtown portion of Fallbrook, the leading community in this area. The reader is referred to Section 2.1.2.4 for additional discussion of specific elements of the Fallbrook Design Guidelines, but in terms of overarching design principles, visual impacts related to theme and style would be **less than significant**.

Inconsistency with Applicable Design Guidelines

The Project's compliance with applicable goals, policies, and requirements of the local Community Plan is discussed under Section 2.1.2.4, below. Specifically with regard to existing design guidelines, however, the proposed SPA and GPA Report (PDC 2014) for the Project lays out design guidelines for the Project. This is necessary because the existing approved uses on the property included golf course and mobile home uses in addition to multi-family uses. The difference in planned uses, as well as the increase in scrutiny of planned design over the last 25 to 30 years, resulted in development of wholly new guidelines being required for the Project.

The current design guidelines address all visible elements of the Proposed Project. These are discussed in Chapter 1.0 of this EIR. They include: building length specifics as appropriate; architectural detailing; location, orientation and landscaping of parking areas; pathway design; setbacks from retained open space; fencing specifics; lighting requirements and restrictions; sign location; recommended plant types (varying by location and purpose); etc. Specified setbacks, density, building size and massing, lot coverage, and relative scale have been guided by local zoning regulations. All of the required guidelines were designed to substantially conform to the Fallbrook Community Plan and I-15 corridor design guidelines (although see also additional discussion on this topic in Section 2.1.2.4). Because conformance with the Project design guidelines is required as a matter of Project design, the Project would comply with them. Impacts related to inconsistency with applicable design guidelines would be **less than significant**.

2.1.2.2 *Removal or Substantial Adverse Change of a Valued Feature*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

2. 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.

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (July 30, 2007).

Analysis

The topography of the Project site, as mentioned above, is generally flat, but does encompass slopes near the drainages that cross the site and those that abut the site on the northeast and south boundaries. The disturbed nature of the uplands portion of the site, its relatively small size in the overall view and visual minimization relative to the hills to the east combine to result in on-site trees comprising the most substantial local focal point to off-site viewers.

According to the property's Cultural Resources Survey (2004; Appendix E), the eucalyptus and pepper trees on the site, along with remnants of one outbuilding and a concrete slab, are remnants of a thoroughbred horse breeding and training facility that once existed on the property. To the extent that they exist, archaeological elements associated with these historic uses are largely not surface features, and do not constitute valued focal points. Please also see also Subchapter 2.4, Cultural Resources, for documentation that these remnants do not meet significance or eligibility criteria to be eligible for the California register of Historic Places.

The individual trees on the northern portion of the Project site and the citrus grove on the parcel south of SR-76 comprise the most visually dominant vegetation on the Project site. Development of the Proposed Project would require the removal of the citrus grove and the trees on the flat portions of the site, as well as some trees within the transverse drainages. Particularly in arid San Diego County, riparian vegetation—which usually varies in color and density from surrounding upland vegetation--can provide a valued focal point.

With regard to Project area north of SR-76, as depicted on Figures 2.1-2 through 2.1-3i, very few trees are located on site that are not associated with riparian corridor. The majority of the site consists of non-native grassland, pasture or disturbed land, ornamental non-native or scrub categories (see Figure 2.6-1, On- and Off-site Biological Resources/Impacts). Trees to be removed generally are associated with the southern riparian forest zones (largely contained within open space set-aside), or eucalyptus woodland. As discussed in Chapter 1 and above in this subchapter the Proposed Project includes required landscaping. As depicted in Figures 2.1-6 through 2.1-8 (Figure 2.1-8 depicts removal of the existing eucalyptus woodland) the number of trees to be installed on site due to perimeter landscaping, provision of shade trees in parking lots and landscaping of pedestrian zones would far exceed the number of trees that would be removed from the site. This would serve to soften the geometry of the buildings and provide some screening that may reduce the contrast between the buildings and the remaining vegetation. As indicated above, trees and riparian vegetation in Horse Ranch Creek and drainages near the perimeter of the site also would largely remain undisturbed. Also as depicted in Figure 2.1-6, the intensity of color, continuity of plant species, and density of the Horse Ranch Creek vegetation would remain distinguishable from the Project planting, which would provide more variety in species and generally be located up slope from the drainage. Regarding on-site removal or change of a valued visual feature associated with trees located north of SR-76, the Proposed Project would result in **less than significant impacts**.

With regard to the groves south of SR-76, some Project elements would be sited on a portion of groves that cover several parcels in the area. Groves provide a significant element to views in this part of the County and are often notable as deep green agricultural areas located on steep and

otherwise scrub- and boulder-covered hillsides. As noted in Section 2.1.1.4 of this subchapter, however, the groves do not provide a primary focal point within the viewshed as they are peripheral to the majority of the panoramic view (being located at the southern extent of the view), are in a generally fragmented state given location on small and disparate parcels, and also visually "dominated" by the San Luis Rey River. Locally, to more "close-in" viewers, the groves to be removed are primarily visible to east-west travelers on SR-76. The trees are relatively low profile and, unlike some of the iconoclastic southern California avocado and citrus groves located on highly visible hillsides, are nestled between the road and the San Luis Rey River on primarily flat terrain. This minimizes their visual effect, as depth and size of the grove are not apparent, and the trees do not present as significant arboreal cover. Although several hundreds of the trees would be removed during construction of general commercial uses in PA 4, the long-term visual effect would be substantially less than that. Long-distance views to the grove from SR-76 are minimal—for east-bound travelers the grove is obscured by the hill immediately west of PA 5 and for west-bound travelers a bend in the SR-76 results in views being deflected to the north. As the trees are lined up in rows in the grove, the most visible elements are the length along SR-76, with the viewer looking into the grove only when directly adjacent to it and looking sideways to the south. This would occur for approximately 325 feet along SR-76, with twice that length of undisturbed grove continuing immediately to the east. Other groves, east of this area, further back from SR-76, up the small hill between the Project and I-15, etc., would remain. In consideration of the small size of the grove relative to groves in the vicinity, the overall low visibility, the continued existence of other groves in the immediate vicinity, a substantial impact is not identified. Regarding on-site removal or change of a valued visual feature associated with trees located south of SR-76, the Proposed Project also would result in **less than significant impacts**.[4]

2.1.2.3 *Substantial Obstruction, Interruption or Detraction from a Valued Vista*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

3. 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
    - a recreational area

[4] The reader should note that although this analysis relies on factors stated above, agriculture is dependent upon socioeconomic and natural factures. Based on review of Google Earth photography of this grove (as well as the grove across SR-76), die off appears to be occurring. The viability of these agricultural features is unknown. Certainly, without irrigation, these groves do not survive in San Diego County.

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (July 30, 2007).

Analysis

The Project and vicinity are located within a panoramic vista consisting of the hills and mountains surrounding a much lower-laying (and less visually relevant) valley floor. Although development would result modification to the valley view, it would neither obstruct views to, nor affect the scale and surrounding nature of, the hillsides and mountains, which provide the primary valued focal point to this vista.

For north-bound motorists, Scenic Highway I-15 is included in the viewshed to its southern boundaries, as well as for approximately one mile north of the Project site, after which point the alignment of the roadway shifts westward, and local topography alternately blocks and reveals the Project site from view for approximately another mile before the freeway extends beyond the viewshed limits. The portion of SR-76 west of I-15 (i.e., the portion that is a Scenic Highway) is not within the viewshed. The Scenic Highway portion that extends east of I-15 looks directly toward PAs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Proposed Project. Scenic Corridor Reche Road also is not within the Project viewshed. Small portions of Scenic Corridor Mission Road are highlighted as being located within the viewshed based on topography. Mission Road, however, is approximately three miles north of the Project site. From this distance, atmospheric conditions and foreground elements reduce the visibility of the Project site.

I-15, SR-76, and Old Highway 395 are the largest roadways in the Project viewshed. There are very few public roadways east of I-15 in the vicinity. Most roads in the viewshed extend south and west of the Project site, in the vicinity of Lake Rancho Viejo and on the eastern-facing slopes above Pala Mesa Resort.

Views from I-15 range from sweeping, expansive, and at times dramatic, views across this valley to the mountains (especially at distance when the entire mountain basin is visible). Once on the valley floor, extensive views across the valley to the hill and mountain slopes are available, but somewhat diminished by intermittently intervening topography and vegetation. As described above, the scenic value to this corridor is largely based on the visibility to the mountains and ridgelines associated with the slopes to the east, as well as the developed and bouldered slopes to the west. The Project proposes numerous on-site structures up to approximately 35 feet in height, with some focused elements and potential intermittent structures potentially reaching to 45 feet in height if concurrence is obtained from the NCFPD. At times, this would occur below line of sight due to property elevations relative to I-15. Even where structures would be visible, they would not obstruct views to the higher eastern features. Depending on viewer location, therefore, the project could be highly visible, but impacts to the elements that create this scenic corridor would be **less than significant**.

Based on topography alone, Lake Rancho Viejo and the public roads providing access to Lake Rancho Viejo (in particular, Shearer Crossing and Dulin Road), are highlighted in the viewshed

analysis (Figure 2.1-4) as having the potential to see the Project site. Views from this area toward the Project site, however, generally are blocked by structures and vegetation, and, in particular, the dense vegetation within the San Luis Rey River corridor. The Proposed Project would not alter these view-restricting features. Views of the general commercial areas south of SR-76 would be available to those traveling on Shearer Crossing once they are north of the river. Proposed Project buildings would be located on either side of Shearer Crossing, south of SR-76, and would be new elements in views that currently include mostly undeveloped lots and citrus groves. Views northward from Shearer Crossing north of the San Luis Rey River include the hillsides and mountains that surround the valley. The Proposed Project buildings would not be tall enough to extend above the horizon line created by these hillsides. They also would be screened by Proposed Project landscaping. The proposed buildings in the larger, northern portion of the Project site also would be visible from Shearer Crossing, but would be small features in the distance until those traveling on Shearer Crossing reach SR-76, at which point views would be similar to those discussed for SR-76 above. Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from views from roadways (including Scenic Highway SR-76) south of the Proposed Project. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

More expansive views of the Project site are available from some points along public roadways in the western portion of the viewshed. West of the Project site, the main east-west routes are SR-76 and Reche Road. Pala Mesa Drive also extends westward from Old Highway 395. Primary north-south roadways are Gird Road (west of the Project site's viewshed) and Wilt Road, which transects the ridgeline at the Project site's western viewshed boundary. Most of the other public roads west of the Project site are two-lane rural collectors. They mostly are used by local residents within the existing low-density residential community and often transition into private roads and private residential access drives. Many of these roadways are not within the Project viewshed.

Local structures and vegetation frequently confine the travelers' view to the immediate vicinity of the local roadway. The Project site mostly is visible from areas of higher elevation and/or from roadways with lesser levels of landscaping/vegetation in the surrounding vicinity. The curving nature of many of the roads results in a frequent shifting of the viewers' focus and few points with views oriented toward the Project site. Most views toward the Project site from these areas are brief, and include intervening elements. The Proposed Project would not obstruct or interrupt views from these roadways; it would, rather, be a smaller element within the larger view, and at a lower elevation than the viewer. Although the proposed buildings would create a change in that larger view, Project features would not detract from the fleeting panoramic vistas available from these roadways because they would not reduce the visual dominance of the Monserate Mountains and Lancaster Mountain east of the Project site. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Other scenic corridors in the general vicinity include Reche Road and Mission Road. Views toward the Project site are not available from Reche Road. Mission Road, approximately three miles north of the Project site, has some small areas with potential to view the Project site. Given distance and the intervening topography, changes to views from Mission Road would be **less than significant**.

A County Priority 1 public hiking trail, Monserate Mountain Trail, owned and maintained by the Fallbrook Land Conservancy, provides access to the slopes and ridge of the Monserate Mountain range. As mentioned above, Project circulation maps and local area trail plans indicate that a new trail segment may connect to SR-76 and the San Luis Rey River via a trail extension along the base of Rosemary's Mountain, approximately 0.5 mile east of the Project site. The area through which this extension would occur, however, currently is private property. Therefore, although recreationalists on trails on the western slopes of Monserate Mountain have high sensitivity, they would have low exposure to any changes caused by the Proposed Project. Currently, views from Monserate Mountain Trail encompass a largely undeveloped valley. The Proposed Project would introduce new developed elements where none currently are visible. This change potentially would constitute more of a visual impact from this viewpoint than from views looking easterly since views from Monserate Mountain Trail extend the length of the valley, as well as encompassing the north-south trending ridgelines and distant views to hills to the south. I-15 snakes through the views from this vantage point and the residential development on hills to the west is notable, but the currently open valley provides a critical element of this view. The distance from the trail minimizes views to the site; and the substantially sized Campus Park and Palomar College parcels would intervene. This distance also would minimize the scale of the Proposed Project, and the Proposed Project landscaping would further soften the geometric built elements. Furthermore, the hills in the background of views from this area would not be disturbed, and would continue to be dominant visual elements in views for recreationalists. The changes to views from Monserate Mountain Trail, therefore, would be **less than significant**.

A hiking trail with viewing benches within the Engel Family Preserve provides extensive, elevated views of the San Luis Rey River Valley and the I-15 corridor, including the Project site. The Proposed Project would change the visual character of the Project site to be more developed (and therefore more consistent with development in the foreground of views from the Preserve). The Proposed Project would not obstruct or interrupt views from this Preserve, and although the proposed buildings would create a change in that larger view, the Project features would not alter or reduce the visual dominance of the Monserate Mountains and Lancaster Mountain east of the Project site. The Proposed Project also includes landscaping that would provide some integration of the site features with vegetation that would remain surrounding the site. Additionally, views from the Engel Family Preserve are experienced by a small number of people. Therefore, although the Project features would contrast with the existing setting, the distance from which this middle ground view is observed, the minimization of structure scale due to proposed vegetation and the distance from (and elevation of) the viewer, the retention of diverse vegetative surrounding the site, and the continued dominance of the background hills, all combine to result in impacts being **less than significant**.

A future San Diego County Third Priority Trail is identified north of the San Luis Rey River; it would extend across the southernmost Project site parcel. This parcel would remain entirely in MSCP open space, and no Project development would occur on it. Most of the trail when it is developed likely would be south of existing groves and dense riparian vegetation, which would block views of development to the north. Portions of the trail on the property and near it, however, potentially would have views of the southernmost portion of the Project site, including the general commercial parcels south of SR-76. Similar to views from Shearer Crossing,

buildings within the Proposed Project, when viewed from the trail, would not be tall enough to extend above the horizon line created by the surrounding hills, and would be screened by Proposed Project landscaping. The proposed buildings in the portion of the Project site north of SR-76 also may be visible from the trail area, but would be small features in the distance. Additionally, this trail is not yet developed or designated, and users would be experiencing the trail at a point in time in which the presence of the Project would be part of their existing setting. Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract views from the area of this future trail and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Off-site Facilities

Neither of the potential off-site pump stations described in Section 1.2.2.3 have the potential to substantially detract from the panoramic vista that constitutes this focal point. Overall, they are each too small to obstruct any view to higher hills. The locations affect the visibility as well as size. As noted above, the Pankey Road facility would be at an elevation lower than Pankey Road, and also would be seen by a viewer looking northerly rather than toward the panorama to the east. Similarly, the RMWD facility, if stand alone, would require a viewer to look westerly, across I-15 and away from the panoramic vista. For viewers from the west looking east, it generally would be below line of sight to the eastern ridgelines. Neither could result in a *substantial* effect. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

2.1.2.4 *Inconsistency with Applicable Goals, Policies or Requirements of an Applicable County Community Plan, and Subregional Plan.*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

4. Not comply with applicable goals, policies or requirements of an applicable County Community Plan, and Subregional Plan,

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Visual Resources (July 30, 2007).

Analysis

The Project is located within areas covered by the Fallbrook Community Plan and the Fallbrook Design Guidelines. Additionally, as mentioned above, due to the Project site's location adjacent to Scenic Highway I-15, the site is subject to the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan area of the Fallbrook Community Plan. These guidelines were created to guide the anticipated growth and development of land within the I-15 corridor in such a way as to maintain the scenic quality of the roadway as well as visual elements important to the maintenance of community character.

The Project's SPA includes design guidelines for the overall development and for the specific areas within the Project (i.e., mixed-use core, general commercial, residential, and limited impact industrial). The intent of the design guidelines is to provide design continuity within the Project based on common design objectives. The specific plan outlines site design and layout, architecture, and landscape architecture goals, criteria, and guidance related to: sidewalks and trails; ramps and crosswalks; lighting; site furnishings; bicycle parking; architectural themes, articulation, entries, and roofs (including shielding of rooftop equipment); and landscape architectural palettes; brush modification zones; irrigation standards; site retaining and noise attenuation walls; and safety fencing.

Specific to roof-top uses, equipment would be screened from view from adjacent roads, properties, and pedestrian areas in PAs 2, 3, 4 and 5. This equipment is expected to include HVAC, etc. In the area north of Pala Mesa Drive, where shielding of routine roof equipment may not be possible, equipment would be organized in an orderly, uncluttered fashion and painted to match the roof color. Rooftop equipment screening would be identified on site plans. With regard to solar collectors, adjacent architectural detailing (similar to that on the San Diego County Commons roof) may also make the panels "read" as architectural detail for elevated viewers who can see these distant and relatively small scale features. Where solar panels are mounted on roofs that are large enough to also support green roof uses, the uses potentially could be split.

The SPA's Goals, Policies, and Objectives related to Community Design specifically state that the project shall comply with the I-15 Scenic Preservation Guidelines. Therefore, while the Proposed Project would result in change to the visual environment east of I-15, the Proposed Project's conformance to the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan would ensure a less than significant level of overall compositional change to the visual environment of the I-15 corridor in this area.

Although the Proposed Project would conform to a great majority of the Fallbrook Design Guidelines, some inconsistencies have been identified. The areas in which inconsistency is found are few, and the "amount" of non-compliance is generally minimal. In particular, the Specific Plan potentially varies from the Fallbrook Design Guidelines with regard to signage height of letters, colors, and size; light standard heights and pole colors in parking areas; and open space configurations in residential areas. Detailed discussion of Campus Park West's compliance with the Fallbrook Design Guidelines is included in Appendix A to the Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix B of this EIR).

Specifically, while particular stores and uses are not yet identified, the Project SPA/GPA includes a requirement that a comprehensive sign plan be submitted and approved once site plan specifics are identified. The Fallbrook Design Guidelines call for simplistic and clarifying signs that contain no more than three colors in addition to black and white. Project Specific Plan guidelines generally restrict signage to color use as specified, but would allow more colors and typefaces for corporate logos and artistic elements where appropriate. Mixed-use tenants would be permitted two wall signs (one facing the central drive aisle/traditional main street and one facing the rear/parking lot area), corner tenants would be permitted two wall signs, and tenants that back or side onto Pala Mesa Drive, SR-76, or I-15 would be permitted to have up to three wall signs.

The Design Guidelines, include standards for letter sizes on signs, with lettering and symbols on commercial, industrial, and town center commercial development (such as the proposed mixed-use core*)* signage to be limited to a maximum of eight inches. The signage deviations proposed by the Project are necessary to accommodate the proposed regional commercial center, which was not contemplated in Fallbrook when the guidelines were originally drafted. When appropriate, deviations would include an exceedance of the eight-inch letter/symbol limit, so that signage would be proportionate to the size of the building on which it is located. For example, the largest letter size would be proportionate to the largest building size (i.e., for business uses exceeding 60,000 s.f., letters could be a maximum of 5 feet in height). An approved sign program would be required for the non-residential land use districts within the Project prior to the issuance of building permits. Although inconsistent with that component of the guidelines, the land use issue of plan to plan conformance is addressed in Section 3.1.5 of this EIR. Impacts are identified as **less than significant**.

With regard to the site lighting, the Fallbrook Design Guidelines call for overhead lighting within commercial and residential parking areas to be no higher than 20 and 15 feet, respectively. The Proposed Project would comply with the residential guidelines, as overhead lighting in residential parking areas would be limited to 15 feet. In commercial area parking lots, however, lights as high as 25 feet are proposed and poles may be dark colors in addition to the Design Guidelines-noted black, white and natural stain finish. They would be configured so as to provide the amount of light necessary for safety while also complying with the Dark Sky policies. The restriction to lower heights is completely reasonable in town center areas where light standards should be in scale with immediately abutting structures. In a commercial structures parking lot, however, safety issues associated with potential user isolation and visibility as pedestrians move among cars becomes paramount. The difference of five feet in height of the pole lights associated with parking lot lighting would not visually read as "out-of-scale" given the size of the parking lot and the required trees within it. The taller light standards also would help reduce the number of light poles in the large commercial parking lots, which may be viewed as a positive benefit. Inclusion of "dark" colors also would help the poles visually fade. As a result, adverse effects associated with visibility of these features are considered **less than significant**. Please also refer to Section 3.1.5 of this document for land use analysis regarding plan to plan consistency.

Although the amount of open space associated with residential uses would be consistent with the Fallbrook Design Guidelines, the final area of potential inconsistency concerns the location of common open space areas in the multi-family residential district. The Project proposes that common open space be permitted atop buildings in the PA 3 multi-family residential district that support seating areas (potentially with potted plants or sod areas) and can be used as an outdoor recreational space. These **"**green roofs" would provide additional common open space for Project residents**,** consistent with the intent of the open space requirements. Green roofs likely were not contemplated in the Guidelines because the document was prepared before they became commonplace in planning efforts as an element to expand open space in constrained locations and to provide visual relief from routine roofing features**.** Green roofs are considered consistent with the Guidelines**,** however, because they directly address a number of items called out in the Guidelines relative to climate and energy conservation (e.g., temperature-moderating and passive solar elements that reduce energy consumption, provide more comfortable living spaces, and

adding visual character to buildings). Elevated viewers able to see the roof tops would be viewing from a distance, with the roofs expected to blend into portions of the site visible as developed when not obscured by Project vegetation. This state would be considered visually preferable to standard roof top. Visual effects relative to roof-top use in PA 3 are therefore assessed as **less than significant**. Please also refer to Section 3.1.5 of this document for land use analysis regarding plan to plan consistency.

Proposed Project differences from the Fallbrook Design Guidelines, therefore, would not result in significant adverse visual impacts. Since the Project would meet goals and policies of the applicable documents, **no impact** is identified.

Off-site Facilities

Installation of utility pipelines within roadbeds, potential installation of small pump station features into disturbed areas, and upgrades to area roadways through installation of signals or improvements of intersections through provision of turn lanes on existing roadways would not conflict with applicable goals, policies or requirements of an applicable County Community Plan, or Subregional Plan. **No impact** is identified.

2.1.2.5 *Installation of Outdoor Light Fixtures Inconsistent with the County Light Pollution Code*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

5. Install outdoor light fixtures that do not conform to the lamp type and shielding requirements described in Section 59.105 and are not otherwise exempted pursuant to Sections 59.108 or 59.109 of the County Light Pollution Code (LPC).

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Dark Skies and Glare (July 30, 2007 as modified January 15, 2009).

Analysis

Development of the Proposed Project would include numerous lights for safety and aesthetic reasons (indoor lights, safety and access lights, street lights, pedestrian pathway lighting, parking lot lighting, and accent lights on signs and within landscape areas) onto a property with virtually no current night lighting.

Project lighting, however, would conform to the lamp type and shielding requirements as well as the hours of operation detailed in the LPC (Section 59.101-59.115). The Project would not install any of the following: lighting that directly illuminates neighboring properties; lighting that would cast a direct beam angle toward a potential observer, such as a motorist, cyclist or

pedestrian; and/or outdoor lighting for vertical surfaces such as buildings, landscaping or signs in a manner that would result in useful light or spill light being cast beyond the boundaries of the intended area to be lit.

The County LPC effectively addresses and minimizes the impacts of new light pollution sources. Project-related impacts would be **less than significant**.

2.1.2.6 *Installation of Highly Reflective Building Materials*

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

The Proposed Project will result in a significant impact if it would:

6. Install highly reflective building materials including, but not limited to, reflective glass and high-gloss surface color in areas that would be visible along roadways, pedestrian walkways or in the line of sight of adjacent properties.

Guideline Source

This guideline is from the County Guidelines for Determining Significance – Dark Skies and Glare (July 30, 2007 as modified January 15, 2009).

Analysis

The SPA (PDC 2014) states that highly reflective surfaces such as glare-producing glass or high-gloss surface color that would be visible along roadways, pedestrian walkways, or in the line of sight of adjacent properties are prohibited (PDC 2014). **No impact** is identified.

There is also a possibility that final building design would incorporate solar/photovoltaic panels. These panels are typically constructed of primarily dark absorptive material that is designed to capture as much light energy as possible. Because they are designed to get as much sun exposure as possible, they are routinely placed on roofs, which would have visibility to viewers from off-site elevated view points. Although not highly reflective, typically, once per day the view angle is such that sunlight can be reflected. When this occurs relative to the viewer, glare may be experienced. Because this occurs for such a short duration per day under worst-case conditions (i.e., reflection 365 days per year, assuming no diffusion related to cloud cover or atmospheric conditions), visual impacts related to glare from solar/photovoltaic panels would be **less than significant**.

2.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

As noted in CEQA Guidelines Definitions and Section 15130, cumulative impacts are those resulting from combination of two or more individual effects; either (1) within a single project, or (2) from a combination of multiple projects. Projects within the above-described Project viewshed (including the Proposed Project) would contribute to regionally cumulative visual effects, and are evaluated in this discussion. Although these projects are all within the Project

viewshed, not all would be visible at any one time or from one point; they are not concentrated in one portion of the viewshed, and local topography, vegetation, intervening structures and land uses would often block views to them. As shown on Figure 2.1-9, County Cumulative Projects, the projects within the viewshed include 35 development projects ranging in size from 1 DU to 844 or 886 DU. Implementation of all the cumulative projects within the viewshed (including the Proposed Project) would result in more than 2,290 residences, as well as commercial and retail businesses, a college campus, hotels, offices, parks, and an elementary school.

A number of the cumulative projects would subdivide existing private lots for the purpose of building one to seven new single-family residences (8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 47, 48, 52, 75, 81, 82, 91 and 92).[5] These proposed minor subdivisions are generally located west of the Proposed Project, within the existing neighborhoods located on the east-facing slope of the hills west of I-15; one is north of the Proposed Project (17). One of these cumulative projects, located north of SR-76 and west of I-15, involves development of a single-unit home (82); one other would create two residential/agricultural lots (9). The proposed minor subdivisions and the single-family residence would result in the construction of approximately 67 new single-family houses within the Project viewshed. Visual changes associated with these cumulative projects would be minor; these proposed structures would be located within existing neighborhoods, and generally at higher elevations than the Proposed Project. With anticipated ornamental landscaping, and, where required, project-specific mitigation, these would visually blend with similar surrounding uses and result in **cumulatively less than significant impacts**.

A number of the cumulative projects consist of 10 to 51 single-family residential developments (4, 6, 18, 33, 49 and 60). These proposed cumulative projects would result in the construction of 145 single-family residences. Most of these single-family residential projects are located west of the Proposed Project on the east-facing slope of the hills west of I-15. One single-family residential cumulative project is located north of the Proposed Project (6), east of I-15 near Stewart Canyon Road. Two larger single-family residential projects are located near the edge of the viewshed. Although several would be converting areas that currently are used for agriculture (e.g., groves), the majority would create large lots with similar characteristics to the existing residential development in the area. Most of the cumulative projects are at higher elevations than the Proposed Project and include landscaping, and therefore would visually blend in with surrounding uses.

One multi-family development (29) west of I-15 and the Proposed Project would create 39 condominium units near the existing Pala Mesa Resort. Although visual effects associated with these units are potentially significant due to community character conflicts, they would not be highly visible in conjunction with the Proposed Project due to screening provided by existing mature trees at the Pala Mesa Resort, the I-15 concrete center barrier, vehicles on I-15, chain link fences, and vegetation.

One project consists of expansion of the existing facilities at the Pala Mesa Resort and the addition of new hotel rooms (11) and a wedding facility. Visual elements of Pala Mesa Resort, located directly west of I-15 from the Project site, consist of a golf course, low-rise resort

[5] Numbers refer to cumulative projects, located in Table 1-4. These numbers refer to the locations of the related projects, as found in Figure 1-27.

facilities, and low-rise residential buildings. The resort currently is surrounded by ornamental landscaping; the additions also would include landscaping. The addition of new resort rooms and more landscaped acreage would not result in major visual changes to the viewshed. Much of the proposed development would not be visible from scenic highways, recreational trails, or area residences.

Another cumulative project would consist of additional units at a bed and breakfast north of the Proposed Project (7). The existing facility is located at a relatively low elevation within the viewshed, and would not be highly visible in conjunction with the Proposed Project. The contribution of this project to the cumulative condition would be less than considerable and impacts would be **less than significant**.

The addition of commercial buildings to an existing commercial site (90) on Old Highway 395 just northwest of the intersection of I-15 and SR-76 similarly would not result in major visual changes within the viewshed. The five buildings added by this project would be similar in visual character to the existing grocery store, service station, and a take-out restaurant. Views toward the Project site potentially are available from this location, but intervening vegetation screens eastward views. Additionally, the two projects are on opposite sides of I-15, and thus not visible at the same time by viewers on the highway. (Also, the freeway is lower in elevation than the commercial areas, and the commercial areas are therefore not visible from many of the travel lanes.) From farther distances in the viewshed, when the two sites may be visible at the same time; however, the distance would reduce visible details and render them small elements within the larger view. From westbound SR-76, vegetation that would not be disturbed by the Proposed Project and the angle of the roadway restricts views of the commercial site. Local topography also restricts views toward the commercial site for eastbound travelers. Lastly, a few points in the viewshed are located "behind," or west and uphill, from the commercial site, and those points are screened by structures and vegetation. Therefore, development of the proposed commercial buildings combined with the Proposed Project would result in cumulative visual impacts being **less than significant**.

One cumulative project relates to the exploration of pipeline and water storage options (28). This project would not create visible changes to the viewshed. **No impact** is identified.

One cumulative project consists of buildout of Lake Rancho Viejo. The most recently completed phase ended with construction of 16 single-family residences in this approximately 750 unit development. The development draws the eye due to its circular pattern of residences and red roofs in an otherwise less developed area and is therefore included with this discussion of valley development with the four projects discussed below.

Four of the proposed cumulative projects would be multiple-land-use developments. Three of these, Meadowood (1), Campus Park (2), and Palomar College (26), would be located on property in the immediately vicinity of the Project site. Pala Mesa Highlands (3) would be located west of I-15 and north of SR-76. Altogether, these four cumulative projects would develop 1,006 single-family houses, 719 multi-family residences, commercial uses, offices, parks, a college site and an elementary school.

Meadowood (1) would be located on 390 acres east of Campus Park (2). Citrus/avocado groves cover most of the sloping acres within that project site, which is generally undeveloped. Meadowood proposes 355 single-family residences and 489 multi-family DU, with densities ranging from 3.5 to 19.9 du/ac. It also would include parks, several miles of trails, designation of a site for a future elementary school, community facilities, 125.3 acres of preserved open space, and 56.8 acres of preserved active agricultural land.

Campus Park (2) would be located on approximately 416 acres north and east of the proposed site. This mixed-use development proposes 521 single family residences; 230 multi-family DU; 61,200 s.f. of general commercial uses; 157,000 s.f. of office professional uses an active sports park, and neighborhood parks, and approximately 197 acres of biological open space. The Campus Park project site currently is undeveloped except for one residence, and contains visual elements similar to the Campus Park West Project site.

Pala Mesa Highlands (3) would be located west of I-15 and the Project site, and north of SR-76. This proposed cumulative project, with densities of 1.6 du/ac, would include 130 single-family residences, two parks, and 36.5 acres of open space on approximately 85 acres.

Palomar College (26) would be located north of the Proposed Project site and Horse Ranch Creek, abutting the I-15 right-of-way. Palomar College would develop a new community college campus to serve approximately 12,000 students. The campus would include classroom and administration buildings, parking, open space, and athletic fields. This campus would not include residential facilities for students.

Meadowood, Campus Park, Palomar College, and the Proposed Project—located adjacent to one another east of I-15—would introduce development over most of the currently undeveloped valley floor and would be visible together from area roadways and recreational trails. As stated above, from elevated areas with more panoramic views, Lake Rancho Viejo, south of the San Luis Rey River, also would be notable as part of the cumulative condition.

Cumulative View 1, Figure 2.1-10, is a photograph taken from Old Highway 395 in the southern portion of the viewshed, north of Lilac Road. Expansive views of the valley within which the Project site is located are available from both I-15 and Old Highway 395 (Old Highway 395 is much higher in elevation at this point than I-15).

Each of these proposed cumulative projects and the Proposed Project have introduced or would introduce a large number of buildings and suburban elements into areas that are currently undeveloped and/or used for agriculture. Views to the Project site and surrounding area from public roads, recreational trails, scenic highways, and recreational areas would be affected. Some or all of the largest cumulative projects and the Project site are visible from views from public roads west of I-15; from the proposed San Luis Rey River trail; the Monserate Mountain trail; the Engel Family Preserve Old Highway 395; and from County Third Priority Scenic Highway I-15. Palomar College would introduce large scale buildings and parking areas into a locale abutting I-15. Meadowood would remove groves currently providing irrigated agricultural visual elements on the steep slopes of the westward facing eastern hills. Campus Park would introduce residential, office and Town Center uses into a large area north and east of the

Proposed Project site. These projects, containing visual elements similar to the proposed Campus Park Project, would each introduce suburban elements into a currently open view of grasslands and orchards. While some development currently is visible within the valley and the I-15 corridor's viewshed east of the freeway (most notably Lake Rancho Viejo south of the river), the projects would combine to create a major change in visual character north of SR-76.

Overall, the visual environment of the I-15 corridor viewshed in this area would be adversely affected by the major change in composition introduced by the cumulative projects. The change would conflict with the existing visual character and quality of the area. Therefore, the **cumulative visual impact would be significant**. (**Impact AE-2**)

These cumulative effects are the result of: (1) some development that is already in place, (2) some development that is under the purview of another jurisdiction than the County, and (3) already-approved adjacent projects. There are, therefore, no Project mitigation measures that can make this substantial amount of development look like the open valley floor and grove agricultural areas that have been and will be replaced during cumulative project buildout. Similarly, because the Project would replace undeveloped acreage with a largely built environment that is visible from adjacent major roadways (including I-15) and higher elevations in the vicinity, there are no reasonable and feasible mitigation measures to screen the Project's contribution to the cumulative effect.

Views to the Project site and surrounding area from recreational trails also would be affected. The Proposed Project and cumulative projects in the area would be visible from the Monserate Mountain Trail (refer to Figure 2.1-3h). Views from the trail would encompass the Campus Park project in the foreground, and Palomar College, Meadowood, and the Proposed Project in the distance. The Engel Family Preserve also has extensive overviews of the Project area from a higher elevation (refer to Figure 2.1-3k), and the Proposed Project would comprise a major element within its view. The proposed cumulative projects would create introduce multiple structures, more vegetation, and many roads and trails into views of the currently undeveloped valley and would extend the suburban elements from surrounding hillsides into undeveloped/agricultural lots on the west-facing slopes of the hills and mountains to the east. The overall effect would result in physical changes that would substantially detract from the panoramic vistas available in these recreational areas, creating a **significant visual impact**. (**Impact AE-3**)

Similar to the discussion for Impact AE-2, panoramic vistas would be affected by development that is: (1) already in place, (2) under the purview of another jurisdiction than the County, and/or (3) already approved. There is, therefore, no Project mitigation that can address the cumulative effect to panoramic vistas from these recreational areas. Similarly, because the Project would replace undeveloped acreage with a largely built environment that is visible from adjacent major roadways (including I-15) and higher elevations in the vicinity, there are no reasonable and feasible mitigation measures to screen the Project's contribution to the cumulative effect.

Specific to removal of irrigated hillside groves, which provide a notable visual element in this part of the County, the cumulative effect is less certain. Meadowood would replace groves with residential development on the project's west-facing slopes. On a localized level, this would be

seen by viewers from the west as the groves are clearly in view along Old Highway 395, I-15 and easterly facing residence in the hills west of I-15. Substantial (and more mature and visually impressive) groves, however, would remain visible south of the San Luis Rey River, where vibrant hillside groves are juxtaposed with the large Lake Rancho Viejo development on the valley floor. Although the effect of grove loss due to Meadowood development may be notable, the loss of those groves alone may not result in contribution to a significant cumulative visual loss in this area.

Regardless, the Campus Park West Project would not make a considerable contribution to the cumulative effect. As discussed in Section 5.4.2 of this report, Project groves do not provide a primary focal point within the viewshed, as they are peripheral to the majority of the panoramic view (being located at the southern extent of the view), are in a generally fragmented state given location on small and disparate parcels, and are also visually dominated by the San Luis Rey River riparian vegetation. The trees are relatively low profile and, unlike groves located on highly visible hillsides, are nestled between the road and the San Luis Rey River on primarily flat terrain. This minimizes their visual effect, as depth and size of the grove are not apparent, and the trees do not present as significant arboreal cover. Other groves, south and east of this area, and up the small hill between the Project and I-15, would remain. The Project contribution to loss of hillside groves would be nil, and any contribution related to loss of groves in general would be less than considerable. **No impact** is identified.

2.1.4 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

The following significant impacts related to aesthetics would occur with Project implementation:

Impact AE-1 Visual effects during the Project construction period related to grading and ongoing development would be substantial until buildout occurs and all vegetation is installed.

Impact AE-2 The visual environment of the I-15 corridor viewshed in the Project area would be affected by the change in composition introduced by the cumulative projects that would be incompatible with the prior visual character of the area.

Impact AE-3 The cumulative conversion of the viewshed from a rural area with abundant open space to a developed area with less open space, and development encroaching into westerly facing slopes would adversely affect this panoramic vista.

2.1.5 Mitigation

Significant visual impacts assessed to the Project are related to: (1) the construction period (and would end following full Project implementation), and (2) cumulative effects which would occur based on buildout by other projects even if Campus Park West is not approved.

With regard to potential mitigation of construction activities, shielding could be attained for users of I-15 and SR-76 through placement of fencing (e.g., wood, fabric panels) or temporary vegetative screening. This screening would not shield views to the site from elevated view

points (frequently on private property), however, and it would also be likely to result in other substantial impacts to views. If the screening is adequate to shield viewers from views to the site, it could also potentially affect the openness of views to the more distant hills and mountains, which provide the valued focal viewpoint in the panorama.

With regard to cumulative impacts, design features such as landscaping, creek retention, and architectural details would help to reduce visual effects of the Proposed Project by screening parking lots, buildings, and lighting. As discussed above, the Project conforms to all but minor deviations to the Fallbrook Design Guidelines; authored to apply to "village" character design features. Additional mitigative features could include substantial redesign of Project extent or components. In order to comply with General Plan development for the area (as well as long-standing land use assumptions related to the I-15/SR-76 node), however, alternative projects would be anticipated to consist of similar elements.

As described throughout this subchapter, Project features would not affect the dominance of cumulative project build-out due to the mass and scale of cumulative past and planned development in the viewshed. Absent the presence of existing and planned hillside development in this area, the primary contributing elements to character change would not occur. Campus Park West would be wholly located in the valley bottom, and is the most visually shielded of the four projects building out in the valley due to its proximity to I-15 berming, existing roadside planting, and size. As a result, the actual contribution of Campus Park West to the cumulative condition is minimal, and the Project clearly would not contribute to the cumulative effect assessed to hillside development. Assuming that it does make a considerable contribution to the cumulative condition, implementation of the project design features would not reduce the Project contribution to cumulative visual impacts to less than significant levels, and no mitigation measures are known that would reduce levels of changes associated with development in this quadrant.

2.1.6 Conclusion

One Project direct impact, temporary construction effects, was found to be visually significant. Significant cumulative impacts also were identified.

With regard to construction-period effects, with the exception of mass grading (hydroseeded to minimize erosion as well as visibility of the graded area), phasing of construction activities would restrict the amount of site under active build at any one time. Landscaping, installed subsequent to each construction phase, also would help minimize visual effects of grading activities and building construction. Nonetheless, incompatible changes to the existing visual character due to construction-period effects related to vegetation removal and the introduction of built elements into a rural setting, as well as night-lighting, would degrade the quality of views from the surrounding areas during the construction period. Screening of construction-period views from locations adjacent to the site would be largely ineffective due to the elevation of the affected viewers (above the Project site from the north or west) or possible long sight-lines for viewers travelling north-south along I-15. Potential screening of stationary views through placement of screening closer to off-site residential or recreational viewers would require fencing on off-site private property or within public open space reserves, which would impede current

views to the larger eastern slopes and mountains, as well as the expansive valley floor (far larger than the Project). Mitigation measures were therefore found to be either infeasible given the orientation of viewers to the Project, or ~~would~~ resulting in obscuring views to the primary valued focal point. As a result, the construction-period impacts were identified as significant and unmitigable. These impacts would be eliminated, however, upon Project buildout and attainment of landscaping maturity. (Impact AE-1)

While approximately 35 development projects are identified within the Project viewshed, most are not visible in the same view as the Proposed Project. Three projects (Campus Park, Meadowood, and Palomar College) located adjacent to or in the same general area as the Proposed Project, however, together with the Proposed Project, would cumulatively introduce a large number of buildings and suburban elements into areas that are currently undeveloped and/or used for agriculture. While some development currently is visible within the valley and the I-15 corridor's viewshed east of the freeway (e.g., the Rancho Lake Viejo housing development south of the river), the projects would combine to create a major change in visual character north of the river. Though additional development in this area has been projected and planned for (see Section 3.1.5, Land Use, and discussion of the Fallbrook Community Plan and 1983 Hewlett Packard Specific Plan), the character of this valley would visibly change with implementation of these projects; with Lake Rancho Viejo, Campus Park West, Campus Park and Meadowood all notable as a group for their valley development elements east of I-15. The change would conflict with the existing visual character and quality of the area, and the cumulative visual impact would be significant. (Impact AE-2)

Additionally, four newer contiguous cumulative projects (including the Proposed Project) would be visible from the Engel Family Preserve and the Monserate Mountain Trail. They would extend the suburban elements from the valley floor into surrounding hillsides and adjacent undeveloped/agricultural lots north of the river. The overall effect would result in physical changes that would substantially detract from the panoramic vistas available in this recreational area and create a cumulatively significant visual impact. (Impact AE-3)

As noted above, several Project design features such as landscaping, creek retention, fire protection walls, and architectural details would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the Proposed Project (and adjacent projects) by screening parking lots, buildings, and lighting. These features would not affect the dominance of the cumulative projects due to their scale, however, and therefore would not reduce the Project contribution to cumulative visual impacts to less than significant levels. Screening of views from off-site viewpoints would be ineffective for the reasons described above. Other mitigation elements would require substantial redesign or elimination of all three of the other three valley projects in the cumulative view which is not only unlikely given the fact that these projects are approved and, in some instances, actively starting construction (with at least one of the projects, Palomar College, being out of County jurisdictional control), but also would contravene regional plans for the I-15/SR-76 node. As a result, these effects remain unmitigable and long-term.

Overall, any Project alternative that includes structures would contribute to changes planned to the open, undeveloped views from I-15 and from the trails. These projected cumulative impacts also would result whether or not the Proposed Project is built based on ongoing implementation

of the Palomar College campus and the approved Campus Park and Meadowood projects. ~~A Statement of Overriding Considerations would be required.~~

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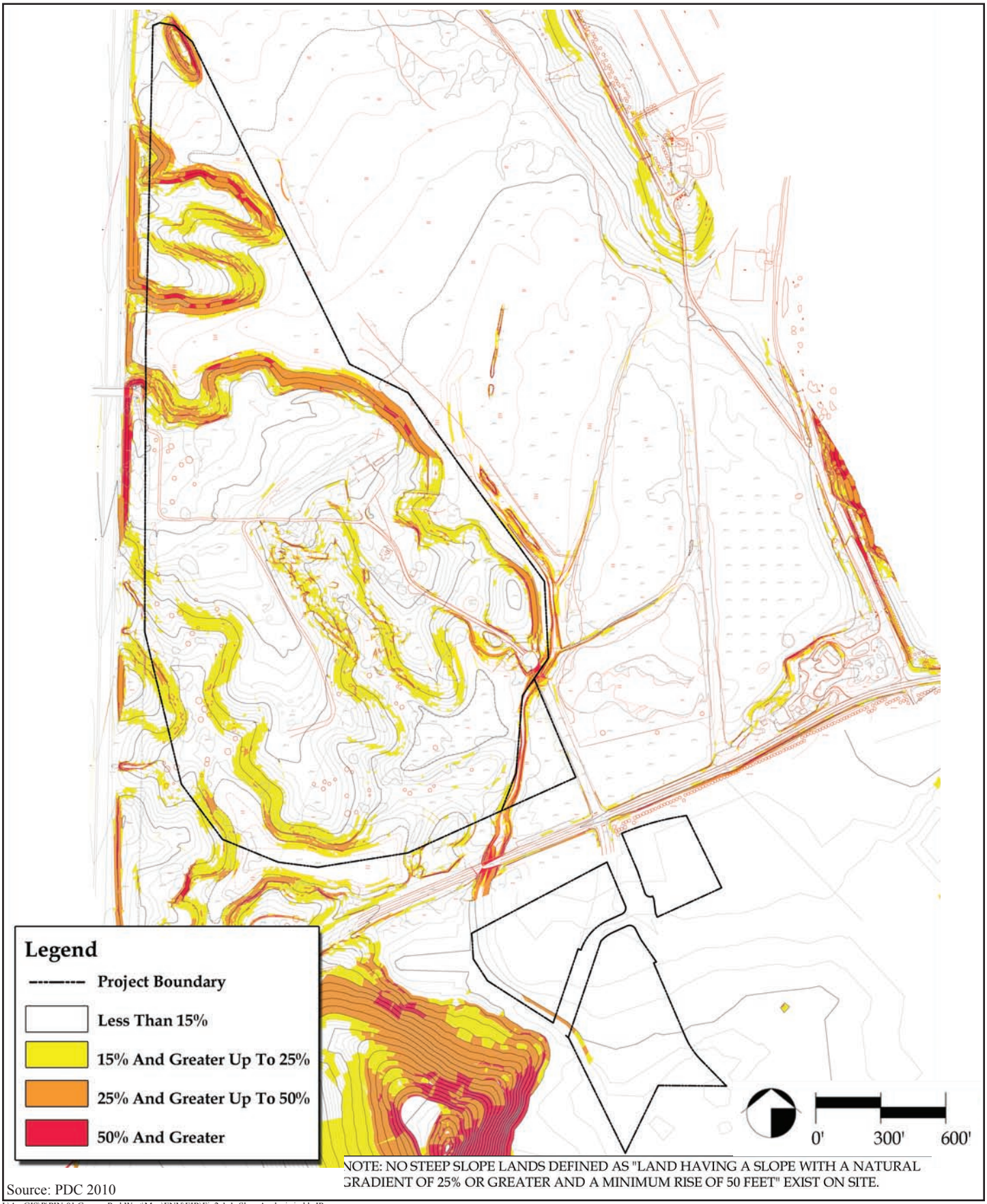

NOTE: NO STEEP SLOPE LANDS DEFINED AS "LAND HAVING A SLOPE WITH A NATURAL GRADIENT OF 25% OR GREATER AND A MINIMUM RISE OF 50 FEET" EXIST ON SITE.

Source: PDC 2010

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Slope Analysis

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-1

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Photograph Location Map

CAMPUS PARK WEST

HELIX Environmental Planning

Figure 2.1-2

Typical View 1: Northwest along the unpaved portion of Pankey Road

Typical View 2: Northward from the unpaved portion of Pankey Road

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Typical Views

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-3a

HELIX Environmental Planning

Typical View 3: Eastward from the western Project boundary toward the airstrip

Typical View 4: Southeastward from the western Project boundary toward the airstrip

Typical View 5: Typical unpaved tracks and trees on the Project site

Typical View 6: Southward from the western, central portion of the Project site

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Typical Views

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-3c

HELIX Environmental Planning

Typical View 7: Southwestward from south of the airstrip

Typical View 8: Westward view of the remote-control helicopter area

Typical View 9: Northwest from Pankey Road, south of SR 76

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Typical Views

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-3e

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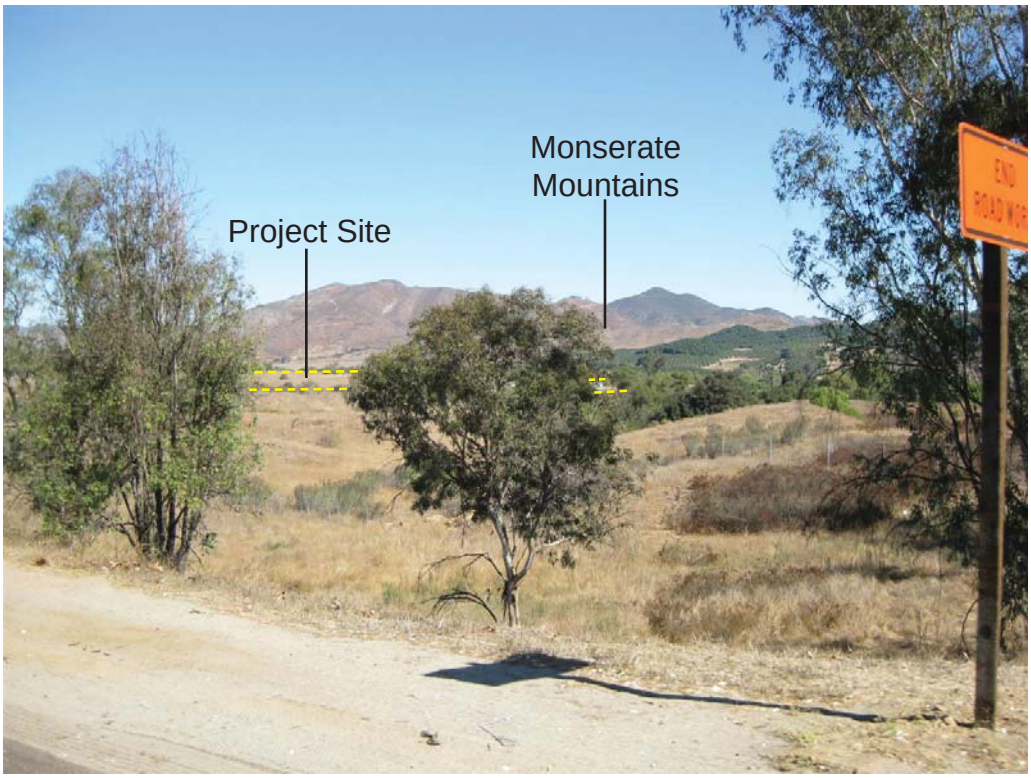
Typical View 10: Northeast from northbound I-15

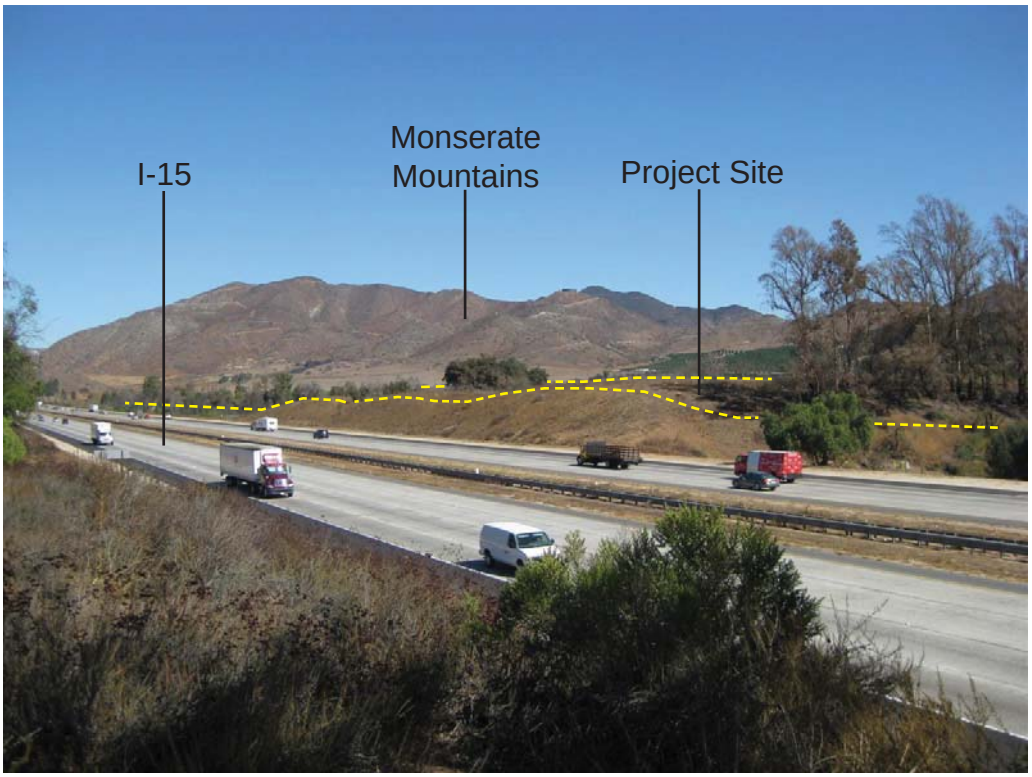
Typical View 11: Southeast from southbound I-15

Typical View 12: Southward from SR 76

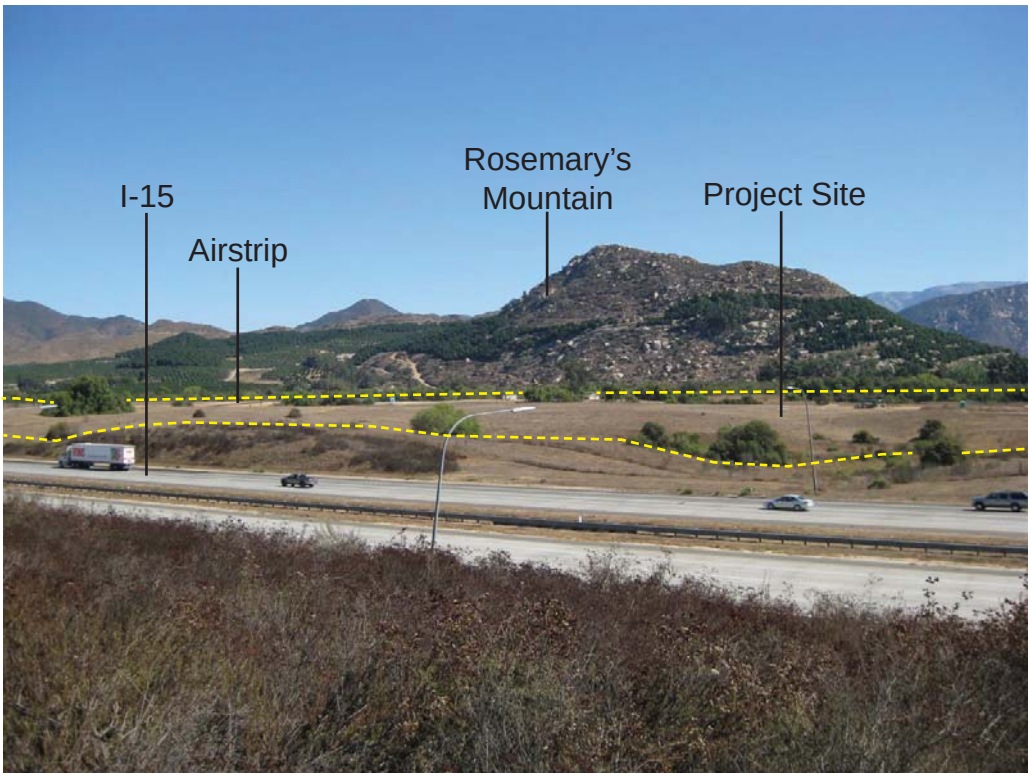
Typical View 13: Northeast from SR 76



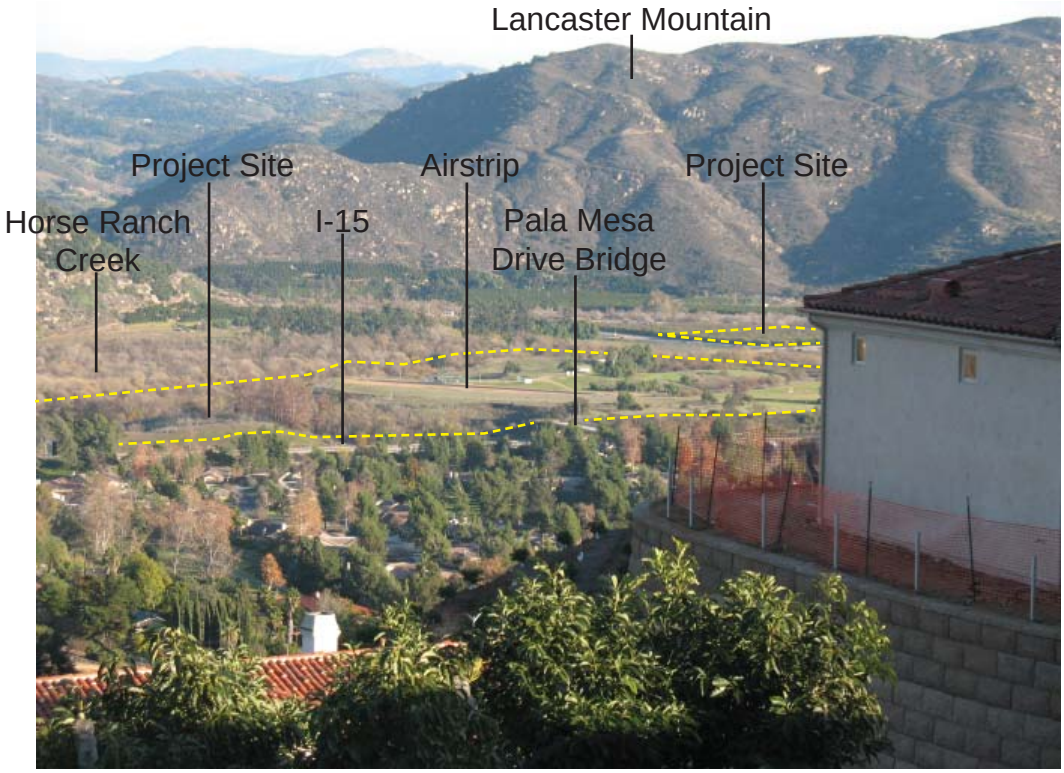
Typical View 14: Northeast from SR 76/Northbound I-15 on-ramp



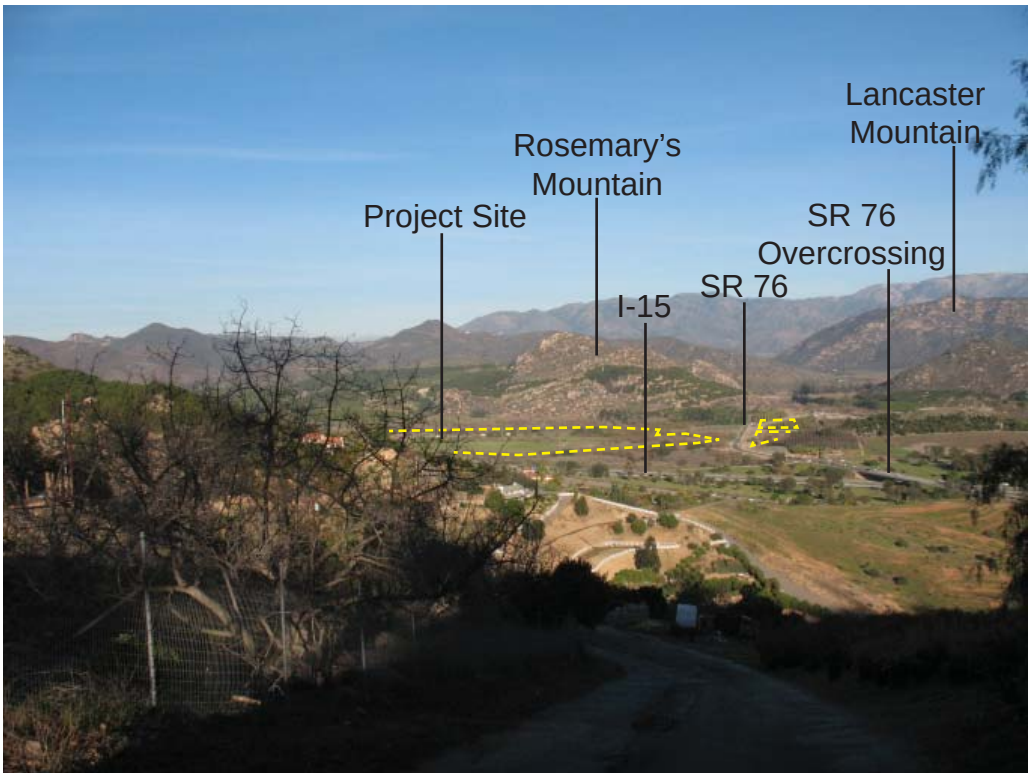
Typical View 15: Northeast from Old Highway 395 north of Pala Mesa Drive



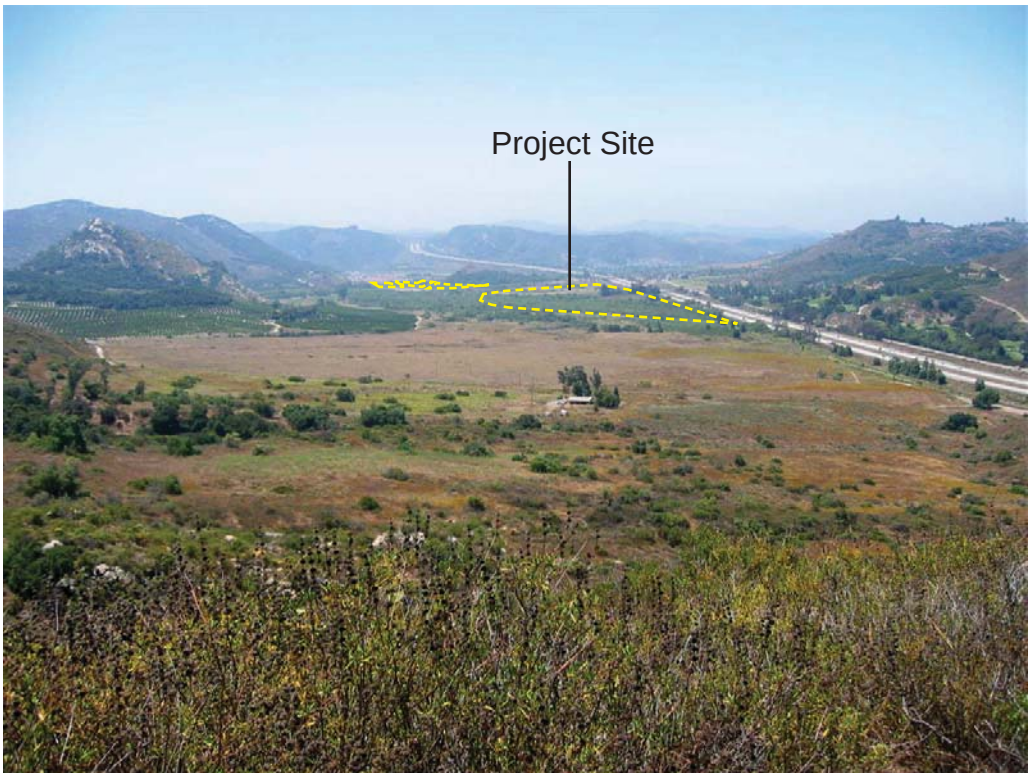
Typical View 16: Northeast from Old Highway 395 south of Pala Mesa Drive



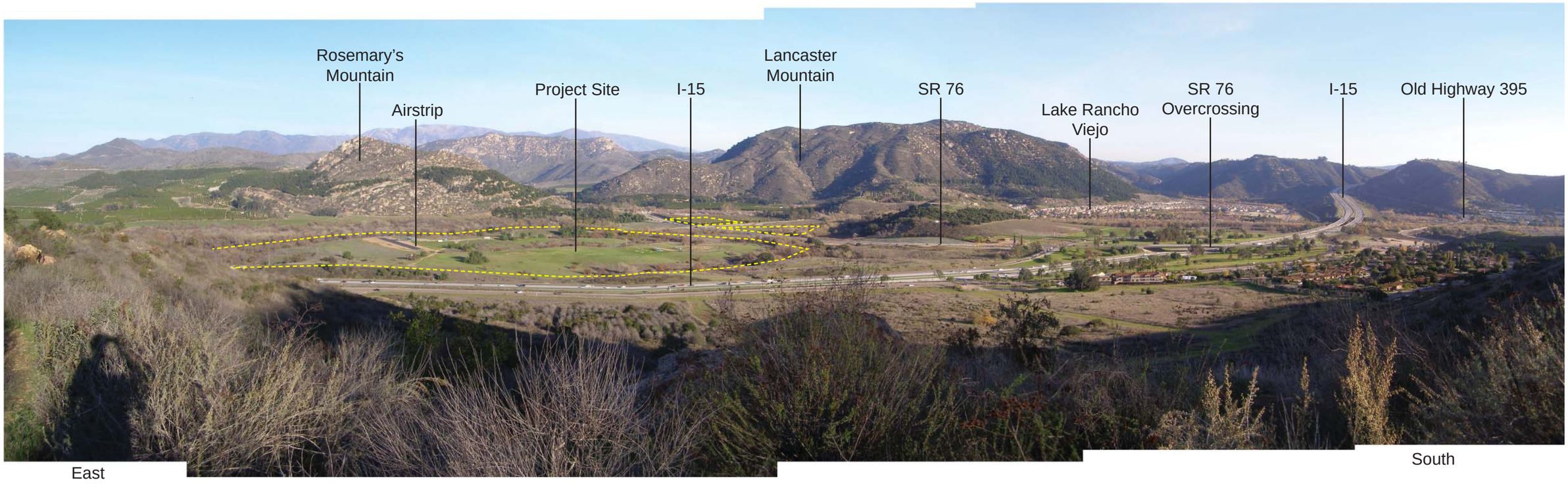
Typical View 17: East from Vern Drive



Typical View 18: Northeast from Brodea Lane



Typical View 19: Southward from trail on Monserate Mountain



Typical View 20: Panoramic from trail in Engel Family Preserve

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Typical View

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-3k

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1-mile Buffers
Project Boundary
Visible
Misson Road
MONSERATE MOUNTAIN
Reche Road
Stewart Canyon Road
Canonita Drive
Old Highway 395
Pankey Road
Monserate Mountain Preserve (Fallbrook Land Conservancy)
Pala Mesa Resort
Pala Mesa Heights Drive
Tecalote Lane
Beck Reservoir
Rice Canyon Road
ROSEMARY'S MOUNTAIN
Pala Mesa Drive
Engel Family Preserve
15
76
Pankey Road
Pala Road
Shearer Crossing
San Luis Rey River
Dulin Road
Pala Road
LANCASTER MOUNTAIN
Lake Rancho Viejo
76
Lilac Road
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W
E
S
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Job No: PIN-01 Date: 06/07/10

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Project Viewshed

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-4

HELIX Environmental Planning

Existing Conditions
Looking westerly on SR 76 from east of Pankey Road

Proposed Configuration

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Key View 1 / Simulation 1

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-5

HELIX Environmental Planning

Existing Conditions
Looking northerly to the Project site from SR 76
east of the I-15 on-ramp

Proposed Configuration

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Key View 2 / Simulation 2

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-6

HELIX Environmental Planning

Existing Conditions
Looking east from Old Highway 395 into the central portion of the Project north of SR 76

Proposed Configuration

Existing Conditions
Looking southeasterly to the northern portion
of the Project from southbound I-15

Proposed Configuration

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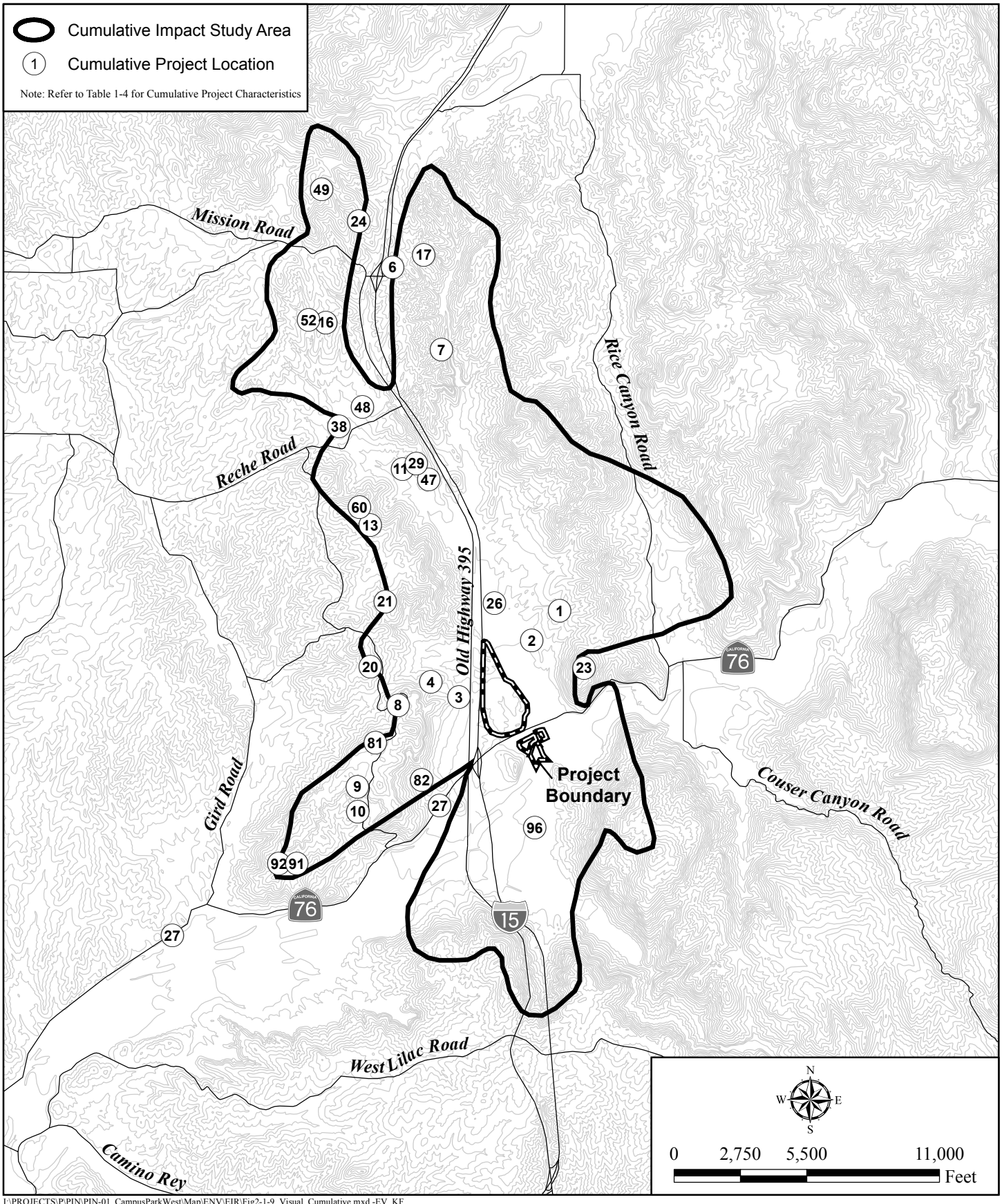
Key View 4 / Simulation 4

CAMPUS PARK WEST

Figure 2.1-8

HELIX
Environmental Planning



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Cumulative Projects for Visual Resources

CAMPUS PARK WEST

HELIX Environmental Planning

Figure 2.1-9

Cumulative View 1: Northward from Old Highway 395, north of Lilac Road