

CHAPTER 2.0 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

2.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

The following section provides a summary of the potential impacts caused by implementation of the proposed Project related to aesthetics and visual quality. The analysis presented in this section is based on the visual simulations prepared for the proposed Project by Development Design Services and Graphic Access, a County-certified visual analyst.

The Otay Ranch PEIR, adopted in 1993, provided a program-level analysis of the existing conditions and potential impacts related to aesthetics for the entire Otay Ranch area, including the Project site. The Otay Ranch PEIR identified potential significant direct and cumulative impacts related to aesthetics and included mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. However, the PEIR found that even with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the significant direct and cumulative impacts would not be fully mitigated. Additionally, the Otay Ranch PEIR determined that specific-plan-level visual impact studies are to be undertaken to determine if additional mitigation measures exist to avoid or reduce Project-level significant direct and cumulative impacts.

2.1.1 Existing Conditions

2.1.1.1 *Visual Character*

The Project site is located at the interface of existing urban development and undisturbed open spaces. The Project site is currently undeveloped; no buildings exist on-site. The Project site is characterized by rocky, low rolling hills covered with sparse, scrubby vegetation. The visual character of the Project site is undisturbed open space. Several different types of land uses exist in the vicinity of the Project site. The Eastlake Vistas and Eastlake Woods residential communities and the U.S. Olympic Training Center are located over one-half mile to the west and southwest of the Project site. Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir, a water and recreation reservoir owned and operated by the City of San Diego, is located south of the site. Upper Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir is located northwest of the site. John Nichols Field, an ultra-light gliding and parachuting airport, is located at the east end of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir, on City of San Diego property.

The Project site contains great scenic beauty and is highly visible from surrounding areas, including Eastlake, the Olympic Training Center, Otay Lakes Road, and, in certain locations, the south side of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir. From the Project site, there are views to the Jamul Mountains to the north, and to Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir and Otay Mountain to the south. **Figure 2.1-0** shows the locations from which photographs were taken of the site's existing visual character and setting. **Figures 2.1-1a through 2.1-8a** show existing conditions from each of the viewpoints and **Figures 2.1-1b through 2.1-8b** provide simulations of the proposed Project from the same viewpoints.

Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas are singular vantage points that offer unobstructed views of valued viewsheds, including County-designated visual resources and areas designated as official scenic vistas along major highways.

The County does not identify specific scenic vistas in its General Plan. However, the Otay SRP identifies Otay Mountain as a scenic resource. The following goals and policies of the San Diego General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element are relevant to the project:

GOAL COS-11

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

Policies

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

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

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

GOAL COS-12

Preservation of Ridgelines and Hillsides. Ridgelines and steep hillsides that are preserved for their character and scenic value.

Policies

COS-12.1 Hillside and Ridgeline Development Density. Protect undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designations on these areas.

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.

Characteristic scenic vistas of the Project site incorporating the scenic vistas discussed above are shown in **Figures 2.1-1a and 2.1-2a** and are simulated with the proposed Project in **Figures 2.1-1b and 2.1-2b**.

Point of View 1

Shown in **Figure 2.1-1a** is Point of View 1, located within Mountain Hawk Park in the Eastlake Vistas community of Chula Vista. This point of view looks northeast and is characterized by the tree-dotted lakeside of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir and rolling hills in the lower portion of the Jamul Mountains. From this viewpoint, the lower slope of San Miguel Mountain is shown to the northwest of the Project site. Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir, Jamul Mountain, the western portion of the Project site, Otay Lakes Road, and the San Ysidro Mountains can also be seen from this viewpoint. Houses associated with the Eastlake Community would also be seen from northwestern views at this viewpoint. All of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir and most of the Project site can be seen from this or other nearby vantage points within Mountain Hawk Park. This point of view is characteristic of views from the easternmost tracts of the Eastlake Community. A simulation of Point of View 1 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-1b**.

Point of View 2

Shown in **Figure 2.1-2a** is Point of View 2, located southwest of Otay Lakes Road, between the north and east arms of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir. This point of view looks northeast and is characterized by a lakeside covered in sparse scrubby vegetation and rolling hills. From this viewpoint, the eastern arm of Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir, Otay Lakes Road, the western portion of the Project site, and the Jamul Mountains can be seen. This point of view is characteristic of views available to Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir recreational users from the edge and surface of the ~~lake~~reservoir. A simulation of Point of View 2 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-2b**.

Scenic Highways

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the San Diego County General Plan identifies scenic highways to create a network of the scenic highway corridors and to protect and enhance the scenic, historical, and recreational resources in those corridors. Otay Lakes Road is a “County Designated Scenic Highway.” (County of San Diego 2011a).

Characteristic existing views of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road, proceeding from west to east along the Project frontage, are shown in **Figures 2.1-3a through 2.1-8a** and described below.

Point of View 3

Shown in **Figure 2.1-3a** is Point of View 3, located along a curve in Otay Lakes Road between the Upper and Lower Otay ~~Lakes~~Reservoirs. This point of view looks east and is characterized by a lakeside spotted with trees in the foreground and undeveloped rolling hills covered with low-lying vegetation in the background, including a peak of the Jamul Mountains that lies just north of the Project boundary. This area along the east side of the road is intermittently inundated during high water conditions in Lower Otay ~~Lake~~Reservoir. From this viewpoint, Lower Otay ~~Lake~~

Reservoir and the southern edge of the Project site can be seen. Houses within Eastlake can be seen from northwestern views at this vantage point. This point of view is characteristic of views looking east along the southern boundary of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 3 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-3b**.

Point of View 4

Shown in **Figure 2.1-4a** is Point of View 4, located on Otay Lakes Road looking northwest along the north arm of Lower Otay LakeReservoir. This point of view is characterized by rolling hills covered in sparse, low-lying vegetation. From this viewpoint, the foothills of Jamul Mountain and the western edge of the Project site can be seen, with the peak of San Miguel Mountain and the lower peak of Mother Miguel Mountain in the background. This point of view is characteristic of views along the western edge of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 4 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-4b**.

Point of View 5

Shown in **Figure 2.1-5a** is Point of View 5, located on Otay Lakes Road looking southeast along the north arm of Lower Otay LakeReservoir. This point of view toward the Project site is characterized by undeveloped rolling hills covered with low-lying vegetation. From this viewpoint, the western edge of the Project site and, in the background, peaks of the Jamul Mountains to the northeast and the San Ysidro Mountains to the southeast, can be seen. This point of view is characteristic of views looking east along the southwestern boundary of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 5 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-5b**.

Point of View 6

Shown in **Figure 2.1-6a** is Point of View 6, located on Otay Lakes Road looking west along the north side of the east arm of Lower Otay LakeReservoir. This point of view is characterized by undeveloped rolling hills covered in sparse, low-lying vegetation. From this viewpoint, the lower foothill portion of the Jamul Mountains within the Project site can be seen. A natural drainage course that crosses under Otay Lakes Road from the Project site and flows into Lower Otay LakeReservoir is near this viewpoint and the off-site area to the south is intermittently inundated during high water conditions in Lower Otay LakeReservoir. Although houses within Eastlake cannot be seen in this photograph, existing residential development to the west can be seen from vantage points in the vicinity of Point of View 6. This point of view is characteristic of views looking west from near the middle of the Project site along Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 6 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-6b**.

Point of View 7

Shown in **Figure 2.1-7a** is Point of View 7, located on Otay Lakes Road looking west adjacent to John Nichols Field, east of Lower Otay LakeReservoir. The Project site from this point of view is characterized by rocky hills covered in sparse, low-lying vegetation. From this viewpoint, a portion of John Nichols Field, a lower foothill of the Jamul Mountains, and the eastern edge of the Project site can be seen. Although houses within Eastlake cannot be seen in this photograph, existing

residential development to the west can be seen from vantage points in the vicinity of Point of View 7. This point of view is characteristic of views looking west from the easternmost edge of the Project site along Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 7 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-7b**.

Point of View 8

Shown in **Figure 2.1-8a** is Point of View 8, located on Otay Lakes Road looking northwest along Otay Lakes Road. The project site at this point is characterized by undeveloped rolling hills covered in sparse, low-lying vegetation. This point of view is characteristic of views looking west and northwest from the southern boundary of the Project site along Otay Lakes Road. A simulation of Point of View 8 for the proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2.1-8b**.

Light and Glare

The Project site is located at the interface of existing urban development and undisturbed open spaces. As shown in **Figures 2.1-1a through 2.1-8a**, there are no street lights along Otay Lakes Road. No lighting exists on the Project site and no glare-producing materials are located on the Project site. Most of the surrounding area is undeveloped. The Eastlake community, located within the City of Chula Vista, 0.5 mile from the Project site, is the closest residential development. Streets in this community are lit by standard street lights and are visible from the Project site.

Pursuant to the State of California Outdoor Lighting Zones regulations (2003) and the United States Census (2000), the Project site is considered to be within Lighting Zone 2, which is composed of rural areas that are not government-designated parks, recreation areas, or wildlife preserves. Areas within this zone designation are characterized as having low ambient illumination.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the San Diego County General Plan provides Goals and Policies for preservation of Astronomical Dark Skies in the County by limiting light pollution and maintaining low levels of sky brightness in the vicinity of the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories (County of San Diego 2011). Both of these sites are considered to be among the best locations for astronomical research in the United States. The following Goal and Policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element are relevant to the Project:

GOAL COS-13

Dark Skies. Preserve dark skies that contribute to rural character and are necessary for the local observatories.

Policies

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.

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.

The County of San Diego Light Pollution Code divides the night sky into two zones: Zone A, all areas within a 15-mile radius of either Palomar Mountain or Mt. Laguna; and Zone B, all remaining portions of San Diego County. The Project site is located in Zone B, approximately 50 miles from the Palomar Observatory and 30 miles from the Mt. Laguna Observatory.

2.1.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

The following significance guidelines are based on the Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report and Content Requirements for Visual Resources approved by PDS on July 30, 2007. A significant aesthetics and visual quality impact would occur if the Project would do the following:

- 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.
- Result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or localized area, including but not limited to landmarks (designated), historic resources, trees, and rock outcroppings.
- 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.*
- Not comply with applicable goals, policies, or requirements of an applicable County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District Zoning.

2.1.2.1 Consistency with Visual Character, Quality, and Design Guidelines

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

A significant aesthetics and visual quality impact would occur if the Project would do the following:

- 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.

Rationale for Selection of Guideline

The significance guideline for consistency with visual character, quality, and applicable local design guidelines is intended to avoid adverse changes or contrasts and to ensure that the community and/or neighborhood surrounding the project will maintain its particular character. The visual quality is based on the viewers' responses to changes in the character and quality of views of the project site, and whether the project contributes or detracts from the existing character and quality of the area.

Analysis

The proposed Project would alter the existing visual character of the site in a manner that would be similar to existing development in the Eastlake community. The Project proposes patterns of land alteration, residential styles, architecture, density, and massing that are similar to existing development west of Lower Otay Lake Reservoir. The proposed Project also places approximately 1,090 acres of undeveloped lands into preserve area within the Project site.

The proposed Project includes a Specific Plan which establishes Development Regulations for the future land uses including single family homes, multi-family homes and the Resort site. Implementation of the Development Regulations will occur through the building permit process. A Site Plan is required for all development in the proposed Project and must demonstrate consistency with the Development Regulations. The Specific Plan's Development Regulations include requirements related to setbacks, density, building size, massing, lot coverage, and scale. These regulations are required by the Otay SRP and will keep the proposed Project from exceeding the significance threshold because the regulations ensure future construction is consistent with the applicable guidelines and the development is consistent with the character of the proposed Project as well as the existing built portions of Otay Ranch. The requirements from the Development Regulations have been included in the photo simulations described below and thus the visual impacts are analyzed as part of this document.

The proposed Project also includes a Village Design Plan that provides guidelines for theme, style, color, architecture, and building materials. Similar to the Development Regulations, the Village Design Plan is required by the Otay SRP and implementation of the guidelines will keep the proposed Project from exceeding the significance threshold because the guidelines ensure that future construction is consistent with the visual character of the existing portion of Otay Ranch. Further, buffer techniques would be implemented by the project to address transitions between villages and incompatible uses to minimize visual impacts.

Included in the Village Design Plan are specifications for light fixtures and street lights within the Project site and along Otay Lakes Road. The Village Design Plan requires light fixtures to be fully shielded in compliance with Sections 6322, 6324, and 6236 of the County Zoning Ordinance and the San Diego County Public Road Standards, which would minimize light and glare impacts to nearby neighborhoods and communities. Overhead and night lighting would be installed in

accordance with the County's Dark Sky Ordinance. Street fixtures would utilize low glare bulbs (i.e. amber light) and be placed, only as necessary, near key intersections for security purposes in accordance with county policy. Furthermore, the nearest community to the proposed Project is approximately 3,000 feet to the west of the Project site. At this distance and using shielded street lights, there would not be a significant impact due to light and glare. The proposed Project's consistency with the Otay SRP, Specific Plan Development Regulations, and Village Design Plan results in *less than significant impacts* to the existing visual character and quality of the Otay Ranch community, including impacts associated with light and glare.

2.1.2.2 Damage to Visual Resources

Guideline for the Determination of Significance

A significant aesthetics and visual quality impact would occur if it does the following:

- Result in the removal or substantial adverse change of one or more features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or localized area, including but not limited to landmarks (designated), historic resources, trees, and rock outcroppings.

Rationale for Selection of Guideline

The significance guideline for avoiding potential damage to visual resources is intended to preserve visual features that represent or characterize a community or neighborhood. Loss or damage to one or more of these particular resources can change the visual character and may also degrade the visual quality. The effect of the change is determined by the viewer response to the changes.

Analysis

While the existing Project site does not include any designated landmarks, historic resources or trees, the site does contain a significant rock outcropping and ridgelines. The Resort component of the Project is proposed just east of, and above the rock outcropping shown in **Figure 2.1-0**; however, the project has been designed to preserve the rock outcropping and retain views of the rocky canyon this rock outcropping creates. The Project also proposes development along the lower ridgelines in the southern and western portion of the Project site; however, the higher elevation ridgelines are proposed to be dedicated to the Otay Ranch Preserve. As a result, the Project would not result in structures being silhouetted against the sky.

As discussed above, seven points of view were used to develop the visual simulations. These points of view were deemed to best represent views of the Project site from the developed areas and parklands to the west and from Otay Lakes Road. These points of view are described in Section 2.1.1 and are shown in **Figures 2.1-1a through 2.1-8a**.

As shown in these figures and the simulations from each of the points of view, development of the proposed Project would result in the conversion of undeveloped land to residential units, resort

facilities, school facilities, parks, and roads, and would include graded slopes, retaining walls, and fire/noise walls. This would substantially change the visual character and quality of the Project site, moving from an undeveloped natural setting to urban development. This change would result in a *significant adverse impact* to visual resources (**Impact AE-1**).

Preliminary Grading Plans have been prepared for the proposed Project and will be relied upon for design measures. For example, the Preliminary Grading Plans show slopes not exceeding a 2:1 ratio. All grading plans submitted will be prepared by a certified engineer and evaluated by the County of San Diego PDS and Public Works of the appropriate jurisdiction. Development would be constructed in accordance with those plans as well as the grading policies in the San Diego County Grading Ordinance.

2.1.2.3 Scenic Vistas

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant aesthetics impact would occur if it does the following:

- 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.*

Rationale for Selection of Guideline

The significance guideline for avoiding impacts to scenic vistas is directed at potentially substantial adverse effects that would be viewed from roadways or recreational areas. Public vantage points, such as roads and trails, allow scenic views to be seen by many people. Scenic views are so important to people that highways and viewpoints are sometimes designated as scenic by the County for County routes or Caltrans for state routes. Adverse changes to these resources could be significant, depending on the degree and nature of the change, particularly if the view is obstructed.

Analysis

Scenic Vistas from Recreational Areas

The Project's location in the Jamul Mountain foothills provides scenic vistas from areas surrounding the Project site.

Figures 2.1-1a and 2.1-2a depict views of these scenic vistas without the proposed Project; **Figures 2.1-1b and 2.1-2b** depict views of these scenic vistas with the proposed Project. The following describes the altered views from these two recreational viewpoints as a result of implementation of the proposed Project.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-1b**, the proposed Project would result in changes to views from west of the Project site. Residential buildings and graded landscaped slopes would be visible in views looking east toward the Project site. This would include views from Mountain Hawk Park, a recreation area located in Chula Vista.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-2b**, the proposed Project would result in changes to views seen by recreational users of Otay Lakes Reservoir and trail users within the Otay Ranch Preserve and Otay Valley Regional Park, south of the Project site. Residential buildings and graded landscaped slopes would be visible in the foreground and a portion of the resort buildings would be visible in the background of views looking north toward the Project site.

Development of the proposed Project would result in the permanent alteration of views to scenic resources, changing from an undeveloped natural state to urban development. The proposed Project would result in graded slopes, buildings, retaining walls, noise walls, and landscaping. These changes would result in a *significant impact* to scenic vistas from recreational areas (**Impact AE-2**).

Scenic Routes

As stated above, Otay Lakes Road is a County Designated Scenic Highway in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan. **Figures 2.1-3a through 2.1-8a** depict views of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road without the proposed Project; **Figures 2.1-3b through 2.1-8b** depict views from Otay Lakes Road with the proposed Project.

As shown in **Figures 2.1-3b through 2.1-8b**, the proposed Project would result in the alteration of the existing landform to accommodate proposed Project development. This development would result in substantial changes to views from Otay Lakes Road to the Project site, changing from an undeveloped natural setting to urban development. These changes would result in a *significant adverse impact* to views from a scenic route (**Impact AE-3**).

2.1.2.4 Consistency with Adopted Goals, Policies, and Ordinances

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant aesthetics impact would occur if it does the following:

- Not comply with applicable goals, policies, or requirements of an applicable County Community Plan, Subregional Plan, or Historic District Zoning.

Rationale for Selection of Guideline

The significance guideline for consistency with adopted goals, policies, and ordinances has been developed to maintain the visual character and quality of communities and neighborhoods in the County as currently regulated by the County General Plan or zoning. Projects that substantially

deviate from County regulations may result in significant adverse effects, depending on the degree and nature of the variation.

Analysis

As described above in Section 2.1.1, Table 2.1-1 below summarizes the applicable General Plan goals and policies related to visual resources and analyzes the proposed Project's consistency as required by the threshold.

Table 2.1-1
Summary of Visual Resources Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies

GOAL COS-11 Preservation of Scenic Resources. Preservation of scenic resources, including vistas of important natural and unique features, where visual impacts of development are minimized.	
Policies	
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.	<p>Otay Lakes Road is a County-designated Scenic Highway that runs adjacent to Lower Otay Reservoir. To protect this scenic resource, the project includes design criteria regulating landscaping, building heights, and setbacks of buildings. Otay Lakes Road is proposed to be maintained in its current alignment adjacent to Lower Otay Reservoir. Development adjacent to the road, on the east and north sides, is buffered by landscaped slopes. Where the project is adjacent to undeveloped open space areas, views to the Jamul Mountains are provided through wildlife corridors.</p> <p>In addition, the size of the resort complex has been reduced from 800 rooms to 200 rooms, while maintaining the rock canyon and outcropping in the eastern portion of the project site. <u>This would reduce disturbance to topography and minimize grading activities at the project site.</u></p>
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative site planning; • Integration of natural features into the project; • Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape; • Minimal disturbance of topography; • Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character; • Creation of contiguous open space networks. 	<p>The project includes design criteria regulating landscaping, building heights, and setbacks of buildings. The Resort Village Development Regulations and Zoning requires site plan review prior to building permit issuance.</p> <p>Otay Lakes Road is proposed to be maintained in its current alignment adjacent to Lower Otay Reservoir. Development adjacent to the road, on the east and north sides, is buffered by landscaped slopes. Where the project is adjacent to undeveloped open space areas, views to the Jamul Mountains are provided through wildlife corridors.</p> <p>In addition, the size of the resort complex has been reduced from 800 rooms to 200 rooms, while maintaining the rock canyon and outcropping in the eastern portion of the project site. <u>This would reduce disturbance to topography and minimize grading activities at the project site.</u></p>

Table 2.1-1
Summary of Visual Resources Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies

GOAL COS-12 Preservation of Ridgelines and Hillsides. Ridgelines and steep hillsides that are preserved for their character and scenic value.	
Policies	
COS-12.1 Hillside and Ridgeline Development Density. Protect undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designations on these areas.	The proposed Project maintains the semi-rural designation. Most of the proposed Project is clustered on the lower mesa tops.
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.	The proposed Project locates the majority of the development on the lower mesa tops and avoids sighting structures on ridges.
Dark Skies. Preserve dark skies that contribute to rural character and are necessary for the local observatories.	
Policies	
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.	The Resort Village Design Plan requires all lighting to be shielded downward such that no light is transmitted across a property line. The Preserve Edge Plan further restricts lighting adjacent to the Preserve to reduce indirect impacts.
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.	The proposed Project would comply with the County's Astronomical Dark Skies ordinance.

Approval of the proposed Project and the concurrent amendments to the County General Plan and Otay SRP discussed above would establish consistency between the Specific Plan, the County General Plan, and the Otay SRP, and there would be ***no impact*** to applicable goals, policies, or requirements of the Otay SRP.

In addition to the applicable subregional plan, the proposed Project is also subject to the following mitigation measures from the Otay Ranch PEIR Landform Alteration/Aesthetics section. A discussion of how the proposed Project is consistent with each is provided below.

- a. *Buildings shall be visually compatible, in terms of height, scale, and bulk, and shall be set back from the edge of the mesa and composed of low-rise structures, no more than three stories in height with an occasional four-story building ~~or iconic architectural element~~ within the Resort and Mixed-Use land use designations approved pursuant to a Site Plan.*

The Project complies with this requirement through the provisions contained in the Resort Village Specific Plan, Development Regulations, Village Design Plan and Preserve Edge Plan. Specifically, the Development Regulations limit building heights of single family and multi-family homes and the Resort complex. The height limit for single family homes is 35 feet. Multi-family homes are limited to 45 feet. The resort land use designation is limited to 45 feet with architecture treatments up to 75 feet permitted through the Site Plan review process.

- b. Contour grading shall be used to transition graded slopes into the natural topography of surrounding hillsides.*

The Village Design Plan establishes guidelines for sensitive grading techniques where the project transitions from development to natural topography, including variable slope and contour grading.

- c. Manufactured slopes shall be revegetated upon completion of grading activities.*

The Preserve Edge Plan establishes a plant palette and hydroseed mix for all manufactured slopes to be revegetated. Additionally, the Village Design Plan includes a similar plant palette for interior manufactured slopes.

- d. Color schemes shall be limited to natural colors that blend with the existing environment and surrounding hillsides. Buildings shall maximize the use of nonreflective/nonglare surfaces.*

The Village Design Plan includes a color palette which requires natural colors and limits where reflective surfaces may be permitted.

- e. Roadways shall be designed to follow the natural contours of hillsides and minimize visibility of road cuts and manufactured slopes.*

With the conversion of the project from a project comprised mostly of multi-family homes to one comprised mostly of single-family homes, streets are able to better conform to the existing contours of hillsides and the visibility of road cuts and manufactured slopes are reduced because individual homes sites can pick up elevation changes much more sensitively than the larger multi-family building pads previously planned for the Project site.

- f. Excessive use of manufactured slopes shall not be permitted.*

With the conversion of the project from a project comprised mostly of multi-family homes to one comprised mostly of single-family homes, manufactured slopes are greatly reduced because individual home sites can pick up elevation changes much more sensitively than the larger multi-family building pads previously planned for the Project site.

- g. Natural buffering shall be provided between development and significant landforms.*

The Project includes a transition area between development and Preserve open space areas. This Preserve Edge is managed through implementation of the Preserve Edge Plan and the requirements of the Fire Protection Plan Fuel Modification Zones.

- h. Eighty-three percent of the steep slopes (greater than 25 percent) shall be preserved in Otay Ranch.*

The Phase 2 RMP estimates that Village 13, including the Birch Estate Parcel, would impact 184 acres of steep slopes. The proposed Project results in impacts to 166.2 acres of steep slopes, which is consistent with the Phase 2 RMP.

- i. View corridors shall be integrated at the terminus or periodically along the length of streets paralleling or intersecting undeveloped open space.*

View corridors are integrated along the length of streets paralleling undeveloped open space. Specifically, the entire length of Otay Lakes Road provides for views over the ~~lake~~ reservoir. Internal to the Project, Strada Piazza provides two major view corridors as it crosses open space areas. Strada Ravena in the east and Guida Sicilia in the west are north/south oriented collectors which parallel undeveloped open space.

- j. Walls, including acoustical barriers, shall be integrated into the architectural theme and scale of the villages.*

The Village Design Plan sets guidelines for all walls, including acoustical barriers, to ensure they are integrated into the overall architectural theme and scale of the village.

- k. Landscape themes shall be used to define village character and blend with adjacent existing development.*

The Village Design Plan establishes 8 landscape zones throughout the Project site, which integrate the overall design theme while respecting the different character of each zone.

- l. Naturalizing and native plantings shall be integrated into revegetation plans for manufactured slopes adjacent to open space areas.*

The Preserve Edge Plan includes a plant palette which has been reviewed by a biologist for consistency with Preserve adjacency requirements.

- m. Scale and architectural treatments (i.e., rooflines, building materials) of all residential and non-residential village buildings shall be diverse and yet compatible.*

The Project complies with this requirement through the provisions contained in the Resort Village Specific Plan, Development Regulations, and Village Design Plan, and implementation of the Specific Plan “Check List.”

- n. Signage shall be controlled and designed to fit into the pedestrian environment.*

The Resort Village Development Regulations establish requirements for size and scale of signs.

- o. Architectural colors for development adjacent to open space areas shall incorporate natural tones and shades.*

The Village Design Plan includes a color palette which requires natural colors.

2.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Consistent with the analysis in the PEIR, implementation of the proposed Project would contribute to cumulative impacts to aesthetic resources within Otay Ranch and southeastern San Diego County. The PEIR generally identified the cumulative study area as the area east of I-805, South of SR-54, south and west of SR-94 and north of SR-905. Since the approval of the PEIR, portions of the cumulative study area, including portions of the Proctor Valley Parcel and San Ysidro Mountain Parcel in Otay Ranch, have been acquired by conservation agencies for open space. The cumulative study area for impacts to aesthetics and visual resources is limited to the viewshed visible from the viewpoints identified in **Figure 2.1-0**.

Figures 2.1-1b through 2.1-8b illustrate the Project-level changes that would occur in relation to views of scenic vistas and from scenic roadways. These figures also illustrate the changes that would occur to the visual character of the area as a result of the proposed Project. Additionally, acquisition of Village 15, portions of Village 14, and Planning Area 16 has led to changes to the cumulative visual setting since certification of the PEIR. The changes will reduce the level of cumulative development in this area. However, these changes are not of a degree that would change the PEIR's conclusion of a significant and unavoidable impact to aesthetic resources in the Project area.

The Final EIR (FEIR) for the County General Plan Update (County of San Diego 2011) identified potentially significant impacts to aesthetics related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character or quality, and light or glare. Mitigation measures were included in the FEIR that would reduce cumulative impacts to scenic vistas and scenic resources to less than significant. The FEIR also determined that General Plan Update policies and mitigation measures would reduce cumulative impacts to visual character or quality, but not to below a level of significance. Consistent with the findings of the FEIR, the proposed Project would contribute to a ***cumulatively significant impact*** related to visual character or quality (**Impact AE-4**). With regard to impacts to light and glare, the analysis provided in Section 2.1.2.1, above, states that the proposed Project's Village Design Plan includes specifications for light fixtures and street lights within the Project site and along Otay Lakes Road. The Village Design Plan light fixtures are required to be fully shielded in compliance with the County Zoning Ordinance and the San Diego County Public Road Standards, which would minimize light and glare impacts to nearby neighborhoods and communities and would result in a ***less than significant impact*** due to light and glare.

2.1.4 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

The following impacts were identified in the analysis of the Project's aesthetic impacts:

<u>Impact Number</u>	<u>Description of Project's Effect</u>	<u>Significance of Impact</u>
AE-1	Substantial adverse change in the visual character and visual quality of the Project site caused by building an urban development in an undeveloped natural setting	Potentially significant direct impact
AE-2	Permanent alteration to views of scenic resources caused by graded hills, buildings, and landscaping	Potentially significant direct impact
AE-3	Permanent alteration to views of the Project site from Otay Lakes Road—a designated scenic route	Potentially significant direct impact
AE-4	Contribution to cumulative aesthetic resources impacts within Otay Ranch and southeastern San Diego County, including impacts to views from scenic vistas and scenic highways and impacts to the visual character of the area	Potentially significant, cumulative impact

2.1.5 Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the significant visual character or quality impacts of the proposed Project (AE-1 through AE-4):

- M-AE-1** All final grading plans, landscape plans, and improvement plans for the proposed Project shall be evaluated for Project compliance with the aesthetic design mitigation measures of this EIR, the Resort Village Specific Plan (Development Regulations), the Resort Village Design Plan, and the Resort Village Preserve Edge Plan. Final grading plans will conform with be created based on the preliminary grading plans and submitted by a certified engineer.
- M-AE-2** Pursuant to Chapter IV, Implementation, of the Otay Ranch Resort Village Specific Plan, Site Plans (“D” Designator) shall be evaluated for Project compliance with the Resort Village Design Plan, the Resort Village Preserve Edge Plan, and the provisions of the Specific Plan related to colors, materials, and other architectural characteristics of adjacent buildings, building massing, siting of buildings and structures, including setbacks from tops of slopes, architectural colors adjacent to open space, height, use of non-reflective/non-glare surfaces, and other aesthetic design measures of this EIR.

Mitigation measures **M-AE-1** and **M-AE-2** require that grading, landscape improvements, and plot plans (Site Plans), and Major Use Permits for the proposed Project be prepared in accordance with the approved Otay Ranch Resort Village Specific Plan, Resort Village Design Plan, Resort Village Preserve Edge Plan, and Tentative Maps. The Resort Village Specific Plan includes a “Check List” (see Table 2.1-2) that identifies the requirements of the D-Designator to demonstrate compliance with these documents and fulfillment of Mitigation Measures **M-AE-1** and **M-AE-2**.

As analyzed above and consistent with the PEIR, mitigation included for the proposed Project would reduce cumulative visual impacts by requiring that design guidelines from the Otay SRP, the Otay Ranch Resort Village Specific Plan, and the Village Design Plan be implemented during the processing of individual grading, landscaping, and building permits to require that the proposed Project implement measures to reduce the aesthetic impact of the development. However, adherence to the mitigation measures would not fully mitigate Project-related impacts. No mitigation exists that would avoid or reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

~~Even with implementation of Mitigation Measures **M-AE-1** and **M-AE-2**, impacts to visual resources would remain significant, including the Project’s contribution to cumulative impacts to aesthetic resources and views from scenic vistas and scenic highways within Otay Ranch and to the visual character of southeastern San Diego County. No other feasible mitigation measures exist that would avoid or further reduce this significant impact. **Therefore, impacts to aesthetics and visual resources remain significant and unmitigable.**~~

2.1.6 Conclusion

As stated above, impacts due to light and glare resulting from the proposed Project would be less than significant because standard street and yard lighting and lights from windows, parks, and parking areas would be consistent with existing lighting conditions within Otay Ranch and Eastlake to the west. Even with implementation of Mitigation Measures M-AE-1 and M-AE-2, impacts to visual resources would remain significant, including the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts to aesthetic resources and views from scenic vistas and scenic highways within Otay Ranch and to the visual character of southeastern San Diego County. No other feasible mitigation measures exist that would avoid or further reduce this significant impact. Therefore, impacts to aesthetics and visual resources remain significant and unmitigable.

**Table 2.1-2
Resort Village Site Plan Checklist**

County Zoning Box (Specific Plan Page 99, Exhibit 47; Page 100)

- Use Regulation- S-88: Specific Plan Area
- Animal Designation –
- Density – 1,881DU
- Minimum Lot Size – 4,000 SF
- Building Type – L
- Height – H (35', 3 stories)
- Setback – V-designator, See Table 9 (Page 102)
- Open Space – M (600' sq. ft. private open space and 0 sq. ft. group open space)

Permitted Uses (Specific Plan Page 101, Table 8)

- Residential District
 - Does the use comply with those uses listed in Table 8 as permitted or has the appropriate permit been applied for (Site Plan, Major Use, etc.)?
- Non-Residential Districts
 - Does the use comply with those listed on pages 108 (Multiple Use District), 110 (Resort District) and/or 111 (Open Space District) as permitted or has the appropriate permit been applied for (Site Plan, Major Use, etc.)?

Setbacks (Specific Plan Page 102, Table 9)

- Do the setbacks meet the minimum setbacks established in Table 9 of the Resort Village Specific Plan Development Regulations?

Accessory Uses (see Pages 104-105 Accessory Use Table)

- Second Dwelling Units
 - Permitted subject to requirements listed on Page 106 of the Resort Village Specific Plan Development Regulations

Temporary Uses

- Permitted subject to Zoning Ordinance Section 6100 *et seq.*

Walls and Fences

- Side and Rear Yard – permitted up to 8’ in height (per Otay Ranch Resort Village Noise Impact Report requirements)
- Front Yard – permitted up to 3.5’ in height

Landscaping

- Required
- Comply with Resort Village Plant Palette from Water Conservation Plan (Appendix VI)

Signage (Specific Plan 112 – 115)

- On-site Signs
 - Subdivision Signs
 - Temporary Construction Signs
 - Real Estate Signs for Residential Sale
- Off-site Signs

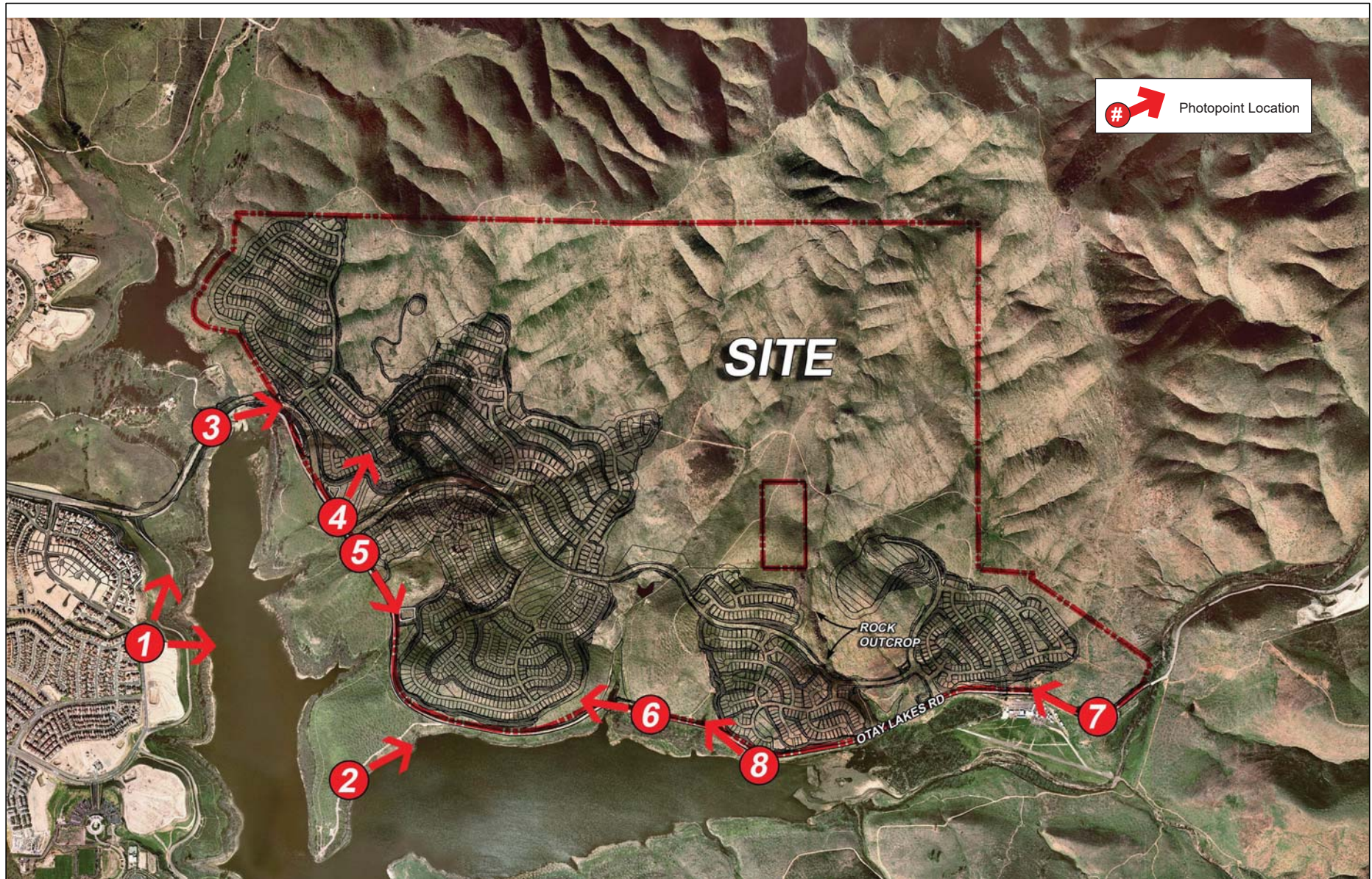
Site Plan Requirements

- Legal description, legend, scale, north arrow, vicinity map, and identification of designer/preparer.
- The boundary lines of subject property fully dimensioned together with the name and dimensions of adjoining streets.
- Existing topography and proposed grading plan showing slope; retaining walls; pad elevations; and percent of slope on streets, driveways, and other graded areas.
- Existing and proposed streets, utilities, and easements.
- Proposed location, height, and dimensions of buildings, including colors and materials on all elevations. The floor area, number of stories, number of units, and bedrooms shall be identified.
 - Colors to match Village Design Plan, page 72

- Materials to match Village Design Plan, page 72
- Landscape concepts including the proposed method of irrigation.
- Pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress, with driveway locations and dimensions.
- Walls and/or fences (including height).
 - Wall type to match Village Design Plan, pages 56–58
- Location, height, and size of signs proposed on the property.
- Lighting, including the location, type, and hooding devices to shield adjoining properties.
 - Lighting to match Village Design Plan, pages 59-62

Impacts to scenic vistas, scenic highways, and visual character as a result of the proposed Project are significant. These impacts, described above, will remain significant after implementation of the mitigation measures listed above. There are no mitigation measures available that would avoid this significant impact. Additionally, cumulative impacts to scenic vistas, scenic highways, and visual character as a result of the proposed Project are also significant. There are no mitigation measures available that would avoid this cumulatively significant impact.

Impacts related to aesthetics resulting from implementation of the proposed Project would remain significant and unmitigable. This conclusion is consistent with the Otay Ranch PEIR and no substantial change in the proposed Project has been made, nor are additional mitigation measures available that would avoid the aesthetic impact from conversion to urban use of an undeveloped natural site located in a scenic area.



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

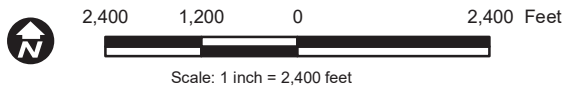


Figure 2.1-0
Photo Locations Map



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-1A
Point of View 1



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-1B
Simulation From Point of View 1



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-2A
Point of View 2



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-2B
Simulation From Point of View 2



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-3A
Point of View 3



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-3B
Simulation From Point of View 3



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-4A
Point of View 4



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-4B
Simulation From Point of View 4



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-5A
Point of View 5



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-5B
Simulation From Point of View 5



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-6A
Point of View 6



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-6B
Simulation From Point of View 6



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-7A
Point of View 7



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-7B
Simulation From Point of View 7



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-8A
Point of View 8



SOURCE: Hunsaker & Associates 2014

Figure 2.1-8B
Simulation From Point of View 8