

## **CHAPTER 2     SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

This chapter of the EIR discusses those effects that were identified as significant, after conducting a thorough analysis of the environmental effects associated with the proposed project. Each environmental issue area describes existing conditions, regulatory setting, analysis of proposed project effects and determinations of significance, cumulative impact analysis, significance of impact prior to mitigation, and mitigation. The environmental issue areas addressed in Chapter 2 are as follows:

- Aesthetics (EIR, Section 2.1)
- Agricultural Resources (EIR, Section 2.2)
- Air Quality (EIR, Section 2.3)
- Biological Resources (EIR, Section 2.4)
- Cultural Resources (EIR, Section 2.5)
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity (EIR, Section 2.6)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions (EIR, Section 2.7)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (EIR, Section 2.8)
- Mineral Resources (EIR, Section 2.9)
- Noise (EIR, Section 2.10)
- Paleontological Resources (EIR, Section 2.11)
- Population and Housing (EIR, Section 2.12)
- Transportation and Traffic (EIR, Section 2.13)
- Utilities and Service Systems (EIR, Section 2.14)
- Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes (EIR, Section 2.15)

### **Analysis of I-15 Interchange Improvements (Mitigation Measure M-TR-1)**

Caltrans is the lead agency for the I-15 interchange improvements project. Accordingly, in a separate environmental review and approval process under CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Caltrans will analyze the I-15 interchange improvements, and whether the existing park-and-ride lots should be expanded, reconfigured, and/or enhanced to support transportation alternatives (e.g., ride-share, car-share, and transit). This EIR identifies the I-15 interchange improvements as a mitigation measure (See EIR Section 2.13, Transportation and Traffic, Mitigation Measure M-TR-1). Because the interchange

improvements are a mitigation measure, this EIR discusses the potential environmental effects of the interchange improvements as required by CEQA (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1)(D)).

In addition, evaluating the Caltrans interchange improvements in terms of the project's mitigation is appropriate because information concerning the interchange improvements is still under review and scoping through the Caltrans process, including an assessment of alternatives to the interchange improvements, which affect the intersection size, configuration, disturbance zones, and other features that are needed for an overall environmental analysis. Nonetheless, this EIR endeavors to disclose all it reasonably can at this time regarding environmental effects associated with the interchange improvements.

## **2.1      Aesthetics**

This section discusses potential impacts to aesthetics and visual resources, including potential impacts to the visual character and quality of the proposed project and surroundings resulting from implementation of the proposed project. The analysis is based on a review of existing resources, technical data, and applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, and summarizes the Visual Resources Technical Report prepared by Dudek that is presented in its entirety in Appendix E of this EIR. The technical report was prepared in conformance with the County of San Diego's Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements: Visual Resources (County of San Diego 2007a) and Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements: Dark Skies and Glare (County of San Diego 2007b, as modified in 2009).

Comments received during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) scoping process included concerns regarding a perceived urbanization of the Twin Oaks Valley area and effects to the area's rural, pastoral character; potential aesthetic impacts experienced at single-family residential properties, Golden Door Properties, LLC and Deer Springs Oaks Mobile Home Estates during construction and final buildout; and perceived impacts to the rural atmosphere of the project due to realignment of Deer Springs Road and the proposed Community trail along Deer Springs Road. The potential aesthetic impacts of the proposed project, including potential impacts to existing visual character and quality of the project Site and surrounding area, are addressed in this section.

### **2.1.1      Existing Conditions**

This section provides a regional overview of the proposed project and describes the existing visual character and quality of the proposed project Site and the surrounding area.

### **2.1.1.1 Environmental Setting**

#### **Regional Overview**

The proposed project is located within an unincorporated portion of the County of San Diego (County) within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, as shown in Figure 1-35, Regional Map, in Chapter 1 of this EIR. The North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area is composed of several non-contiguous areas interspersed among the cities of Escondido, San Diego, San Marcos, Vista, and Oceanside, with the most easterly portion adjacent to Valley Center. The North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area includes the communities of Hidden Meadows and Twin Oaks. Most of the project Site is located in the community of Twin Oaks, with a portion of the Site located in Bonsall. The proposed project is directly west of Interstate 15 (I-15), north of State Route 78 (SR-78), and south of SR-79. The cities of Escondido and San Marcos are approximately 1 mile south of the proposed project. The proposed project is bounded by I-15 on the east, Deer Springs Road (County Road S12) on the south, and Twin Oaks Valley Road on the west, with a small portion of the northwestern edge traversed by Twin Oaks Valley Road. Gopher Canyon Road is located approximately 1.5 mile north of the proposed project Site's northern boundary and 2.5 miles north of the development area.

#### **Project Site**

The project Site is located within the northern portion of the Merriam Mountains, a narrow chain of low mountains generally running north/south with a variety of east/west-trending ridgelines and scattered peaks. These mountains originate near the northern end of the urban parts of the City of Escondido and are bordered by Gopher Canyon Road to the north, I-15 to the east, and Twin Oaks Valley Road to the west. The mountains are approximately 8.5 miles long, and the proposed project would be situated on approximately 3 miles of the northern portion of the Merriam Mountains.

Natural topography of the Site is composed of hills and valleys dominated by significant rock outcroppings with moderate to steeply sloping terrain. On-site elevation ranges from approximately 660 feet above mean sea level near the northwestern limits of the proposed project at Twin Oaks Valley Road to approximately 1,750 feet above mean sea level in the west central portion of the property. Topography generally increases toward the center of the Site, forming a number of ridgelines and some prominent rock outcrops. In some locations the gentle sloping perimeter gradually rises to higher elevations, and in other areas the slopes are more acute. As stated in Chapter 1, Project Description, of this EIR, approximately 55 percent of the Site contains Resource Protection Ordinance-defined steep slope lands. Prominent, generally east/west-trending ridgelines divide the Site into five separate drainage basins, which are tributaries to Moosa Canyon, Gopher Canyon, and San Marcos Creek. Gopher Canyon is located north of the project Site and a small portion of the South Fork of Gopher Canyon Creek runs

southeast–northwest through the northwestern area of the Site, eventually meeting the San Luis Rey River. Both Gopher Canyon and the San Marcos Mountains show favorable attributes as habitat and corridors for larger wildlife.

The majority of the proposed project Site is currently undeveloped and is largely dominated by undisturbed chaparral. Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), white fairy-lantern (*Calochortus albus*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), and other species characterizing the on-site chaparral range from approximately 5 to 10 feet in height, display green to brown to greyish colors, and are often intermixed with patches of bare soil. Smaller pockets of coastal scrub habitat are scattered throughout the chaparral across the project Site. In addition to native vegetation communities, a number of dirt roads and trails that provide access to each parcel and service roads for the existing water infrastructure traverse the Site. The tan-colored bare soil surface of trails and roads are distinguishable from adjacent natural habitat due to contrast in line and color. Portions of the Site have been and continue to be used for various unauthorized land uses, including horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, off-roading, motorcycling, shooting, and dumping. An abandoned quarry is located in the northwest portion of the Site fronting Twin Oaks Valley Road, and an abandoned private airstrip is located in the north central portion of the Site.

### Surrounding Area

Land uses in the surrounding area are illustrated on Figure 1-37, Surrounding Land Uses, of this EIR. As detailed on Figure 1-37, large-lot single-family residential development and agricultural groves comprise the majority of property in the surrounding area and undeveloped hilly and canyon terrain is present to the north and east.

Semi-rural residential development, with occasional equestrian and agricultural (nursery and groves) uses, is located along the Site's western and southern boundary. Homes are typically modest one- or two-story single-family structures with larger lots featuring equestrian facilities (i.e., riding arenas and/or rings, stalls), fruit groves, and occasionally, stored vehicles and/or equipment. Private yards are typically landscaped and properties boundaries are occasionally lined with palm, pine, pepper, oak, and eucalyptus trees in attempt to create visual screens from Deer Springs Road and adjacent properties.

Large-lot and more dense single-family residential development occur to the east of the project Site in the Hidden Meadows community and to the south in San Marcos. Denser single-family residences in Hidden Meadows are located approximately 1 mile east of the Site's eastern boundary and north of the South Fork of Gopher Canyon and generally consist of one- to two-story structures on smaller, landscaped lots that, at development edges, tend to abut undeveloped and densely vegetated terrain. Larger ridgeline homes in Hidden Meadows would be afforded

views to the project Site, but views to the project Site from the majority of homes in Hidden Meadows would generally be obstructed by intervening vegetation, structures, and terrain. Denser, tract-like single-family development in San Marcos is located over 1.7 miles to the south of the Site and includes residences around the Twin Oaks Valley Golf Course and the gated, ridgetop Emerald Heights development. A small and gated single-family residential community featuring large, two-story homes on generally densely landscaped and spacious lots is bound by Sycamore Drive to the west and Mulberry Drive to the east and is approximately 1.8 miles south of the Site's southern boundary. Views to the Site are available but proposed development would be intermittently screened by residential landscaping and by more distant topography.

Commercial land uses, limited industrial businesses and mobile home and resort-living communities are located in the surrounding area. In addition to commercial nurseries and flower stands located along the I-15 and Twin Oaks Valley Road corridor, the Twin Oaks Market is adjacent to Twin Oaks Valley Road and is located approximately 1.4 miles south of the Site's southern boundary. The market is a small one-story structure surrounded by a paved parking lot and minimal landscaping and the majority of the project Site is not visible from this location due to intervening structures and terrain. A winery and tasting room is also located to the south of the Site on slightly elevated and landscaped terrain. Due to its slightly elevated location, views to the portions of development areas in the eastern extents of the project Site would be visible from this location. An ARCO gas station abuts the southeastern corner of the Site and features a canopied fuel dispensing area and convenience market. An active quarry for construction aggregate products is located on Twin Oaks Valley Road, approximately 0.6 mile northwest of the abandoned quarry located in the northwestern corner of the project Site. The San Diego County Water Authority's Twin Oaks Valley Water Treatment Plant is situated approximately 1 mile west of the proposed Summit and Knoll development area and views to Site largely encompasses areas where biological open space is proposed. Lastly, a small mobile home community is located south of Deer Springs Road and immediately south of the proposed Town Center planning area and the Champagne Village mobile home community is located east of I-15 and approximately 0.2 mile from the Site's eastern boundary. These communities feature single-story structures, narrow interior access roads, and private yard and perimeter landscaping. Views to the Site from the Deer Springs Road adjacent community are partially screened by existing oak, pine, and pepper trees planted along the northern boundary of the community. Views to the Site from the Champagne Village development would generally consist of undeveloped terrain where no development is proposed. Relatively long, two-story apartment-style buildings line portions of the Welk Resort property, which is located east and northeast of the project Site and offers short-term/vacation and ownership residential opportunities. Views from the Welk Resort to the project Site would be similar to views from Champagne Village.

Golden Door Properties, LLC is located off Deer Springs Road, approximately 0.35 mile east of Sarver Lane and approximately 0.5 mile south of the Site's southern boundary. The resort property features spa and fitness/recreation facilities including more than 20 miles of hiking trails in the adjacent undeveloped mountainous terrain, visitor suites, orange groves, and vegetable gardens. Development in the nearest planning area, the Valley planning area, would be located approximately 0.54 mile north of the resort, however, views to proposed development would largely be obscured by resort perimeter landscaping and rising terrain located north of Deer Springs Road.

In addition to equestrian facilities located on residential properties, commercial and therapeutic equestrian centers and businesses operate in the Twin Oaks Valley area. A large equestrian center featuring a community feed and supply store, outdoor riding rings, a large covered riding arena and stables is located at the corner of North Twin Oaks Valley Road and Deer Springs Road. The facility is approximately 1.0 mile south of the Site's southern boundary and views to the Site are occasionally partially screened by intervening vegetation and structures. In addition, the TERI Campus of Life Therapeutic Equestrian Center is located south of the intersection of Deer Spring Road and Sarver Lane and consists of a therapy riding trail, an open air equestrian arena, boarding stalls and a bathing bay, administrative offices, and an outdoor patio (TERI 2016). Proposed improvements on Sarver Lane would be visible from the facility but the majority of development areas on the Site would be screened by Site topography.

The proposed project Site is primarily undeveloped and contains no existing sources of nighttime lighting. Outdoor lighting is installed at the ARCO gas station near the Site's southeastern boundary, at the I-15 on- and off-ramps at Deer Springs Road and at the intersection of Deer Springs Road and Mesa Rock Road. Street lighting is not installed along Deer Springs Road from west of Mesa Rock Road to Twin Oaks Valley Road, and is not installed along existing project area smaller roads such as Sarver Lane or Deer Springs Place. Homes and commercial businesses along I-15 and Deer Springs Road generate visible nighttime lighting via interior and exterior lighting, however, effects tend to be more prevalent in denser tract-style residential neighborhoods located to the south of the Site in San Marcos. There are no existing sources of glare on the project Site; however, a limited number of existing sources of glare are present in the surrounding area. In addition to existing signage at the ARCO gas station, limited street lighting in the surrounding area is a potential sources of nighttime glare in the existing environmental.

There are no designated or eligible state scenic highways in the immediate project area (Caltrans 2014). SR-76 from I-5 near Oceanside to SR-79 near Lake Henshaw is an eligible state scenic highway that is located more than 4 miles from the northern and western project boundary. Two roadways in the project viewshed are included in the County Scenic Highway System: (1) I-15 (from the Escondido city limits north to Riverside County line); and (2) Twin Oaks Valley Road (Gopher Canyon Road south to San Marcos city limits). Views to proposed development and

roadway improvements would be available from these roadways. An approximately 2-mile segment of I-15 located north of Deer Springs Road parallels the project Site's eastern boundary. Development in the proposed Town Center would be located within 500 feet of southbound I-15 lanes, but development in the Terraces, Hillside, and Mesa planning areas would be located 0.25 mile, 0.18 mile, and 0.23 mile from the closest segment of I-15, respectively. Intervening topography would screen a significant portion of development in the Hillside and Mesa planning areas from I-15. Twin Oaks Valley Road traverses the northeastern portion of the project Site and is located more than 0.65 mile from proposed development in the Summit, Knoll, and Valley planning areas. Intervening topography and structures would obstruct views to most development on the project Site from Twin Oaks Valley Road.

The closest large public park to the project Site is Walnut Grove Park in San Marcos. At its closest point, the park is located approximately 1.1 miles south of the Site's southern boundary. The 39-acre park features a perimeter paved surface parking lot a large, triangular-shaped turf area for team sporting events, a historic barn structure used for meetings and other events, two outdoor equestrian riding rings/arenas, and a recreation center. A dirt equestrian trail lines the perimeter of the park and trail extends over 1 mile to the south and east along Sycamore Drive and East La Cienega Road. Development on the project Site would largely be screened from view at Walnut Grove Park by intervening topography and vegetation, but fuel management activities occurring along the Site's southern boundary would be faintly visible from the park. Although there are no components of a known state trail system within the viewshed of the project Site, the existing dirt right-of-way located north of Deer Springs Road and east of Sarver Lane is understood (based on comments received during the NOP public scoping period) to receive use by equestrians and pedestrians.

In addition to the Walnut Grove Park, several recreational facilities are located within the computer-generate project viewshed described below in Section 2.1.1.2. The Thunderbird Driving Range and Batting Cages are situated approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the Site and due to the presence of mature trees lining Tierra Libertia Road, views to the project Site are partially screened. Twin Oaks High School (a continuation school for grades 9 through 12) features an outdoor basketball court and turf soccer field and these facilities are located approximately 1.5 miles south of the Site's southern boundary. In addition, a turf field and two baseball/softball diamonds are located approximately 1.65 and 1.9 miles south of the Site's southern boundary at Twin Oaks Elementary School and The Oaks Christian Church. The Welk Resort Golf Course and portions of the Castle Creek Golf Course are also located in the surrounding area. At its closest location, the Welk Resort Golf Course is located approximately 0.35 mile from the northern Site boundary and closest portions of the Castle Creek Golf Course are located over 1.8 miles from the northern Site boundary. From these facilities, views to the

northern portion of the project Site are available but generally encompass areas where no development is proposed.

Photographs of on-site visual elements are illustrated in Figures 2.1-1a to 2.1-1b and photographs from off-site visual elements are illustrated in Figures 2.1-1c through 2.1-1h.

### On-Site Visual Elements

Figure 2.1-1a illustrates the topography, vegetation, and occurrences of rock outcrops across the project Site. Existing trails on the project Site are also visible in Figure 2.1-1a photographs.

Figure 2.1-1b illustrates evidence of illegal dumping on the project Site and also depicts the visual effects of the abandoned on-site quarry and typical vegetation found across the project Site. Evidence of illegal trespassing and tire tracks signifying use of on-site trails by motorcycles and other vehicles are distinguishable in this figure photo.

### Off-Site Visual Elements

Figures 2.1-1c through 2.1-1e illustrate the existing visual character and quality of development in the area surrounding the project Site. With the exception of Figure 2.1-1e, which includes photographs of existing resort and commercial development along Deer Springs Road, the figures depict the character of existing development on residential properties.

Figure 2.1-1f illustrates the general character of and views available to residential development located east of the project Site in the Hidden Meadows community. With the exception of ridgeline residences, views to the project Site from Hidden Meadows would be obscured by intervening terrain and development.

Figures 2.1-1g and 2.1-1h illustrate the existing visual character of the I-15 and Twin Oaks Valley Road corridors.

#### **2.1.1.2 Project Viewshed**

A “viewshed” is an analytical tool to aid in identification of views that could be affected by a potential project. The viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the on-site elements of the proposed project are likely to be seen, and mostly is delineated based on topography. The viewshed is the area visible from an observer’s viewpoint, including the screening effects of intermediate vegetation and structures. The most comprehensive viewsheds are generally from scenic viewpoints, singular vantage points that offer an unobstructed view of expansive visible landscape components. Its components include the underlying landform (topography, e.g., foothills, mountains, flatlands) and the overlaying landcover (e.g., water

features, vegetation, cultural sites, and buildings) (County of San Diego 2007a). The viewshed boundary represents the geographic limits for this visual assessment.

For the proposed project Site, views within an approximate 2-mile radius were focused on in the selection of key viewpoints as they were considered close enough to afford receptors relatively clear views of project components including landform alteration and proposed structures. Figure 2.1-1 illustrates the project viewshed on an aerial photographic base. The project viewshed, or “visible areas” as identified on Figure 2.1-1, is approximate and was delineated using GIS models that analyze topographic data and the elevation of project components (including landform alterations) to determine portions of the project Site that may be visible in the surrounding area. As shown on Figure 2.1-1, views to some portions of the project Site and proposed development components would extend to I-15, Deer Springs Road, North Twin Oaks Valley Road, Twin Oaks Valley, Hidden Meadows, Lawrence Welk Village, and other locations in the surrounding area.

Because the project viewshed as depicted on Figure 2.1-1 is based primarily on topographic data, screening as a result of existing intervening vegetation and structures is not reflected on Figure 2.1-2. Due to the presence of intervening vegetation and structures, the project Site and proposed development components would not be visible to all locations in the project viewshed (i.e., at all areas identified as “visible areas” on Figure 2.1-2).

### **2.1.1.3 Visual Character**

Visual character is descriptive and non-evaluative, which means it is based on defined attributes that are neither positive nor negative in themselves. A change in visual character cannot be described as having positive or negative attributes until it is compared with the viewer response to that change. If there is public preference for the established visual character of a regional landscape and resistance to a project that would contrast that character, then changes in the visual character can be evaluated.

For purposes of this analysis, the visual character of the project area is organized into a discussion of landscape units. A landscape unit (LU) is a portion of the regional landscape that exhibits a distinct visual character. Topography, vegetation, and existing landform contribute to the distinctness of visual character. Slopes, watershed ridges, rock outcroppings, vegetation, and other physical elements can serve to distinguish one unit from another. The lines and elements that define landscape character units may be abrupt and obvious (a mountainous ridgeline for example), but may also be less obvious and transitional (a transitional uplands area featuring irregular clumps of granite boulders that slowly gradate to distinct boulder-strewn mountain foothills). A landscape unit will often correspond to a place or district that is commonly known among local viewers by its visual character.

Two LUs were identified in the project area: the I-15 Corridor LU and the Twin Oaks Valley LU.

### I-15 Corridor Landscape Unit

The I-15 Corridor LU is composed of the terrain, vegetation and development visible to I-15 motorists near the project Site. The landscape is characterized by a series of north-south running rolling hills and steep slopes located east and west of the interstate. The presence of high elevation terrain parallel to the interstate creates a generally narrow and enclosed landscape that is occasionally interrupted by a system of east-west canyons and drainages that expand available views and broaden the scene. The hills and steep slopes of the corridor typically support native chaparral vegetation of varying density and large, white to gray colored boulder outcrops. Undeveloped terrain tends to be densely covered by a mosaic of brown and gray colors (color varies slightly by season) that are intermittently interrupted by thin, red to tan-colored horizontal lines associated with access roads. In contrast, developed hills and flat, lower-lying terrain features pockets of single-family residential development intermixed with non-native landscaping, remnants of native vegetation, plant nurseries, gas stations, and other commercial uses. As with residential and commercial uses, pockets of agricultural operations including avocado crops on east and west facing slopes and interstate adjacent nurseries are visible along the corridor.

Although located both east and west of the interstate, residential development is seemingly concentrated east of the interstate due to the presence of more favorable (and flatter) terrain. Large lot residential development atop ridgelines is commonplace through the corridor but is more prevalent north of Deer Springs Road. Massive single-family residences are perched high above the corridor and the form of structures are silhouetted against the sky. In addition to canyons, the base of more moderately sloped east and west-facing terrain tends to be developed with residential and recreational uses. The most prominent occurrence of this development pattern is the sprawling golf course and multi-story condominium development at Lawrence Welk Village. Tightly packed mobile homes associated with the Champagne Village development and the golf course and surrounding residential development of near Castle Creek are other examples of development within flatter, more favorable terrain areas of the LU. The abovementioned developments are visible to interstate motorists and create visual contrast with the surrounding natural elements in the landscape. For example, the light exterior paint common on structures in the Lawrence Welk Village and Champagne Village developments, the prevalence of slightly sloped red tiled roofs, and the light green color and smooth textured surface of manicured golf course grasses contrast with the muted greens and browns of surrounding chaparral covered terrain.

Photographs of existing visual conditions within the I-15 Corridor Landscape Unit are presented in Figure 2.1-1g.

### Twin Oaks Valley Landscape Unit

Located west and southwest of the project Site, the Twin Oaks Valley LU consists of the flat and moderately developed valley bottom and surrounding foothills and ridgelines of the Twin Oaks Valley area. The valley is generally bound by the Merriam Mountains and San Marcos Mountains to the north and rising terrain located west and east of Twin Oaks Valley Road and the Twin Oaks Valley Golf Course to the south. Development within the landscape unit consists of residential, agricultural, and recreation (more specifically, equestrian and park) uses. Residential development within the area includes semi-rural (1- to 10-acre) sized lots featuring one and two-story single-family residential development intermixed with tall oak, pine, eucalyptus and palm trees west of Twin Oaks Valley Road and small, gated residential development and denser, tract-style single family residential neighborhoods located east of Twin Oaks Valley Road in San Marcos. Although residential development is clustered at the valley floor and extends to low-lying foothills, several ridgelines have been modified by grading associated with and construction of residences and access roads. The natural density of vegetation on west and south-facing slopes in the area has also been altered because of fuel modification practices at development boundaries. Agricultural development is prevalent in the valley and primarily consists of small commercial nurseries featuring long, linear rows of container trees and shrubs and larger operations featuring long rows of rectangular, lightly colored greenhouses. Several parcels have also recently been cleared and/or tilled and as a result, these lands display a relatively flat form with horizontal lines of low vegetation adjacent to linear bands of bare soil. In addition to commercial nurseries and planted fields, avocado and other fruit tree operations occur within the valley and on east- and west-facing foothills of terrain in the area. The orderly organization of crops and the spherical form and bright green color of fruit tree canopies produces a visual contrast when viewed against the rough form and drab green and grayish color of native chaparral vegetation that populates surrounding terrain.

Recreational uses in the area are concentrated near the intersection of North Twin Oaks Valley Road and Deer Springs Road and consist of equestrian centers, a public park (Walnut Grove Park), dirt trails, and turf fields. In addition to clusters of oak trees and tall palm trees, overhead electrical distribution line runs parallel alongside Deer Springs Road and streetlights and traffic signals are installed at major intersections along Twin Oaks Valley Road.

Photographs of existing visual conditions within the Twin Oaks Valley Landscape Unit are presented in Figure 2.1-1h.

#### **2.1.1.4 Visual Quality**

Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness, and unity present in the viewshed. This approach to evaluating visual quality can help identify specific methods for

mitigating specific adverse impacts that may occur as a result of a project. The three criteria for evaluating visual quality can be defined as follows:

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

### I-15 Corridor Landscape Unit

Although the juxtaposition of rugged mountainous terrain occasionally traversed by canyons and the relatively narrow, flat form of the corridor floor is somewhat striking, vegetation consistently displays tones of brown and green and residential and resort development compete with the natural terrain and vegetation for attention. As a result, the vividness of the landscape unit is rated as moderate.

The intactness of the unit is moderately low. The unit includes undeveloped hillsides, mobile home communities, large, two-story ridgeline residences and golf courses resort development. Furthermore, dirt and paved roads traversing steep slope areas are visible as are agricultural groves of varying densities that display disparate diverse colors and lines on underlying terrain.

The unity of the landscape is moderately low. Residential development is located on the corridor floor and is interspersed with golf course and occasionally, commercial development including nurseries, a winery/tasting room, and a recreational driving range. Development also occurs on hillsides and ridgelines and is situated adjacent to undeveloped chaparral terrain, boulders outcrop, and agricultural groves. Residential development includes single-story mobile homes, two-story white stucco exterior and red tile roof condominium development, and larger two-story custom homes atop ridgelines that contain little composition similarities.

### Twin Oaks Valley Landscape Unit

The juxtaposition of the flat and moderately developed valley floor and surrounding foothills and ridgelines mountainous terrain is unique; however, visible alteration of vegetation and terrain on hillsides and peaks reduces the vividness to a moderately low rating.

The majority of the landscape displays a relatively consistent rural character, but the presence of large-lot and gated residential communities and the visual effects of hillside and ridgeline

residential and agricultural development (and residential, adjacent fuel modification practices) reduce the intactness of the landscape to a moderate rating.

The landscape includes an assortment of uses including residential, agricultural groves, nurseries, recreational facilities and limited industrial uses. Residential development tends to be located on the valley floor but also occurs on hillside and ridgelines and has created visible form, line and color contrast with adjacent terrain and vegetation. Agricultural groves are relatively commonplace, but areas covered with seemingly dense trees tend to be viewed along hillsides marked by the tan-color of underlying soils or swaths of native vegetation that creates an inconsistent visual pattern. As a result, unity of the landscape unit is assessed as moderate.

#### **2.1.1.5 Viewer Response**

Viewer response is composed of two elements: viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure. These elements combine to form a method of predicting how the viewers might react to visual changes brought about by a project.

Viewer sensitivity is both the viewers' concern for scenic quality and the viewers' response to change in the visual resources that make up the view. Local values and goals may confer visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional in a visual resource analysis.

Viewer exposure is typically assessed by measuring the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of their view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer.

A viewer's response is also affected by the degree to which he/she is receptive to the visual details, character, and quality of the surrounding landscape. A viewer's ability to perceive the landscape is affected by his/her activity. A viewer on vacation in San Diego County would probably take pleasure in looking at the landscape, and an individual may be strongly attached to the view from their home, but a local County resident commuting to work may not "register" those same visual resources on a daily basis.

The following discussion of viewer groups addresses public and private views and considers the range of land use included in the project viewshed. The majority of private views considered in this analysis would be from residences, yards, and/or streets that are inaccessible to the public; however, viewers at these locations are anticipated to be afforded views to the project Site and proposed development.

### Motorists

Travelers on I-15 constitute the larger viewer group in the area. Although southbound motorists would be afforded peripheral views to development proposed in the southeastern corner of the Site (i.e., the Town Center and Terraces planning areas), northbound motorists would have direct views to these planning areas and would be able to view the Hillside planning area as well. The primary local roadway in the project area is Deer Springs Road. Travelers on Deer Springs Road would have peripheral views to development proposed in the southeastern corner of the Site and to the Hillside planning area but would have direct views to roadway improvements proposed on Deer Springs Road. Other east/west roadways including Mountain Meadow Road (east of the project Site) and north-south roads including North Centre City Park (east of the project Site and I-15), Mesa Rock Road (south of project Site), and North Twin Oaks Valley Road (west of the project Site) would be provided brief duration views to the southeastern corner of the project Site or to the western project boundary. These roads are typically two-lane facilities that in the case of Mountain Meadow Road and Mesa Rock Road are lined by vegetation and/or abut terrain that obscures portions of the project Site from view. North City Centre Road parallels I-15 and due to a lack of freeway adjacent trees, motorists would have direct views to the southeastern corner of the project Site. Road adjacent landscaping and the area's mountainous terrain screen the majority of development areas on the project Site from view of North Twin Oaks Valley Road motorists.

Motorists on I-15 and Deer Spring Road are presumed to have low to moderate sensitivity. Although local area residents use I-15, a high percentage of interstate viewers are assumed to be regional commuters simply passing through the area. Area residents on the interstate and on local roads in the project area generally would have high sensitivity that would be somewhat tempered by occasional curves on the roadways (which would require the attention of drivers and divert attention from views of the landscape).

I-15 is generally an eight-lane north/south freeway with a posted speed limited of 65 miles per hour near the project Site. In addition, between Gopher Canyon Road and Deer Springs Road, I-15 carries approximately 126,000 annual average daily traffic trips. Although direct views to the southeastern corner of the project Site would be available to northbound motorists, view exposure would be relatively brief.

Deer Springs Road is currently constructed as a two-lane roadway with unimproved shoulders and a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour from Twin Oaks Valley Road to Sarver Lane and 55 miles per hour from Sarver Lane to I-15. In the project area, Deer Spring Road carries approximately 19,000 average daily traffic trips. As previously stated, Deer Springs Road motorists would generally be afforded peripheral views to the project Site and development with

the exception of proposed improvements on Deer Springs Road. East of Mesa Rock Road, development on the project Site would be obscured by topography and vegetation.

Mountain Meadow Road is currently built as a four-lane undivided road with a striped median between Champagne Boulevard and High Mountain Drive. East of High Mountain Drive, a two-way left-turn lane is provided to Hidden Meadows Road. The posted speed limit on the roadway is 50 miles per hour. East of Champagne Boulevard, Mountain Meadow Road carries approximately 8,000 average daily traffic trips. Although direct views to the Terraces planning area would be available, view duration would be extremely brief to Mountain Meadow Road motorists and would be available through a narrow viewing corridor created by descending canyon terrain. Otherwise, views to the project Site from Mountain Meadow Road would be obscured by intervening vegetation and terrain.

North Centre City Parkway currently is constructed as a two-lane roadway with unimproved shoulders and a posted speed limit is 55 miles per hour. South of Deer Springs Road, North Centre City Parkway carries approximately 10,990 average daily traffic trips. Viewing conditions to the southeastern corner of the project Site from North Centre City Parkway would be similar to northbound I-15 views; however, due to a lower speed limit, view exposure and duration would be slightly longer.

### Residents

Portions of the proposed project Site are visible to nearby residences, including those in the Twin Oaks Valley, Lawrence Welk Village, and Hidden Meadows areas. Generally, residents are afforded long-term/permanent views of the surrounding landscape and as such, their rate of exposure is high. However, as previously discussed, exposure is also assessed by position of the viewer that may include the presence of intervening elements capable of screening the proposed project from view. For example, at ridgeline residences located east of the project Site in the community of Hidden Meadows, the elevated vantage point and general lack of intervening elements could provide long and broad views to the west that encompass a significant portion of the project Site development areas. At residences elsewhere in the viewshed including those located south of the project Site along Sarver Lane and west of the Site along North Twin Oaks Valley Road, views to development areas on the project Site would be partially to fully obstructed by intervening topography and vegetation. Generally, residences located atop prominent terrain to the south and east of the Site would have views to proposed development area that would be partially screened by landscaping and agricultural groves.

## Recreationists

Walnut Grove Park, recreational facilities located at Twin Oaks Elementary and High Schools, and area golf courses are located in the viewshed but recreationists at these locations would have obstructed views to the project Site and development areas. Where open views are available, views would generally encompass project Site edges that would not be developed and would instead be retained and managed as biological open space. Equestrians utilizing the Deer Springs Road adjacent dirt shoulder would have direct views to roadway improvements at Sarver Lane and along Deer Springs Road and as most are assumed to be area residents, equestrians would be expected to be highly sensitive to visual changes in the landscape.

### **2.1.2 Regulatory Setting**

#### Federal

There are no relevant or applicable federal policies concerning the protection of visual resources.

#### State

##### California Scenic Highway System

Created by the California State Legislature in 1963, the California Scenic Highway Program includes highways designated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as scenic. The purpose of the program is to protect the scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through conservation and land use regulation. For a highway to be included in the program it must first be nominated by the specific city or county where it is located. The nomination/eligibility process also entails that the city/county identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway to better understand the extent of visual resources requiring conservation. For an eligible highway to be officially designated and included in the program, the local government with jurisdiction over lands abutting the highway must implement a scenic highway corridor protection program that safeguards the scenic appearance of the corridor. Corridor protection may be achieved through a variety of means, including regulation of land uses and intensity of development, detailed land and Site planning, control of outdoor advertising, consideration of earthmoving and landscaping, and the design and appearance of structures and equipment. If the local Caltrans district and State Scenic Highway Coordinators determine that the corridor protection program meets the five legislatively required elements discussed above, a recommendation to designate the highway as scenic is forwarded to the Caltrans Director (Caltrans 2008).

There are five officially designated scenic highways in San Diego County: SR-163 (from the north to the south boundary of Balboa Park), SR-75 (from Imperial Beach city limits to Avenida

Del Sol in the city of Coronado, and Coronado Bridge), SR-125 (from SR-94 to SR-8), SR-78 (from west to east boundary of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park), and SR-52 (through Mission Trails Regional Park; from near Santo Road to near Mast Boulevard). There are no designated or eligible state scenic highways in the immediate project area. The nearest scenic highway, SR-76, is an eligible state scenic highway from I-5 near Oceanside to SR-79 near Lake Henshaw that has not been officially designated by Caltrans (Caltrans 2016). The closest segment of SR-76 (SR-76 at East Vista Way) is located more than 4 miles from the northern and western project boundary.

### Local

#### San Diego County General Plan

The County General Plan, through elements established to address the various issues accompanying planning and development, provides guidance for the protection of visual resources. Select policies within the Land Use, Mobility, and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan (County of San Diego 2011a) address the protection of existing visual character and/or quality of areas and contain general direction regarding the minimization of adverse impacts to visual resources. Policies from the remaining elements of the County General Plan were not considered applicable as they do not concern the protection of visual resources.

The following goals and policies of the Land Use (L), Mobility (M), and Conservation and Open Space (COS) Elements concern the preservation of visual and scenic resources (County of San Diego 2011a):

- **Goal LU-2: Maintenance of the County's Rural Character.** Conservation and enhancement of the unincorporated County's varied communities, rural setting, and character.
  - **Policy LU-2.8: Mitigation of Development Impacts.** Require measures that minimize significant impacts to surrounding areas from uses or operations that cause excessive noise, vibrations, dust, odor, aesthetic impairment and/or are detrimental to human health and safety.
  - **Policy LU-2.9: Maintaining Rural Character.** Consider level of service criteria, in accordance with Policy M-2.1, to determine whether adding lanes to a Mobility Element road would adversely impact the rural character of a community or cause significant environmental impacts. In those instances, consider other options to mitigate LOS where appropriate.

- **Goal LU-6: Development – Environmental Balance.** A built environment in balance with the natural environment, scarce resources, natural hazards, and the unique local character of individual communities.
  - **Policy LU-6.6: Integration of Natural Features into Project Design.** Require incorporation of natural features (including mature oaks, indigenous trees, and rock formations) into proposed development and require avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.
  - **Policy LU-6.9: Development Conformance with Topography.** Require development to conform to the natural topography to limit grading; incorporate and not significantly alter the dominant physical characteristics of a site; and to utilize natural drainage and topography in conveying stormwater to the maximum extent practicable.
  - **Policy LU-10.2: Development – Environmental Resource Relationship.** Require development in Semi-Rural and Rural areas to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character, and avoid sensitive or intact environmental resources and hazard areas.
  - **Policy LU-11.2: Compatibility with Community Character.** Require that commercial, office, and industrial development be located, scaled, and designed to be compatible with the unique character of the community.
  - **Policy LU-12.4: Planning for Compatibility.** Plan and site infrastructure for public utilities and public facilities in a manner compatible with community character, minimize visual and environmental impacts, and whenever feasible, locate any facilities and supporting infrastructure outside preserve areas. Require context sensitive Mobility Element road design that is compatible with community character and minimizes visual and environmental impacts; for Mobility Element roads identified in Table M-4, an LOS D or better may not be achieved.
  - **Policy M-4.5: Context Sensitive Road Design.** Design and construct roads that are compatible with the local terrain and the uses, scale and pattern of the surrounding development. Provide wildlife crossings in road design and construction where it would minimize impacts in wildlife corridors.
  - **Policy COS-11.1: Protection of Scenic Resources.** Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes.
  - **Policy COS-11.2: Scenic Resource Connections.** Promote the connection of regionally significant natural features, designated historic landmarks, and points of regional historic, visual, and cultural interest via designated scenic corridors, such as scenic highways and regional trails.

- **Policy COS-11.3: Development Siting and Design.** Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:
  - Creative site planning;
  - Integration of natural features into the project;
  - Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape;
  - Minimal disturbance of topography;
  - Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character; and
  - Creation of contiguous open space networks.
- **Policy COS-11.7: Underground Utilities.** Require new development to place utilities underground and encourage “undergrounding” in existing development to maintain viewsheds, reduce hazards associated with hanging lines and utility poles, and to keep pace with current and future technologies.
- **Policy COS-12.1: Hillside and Ridgeline Development Density.** Protect undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designations on these areas.
- **Policy COS-12.2: Development Location on Ridges.** Require development to preserve the physical features by being located down and away from ridgelines so that structures are not silhouetted against the sky.
- **Policy COS-13.1: Restrict Light and Glare.** Restrict outdoor light and glare from development projects in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands and designated rural communities to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.
- **Policy COS-13.2: Palomar and Mount Laguna.** Minimize, to the maximum extent feasible, the impact of development on the dark skies surrounding Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories to maintain dark skies which are vital to these two world-class observatories by restricting exterior light sources within the impact areas of the observatories.

In addition to goals and policies, the General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element establishes a County Scenic Highway System that is composed of particularly scenic segments of county roadways, state routes, and interstate freeways. Within the North County Metropolitan and Bonsall areas, I-15 (Escondido city limits north to Riverside County line) and Twin Oaks

Valley Road (Gopher Canyon Road to San Marcos city limits) are included within the County Scenic Highway System (County of San Diego 2011a).

### North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan

The southern portion of the proposed project is located within the County's North County Metropolitan Subarea. The subarea is composed of non-contiguous areas interspersed among the cities of Escondido, San Diego, San Marcos, Vista and Oceanside and includes the unincorporated communities of Hidden Meadows (located east of the project Site and I-15) and Twin Oaks (located west of I-15). The North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan does not contain specific goals or policies for visual resources. Nonetheless, Goal 1 of the plan is to "accommodate urban development in appropriate areas" and Goal 4 is "protect environmental resources" through use of rural and semi-rural land use designation. In addition, the plan identifies specific areas requiring special attention "in order to conserve resources in a manner best satisfying public and private objectives" (County of San Diego 2011b). Resource Conservation Areas in the subregional plan area include scenic landforms such as the San Marcos Mountains and the Merriam Mountains. According to the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, within Resource Conservation Areas, "County departments and other public agencies shall give careful consideration and special environmental analysis to all projects that they intend to carry out, propose, or approve" (County of San Diego 2011b).

### Bonsall Community Plan

The northern portion of the proposed project is located in the Bonsall Community Plan area. According to the Bonsall Community Plan, the Plan area consists of low-density estate type residential homes located far apart from one another on hillsides, hilltops, and in valleys. Homes are typically surrounded by fallow fields, undisturbed native vegetation and agriculture. In addition, estate residential uses, agricultural and equestrian uses are key factors in Bonsall's rural character (County of San Diego 2011c).

Relevant policies of the Bonsall Community Plan related to community character and visual and/or scenic resources are as follows (County of San Diego 2011c):

- **Policy LU-1.1.3:** Require development to be sensitive to the topography, physical context, and community character of Bonsall.
- **Policy LU-1.2.1:** Require development that is designed to be consistent with the rural character of the Bonsall community.
- **Policy LU-3.1.2:** Require subdivision design to minimize adverse impacts to community character, or to the environment, and to mitigate any impacts from other constraints on the land that could not be avoided. Require mitigation actions to remain

within the CPA [Community Plan Area].

- **Policy LU-3.1.5:** Preserve ridgelines by siting buildings below ridges or set back with sufficient distance to minimize visual impacts. Encourage screening to visually shield all structures, including the use of vegetation, as well as appropriate and varied building materials.
- **Policy LU-5.1.2:** Require grading to be contoured to blend with natural topography, rather than consist of straight edges.
- **Policy LU-5.1.3:** Minimize grading to preserve natural landforms, major rock outcroppings and areas of existing mature trees. Integrate hillside development with existing topography and landforms.
- **Policy LU-5.1.4:** Restrict, to the maximum extent feasible, extensive grading for development projects in areas with slopes that are 20% or greater, in order to preserve and protect the environment, and to lessen grading and erosion.
- **Policy LU-5.1.5:** Require development on slopes to be stepped to follow and preserve topography to the maximum extent feasible.
- **Policy LU-5.1.6:** Minimize cut and fill grading for roads and access ways to the absolute minimum necessary.
- **Policy CM-5.1.3:** Require new development to provide trees, in compliance with the suggested trees for defensible space, within the development but along and outside of the public right of way.
- **Policy COS-1.1.4:** Require development to be compatible with adjacent natural preserves, sensitive habitat areas, agricultural lands, and recreation areas, or provide transition or buffer areas.
- **Policy COS-1.1.5:** Require that landscaping be designed to prevent erosion on graded sites and, if adjacent to sensitive habitats, require re-vegetation with the appropriate drought tolerant plant species with specific restrictions on the use of any invasive species.
- **Policy COS-1.4.1:** Discourage street lighting, unless necessary for safety. Require street lighting to meet basic safety standards and the County Light Pollution Code, Ordinance #7155.

## San Diego County Zoning Ordinance

The provisions of Sections 5000 through 5964 of San Diego County's Zoning Ordinance, also known as the Special Area Regulations, set forth regulations to ensure that consideration is provided for areas of special interest or unusual value. When Special Area Regulations require the issuance of a Minor Use Permit or a Major Use Permit, such permits are only issued when

the proposed use satisfies all conditions and requirements of the Special Area Regulations and is found consistent with the intent and purpose of the applicable Special Area Regulations. The Special Area Regulations and associated Zoning Ordinance sections that apply to the proposed project include Scenic Area (S), Sections 5200–5212.

The provisions of Sections 6000 through 6991 of the County’s Zoning Ordinance outline general zoning regulations and include a few regulations regarding glare and outdoor lighting. Sections of the general regulations applicable to the proposed project include Sections 6320, 6322, and 6324 (County of San Diego 1978).

### San Diego Light Pollution Code

The Light Pollution Code was developed by the County Department of Planning & Development Services and Department of Public Works in cooperation with lighting engineers, astronomers, land use planners from San Diego Gas & Electric, Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories, and local planning and sponsor groups to address and minimize the impact of new sources of light pollution on nighttime views. For purposes of lighting requirements, the code separates the unincorporated portion of the County into two zones: Zone A and Zone B. Zone A includes all unincorporated lands located within a 15-mile radius of the Palomar or the Mount Laguna observatories, and Zone B includes all areas not included in Zone A (County of San Diego 2009a). Section 59.105 includes general lighting requirements applicable to all unincorporated lands in the County, and Section 59.106 includes shielding requirements per fixture by lighting type (i.e., outdoor lighting used for outdoor sales, eating areas, or advertisements (Class I), security lighting (Class II), and decorative lighting (Class III)) and according to location (Zone A or B) (County of San Diego 1986). Because the Palomar Observatory is located greater than 15 miles from the eastern project boundary, the proposed project is located in Zone B.

### I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines

The I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines apply to the unincorporated portion of the I-15 corridor extending from the northern city limits of Escondido to the Riverside County line (County of San Diego n.d.). The I-15 corridor extends approximately 20 miles from the Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. It contains the 0.5-acre to 2-mile “viewshed” area on either side of the freeway, which is what generally can be seen while driving along I-15. The “B” Design Review Area Special Designator is applied to properties within the corridor, which requires the preparation of a Site Plan in accordance with the Scenic Preservation Guidelines. The eastern portion of the proposed project has an existing “B” Special Area Designator, as shown in Figure 1-44, Existing North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor, in Chapter 1. In addition, the proposed project is located within Segments 1 and 2 of the I-15

Corridor Study Area (six segments have been delineated) and within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan and Bonsall Community Plan areas.

The three objectives of the scenic preservation guidelines are as follows (County of San Diego n.d.):

- Protect and enhance scenic resources within the I-15 corridor planning area while accommodating coordinated planned development, which harmonizes with the natural environment;
- Establish standards to regulate the visual quality and the environmental integrity of the entire corridor; and
- 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.

To achieve the identified objectives, design standards related to Site planning, parking and circulation design, lighting, landscape design, public utilities and safety, development for steep topography and natural features, and architecture were established and remain applicable to development within the corridor study area. Although all policies apply to the proposed project, the following policies are particularly relevant as they pertain to visual character and/or lighting (County of San Diego n.d.):

- **Site Design, Site Planning Standards, Policy 1:** Individual projects shall reinforce the character of the sites, the attributes of adjacent properties and preserve the viewsheds, natural topographic features and natural watercourses.
- **Site Design, Site Planning Standards, Policy 4:** Building orientation shall take maximum advantage of existing views and create view corridors.
- **Site Design, Site Planning Standards, Policy 5:** Ridgeline projects can be highly sensitive and are generally discouraged; (a) Ridgeline projects shall maintain a low profile appearance and the natural physical character of the ridgeline shall be substantially maintained; (b) Ridgeline projects shall be limited to one story; (c) Ridgelines that have been graded or disturbed shall be supplemented with a sufficient amount of trees, shrubs, and ground cover to minimize visual impacts resulting from such disturbances.
- **Parking and Circulation Design Standards, Policy 2:** Project entries shall provide for safe and efficient circulation; (a) Project entries and the transition from major circulation routes into the project interior shall be accomplished through the use of landforms, open space, landscape plantings, and architectural elements (i.e., wall, signs); (b) The number of driveway entrances into parking areas from public streets shall be minimized. Use of common easements for parking and circulation systems integrated between properties

shall be encouraged; (c) The number of driveway entrances into parking areas from public streets shall be minimized. Use of common easements for parking and circulation systems integrated between properties shall be encouraged.

- **Site Lighting Standards, Policy 1:** Site lighting shall minimize emission of light rays into both the night sky and neighboring properties, especially as it pertains to Mt. Palomar Observatory; (a) Site lighting shall be limited to that necessary for security, safety and identification and shall be integrated with project landscape design.
- **Site Lighting Standards, Policy 2:** Site lighting plans that conflict with the character of the community shall be discouraged.
- **Landscape Design Standards, Policy 2:** Project boundary landscaping shall compliment adjacent landforms and plant materials.
- **Landscape Design Standards, Policy 3:** Landscape plans shall utilize native and drought tolerant plants, where possible, per the plant list provided by County staff.
- **Landscape Design Standards, Policy 4:** Trees and plantings adjacent to pedestrian paths and within parking areas shall be selected to enhance the human scale; (a) Tree canopies shall be encouraged to soften the visual impact of vehicular circulation and parking areas, and relieve them from heat build-up. Trees shall be placed away from entrances to buildings, parking lots, and street intersections for visibility and safety, where possible; (b) Low-scale plantings shall be located adjacent to driveway entrances and street corners, where possible, and shall not obscure drive visibility; (c) Parking areas shall be visually screened with peripheral landscaping, wherever feasible. Exposed vehicular use areas shall include a minimum of 10% of the paved areas in landscaping dispersed throughout the parking area.
- **Development Standards for Steep Topography and Natural Features, Policy 1:** Extensive grading of slope areas within viewsheds will be minimized; (a) Revegetation and erosion control shall be provided in all newly graded areas.
- **Development Standards for Steep Topography and Natural Features, Policy 2:** Hillside development shall be integrated with existing topography and landforms. Areas of steep topography, tree stands, hillside agricultural activity, and rock outcroppings shall be respected and preserved.
- **Development Standards for Steep Topography and Natural Features, Policy 3:** Variety in the development of hillsides shall be encouraged through the use of appropriate site preparation techniques, grading techniques, and in the configuration, size, and placement of lots.

- **Development Standards for Steep Topography and Natural Features, Policy 6:** The visual quality shall be maximized and the erosion potential shall be minimized by planting native and naturalized plants, especially in disturbed areas adjacent to upgraded hillsides and watercourses.
- **Development Standards for Steep Topography and Natural Features, Policy 8:** Any grading above 25% slope will blend with the surrounding area, and be landscaped appropriately to look natural.
- **Architectural Design, Policy 1:** Building forms, materials, and colors shall complement adjacent topography, landscape, and buildings in the area; (1) Architectural harmony with the surrounding community shall be achieved through the use of natural appearing materials and complementary styles; (2) Colors for primary building forms shall be coordinated with landscaping materials. Earthtones and muted pastels are preferred for large areas, with primary colors limited to accent points and trim; (4) Where a site is visible from higher elevations, roof forms shall be considered integral design elements with consideration given to colors and pattern of roofing materials and (5) The use of mirrored glass, which can cause the sun to glare into drivers' eyes and, is therefore, a potential safety hazard, shall be prohibited on buildings visible from I-15.
- **Architectural Design, Policy 2:** Building forms shall be of appropriate scale, provide visual interest, avoid block-like configurations, and, where feasible, be integrated into the existing topography; (3) Building forms shall be scaled to step up and away from primary circulation routes and from each other; parallel and continuous building facades and paved surfaces shall be avoided, where possible.
- **Architectural Design, Policy 3:** Signage shall not adversely impact the environmental and visual quality of the area; (1) All signs shall be limited to the minimum size and height necessary to adequately identify a business location; (2) All signs shall be kept as low to the ground as possible; (3) Signs shall be used for identification, not advertisement; (4) Signage design shall be carefully integrated with the site and building design concepts to create a unified appearance for the total development; (5) Signs shall be predominately constructed of natural materials, non-moving, and externally illuminated; and (6) Off-premise signs shall be prohibited, except for temporary real estate directional, community identification, and directional signs, as specified in Section 6207 of the County Zoning Ordinance.

The project proposes to amend the existing North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor boundaries to better follow the topographical limit of the I-15 viewshed on the proposed project Site (see Figure 1-45 in Chapter 1). Following the amendment, the majority of the proposed project (with the exception of the Town Center planning area) would be excluded from the design corridor boundaries.

### 2.1.3 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

#### 2.1.3.1 Scenic Vistas

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

For purposes of this EIR, the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Report Format and Content Requirements: Visual Resources* (County of San Diego 2007a) applies to both the direct and cumulative impact analyses. As stated in the County guidelines, a significant scenic vista impact would occur if:

- A. The project would substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from:
- a public road,
  - a trail within an adopted County or State trail system,
  - a scenic vista or highway, or
  - a recreational area.

##### Methodology

There are no designated valued focal vistas along regional and surface roads in the proposed project area. Nonetheless, the local ridge and valley landscape creates opportunities for focal and panoramic vistas from public roads. For purposes of this section, focal vistas are views where the eye is lead to a focal point in the landscape due to converging features or the visual prominence of a particular object/group of objects. A "valued" focal point contains these characteristics and elements but is also officially designated or identified in a local planning document such as a community plan and or general plan. On the other hand, panoramic vistas are long and broad views with little or no sense of boundary restriction in the landscape. In addition, panoramic vistas are distinct because of the apparent lack of view limitations and foreground or middle ground objects do not substantially block views of background objects.

In general, the foreground zone is usually limited to areas within 0.25 to 0.5 mile of the observer. The middleground zone extends from the foreground zone to 3 to 5 miles from the observer. As opposed to the foreground zone where details of the landscape can be seen, in the middleground zone, landscape details are viewed in masses or continuous cover. The background zones extends beyond the middleground zone; at this distance, observers view the landscape in groups and/or patterns.

To determine the visibility of project development from prominent roadways in the surrounding area, Dudek performed a viewshed analysis. The viewshed analysis approximates the height of proposed development on finished grade within the various planning areas and approximates visibility from specific points in the landscape. The viewshed analysis is based solely on terrain. Vegetation and structures are not considered in the viewshed analysis models and therefore, the potential screening effect of these features from locations in the surrounding area is not represented in viewshed analysis figures. The result of the viewshed analysis is a composite of project visibility from roadways located in the project viewshed. Graphic representation of the viewshed analysis is included as EIR Appendix E, Visual Resources Technical Report (see Appendix A of the report), and is composed of 24 figures. Figure 2.1-3 of this EIR shows the key view locations, and EIR Figures 2.1-4a through 2.1-13 show Key View 1 through Key View 10.

The following analysis also evaluates the visual impacts of the Caltrans I-15 interchange improvements, as these improvements constitute an off-site mitigation measure for the proposed project. Visual simulations (Figures 2.1-4 and 2.1-6) depict the potential interchange improvements known at this time. The ultimate interchange configuration may be slightly different than the configuration used in the visual simulations for the interchange improvements because Caltrans has not yet committed to a final design due to the need for Caltrans to evaluate interchange alternatives. Nonetheless, at this time, the interchange improvements — whatever the configuration — have the potential to remove mature trees and other landscaped vegetation. Construction also would have potential temporary impacts from nighttime lighting, dust, construction vehicles and equipment, contractor storage and temporary bridge support structures. Where space permits, removed vegetation, including trees, would likely be replanted in accordance with Caltrans' policies.

During final design, Caltrans likely would require aesthetic treatments, such as surface texture, patterns, and color for potential project features. At this time, however, no information exists with regard to the final interchange configuration, its final design, or landscape or aesthetic features to reduce visual/aesthetic impacts.

## Analysis

### Public Roads

Prominent roadways in the surrounding area including I-15, Deer Springs Road, Twin Oaks Valley Road, and Mountain Meadow Road are analyzed below. Due to a similar alignment and viewing conditions, the analysis presented for I-15 is also applicable to North Centre City Parkway. The majority of long views available from these roadways are framed by terrain and/or vegetation. For example, near Deer Springs Road, northerly views from I-15 extending to the silhouettes of distant and mountainous terrain are framed by ascending chaparral and boulder

covered slopes located west and east of I-15. Similar viewing conditions are available to northbound North Centre City Parkway motorists; however, vegetation adjacent to the northbound travel lane occasionally limits the width of available views. Furthermore, as westbound Mountain Meadow Road descends higher elevation terrain and approaches Deer Springs Road and I-15, rising, vegetated terrain to the north and mature eucalyptus and other tree species to the south of the roadway frame the westerly view toward the project and the distant horizon. Therefore, although framed viewing conditions suggest the availability of focal vistas, these viewing conditions also suggests the presence of limitations and boundary restrictions such that the view is no longer considered to display a particularly broad composition. As such, the analysis presented below is focused on potential project-related effects to focal vistas from prominent public roads in the surrounding area.

### *Interstate 15*

As viewed from I-15, the proposed project Site consists of rising, rugged terrain that creates a series of mounded and rolling ridgelines. West of the interstate, the bright to dark green color of tree canopies line Mesa Rock Road and continues north toward Deer Springs Road. The vibrant green of tree canopies stands out against the drab green and brown chaparral vegetation covering the proposed project Site. Visible development consists of I-15 and overhead lighting, an ARCO gas station, nurseries, a fire station facility and an adjacent mobile home park, agricultural operations and ridgetop residences. Under proposed conditions, development within the Sierra Town Center and Sierra Terraces planning areas would be visible, as would a short segment of the new primary access road to the project constructed off Deer Springs Road. In addition to on-site grading activities proposed on east- and south-facing slopes, the installation of fire-resistant planting (i.e., vineyard, shrubs, and trees) and landscape features, and the thinning of existing vegetation for project fuel modification purposes would be visible to passing I-15 motorists.

The viewshed analysis for I-15 is included in the EIR, Appendix E, Visual Resources Technical Report (see Appendix A of the report, Figures 1 through 10). As depicted in Appendix A of the report, proposed development would be most apparent to northbound I-15 motorists near Deer Spring Road (see Figure 2, Public Point 2, of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report). At this location, development within the Town Center and Terraces planning areas, associated fuel modification, and unmodified open space would be visible to passing motorists. More specifically, of the project components (i.e., development, fuel modification, and open space) visible to motorists at Public Point 2, development would comprise 34 percent of visible project components, open space would comprise 37 percent, and fuel modification would comprise 29 percent. Public point 2 represents the greatest exposure to project components that would be experienced by interstate motorists and as shown on Figure 2 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report, proposed development would primarily be located within a foreground viewing distance and a small percentage of the overall development would occupy

the views of motorists. Farther to the south (see Figure 1, Public Point 1, of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report), the proposed project would be screened from view by intervening, vegetated terrain. Farther to the north beyond Deer Springs Road (see Figures 3 through 10, Public Point 3 through 10, of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report), the steep, rising terrain at the eastern extent of the project Site would partially screen views of proposed development for north and southbound motorists.

Project development would alter the existing primarily undeveloped character of the southeastern corner of the Site as viewed from I-15. However, development and fuel modification would not screen the silhouettes of distant mountainous terrain to the north from view and not substantially alter the line displayed by prominent terrain on the project Site that may draw attention from passing motorists. In addition, views of project components along I-15 near the project would be experienced briefly at the posted speed limit (i.e., 70 miles per hour). More specifically, project development would be visible from discontinuous segments or pockets of I-15 over an approximate 5-mile stretch (along northbound I-15) and an approximate 5-mile stretch (along southbound I-15). According to the viewshed analysis and assuming vehicle travel at 70 miles per hour, the majority of views would be available for between 1 to 5 seconds. However, along a limited number of longer interstate segments (i.e., four segments of northbound I-15 and five segments of southbound I-15 are included in the project viewshed; see Figure 2.1-1, Project Viewshed), views may be available for between 5 and 24 seconds. Although discontinuous and relatively short-duration views of the project would be available to motorists along an approximately 5-mile-long segment of northbound I-15 and a 4.25-mile-long segment of southbound I-15, unaltered open space and perimeter fuel modification would comprise the majority of visible project components. For example, at public points 6 and 7 (see Figures 6 and 7 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report), unaltered open space would comprise between 70 to nearly 100 percent of project components visible from I-15. Because project development would not substantially screen distant background elements from view and due to the discontinuous nature and relatively short-duration of available views, impacts to valued focal and/or panoramic vistas from I-15 would be **less than significant**.

### *Mountain Meadows Road*

At Mountain Meadows Road, the mounded, rising form and rugged line of the Merriam Mountains are visible. Although prominent terrain within the range is skylined, lower-elevation ridgelines are backscreened by rugged terrain surrounding the Twin Oaks Valley. Descending terrain located west of High Mountain Drive creates a narrow and briefly experienced viewing window to west through which the project Site and the Twin Oaks Valley are visible. At this location, the color and texture of vegetation on the proposed project Site appear grey and dense and is occasionally broken by the light brown color and smooth surface of trails and outcrops of

white/grey granitic boulder. Elsewhere along the roadway, the proposed project Site is screened by adjacent terrain and vegetation and would not be visible.

The viewshed analysis for Mountain Meadow Road is included in Figures 11 and 12 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report. As shown in the figures, project development, fuel modification, and open space would be visible from various locations along Mountain Meadow Road.

At public point 11, a relatively narrow viewing window to the east-facing slopes located along the western extent of the Terraces planning area is available. Available views at public point 11 include prominent terrain on the project Site, distant mountainous terrain in the background and the hazy, horizontal line of the Pacific Ocean. Project development and fuel modification would comprise 29 percent and 51 percent, respectively, of visible project components at public point 11. The distinct visual pattern of dense chaparral and occasional boulder covered terrain on the project Site would be noticeably altered by construction and operation of the proposed project. Still, due to the elevated vantage point offered at public point 11, proposed residences and fuel modification activities in the Terraces planning area would not block views of prominent background terrain. At public point 12, views to the project would be similar to those at Key View 2 (see Section 2.1.3.2, below, for Key View 2 analysis). As viewed from public point 12, implementation of the proposed project would create substantial line, color, and texture contrast with existing on-site visual resources; however, the available view is primarily confined to the middle ground terrain of the Merriam Mountains (see Figure 2.1-4, Key View 2, Mountain Meadow Road, for approximation of view at public point 12). As a result, background elements tend to be hazy and difficult to see clearly. The existing hilly terrain in the foreground converges to form a wide, v-shaped viewing window that focuses viewers' attention on the project and away from distant and hazy background elements, however, the view to the proposed project is brief (available for approximately 1 to 3 seconds at public point 12) and is made in passing by motorists at approximately 50 miles per hour. Development and fuel modification would comprise 48 percent and 32 percent of visible project components at public point 13, but these activities would tend to be located north of the point of terrain convergence (i.e., the point where terrain seemingly comes together). As a result, development and fuel modification would tend to be located in the peripheral view of motorists as they pass the project Site.

The visual effects of development and fuel modification would attract the attention of westbound motorists on Mountain Meadow Road; however, the availability of views would be brief. According to the viewshed analysis, project components (i.e., development, access roads, fuel modification, and open space) would be visible from discontinuous segments/pockets of Mountain Meadow Road over an approximate 0.80-mile stretch from Stickley Ranch Road west to Champagne Boulevard/North Centre City Parkway. Assuming travel at the posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour, the majority of views would be available for 1 to 3 seconds. The viewshed

analysis also indicates that project views would be available along one 930-foot segment of the road (view exposure duration would be approximately 13 seconds) and that the cumulative view exposure duration from the westbound travel lanes of Mountain Meadow Road would be approximately 28 seconds. The viewshed maps prepared for Mountain Meadow Road (see Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report, Figures 10, 11, and 12) do not consider the screening effect of existing vegetation (such as tall eucalyptus trees installed sporadically along the roadway), which would conceivably reduce the cumulative view exposure duration. In addition, the viewshed analysis maps presented in Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report convey that views would not be continuously available along the road from Stickley Ranch Road west to Champagne Boulevard/North Centre City Parkway. Furthermore, westerly views from Mountain Meadow Road toward the project are not designated as valued focal vistas in applicable planning documents and available views are not particularly panoramic in composition due to nearby mountainous terrain that establish limitations to views. Therefore, impacts to valued focal vistas available from Mountain Meadow Road would be **less than significant**.

### *Deer Springs Road*

North of Deer Springs Road, the relatively flat form and slight diagonal line displayed by terrain across modified rural residential parcels quickly transitions to the rugged, tall form of south-facing slopes. The visible ridgeline to the northeast creates a bold, undulating line that falls and rises between a series of pyramidal points. Patches of bare soil resulting from the removal of dense chaparral vegetation are visible and are interrupted by scattered and spreading dark green oaks, citrus, and light green palm trees. Random tall palms and pines and ordered low palms line several residential parcels north of the road and function as a landscape screen. Rural residences are visible but partially obscured by spreading native and non-native trees. Tall and narrow electrical and communication infrastructure is skylined. Under existing conditions Deer Springs Road is a paved, undivided road with a narrow shoulder in each direction and no central median/turning lane. Under proposed conditions, the road would be resurfaced and widened to include a central median/turning lane, bike lanes in each direction, a landscaped parkway, and an improved trail. In addition, existing overhead utilities lines would be placed underground and would be removed from the Deer Springs Road viewshed.

The viewshed analysis for Deer Springs Road is included in Figures 13 through 16, Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report. With the exception of the segment of Deer Springs Road that spans I-15 and along the southerly project frontage near the Town Center, views to the proposed development are relatively limited (see Key Views 7 and 8 in EIR Figure 2.1-9 and Figure 2.1-10 for example of available views from Deer Springs Road). Motorists on Deer Springs Road would primarily be afforded views of proposed improvements to the roadway, perimeter fuel modification on the project Site, and open space. However, at public point 16 motorists would be afforded quick views of residential development and fuel modification

occurring in the southern extent of the Mesa and Knoll planning areas in the middle ground distance (see Figure 16 and Figure 21 in Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report). At public point 16, motorists would be negotiating the curving alignment of Deer Springs Road and cyclists and vehicles in the adjacent lane of travel. As a result, motorists may not be focusing on elements in middle ground viewing distance at public point 16. Despite the visibility of project components from segments of the roadway, the majority of views from Deer Springs Road lack particularly panoramic characteristics (i.e., long composition, seemingly limitless boundaries, clear and unstructured viewing conditions to background elements) due to rising, mountainous terrain and trees and overhead electrical infrastructure installed within the roadway right-of-way. In addition to chaparral and boulder covered terrain, the presence of rugged ridgelines surrounding the Twin Oaks Valley in the middle ground viewing distance creates co-dominant, competing visual features in the landscape that attract the attention of receptors in the area. Thus, this segment of Deer Springs Road is not considered to offer panoramic or valued focal vistas to motorists.

The segment of Deer Springs Road located south of Sarver Lane travels through a relatively enclosed landscape created by the ascending, chaparral covered slopes located to the north and south of the roadway. Given the limitations of views associated with the presence of densely vegetated terrain located north and south of the roadway, panoramic vistas are not considered to occur along this segment of Deer Springs Road. North and south converging terrain tends to guide views to a central point in the landscape, but views tend to be limited to the foreground distance and lack prominent focal features. No valued focal vistas were identified along this segment of Deer Springs Road in applicable planning documents. Therefore, impacts to panoramic or valued focal vistas available from Deer Springs Road would be **less than significant**.

### *Twin Oaks Valley Road*

As previously discussed in Section 2.1.1, Existing Conditions, existing views from Twin Oaks Valley Road include 1- to 10-acre sized lots featuring modest one-story single-family residential structures intermixed with tall oak, pine, and eucalyptus and palm trees. A Community market, floral stands and nurseries, a tool repair shop, a farming warehouse, active agricultural fields and Twin Oaks Elementary School are also located along the Twin Oaks Valley Road corridor. Ridgeline residential development is visible beyond the corridor atop rising terrain to the east. Avocado groves and dense chaparral vegetation are also visible on mountainous terrain in the area. As proposed, the project would improve the current two-lane undivided segment of Twin Oaks Valley Road from Deer Springs Road south to approximately Cassou Street. The road would be widened to accommodate two lanes of travel, shoulders, and bike lanes in each direction, a landscaped and divided central median and landscaped parkways in each travel direction.

The viewshed analysis for Twin Oaks Valley Road is included in Figures 17 through 24 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report. According to the viewshed analysis, development and fuel modification within the Valley, Knoll, and Mesa planning areas would be visible at a middle ground distance from public point 17 and would comprise 66 percent of visible proposed project components, the average visibility of these effects along the segment of the roadway evaluated would be less. Furthermore, with the exception of public point 17, undeveloped open space would comprise the majority (over 82 percent) of visible project components. North of public point 17 and Deer Springs Road, views to the proposed project from Twin Oaks Valley Road would be discontinuous due to intervening terrain and the presence of stands of mature trees installed north and east of the roadway. Also, at public point 17 (located near the Deer Springs Road and Twin Oaks Valley Road intersection), views to the north extend to mountainous terrain but are limited in extent to the middle ground viewing distance. As a result, the northerly view from public point 17 is not considered a panoramic vista. Similarly, the visible landscape lacks a particularly prominent focal feature or converging terrain or other elements that would suggest the presence of a valued focal vista. In addition, the regular presence of mature trees and electrical infrastructure in the foreground along Twin Oaks Valley Road limits the availability of clear, unobstructed views to the surrounding landscape. Although views from Twin Oaks Valley Road include scenic features, views are not considered panoramic or focal vistas. In addition, focal vistas were not designated along Twin Oaks Valley Road in the North County Metropolitan Subregional Area Plan. Therefore, impacts to panoramic or valued focal vistas available from Twin Oaks Valley Road would be **less than significant**.

### Trail within an Adopted County or State Trail System

There are no components of a known state trail system within the viewshed of the proposed project. However, Community trails and pathway plans have been developed and adopted for Twin Oaks, Hidden Meadows, Valley Center, and Bonsall. Unlike regional trails that are focused on providing long, linear trail experiences, the intent of the Community trails and pathways plan is to provide local public facilities in close proximity to residents that provide a transportation, recreation, access, infrastructure linkages and safe routes throughout a community (County of San Diego 2005a).

Multiple trails and pathways are identified in the Twin Oaks, Hidden Meadows, Valley Center, and Bonsall plans, and components of the proposed project would be visible from those trails and pathways located in the project viewshed, but the majority of trails and pathways are currently identified by the County as proposed facilities. For example, of the 22 trails and pathways listed in the Twin Oaks Valley Community Trails and Pathways Plan, none are identified as “existing” facilities (County of San Diego 2005a, 2009b). However, based on comments received during public scoping, existing right-of-way located north of Deer Springs Road (identified as the proposed Deer Springs Road pathway in the Twin Oaks Valley Community Trails and Pathways

Plan) is understood to receive use by equestrians and pedestrians in the area. Under existing conditions, use of the unprotected right-of-way as a trail can be dangerous due to the proximity to the westbound traffic lane and lack of a traffic barrier. Under proposed conditions, Deer Springs Road would be widened and new facilities include curb and gutter, small landscape parkway, and a 8-foot wide multi-use pathway would be installed. The multi-use path would be separated by roadway travel lanes by curb and gutter facilities, a small landscaped parkway and post and rail fencing. In addition, existing overhead utilities lines installed north of Deer Springs Road would be undergrounded by the project and would be removed from the Deer Springs Road viewshed. As such, the proposed project would improve trail conditions along Deer Springs Road.

Similar to the “proposed” facility designation of trails and pathways in the Twin Oaks Valley Community Trails and Pathways Plan, the 10 trails and pathways listed in the Hidden Meadows Community Trails and Pathways Plan (County of San Diego 2005b) and the 71 trails and pathways listed in the Valley Center Community Trails and Pathways plan (County of San Diego 2005c) are all identified as “proposed” facilities. One existing trail, the San Luis Rey River North Trail, is listed among the 22 facilities identified in the Bonsall Community Trails and Pathways plan (County of San Diego 2005d, 2009c). Near the San Luis Rey River Park, the San Luis Rey River North Trail parallels and eventually crosses to the north side of SR-76 and at the confluence of SR-76 and Old River Road, the trail alignment is located approximately 4.1 miles northwest of the western project boundary. Due to the presence of intervening terrain and vegetation, the availability of views to the project would be severely limited. Furthermore, proposed planning areas and future development would be concentrated in the central and southern portions of the project and due to the low viewing angle afforded to trail users and the mountainous terrain comprising the eastern and northern boundary of the project, planning areas and development would be largely screened from view of trail users. As such, the project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from the San Luis Rey River North Trail and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Although components of the proposed project including Deer Spring Road improvements would be visible from trails and pathways identified in the Twin Oaks, Hidden Meadows, Valley Center, and Bonsall, with the exception of the San Luis Rey River North Trail, all listed trails and pathways are identified as “proposed.” Several of these proposed alignments traverse private property and others either parallel or are located on private or public paved or dirt roadways. For example, within the Twin Oaks Valley Community Trails and Pathways Plan, private roads including a segment of Camino Mayor located on the project are identified as proposed Community trails (County of San Diego 2005a, 2009b). Several of the alignments, such as those aligned on existing utility access roads and private roads, may receive use, but no public right-of-way has been established for public use of these facilities to date, and necessary easements have

not been negotiated or acquired. Therefore, as no public right-of-way has been established to date, and public use easements have not been acquired, trails and pathways identified in Community trails and pathways plans as “proposed” are not considered established public recreational facilities of an adopted County Trail System. As such, the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from an adopted County Trail System and impacts would be **less than significant**.

### Scenic Vistas and Highways

There are no known designated scenic vistas in the immediate project area. Several topographical high points in the surrounding area including San Marcos Mountain, Mountain Meadow Road near High Mountain Road, and the rural residentially developed ridgeline located east of the proposed project and I-15 could offer scenic vantage points from where particularly long and broad views of the landscape are available. These locations are, however, either inaccessible to the public or have been previously addressed within this analysis. For example, San Marcos Mountain (located approximately 1.5 miles west of the proposed Summit planning area) and the rural residential developed ridgeline located east of the proposed project and I-15 are not publicly accessible. Thus, these locations are not public vantage points. Furthermore, the visual change resulting from development of the proposed project as viewed from the segment of Mountain Meadow Road near High Mountain Road was previously evaluated above within the Public Road analysis and is analyzed below in Section 2.1.3.2, Visual Character or Quality.

In addition to the elevated vantage points discussed above, topographical high points located outside of the immediate surrounding area such as Double Peak Park in the City of San Marcos were also considered. Although Double Peak Park offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, including the Pacific Ocean and Palomar Mountain and is indeed a scenic vantage point/vista, the park is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of the southwestern project boundary. Views to the proposed project Site are likely available to viewers at Double Peak Park, however, given the availability of long and particularly wide panoramic views that seemingly have few limitations, project development concentrated within the lower, valley portions of mountainous terrain located approximately 6.5 miles away would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from existing views. Furthermore, Double Peak Park (approximate elevation 1,620 feet) and the high point on the project (approximate elevation 1,590 feet) are located at a similar elevation. Proposed planning areas are proposed at elevations less than the topographical high point on project Site and higher elevation development within the Terraces and Town Center planning areas would be obscured by the mountainous terrain located west of these planning areas. In addition, because of the availability of long, broad, and seemingly limitless views to the northeast, viewers at Double Peak Park are likely to be drawn toward prominent mountainous terrain located in the background distance (i.e., Palomar Mountain and surrounding peaks). Visible project development located more than 6.5 miles away at a similar or

lower elevation as Double Peak Park would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from available views to these rugged and bold features and therefore, project effects to views from Double Peak Park would be **less than significant**.

Although there are no designated or eligible state scenic highways in the immediate project vicinity (the nearest state scenic highway, SR-76, is an eligible state scenic highway and is located more than 4 miles from the northern and western project boundary), regional and local roads in the project viewshed are included in the County of San Diego Scenic Highway System. A list of the roads within the unincorporated County included in the Scenic Highway system is included in the County's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element (County of San Diego 2011a). Two County Scenic Highway System roads I-15 (from the Escondido city limits north to Riverside County line) and Twin Oaks Valley Road (Gopher Canyon Road south to San Marcos city limits) are located in the immediate project vicinity and views to proposed development and roadway improvements would be available from these roads. The anticipated changes to the existing visual experience afforded to motorists travelling on I-15 and Twin Oaks Valley Road were previously discussed and evaluated for significance within the Public Roads analysis provided above. As stated previously, project impacts pertaining to obstruction, interruption, or detraction of panoramic or valued focal vistas from I-15 and Twin Oaks Valley Road would be **less than significant**.

### Recreation Areas

As previously stated above, the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from the San Luis Rey River North Trail. In addition, "proposed" trails and pathways identified in the trails and pathways plans for the communities of Twin Oaks Valley, Hidden Meadows, Valley Center, and Bonsall are not considered established public recreational facilities. No public right-of-way has been established along these proposed alignments to date and public use easements have not been acquired. Furthermore, the trails and pathways depicted on the maps for the communities of Hidden Meadows, Twin Oaks Valley, and Bonsall are 0.25-mile-wide corridors that reflect a general alignment, not a specific trail or pathway. Therefore, given the "proposed" status of these general trail and pathway alignments, they are not considered established public recreational facilities. As such, the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from an existing trail and impacts would be **less than significant**.

The visual effects of the proposed project would be largely obscured from the view of park goes at the City of San Marcos's Walnut Grove Park. Project effects to existing views from Walnut Grove Park are analyzed in greater detail below in Section 2.1.3.2 and are briefly summarized here. At Walnut Grove Park, visible project features would be limited to linear areas of thinned chaparral vegetation that would comprise perimeter fuel modification located on the middle

ground ridgeline some 1.4 miles to the northeast. Although thinning of existing vegetation would create line and color contrasts when viewed against areas of existing vegetation that would not be disturbed, the visual change would be subtle to viewers at Walnut Grove Park and may go unnoticed by the majority of park goers. Both distance between the park and modified vegetation on ridgelines to the northeast and the thin and relatively narrow area of fuel modification visible to viewers would reduce the visual prominence of project effects such that they may not be noticeable to the casual viewer.

Anticipated project effects to northerly views of the characteristic mountainous terrain bordering the Twin Oaks Valley from Walnut Grove Park would be minor and due to the small area of visible alteration on the prominent ridgeline to the northeast. Following project implementation, the existing visual character of areas ridgelines would largely remain. Recreationists (primarily equestrian riders, pedestrians and runners) on a relatively small network of trails lining the perimeter of Walnut Grove Park and extending to the south and east along Sycamore Drive, Cox Road, East La Cienaga Road, and North Twin Oaks Valley Road would generally be afforded similar views to proposed fuel modification activities along the southwestern perimeter of the project. However, the presence of intervening vertical features such as residences and other structures, mature trees along Sycamore Drive and East Cienaga Drive, and the linear movement of trail-based recreationists could result in reduced viewing opportunities, partially screened views, and reduced exposure to project activities. As discussed above for recreationists at Walnut Grove Park, anticipated project effects to the vividness, intactness, and unity of the existing landscape as viewed from local City of San Marcos trails identified in the *San Marcos Parks & Trails Pocket Guide* (City of San Marcos 2007) would be limited due to distance and the small area of visible disturbance on the proposed project Site. Proposed project elements would not obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from these local trails and as such, impacts would be **less than significant**.

### **2.1.3.2 Visual Character or Quality**

#### **Guidelines for the Determination of Significance**

For purposes of this EIR, the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Report Format and Content Requirements: Visual Resources* (County of San Diego 2007a) applies to the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact analyses. A significant impact would result if:

- a. The project would introduce features that would detract from or contrast with the existing visual character and/or quality of a neighborhood, community, or localized area by conflicting with important visual elements or the quality of the area (such as theme, style, setbacks, density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, building materials, etc.) or by being inconsistent with applicable design guidelines.

- b. The project would result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one of 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), trees, and rock outcroppings.

### Methodology

Key views of the project were selected that would typify the effects on visual resources as experienced by a range of expected viewers in a dynamic experiential setting. Locations in the project viewshed from which views of the proposed project would be available were identified on aerial photography prior to the initial project Site visit. Once identified, candidate key view locations and extent of viewshed were field verified to confirm orientation and visibility to the proposed project. Initial key viewpoint locations were modified and/or new locations were established based on field conditions. Digital images from multiple candidate key view locations were collected and the existing conditions including time of day, weather, vegetation, topography and visual character were noted and recorded. In addition, the landscape character of the proposed project Site and surrounding area were documented through digital imagery. Public routes into and out of the project viewshed were field reviewed multiple times to assess the experiential component that viewers would rely upon to form visual perceptions of the landscape and project environment.

Ten key views were submitted to the County for review and were approved for use in this visual resource assessment. The locations of selected key views are presented in EIR Figure 2.1-3. EIR Figures 2.1-4a through 2.1-13 present static images of the proposed project Site from the selected public key viewing locations in the surrounding area where conditions generally afford clear visibility to the proposed project. Visual simulations are also included in EIR Figures 2.1-4a through 2.1-13 and present a before and after (i.e., after completion of construction and with mature landscaping) depiction of the project as experienced by viewers in the project vicinity. An additional visual simulation has been prepared from Key View 1 to depict project landscaping at installation so that the public and decision makers are better able to conceptualize anticipated visual changes following construction and installation of landscaping. Also, the proposed project includes two options for improving Deer Springs Road. Therefore, visual simulations depicting the two options were prepared for identified key views located on segments of Deer Springs Road (i.e., Key Views 5 and 6) that would be improved and potentially widened to four travel lanes total by the proposed project.

## Analysis

### Operations

Upon completion of construction and occupancy of commercial, residential and education uses, the proposed project would generate regular traffic and project development would introduce elements that contrast with existing project Site conditions. Residential and commercial traffic would use Deer Springs Road and Mesa Rock Road to access the proposed project Site. The proposed project would also generate additional traffic on North Twin Oaks Valley Road, Sarver Lane, and Camino Mayor. Outdoor signs in the Town Center planning area would advertise available commercial and retail services and operate during evening hours. Graded and bare hillsides would be dotted with rows of vineyards and vegetation would begin to be established in fuel modification zone 1 areas. New landscape trees installed throughout the Town Center and Terraces planning areas (and along segments of realigned and paved Mesa Rock Road) would display a tall, spreading form that would rise from irrigated and non-irrigated slopes and flat building pads. Commercial and retail development within the Town Center planning area would occupy a low, southwesterly portion of the proposed project Site and multi-story residential townhome structures (and associated fuel modification zones) would seemingly climb the terrain.

As viewed from westbound Deer Springs Road at I-15, westbound Mountain Meadow Road, northbound North Centre City Parkway/I-15 (see Key Views 1, 2, and 3 in EIR Figures 2.1-4a, 2.1-4b, 2.1-5, and 2.1-6), and from ridgeline residential areas in the Hidden Meadows community, the characteristic and dominant visual pattern of chaparral and occasional boulder covered mountainous terrain would become discontinuous across the proposed project. Existing elements would be removed to accommodate proposed development and as shown in EIR Figure 2.1-7 (Key View 4 – Southbound I-15), the removal of native vegetation and the establishment of fuel modification zones would create noticeable line and color contrast. Vegetation at the project edges would appear sparser than adjacent areas of natural and intact vegetation and where visible, proposed vineyards would display an ordered, uniform appearance (see Key Views 1, 2, and 3; EIR Figures 2.1-4a, 2.1-4b, 2.1-5, and 2.1-6). Although maturity of landscape materials would eventually conceal previously exposed soils and denuded slopes and reintroduce spreading green hued forms to areas altered by construction, these new forms and elements would be discontinuous and be noticeably sparse at project edges. Furthermore, mature landscape trees would partially screen development from view; however, the visual effects and contrast associated with vegetation management and development would be clearly visible to viewers along nearby regional and local roads including I-15, Deer Springs Road at I-15, North Centre City Parkway and Mountain Meadow Road.

Alternatively, views of the proposed project from roadways in the viewshed located south and/or west of the proposed project Site, including Deer Springs Road (west of Mesa Rock Road) and North Twin Oaks Valley Road, and from Walnut Grove Park in the City of San Marcos would

largely be composed of roadway improvements, slope alteration, perimeter fuel modification, and/or unmodified open space. From these locations, visual change occurring on the proposed project Site associated with residential, commercial, and educational development would be difficult to detect and be relatively subtle. Instead, motorists (and potentially, cyclists) such as those on Deer Springs Road would be afforded views of proposed roadway improvements including the widened roadway and shoulders, new bike lanes, curbs and gutters, and landscape parkways (see Key Views 5, 6, 7, and 8 in EIR Figures 2.1-8a, 2.1-8b, 2.1-9a, 2.1-9b, 2.1-10, and 2.1-11). In addition, at Key View 5 a substantial cut into the south-facing slope located in the foreground and north of the westbound travel lane would be required to expand Deer Springs Road to two- or four-lanes (see EIR Figures 2.1-8a and 2.1-8b). As depicted in the visual simulations, the south-facing slope would be steep and slope stabilizing vegetation would be applied with a non-irrigated hydroseed. Dependent on seasonal rainfall, partial vegetative coverage is expected as illustrated in the Key View 5 and Key View 6 visual simulations. When compared to existing conditions at Key View 5, the proposed landscape would appear orderly and less chaotic due to the underground installation of existing overhead utilities yet the density of plantings on the slope and regular occurrence of rocks would bear little resemblance to the existing visual pattern of dense chaparral and occasional boulder covered terrain.

Elsewhere along the Deer Springs Road corridor (such as at Key View 6; see EIR Figures 2.1-9a and 2.1-9b), proposed project roadway widening and planned improvements would have beneficial effects to the quality of existing views. As proposed, the project would soften the transition from Deer Springs Road and adjacent, unimproved parcels to the north through the installation of the landscape parkway and low vegetated slope, resulting in an increasingly coherent and harmonious visual pattern. The underground installation of existing overhead utilities along the corridor would similarly enhance the quality of views and support an improved visual condition. At Key View 7 (see EIR Figure 2.1-10), proposed roadway improvements would be visible in the foreground and modification activities, two-story residential development and common area landscaping within the southeastern extent of the Knoll planning area would be visible from Key View 7 in the middle ground atop ridgelines to the north-northeast. Alteration of terrain and the resulting color and texture contrasts from vegetation removal (i.e., fuel modification activities) would create visible disharmony in the middle ground visual pattern, but these elements would be obscured by existing vegetation and distance and overall visual character and quality effects would be moderately low. As viewed from Key View 7 and 8 (see EIR Figures 2.1-10 and 2.1-11), proposed roadway and right-of-way improvements would be appropriately scaled for the surrounding character of the area and vertical elements (i.e., traffic signals) added to the scenes would not substantially or continuously block viewing opportunities to middle ground features in the landscape. As at Key View 6, the undergrounding of existing overhead utility lines along the Deer Springs Road corridor would enhance the quality of views available at Key View 7 and 8.

Lastly, from Walnut Grove Park and North Twin Oaks Valley Road, alteration of the project Site and development of residential, commercial, and educational use would be obscured by intervening terrain, vegetation, and distance. Visible proposed project elements would generally consist of the removal of existing vegetation and the establishment of perimeter fuel modification zones and/or roadway and adjacent right-of-way improvements. For example, at Walnut Grove Park (Key View 9; see EIR Figure 2.1-12), visitors would be afforded views to fuel modification zones within the southwestern most edges of the Sierra Terraces planning area. However, visitors to the park would generally be focused on activities occurring at a foreground viewing distance and within the park and as depicted in EIR Figure 2.1-12, project effects to the intactness and unity of existing views would be minor due to the small area of visible alteration on the ridgeline to the northeast. Also, at North Twin Oaks Valley Road near Camino Mayor (Key View 10; see EIR Figure 2.1-13), motorists would be afforded views to a regraded and widened Camino Mayor and adjacent fuel modification zones.

Given the existing character and quality of the Key View 10 landscape, widening and paving of Camino Mayor would have a moderately low effect on the existing unity present. Camino Mayor is an existing private roadway and the paved surface creates a greyish, straight, and eventually curving line in the landscape. Grading activities to support the widened roadway would create a line consistent in color, form, and texture with North Twin Oaks Valley Road and vegetation removal would remove drainage vegetation from the scene. As a result, the proposed visual scene would be increasingly harmonious and free of jumbled or chaotic elements.

Proposed project changes to existing visual character of the project Site would be difficult to detect and would be relatively subtle as viewed from locations in the project viewshed located south and west of the project (i.e., at Key Views 6 (see Figures 2.1-9a and 2.1-9b), 7 (see Figure 2.1-10), 8 (see Figure 2.1-11), 9 (see Figure 2.1-12), and 10 (see Figure 2.1-13)). In addition, approximately 1,209 acres of the 1,985-acre site would remain undeveloped and designated Open Space – Conservation. However, the project would introduce features (i.e., residences, vineyards, and paved roadways) that would contrast with the existing visual character of the primarily natural-appearing project Site and surrounding rural community along Deer Springs Road. Although master-planned residential development occurs outside of the immediate area in the Twin Oaks Valley and City of San Marcos, both the proposed coverage and orderly style of residential development associated with the project would contrast with the existing rural development pattern visible in the immediate area. Existing development along the Deer Spring Road corridor generally consists of 10- to 20-acre lots featuring primarily single-story residences, dense to sparse landscaping, accessory structures, and maintained to unimproved yards. The visual change associated with removal of existing vegetation and alteration of existing terrain to accommodate proposed residential, commercial, and education land uses and associated infrastructure would be most evident as viewed from locations in the viewshed located east of the project Site, such as Key Views 1, 2, and 3 (see Figures 2.1-4a, 2.1-4b, 2.1-5,

and 2.1-6). As viewed from these locations, the introduction of project elements would result in an adverse change to the primarily undisturbed chaparral-covered hill and valley terrain of the project Site, resulting in changes in the visual character of the project Site from undeveloped to open space/developed. As such, the proposed project would significantly alter the current visual character of the site, and impacts would be **potentially significant (Impact AES-1)**.

## Construction

Construction effects to the existing visual character of the proposed project would be most apparent to northbound motorists on I-15 and North Centre City Parkway, westbound motorists on the segment of Deer Springs Road spanning I-15, and residents of ridgeline developments located east of the site and I-15. Regarding planned roadway improvements, construction effects to the existing visual character and quality of Deer Springs Road would be most apparent to east and westbound motorists on Deer Springs Road.

The proposed project would require grading, excavation, blasting and improvements including the construction of public sewer, water and storm drain system and public roads. The majority of the activities would occur within the seven planning areas (public road improvements would occur outside of the seven planning areas) and be designed to avoid the most sensitive biological, cultural, and topographical resources on the proposed project Site. Grading has been designed to balance within the boundaries of the project Site and the improvements to Deer Springs Road and Sarver Lane immediately off-site, and thereby reduce off-site truck trips and hauls during construction. Grade-adaptive architecture would be incorporated into planning areas to minimize Site grading impacts by constructing one or more steps in the ground floor that conform to the underlying slope of the Site. However, as viewed from I-15, North Centre City Parkway, and Deer Springs Road at I-15, development of the Town Center and Terraces planning areas would entail the removal of primarily undisturbed chaparral vegetation from east- and south-facing hillsides. Furthermore, portions of hillsides would be graded and terrain steepened. North of Deer Springs Road, Mesa Rock Road would be realigned to provide service to the proposed planning areas and the graded extents of the new roadway would climb and cut through the altered project Site. Terrain would rise away from the new roadway alignment and would either display a relatively bare, orderly and dotted appearance (i.e., where vineyards are proposed) or display the forest green color of an applied slurry seed mix (i.e., where irrigated slopes near building pads are proposed). Over time, the building frames of proposed development (commercial, residential, and educational) would rise from level building pads. Areas of thinned vegetation would be distinct from adjacent areas of natural and intact vegetation due to the inclusion of previously concealed underlying soils and seemingly sparse spacing of individual shrubs to the visual pattern. To construct and install the proposed water tank, an existing mounded peak would be graded and flattened. Grading activities associated with the proposed I-15 interchange and park-n-ride facility would entail vehicles and equipment working within the

disturbed I-15 right-of-way. Proposed activities would require the removal of vegetation, alteration of the gently sloping terrain, and grading of level surfaces.

Views to the proposed project from public roads are relatively limited and the visual effects of construction activities would be experienced briefly by passing motorists. Furthermore, residential development is commonplace on hillsides, atop ridgelines, and within lower elevation valleys along the I-15 corridor. However, the introduction of expansive and light tan colored graded pads and hillsides and the removal of dense tracts of native, dark green and greyish chaparral vegetation and occasionally, alteration of granitic boulder outcrops, would introduce particularly contrasting features to the proposed project. Although landscaping and boulders would be incorporated into Community entry signage and at rustic neighborhood and park entry monuments and would reflect the existing character of the project Site, the removal of vegetation, rock outcrops and modification of hillsides would result in an adverse change to these dominant features that contribute to the valued visual character of the project Site. As such, construction activities would significantly alter the current visual character of the project Site.

In addition to motorists and other mobile viewers, views to the project Site are available to ridgeline residences located east of I-15 in the community of Hidden Meadows. Receptors in ridgeline residences are afforded views to the project Site and would experience the visual effects of construction, but residences located east of ridgelines would not generally be able to view the proposed project. Prominent, intervening structures (residences) would effectively block the proposed project from view of most residences located away from the western perimeter of the Hidden Meadows community. To demonstrate the approximate visibility of the proposed project from residential areas in the Hidden Meadows community, three non-public points were selected and viewshed maps were prepared.

The non-public points were situated on Meadow Mesa Drive (non-public point 1, Figure 25 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report), Sandhurst Way (non-public point 2, Figure 26 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report), and High Vista Drive (non-public point 3, Figure 27 of Appendix A to the Visual Resources Technical Report). As indicated in the figures, the viewers at each of the non-public points would be afforded views to different areas of the proposed project.

Of the three selected points, proposed project construction activities would be most visible from High Vista Drive (i.e., non-public point 3). The anticipated visual effects of project construction at non-public points would be similar to visual effects described above for public roads, but the duration of private views would be longer and viewers would be stationary. Unlike passing motorists, the views at ridgeline residents would not be brief and not be made in passing. During construction, residents would experience daily the transformation of the project Site from primarily undeveloped, chaparral and boulder covered to a developing site marked by the tan-

colored soils of graded hillsides, lots, and roadway alignments. Longer view duration would provide opportunity for residents to scan the project Site and construction visual effects with detail and due to the longer viewer duration and elevated vantage point, the visual effects of construction activities as experienced by receptors at ridgeline residences would be more severe than experienced by passing motorists in the surrounding area.

Along Deer Springs Road, existing vegetation located within the right-of-way and widened corridor would be removed. These areas would also be graded and leveled for the expansion of the roadway and the inclusion of associated improvements including curb and gutter, bike lanes, landscaped parkways and a pedestrian trail. Under the two-lane road Option A, the curb-to-curb width of the widened roadway would be approximately 52 feet and include a 12-foot-wide striped, unraised median, 12-foot-wide east- and west-bound travel lanes, and 8-foot-wide striped areas to accommodate bike lanes and shoulders. An approximate 10-foot-wide landscape parkway would be provided south of the eastbound travel lane and a 4-foot-wide landscape parkway and an 8-foot-wide pathway would be provided north of the westbound travel lane. The pathway and landscape parkway installed north of the westbound travel lane would be separated by a post and rail fence. Under the four-lane road Option B, the south-facing slope located north of Deer Springs Road would appear slightly steeper than the slope under the two-lane road scenario. Deer Spring Road would be regraded, widened, and repaved. As proposed and east of Sarver Lane, the curb-to-curb width of the widened roadway would be approximately 78 feet and include a 14-foot-wide striped, unraised median, two 12-foot-wide east- and westbound travel lanes, and 8-foot-wide striped areas to accommodate bike lanes and shoulders. In addition, an approximate 10-foot-wide landscape parkway would be provided south of the eastbound travel lanes and a 4-foot-wide landscape parkway and an 8-foot-wide pathway would be provided north of the westbound travel lanes. A post and rail fence would also be installed under the four-lane scenario to separate the pathway and landscape parkway installed north of the westbound travel lanes. Under the two-lane and four-lane road scenario, existing overhead utility lines located along the north side of Deer Springs Road would be placed underground by the project.

Under both the two-lane and four-lane options, adjacent terrain would be graded and otherwise modified where necessary to accommodate proposed improvements. Where grading would be necessary, existing vegetation would be removed and the angle of slopes would be steepened. Under both the two- and four lane options, Deer Springs Road would display a continuous asphalt surface from curb-to-curb and an unraised, 12-foot-wide striped median would separate east and westbound travel lanes. Construction activities would result in the removal of existing vegetation in the right-of-way to accommodate the widened roadway alignment (and other proposed amenities) and modification of existing terrain near the eastern extent of proposed improvements. Several pepper trees installed north of the Deer Springs Road and Sycamore Road intersection would be removed to accommodate the new alignment of the road; however,

these trees are ornamental and are not considered dominant features that contribute the valued visual character of the landscape.

Several oak trees located south of the roadway and chaparral vegetation occurring on a south-facing slope located north of the roadway near Mesa Rock Road would be removed to accommodate the widened roadway and amenities. Furthermore, the removal of mature oak trees along a segment of Deer Spring Road regularly lined with dense oak trees and other vegetation would result in a substantial adverse change to the existing rural character of the corridor, which is defined in part by narrow travel lanes and dense oak and chaparral vegetation located north and south of travel lanes. As such, construction activities and associated impacts to the current visual character of the Deer Springs Road corridor would be **potentially significant (Impact AES-1)**.

### **2.1.3.3 Light and Glare**

#### **Guidelines for the Determination of Significance**

For the purpose of this EIR, the CEQA Appendix G Threshold for light and glare was used in lieu of the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Report Format and Content Requirements: Dark Skies and Glare* (County of San Diego 2007b) as the lamp type and shielding requirements, operational characteristics of lighting, and reflectivity of project components are discussed within the standard light and glare threshold. Therefore, a significant impact would result if:

- a. The project would create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Additionally, the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Report Format and Content Requirements: Dark Skies and Glare* (County of San Diego 2007b) applies to the impact analysis. A significant impact would result if:

- a. The project will install outdoor light fixtures that do not conform to the lamp type and shielding requirements described in Section 59.105 (Requirements for Lamp Source and Shielding) and are not otherwise exempted pursuant Section 59.108 or Section 59.109 of the San Diego County Light Pollution Code.
- b. The project will operate Class I or Class III outdoor lighting between 11:00 p.m. and sunrise that is not otherwise exempted pursuant Section 59.108 or Section 59.109 of the San Diego County Light Pollution Code.
- c. The project will generate light trespass that exceeds 0.2 foot-candles measured five feet onto the adjacent property.

- d. The project will install highly reflective building materials, including but not limited to reflective glass and high-gloss surface color, that will create daytime glare and be visible from roadways, pedestrian walkways or areas frequently used for outdoor activities on adjacent properties.
- e. The project does not conform to applicable Federal, State or local statute or regulation related to dark skies or glare, including but not limited to the San Diego County Light Pollution Code.

## Analysis

### Lighting

Residential lighting, streetlights, and neighborhood commercial lights would be installed within planning areas and would operate during evening and nighttime hours. The types of outdoor lighting associated with the proposed project is generally defined by Section 59.104 of the San Diego County Light Pollution Code as Class II lighting; however, outdoor lighting installed for decorative effects (i.e., Class III lighting) may also operate permanently (such as within private landscape areas) or periodically (i.e., holiday lighting) within proposed planning areas. Lights used for holiday decorations are exempt from the Light Pollution Code. The proposed project is located in Zone B as designated by the County's Light Pollution Code. Accordingly, all outdoor lighting installed within proposed planning areas at the project Site and along project roads would conform to the lamp type and shielding requirements described in Section 59.105 (Requirements for Lamp Source and Shielding) for Class II and Class III lighting. Also, due to the inclusion of commercial uses in the Town Center and the likely possibility that the existing AM/PM gas station freeway sign would be removed and replaced with a sign of similar bulk and scale advertising the commercial uses of the project, Class I lighting may also be installed. If Class I lighting is installed, all fixtures would be fully shielded per Section 59.105 of the San Diego County Light Pollution Code. Furthermore, all new street lighting installed along private roadways would consist of fully shielded low-pressure sodium lamps or other lamp types of 4,550 lumens and below. In addition, although the requirements of the San Diego Light Pollution Code are not specifically applicable to public street lighting (see Section 59.104), new outdoor lighting installed along Deer Springs Road would comply with the shielding and lamp type requirements of the code to the extent that doing so would not jeopardize the safety of motorists and other users.

All Class I and Class III lighting installed within the proposed planning areas would comply with the hours of operations limitation established by Section 59.107 of the County's Light Pollution Code. However, as noted above, Class III decorative lighting including illumination of the United States or State of California flag (and flagpole) and holiday decorations that future

residents or businesses may elect to install on their property may operate beyond the hours established by Section 59.107 (these sources are permanently exempt from the requirements of Section 59.107). All decorative landscape lighting would be subject to the requirements of Section 59.107 and, therefore, landscape lighting installed on private residences, within the Town Center, and other locations would be shut off between 11 p.m. and sunrise. The San Diego Light Pollution Code does not regulate the operation of roadway lighting along Deer Springs Road and internal project roads, and parking lot lighting, residential entrance and walkway lighting, or commercial walkway lighting. Therefore, the operation of these lighting sources along Deer Springs Road and throughout the proposed planning areas between 11 p.m. and sunrise would not conflict with the San Diego Light Pollution Code.

The proposed project Site is currently undeveloped and consists of dense chaparral and occasional boulder covered mountainous terrain. With the exception of lighting installed at the ARCO gas station and along Mesa Rock Road, no outdoor lighting is currently installed within the boundaries of the project site. Furthermore, with the exception of several streetlights installed near the intersection of Deer Springs Road and Sarver Lane, streetlights are not installed along the segment of Deer Springs Road where improvements are proposed. New sources of lighting within the project Site would illuminate portions of the project during nighttime hours, but the potential for light trespass onto adjacent properties would be reduced through compliance with the shielding requirements of the San Diego Light Pollution Code. As previously stated, all non-exempted outdoor lighting within the proposed planning areas would conform to the Zone B lamp type and shielding requirements for Class I, II, and III lighting. More specifically, all non-exempted outdoor lighting would be fully shielded and mounted such that light would not be emitted above the horizontal plane/angle of the lighting fixture. By installing shielded lamps, the potential light trespass would be reduced, as light would be primarily projected directly onto the ground under the fixture as opposed to a wider distribution to adjacent lands and/or the sky.

Although streetlights are not currently installed along the majority of the Deer Springs Road segment proposed to be improved, interior and exterior lighting installed at private homes adjacent to the roadway, generate visible nighttime lighting. In addition to widened travel lanes and the installation of bike lanes, curbs, gutters, and other improvements, lighting would be installed along Deer Springs Road from Mesa Rock Road to Twin Oaks Valley Road for the safety of motorists and other users. Lighting may be installed on North Twin Oaks Valley Road, Sarver Lane, and Camino Mayor as project traffic would also use these roadways. Although Section 59.104(c) of the County's Light Pollution Code identifies roadway lights as Class II lighting, Section 59.104(a) does not specify that public street lighting is subject to the requirements of the Light Pollution Code. Although newly installed street lights would produce light levels brighter than those that currently exist along the roadway, new outdoor lighting installed along Deer Springs Road would comply with the shielding and lamp type requirements

of the code to the extent that doing so would not jeopardize the safety of motorists and other users. At this stage of planning it is anticipated that new lighting installed along the improved segment of Deer Springs Road would be fully shielded to minimize light trespass onto adjacent habitat and properties.

All Class I, II, and III lighting installed within proposed planning areas would comply with the applicable requirements of County of San Diego Light Pollution Code Section 59.101 et al. All new street lighting along the improved segment of Deer Springs Road would be fully shielded and would comply with the applicable lamp type requirements of County of San Diego Light Pollution Code Section 59.101 et al. to the extent that doing so would not jeopardize the safety of motorists and other users. Therefore, potential lighting impacts would be **less than significant**.

### Glare

The proposed project would largely consist of residential development that would not incorporate highly reflective building materials such as stainless steel, reflective glass, or surfaces coated with high-gloss color. Solar panels would be included on all residential units (both attached and detached) including the residential portions of the Town Center. Solar panels would not be installed atop buildings in the commercial area of the Town Center. Installed panels would be highly absorptive and designed to capture as much light energy as possible. Although off-site receptors at elevated viewpoints (such as at a limited number of ridgeline residences located east of the project Site) would be afforded views to these features, solar PV panels are designed to be highly absorptive of incoming sunlight and are not anticipated to create glare that would be received by receptors in the surrounding area.

As currently proposed, structures within the Town Center planning areas and residences within the remaining planning areas would be constructed with wood or potentially metal frames and would feature stucco exteriors finished with warm color and gently sloped, tan colored roofs. Highly absorptive solar PV panels would be installed on the roofs of residential structures. Potential glare reflected by glass windows installed within the proposed residential planning areas would not be located in line with local roadways such as I-15, Deer Springs Road, North Centre City Parkway, Twin Oaks Valley Road, or Mountain Meadow Parkway. Rather, project-generated glare associated with glass elements would be located in the peripheral view of motorists or other users of these roadways and existing landscaping, structures, and terrain located adjacent to these roads would partially screen or obscure project generated glare from view. In addition, from these roadways, peripheral project-generated glare would be experienced temporarily as mobile viewers travel through the project viewshed. The interior clearance/headspace of vehicles would further limit the duration of peripheral glare exposure along local area roadways.

Also, consistent with the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines, excessive building or project Site lighting for decorative purposes is not proposed in any of the planning areas and newly installed lighting would be limited to that necessary for security, safety and identification. Although the installation of mirrored glass on project structures is not anticipated at this time, if mirrored glass is considered its use would be prohibited on structures visible from I-15. With regard to potential nonconformance with the requirements of the County's Light Pollution Code, please refer to the analysis presented above under the Lighting heading. Potential impacts associated with highly reflective building materials (Guideline d) and conflicts with federal, state, or local statutes or regulations related to dark skies or glare (including the County Light Pollution Code) (Guideline e) would be **less than significant**.

#### **2.1.3.4 Consistency with Applicable Plans, Policies, and Ordinances**

##### Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

For purposes of this EIR, the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Report Format and Content Requirements: Visual Resources* (County of San Diego 2007a) applies to the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact analyses. According to these guidelines, a significant impact would result if:

- a. The project would not comply with applicable goals, policies, or requirements of an applicable County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District's Zoning.

##### Analysis

A consistency analysis was prepared for the proposed project and applicable visual resource policies from the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines) and the Bonsall Community Plan and is included as Appendix E to this EIR (see Appendix B of Visual Resources Technical Report). Although not discussed here due to the focus of the County's visual resources guidelines, a detailed list of County General Plan policies and the proposed project's consistency with those policies is found Appendix DD of this EIR. As demonstrated in Appendices E and DD of this EIR (see Appendix B of Visual Resources Technical Report), the proposed project would be consistent with the identified visual resource policies of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines), the Bonsall Community Plan, and the County General Plan. Therefore, plan inconsistency impacts would be **less than significant**.

### 2.1.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

#### Methodology

The character elements of cumulative development occurring within the project viewshed contribute to the overall visual character of the viewshed and would affect, either negatively or positively, the quality of existing views of the landscape. Including the proposed project, projects contributing to cumulative visual effects include those within the proposed project viewshed. The viewshed encompasses the area within which the viewer is most likely to observe the project and surrounding uses. The project viewshed is generally confined to the areas located within the ridgelines that surround the I-15 corridor and the project Site; however, due to the inclusion of proposed improvements to Deer Springs Road, the proposed project viewshed also encompasses the improved segment of the roadway and extends into the Twin Oaks Valley area. Therefore, for purposes of this report, the project viewshed is the geographic extent for the analysis of cumulative impacts to visual resources.

#### Reasonably Foreseeable Projects

There are approximately 11 development projects located within the proposed project viewshed. Development projects within the project viewshed are depicted in Figure 2.1-14, Cumulative Projects. Ranging from a 147 residential lot subdivision (Mountain Gate Rezone for Tentative Map Time Extension, Map ID #123) on Mountain Meadow Road to a 108 residential unit and 10,000 square-foot development near Cal State San Marcos (Campus Point II, Map ID#191) to a two single-family residential lot subdivision (Rimsa TPM, Two Lots, Map ID#157) implementation of the identified cumulative projects would result in the construction of approximately 455 additional residences/residential units (and associated infrastructure) and approximately 10,000 square-feet of new retail space.

If the proposed project, along with projects located within the proposed project viewshed, would result in a substantial overall change in the visual character of the viewshed, then a cumulative aesthetic impact would occur. Of the projects analyzed, six are minor residential subdivisions (i.e., less than seven lots), proposing between 2 and 7 new single-family residences or lots. These residential subdivisions would be located to the north, south, southwest, and west of the proposed project within established agricultural/rural residential areas and as a result, development of these projects would not substantially change the existing character of the viewshed. The construction of a foster care facility (Map ID#117) and a portable classroom pre-school (Map ID#119) in the Twin Oaks Valley area would not substantially alter the existing character of the area as the facilities would be relatively small in size and would look similar to existing housing and school facilities in the area. The Campus Point II (Map ID#191) is located south of SR-78 and would blend in with the existing assortment of apartment buildings and retail

business located in and around the Cal State San Marcos campus. Two of the projects within the cumulative study area (Mountain Gate Rezone, Map ID #123; and Canyon Villas Welk TM, Rezone and STP, Map ID #129) involve rezones and if approved, could entail the development of approximately 147 single-family lots and 177 time-share units in the viewshed.

Despite the presence of existing agricultural/rural residential development in the project viewshed and resulting alterations to the landscape, the cumulative projects identified in Table 1-10 would combine with the proposed project to change the existing composition of the visual environment. With implementation of the identified projects and the proposed project, the area would transition from primarily agriculture and rural residential land use development pattern to a more urban pattern of development. Physical changes associated with vegetation removal, grading, and the addition of residential development would adversely affect the viewshed and impacts would be considered **cumulatively considerable**.

### 2.1.5 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

#### Scenic Vistas

Construction and operation of the proposed project including improvements to Deer Springs Road would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from a public road, a trail within an adopted County or State trail system, a scenic vista or highway, or a recreational area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista and impacts would be **less than significant**.

#### Visual Character or Quality

Construction and operation of the proposed project would introduce features that would contrast with the existing visual character of the project and would result in the removal of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character of the site. The project as viewed from I-15, Deer Springs Road near I-15, North Centre City Parkway, Mountain Meadow Road and Deer Springs Road near Mesa Rock Road would reduce the vividness, intactness and unity of existing views and would appear inconsistent with the existing visual character of the site and immediate surroundings. Several project features including balanced grading, focusing project development to lower elevation valley areas on the project site, conservation of open space, landscaping, and grade-adaptive architecture would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the proposed project by minimizing grading (to the extent feasible), avoiding particularly prominent development locations, retaining the natural characteristics of portions of the Site, partially screening structures, and incorporating natural terrain in project design. These features would not, however, mask or otherwise obscure the physical changes to the existing visual environment of the proposed project Site as viewed from certain public roadways in the area including I-15,

Deer Springs Road at I-15, North Centre City Parkway and Mountain Meadow Road. Because there are no mitigation measures available that would further reduce the anticipated level of contrast associated with development of the project and implementation of roadway improvements along the identified segment of Deer Springs Road, impacts would be **significant and unavoidable (Impact AES-1)**.

### Light or Glare

All applicable outdoor lighting would conform to the San Diego Light Pollution Code and highly reflective building materials are not proposed for installation as part of the proposed project. Solar panels would be included on all residential units (both attached and detached); however, the installed panels would be highly absorptive and are designed to capture as much light energy as possible. Although off-site receptors at elevated viewpoints (such as at a limited number of ridgeline residences located east of the project Site) would be afforded views to these features, solar PV panels are designed to be highly absorptive of incoming sunlight and are not anticipated to create glare that would be received by receptors in the surrounding area. Project lighting would be designed to adhere to the regulations of the County Light Pollution Code. Therefore, impacts concerning the introduction of new sources of substantial light and glare would be **less than significant**.

### Consistency with County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District's Zoning

As demonstrated in Appendix B to the Visual Resources Technical Report (Appendix E of this EIR), the proposed project was determined to be consistent with applicable visual resource policies of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines) and the Bonsall Community Plan. Impacts would be less than significant. Similar to the proposed project, development within the proposed project viewshed is required to perform a consistency determination with relevant goals and policies of applicable County Community Plans, Subregional Plans, and Historic District's zoning (if applicable). Because the proposed project would not conflict with applicable policies of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines) and the Bonsall Community Plan, it would not contribute to a cumulative significant impact related to compliance with applicable community and regional plans. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**.

## **2.1.6 Mitigation Measures**

### Scenic Vistas

Impacts to scenic vistas were found to be **less than significant** and, therefore, mitigation is not required.

### Visual Character or Quality

Several project design features, including balanced grading, focusing project development to lower elevation valley areas on the proposed project, conservation of open space, landscaping, and grade-adaptive architecture, would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the proposed project. These features would generally reduce visual impacts by minimizing grading (to the extent feasible), avoiding particularly prominent terrain, retaining the natural characteristics of portions of the Site, partially screening structures through the installation of plantings, and incorporating natural terrain and vegetation in the proposed project design. As discussed in Chapter 1, Project Description, planning for the proposed project took into account existing landforms and topography by concentrating development between and away from ridge lines. Prominent ridges and landforms were mapped, and each neighborhood was designed to minimize disturbance to prominent peaks and landforms on the project Site. Also, as proposed, three large continuous blocks of open space habitat have been incorporated into the design of the proposed project and would work as a buffer to reduce the project's visibility from I-15 and residential properties to the east. The landscape character of the proposed project would also be informed by the natural terrain. For example, overall landscape theme would include preservation and re-use of natural Site boulders paired with oak trees and native and adapted low-water-use plants and planned roadside swales would mimic the natural Site hydrology. Also, vineyards are proposed throughout the project Site on cut slopes (where possible) and would establish a visual connection to the region's agrarian history.

Mitigation measures that would further reduce the anticipated visual contrast associated with implementation of the proposed project were considered but determined to be infeasible. For example, temporary screening of construction sites and storage areas with opaque fencing would largely be ineffective due to the viewing angle to the proposed project Site afforded to viewers on I-15 and North Centre City Road. Also, a denser distribution of landscape trees and shrubs would increase visual contrast (and decrease intactness) between proposed landscaped areas on the Site and native vegetation that would be maintained as biological open space. Additional landscaping in planning areas and along roadways to further screen proposed development from view at off-site locations may also conflict with applicable fire requirements and the establishment and maintenance of horizontal and vertical clearances and defensible space.

Incorporation of grading, open space, landscaping, and architectural design features described above would not mask or substantially reduce the anticipated physical changes to the existing visual character of the proposed project Site as viewed from public roadways in the area including I-15, Deer Springs Road, North Centre City Parkway, and Mountain Meadow Road. Because there are no mitigation measures available that would further reduce the anticipated level of contrast associated with development of the proposed project and implementation of

roadway improvements along the identified segment of Deer Springs Road, impacts would be **significant and unavoidable (Impact AES-1)**.

#### Light or Glare

Impacts associated with the introduction of new sources of substantial light and glare would be **less than significant**; therefore, no mitigation is required.

#### Consistency with County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District's Zoning

Impacts associated with conflicts with the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines) and the Bonsall Community Plan would be **less than significant** and, therefore, mitigation is not required.

### **2.1.7 Conclusion**

#### Scenic Vistas

There are no designated valued focal vistas along regional and surface roads in the project area, but the local ridge and valley landscape creates opportunities for focal and panoramic vistas from public roads. For example, the proposed project would be visible from prominent roadways in the surrounding area including I-15, Deer Springs Road, Twin Oaks Valley Road, and Mountain Meadow Road. Although visual change associated with construction and operation of the project would be detectable from public roads in the surrounding area, views to the project from these facilities would be experienced briefly and project development would not substantially screen distant background elements from view. As proposed, development of the planning areas would be concentrated in the central and southern portions of the project Site, with the exception of the Town Center. Due to distance, the low viewing angle afforded to San Luis Rey North Trail users, and the presence of intervening terrain (i.e., mountainous terrain comprises the eastern and northern boundary of the proposed project), planning areas and development would be screened from view of trail users. As such, the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista from the San Luis Rey River North Trail. At Walnut Grove Park, visible project features would be limited to linear areas of thinned chaparral vegetation that would comprise perimeter fuel modification located on the middle ground ridgeline some 1.4 miles to the northeast. However, due to the distance between the park and modified vegetation on ridgelines to the northeast and the thin and relatively narrow area of fuel modification visible to viewers, project effects would not be visually prominent and may not be noticeable to the casual viewer.

Based on the analysis presented in Section 2.1.3.1 and summarized above, the proposed project would not substantially obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a valued focal and/or panoramic vista in the surrounding area. Impacts would be **less than significant** and, as such, no mitigation is required.

### Visual Character or Quality

Views to the project from public roads are relatively limited and the visual effects of construction activities would be experienced briefly by passing motorists. Furthermore, residential development is commonplace on hillsides, atop ridgelines, and within lower elevation valleys along the I-15 corridor. However, the introduction of expansive and light tan colored graded pads and hillsides and the removal of dense tracts of native, dark green and brownish chaparral vegetation and occasionally, alteration of granitic boulder outcrops, would introduce particularly contrasting features to the proposed project Site. Furthermore, the removal of vegetation, rock outcrops and modification of hillsides would result in an adverse change to these dominant features that contribute to the visual character of the Site. As such, construction activities would significantly alter the current visual character of the Site.

Although proposed project changes to existing visual character of the Site would be difficult to detect and be relatively subtle as viewed from locations in the project viewshed located south and west of the project, the project would introduce features (i.e., residences, trees, vineyards, and paved roadways) that would contrast with the existing visual character of the primarily natural-appearing Site. The visual change associated with removal of existing vegetation and alteration of existing terrain to accommodate proposed residential, commercial, and education land uses and associated infrastructure would be most evident as viewed from locations in the viewshed located east of project such as Key Views 1, 2, and 3. As viewed from these locations, the introduction of project elements would result in an adverse change to the primarily undisturbed chaparral-covered hill and valley terrain visual character of the Site. As such, the project would significantly alter the current visual character of the Site.

Several proposed project design features would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the proposed project but they would be unable to mask or substantially reduce the anticipated project visual contrast as viewed from I-15, Deer Springs Road at I-15, North Centre City Parkway and Mountain Meadow Road. Therefore, impacts to existing visual character and quality of the Site and surroundings would be **significant and unavoidable (Impact AES-1)**.

### Light or Glare

All Class I, II, and III lighting installed within proposed planning areas would comply with the applicable requirements of County of San Diego Light Pollution Code Section 59.101 et al. All new street lighting along the improved segment of Deer Springs Road would be fully shielded

and would comply with the applicable lamp type requirements of County of San Diego Light Pollution Code Section 59.101 et al. to the extent that doing so would not jeopardize the safety of motorists and other users. Therefore, potential lighting impacts would be **less than significant**.

The proposed project would largely consist of residential development and would not use highly reflective building materials. Solar PV panels would be included on all residential units (both attached and detached); however, the installed panels would be highly absorptive and are designed to capture as much light energy as possible. Although off-site receptors at elevated viewpoints (such as at a limited number of ridgeline residences located east of the project Site) would be afforded views to these features, solar PV panels are designed to be highly absorptive of incoming sunlight and are not anticipated to create glare that would be received by receptors in the surrounding area. Also, consistent with the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines, excessive building or Site lighting for decorative purposes is not proposed in any of the planning areas and newly installed Site lighting would be limited to that necessary for security, safety and identification. The installation of mirrored glass on project structures is not anticipated at this time. Therefore, potential impacts associated with highly reflective building materials (Guideline d) and conflicts with federal, state, or local statutes or regulations related to dark skies or glare (including the County Light Pollution Code) (Guideline e) would be **less than significant** and no mitigation is required.

#### Consistency with County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District's zoning

As demonstrated in Appendix B to the Visual Resources Technical Report (Appendix E of this EIR), the proposed project would be consistent with the identified visual resource policies of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (including the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines) and the Bonsall Community Plan. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**.



**FIGURE 2.1-1a**  
**On-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-1b**  
**On-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-1c**  
**Off-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-1d**  
**Off-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-1e**  
**Off-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-1f**  
**Off-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

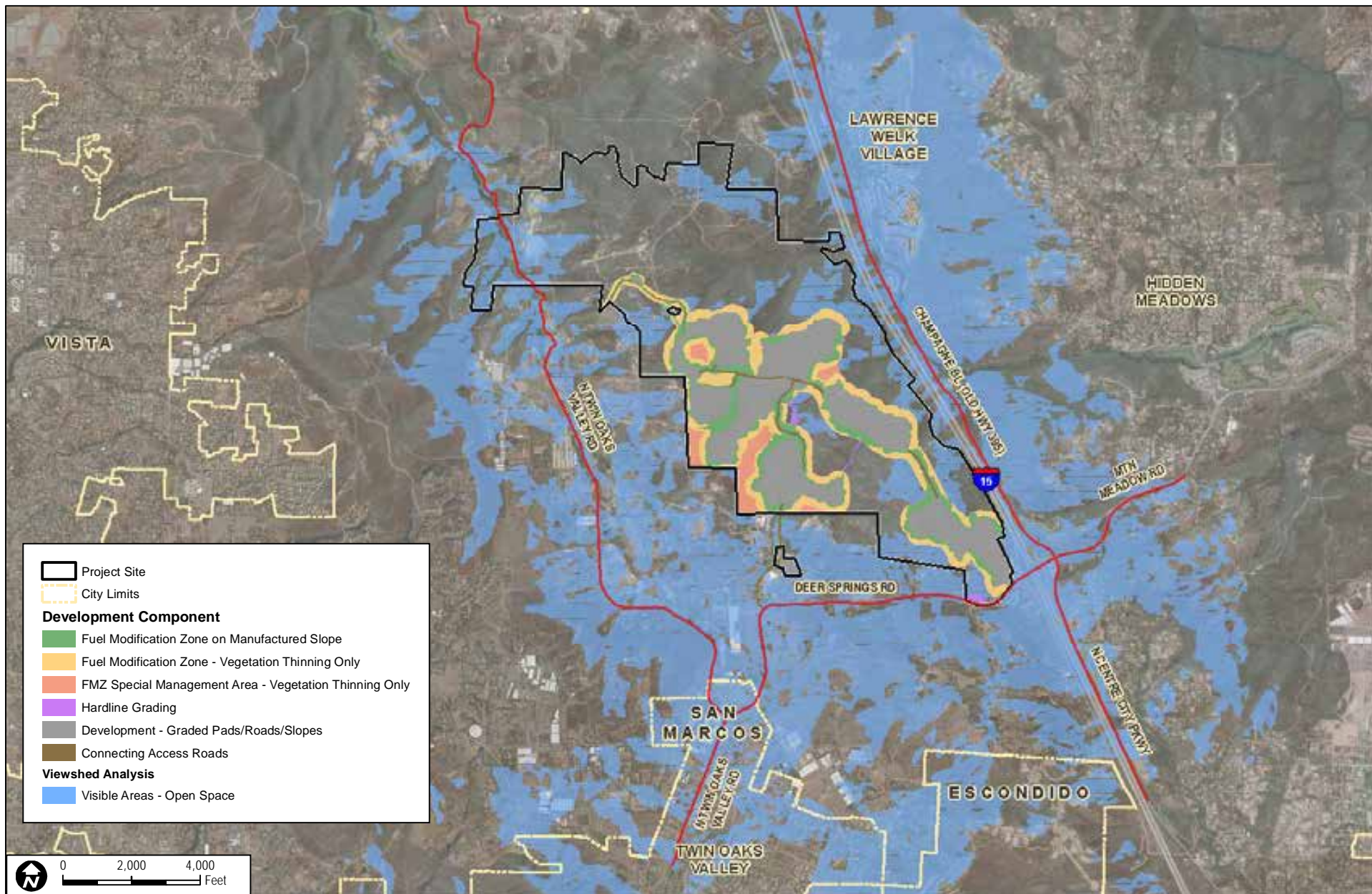


**FIGURE 2-1-1g**  
**Off-Site Visual Elements**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



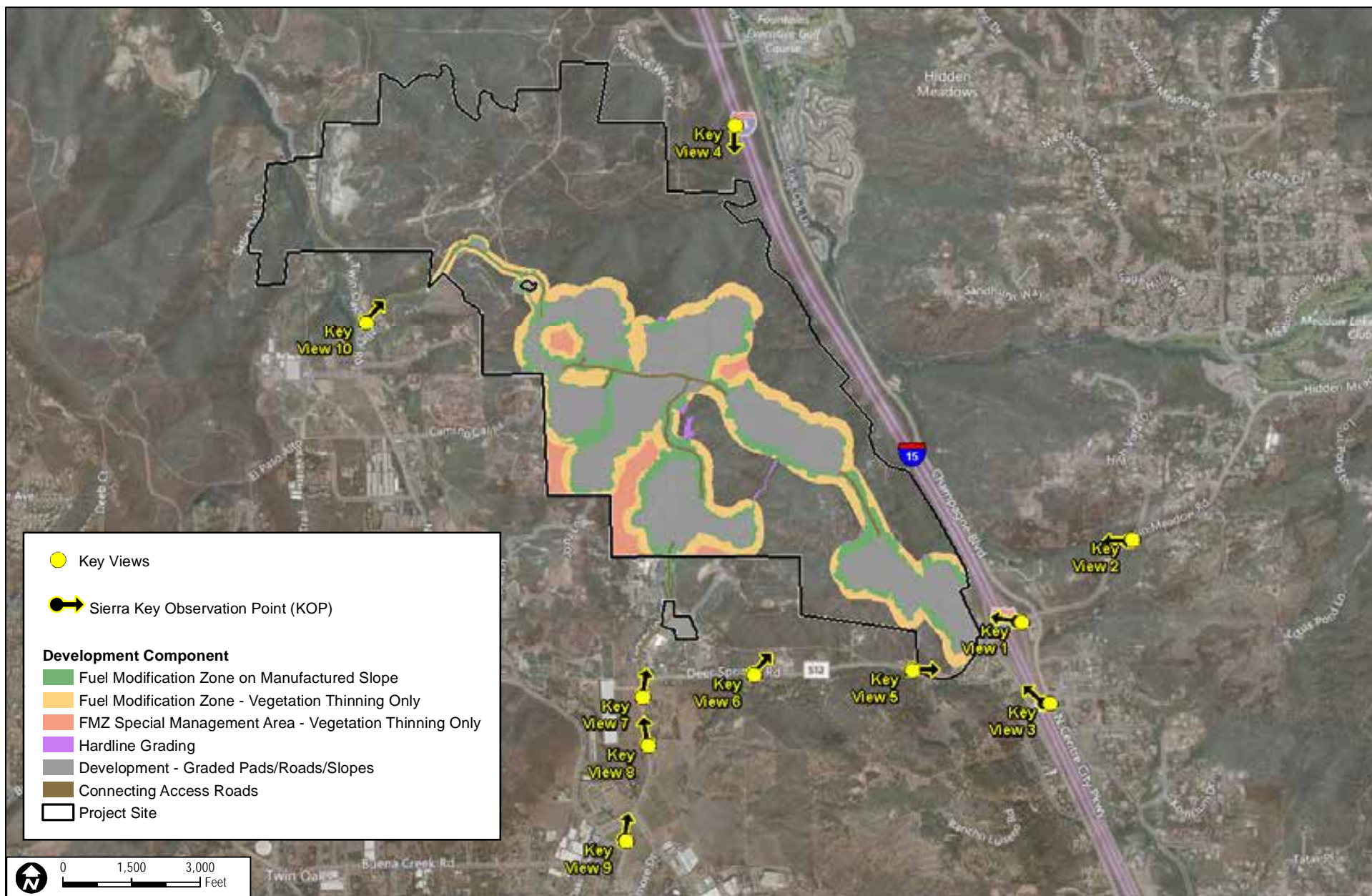
INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



SOURCE: Bing Maps 2015

**FIGURE 2.1-2  
Project Viewshed**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**FIGURE 2.1-3**  
**Key Views**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 1: Existing



Key View 1: Proposed (with newly installed landscaping)

**FIGURE 2.1-4a**  
**Key View 1 - Deer Springs Road at I-15 NB On-Ramps**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 1: Existing



Key View 1: Proposed (with mature landscaping)

**FIGURE 2.1-4b**  
**Key View 1 - Deer Springs Road at I-15 NB On-Ramps**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 2: Existing



Key View 2: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-5**  
**Key View 2 - Mountain Meadow Road**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 3: Existing



Key View 3: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-6**

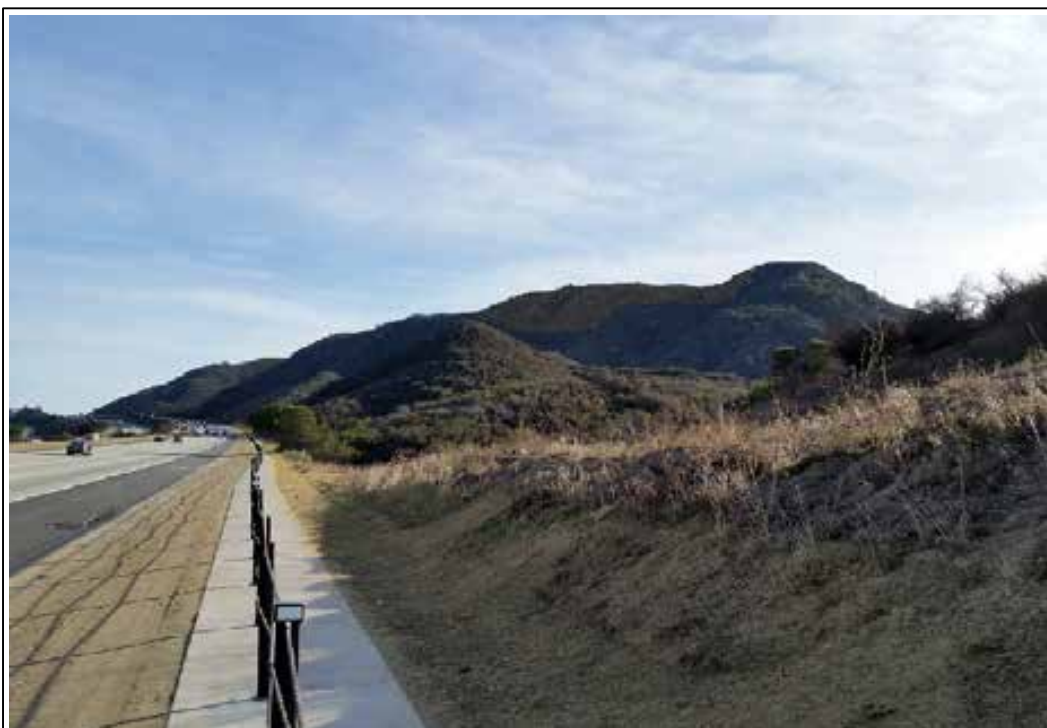
**Key View 3 - North Centre City Parkway/I-15 NB**

Newland Sierra Environmental Impact Report

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 4: Existing



Key View 4: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-7**  
**Key View 4 - SB I-15**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 5 (Option A): Existing



Key View 5 (Option A): Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-8a**  
**Key View 5 - Deer Springs Road near Mesa Rock Road (Option A)**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 5 (Option B): Existing



Key View 5 (Option B): Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-8b**  
**Key View 5 - Deer Springs Road near Mesa Rock Road (Option B)**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 6 (Option A): Existing



Key View 6 (Option A): Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-9a**  
**Key View 6 - Deer Springs Road near Deer Springs Place (Option A)**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 6 (Option B): Existing



Key View 6 (Option B): Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-9b**  
**Key View 6 - Deer Springs Road near Deer Springs Place (Option B)**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 7: Existing



Key View 7: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-10**  
**Key View 7 - Deer Springs Road near Sarver Lane**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 8: Existing



Key View 8: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-11**  
**Key View 8 - Deer Springs Road near Sycamore Road**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Key View 9: Existing



Key View 9: Proposed

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



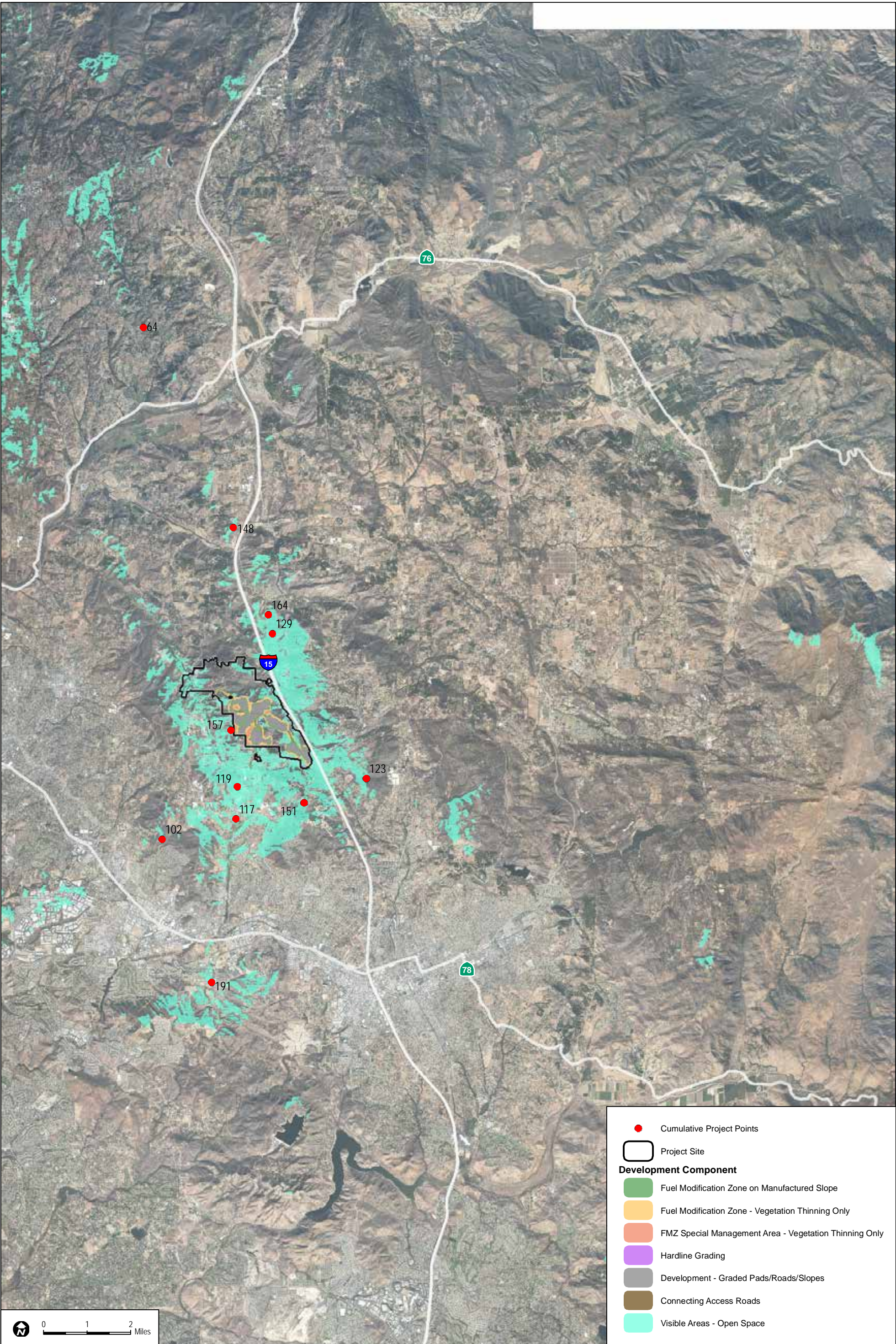
Key View 10: Existing



Key View 10: Proposed

**FIGURE 2.1-13**  
**Key View 10 - North Twin Oaks Valley Road near Camino Mayor**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



SOURCE: SANDAG Imagery, 2014; Newland Sierra LLC, 2015.

**FIGURE 2.1-14**  
**Cumulative Projects Map**

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK