2.1. Aesthetics and Visual Resources

This section addresses potential aesthetics and visual resources impacts that may result from construction and/or operation of the Safari Highlands Ranch (SHR) project. The following discussion addresses the existing aesthetics and visual resources of the affected environment, evaluates the project's consistency with applicable goals and policies, identifies and analyzes environmental impacts, and recommends measures to reduce or avoid adverse impacts anticipated from implementation of the project, as applicable.

The analysis in this section is partially based on the Aesthetics Technical Report prepared by Geo/Graphics, Inc. (Geo/Graphics 2017) and peer reviewed by Michael Baker International. The report is included in its entirety in **Appendix 2.1**.

The table below summarizes the aesthetics and visual resources impacts detailed in **Section 2.1.4**.

Summary of Aesthetics and Visual Resources Impacts

Threshold Number	Issue	Determination	Mitigation Measures	Impact After Mitigation
1	Scenic Vistas	Less than Significant Impact	None required	Less than Significant Impact
2	Scenic Resources	Less than Significant Impact	None required	Less than Significant Impact
3	Visual Character or Quality	Less than Significant Impact	None required	Less than Significant Impact
4	Light or Glare	Less than Significant Impact	None required	Less than Significant Impact

2.1.1. Existing Conditions

Regional Setting

The SHR project site is presently undeveloped and lies along the foothills that form a part of the eastern boundary of the San Pasqual Valley. The valley has an east/west orientation and is surrounded by rugged terrain and rolling hills that rise to approximately 4,200 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The surrounding hillsides and ridgelines are prominent in views from the valley floor and are considered a key element contributing to the region's visual character. **Figure 2.1-1**, shows the location of such resources within the City of Escondido limits and the General Plan boundary.

In the region surrounding the project site, several large natural expanses of open space have been preserved and buffer Escondido from surrounding communities (see also **Figure 2.11-1**). The Daley Ranch Conservation Bank is located in the northeastern portion of the City and encompasses 3,058 acres of open space. The Dixon Lake Recreation Area lies within the Daley Ranch Conservation Bank and is a regional and community park. Kit Carson Park is an approximately 200-acre regional and community park of historical significance located in eastern Escondido and offers recreational amenities, natural habitat, and visual features.

Additionally, the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park serves as an 80,000-acre regional park extending approximately 55 miles from just east of Volcan Mountain in

eastern San Diego County to the Pacific Ocean at the City of Del Mar. Lake Wohlford and the Lake Wohlford Reservoir, to the east of Escondido, consist of over 1,600 acres of scenic resources including ridgelines, rock outcroppings, and natural habitats such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coast live oak woodland, and riparian vegetation.

Project Setting

Topographical elements on-site consist of a rolling hills, rock outcroppings, and steep topography dissected by drainage courses that drain primarily to the southwest. On-site elevations range from approximately 400 to 1,800 feet amsl. Similar to other surrounding lands in the project vicinity, large rock outcroppings are scattered throughout and contribute to the overall character of the site. Please refer to **Figures 2-2A** and **2-2B, Existing Site Photos**, in **Chapter 2.0, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis**, for representative photos of the project site.

Habitat on-site and on adjacent lands consists of the following vegetation communities: agriculture, cactus scrub, rock outcroppings/bushy spikemoss mats, non-native grassland, Diegan coastal sage scrub, southern mixed chaparral, deer weed scrub, western ragweed meadow, oak woodland, oak riparian woodland, mulefat scrub, disturbed habitat, and developed lands.

A series of dirt roadways and trails are present on-site. These elements traverse the site, providing access within the site and connection to several off-site roads and/or trails.

The site is bordered by developed lands to the west and south. Largely undeveloped lands border the site to the east. To the north and east are scattered rural residential uses and estate homes on larger lots (see **Figure 2-1**). The Rancho San Pasqual neighborhood, with 580 residential lots, and the Eagle Crest Golf Club are located to the northwest. The Rancho Vistamonte neighborhood, with 80 residential lots, is located adjacent to the southwest. The 1,800-acre San Diego Zoo Safari Park is located to the south and is separated from the project site by undeveloped and sparsely developed lands. Additionally, San Pasqual Union School is located approximately 0.5 mile to the west of the site, along Rockwood Road.

2.1.2. Regulatory Framework

Federal

There are no federal regulations that apply to the project with regard to aesthetic resources.

State

California Scenic Highway Program

State scenic highways are those highways that are either officially designated as state scenic highways by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or are eligible for such designation. The scenic designation is based on the amount of natural landscape visible by motorists, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the motorist's enjoyment of the view.

There are no officially designated or eligible state scenic highways in the immediate project area. The closest state scenic highway is a portion of State Route (SR) 125 between Interstate 8 (I-8) and SR 94, approximately 23 miles to the south of the project site. Additionally, SR 78 is designated as a state scenic highway through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, approximately 29 miles east of the site (Caltrans 2011). The project site is not located within the viewshed of any designated state scenic highway.

The City's General Plan EIR identifies several scenic roadways in the General Plan planning area, including I-15 through the entire planning area; the segments of Del Dios Highway to Via Rancho Parkway, Via Rancho Parkway to Bear Valley Parkway, Bear Valley Parkway to Valley Parkway, Valley Parkway to Lake Wohlford Road, and Lake Wohlford Road to the General Plan planning area boundary that extend from the southwest corner of the planning area to the northeast corner; South Citrus Avenue from Bear Valley Road to San Pasqual Valley Road; San Pasqual Valley Road/SR 78 from Bear Valley Parkway to the eastern boundary of the General Plan planning area; and San Pasqual Road from Bear Valley Parkway to San Pasqual Valley Road (Escondido 2012b).

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Environmental legislation in California is largely focused upon CEQA and its implementing guidelines. CEQA generally requires projects with the potential to adversely affect (or impact) the environment r impacts) to undergo review. Such environmental impacts, if identified, are typically mitigated as part of the review process, in conformance with applicable environmental laws and regulations.

Local

City of Escondido General Plan

Various chapters of the Escondido General Plan address the city's aesthetics and visual resources. The following goals and policies are pertinent to the SHR project:

I. Vision & Purpose

Land Use Goals

Land Use Goal 12

Open space lands that provide an attractive environmental setting for Escondido and visual relief from development, protect the viability of natural resources and habitat, offer recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and protect the public from the risks of natural hazards.

Resource Conservation Goals

Resource Conservation Goal 3

Preservation of significant visual resources such as ridgelines, hillsides, and viewsheds that serve as a scenic amenity and contribute to the quality of life for residents.

II. Land Use and Community Form Element

Community Character

Community Character Goal 1

A community composed of distinct residential neighborhoods, business districts, and employment centers, whose urban form reflects the natural environmental setting.

Community Character Policy 1.1

New development should serve to reinforce the City's present development pattern of higher-intensity development within the downtown area and lower-intensity development in outlying areas. As a guide toward accomplishing this objective, new development projects shall be at an appropriate density or clustered intensity based upon their compatibility with the majority of the existing surrounding land uses. This policy shall limit density transfers from constrained portions of a property as defined in the land use and open space goals.

Community Character Policy 1.3

Focus development into areas where land use changes achieve the community's long-term goals. Facilitate development that is consistent with the build out vision for each area through incentive programs and efficient administrative and discretionary approval processes for plot plans, Planned Developments, Area Plans, Specific Plans, and Zoning Overlays.

Community Character Policy 1.10

Reduce light pollution and preserve views of the night sky through the design and sighting of light fixtures to minimize light spill-over onto adjacent properties.

Community Character Policy 1.11

Encourage new development to minimize the creation of incompatible glare through development design features (e.g., minimizing use of certain types of exterior building materials).

Residential Development

Residential Development Goal 3

Neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing types, densities, and design, and a mix of uses and services that support resident needs.

Residential Development Policy 3.10

Encourage proportionate numbers of two-story dwelling units within single-family detached subdivisions to promote variety and avoid monotonous streetscapes and visual impacts.

Valley View SPA #4

SPA 4 Guiding Principles

The SPA envisions an upscale, large lot single-family residential community, organized around a comprehensively planned open space system….The aesthetic and rural character of the area

will be maintained in accordance with strict site planning, architectural, and landscaping standards.

VII. Resource Conservation Element

J3. Visual Resources

Visual Resources Goal 3

Preservation of significant visual resources such as ridgelines, hillsides, and view sheds that serve as a scenic amenity and contribute to the quality of life for residents.

Visual Resources Policy 3.1

Preserve significant visual resources that include unique landforms (e.g., skyline ridges, intermediate ridges, hilltops, and rock outcroppings), creeks, lakes, and open space areas in a natural state, to the extent possible.

Visual Resources Policy 3.2

Require new development to avoid obstructing views of, and to minimize impacts to, significant visual resources through the following: creative site planning; integration of natural features into the project; appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape; clustering of development to preserve open space vistas and natural features; minimal disturbance of topography; and creation of contiguous open space networks.

Visual Resources Policy 3.3

Maintain density and development standards designed to protect significant visual resources such as existing terrain, steep slopes, floodways, habitat areas, and ridgelines, and to minimize visual impacts of grading and structures.

Visual Resources Policy 3.4

Prohibit development on skyline ridges and seek to obtain scenic easement dedications for these areas from property owners in conjunction with development on other suitable locations of the property. Require property owners of such scenic easements to retain, maintain, preserve, and protect the public view of these areas in their natural state, without obstruction by structures, and prohibit clearing of brush or planting of vegetation except as necessary to reduce fire hazards.

Visual Resources Policy 3.5

Regulate development on intermediate ridges, hilltops, and hillsides to preserve the natural appearance and landform, and minimize impacts on terrain with a slope greater than 15 percent subject to the following requirements:

1. Intermediate Ridges and Hilltops
    a) Prepare landscaping plans that minimize the visual impact of the development from adjoining properties and the valley floor;

b) Concentrate development in subordinate or hidden locations, which shall not project above the natural landform;

c) Prepare grading plans that minimize disruption of the natural landform and vegetation; and

d) Allow development on intermediate ridges only in association with the preservation of significant open space, habitat, cultural resources or agricultural uses within the same project.

2. Slopes Greater than 15 Percent

a) Locate development to avoid potentially hazardous areas and environmentally sensitive areas, as well as to avoid dislocation of any unusual rock formations or any other unique or unusual geographic features.

b) Design development to minimize grading requirements by incorporating terracing, padding, and cut-and-fill grading that conforms to the natural contours of the site and protects the visual continuity of the hillsides.

c) Cluster the overall development pattern in accordance with General Plan provisions to preserve the maximum amount of open spaces and natural setting and to reduce grading, erosion, and runoff potential.

d) Landscape the site with existing trees and other natural vegetation, as much as possible, to stabilize slopes, reduce erosion, and enhance the visual appearance of the development.

e) Minimize the visual impact of development on adjoining residential areas to the extent feasible.

City of Escondido Zoning Code

The City of Escondido Zoning Code (Chapter 33 of the Escondido Municipal Code) establishes regulatory standards relevant to aesthetic character and resources, as discussed below.

Article 5, Open Space Development Standards

The Open Space Development Standards establish standards for development of lands identified as having open space value to the community and having one or more of the following characteristics: (1) slopes greater than 15 percent; (2) vegetation conservation areas; or (3) natural drainage courses not otherwise defined as floodways. Development proposed on such lands is subject to the following development standards:

a) Natural features such as rock outcroppings, creeks and other natural drainage courses, and wooded areas shall be protected and preserved.

b) Unless cleared for agricultural purposes, natural vegetation shall remain undisturbed except as necessary to construct improvements and to eliminate hazardous conditions, unless replanted with native or fire-retardant materials including groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

c) Grading shall not alter the natural contours of the terrain except as necessary for building sites or to correct unsafe conditions. The locations of buildings and roads shall be planned to follow and conform to existing contours.

d) Lot coverage shall not exceed 20 percent on land consisting of moderate slopes (16 to 30 percent) or 10 percent on land consisting of steep slopes (31 percent or greater). Lot coverage shall include all buildings which extend more than three feet above the surface of the ground level.

e) No alteration of natural features identified for preservation and protection shall be permitted prior to approval of a development permit.

Article 35, Outdoor Lighting

The City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (Article 35) is intended to reduce unnecessary glare for public benefit and for operations at the Palomar Observatory. The ordinance identifies the following requirements for outdoor lighting:

a) Use outdoor light fixtures with good optical control to distribute the light in the most effective and efficient manner;

b) Use the minimum amount of light to meet the lighting criteria;

c) Use shielded outdoor light fixtures;

d) Use low-pressure sodium outdoor light fixtures where required;

e) Use automatic timing devices to energize outdoor light fixtures only when necessary; and

f) Turn off certain outdoor fixtures between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and sunrise.

Article 40, Historical Resources

Article 40 is intended to enhance the Escondido's visual character by encouraging protection of unique and established architectural traditions. The City requires a Certificate of Appropriateness for any exterior additions to or alterations of historical resources to preserve the architectural character. Article 40 also requires that owners or lessees of a historical property maintain historical properties in good condition.

Article 55, Grading and Erosion Control

Article 55 is intended to guide grading activities to ensure protection of existing natural and topographic character, visual integrity of hillsides and ridgelines, sensitive species, unique geologic/geographic features, and public health, safety, and welfare. Section 33-1066 identifies design criteria for grading to ensure that the character of critical landforms and natural resources are maintained. Additionally, Sections 33-1067.A–F provide design criteria for the protection of hillsides with slopes over 15 percent, skyline ridges, and intermediate ridges. The City uses such criteria in the discretionary approval process to evaluate proposed grading designs for development projects.

Article 55 discourages grading in steep slope areas that are visible from surrounding (off-site) vantage points, fill slopes that restrict views from off-site properties, and grading designs that

have the potential to extend into or otherwise disrupt properties in the vicinity. Other design measures are included to address controlling slope height and slope ratios to reduce potential effects on views from adjacent properties and/or other public vantage points, and to ensure that manufactured slopes reflect natural topography to the extent feasible to avoid a substantial change in the existing visual setting.

The article identifies the following as valuable resources that should be protected from effects of development: undisturbed steep slopes (over 35 percent); riparian areas, mitigation areas, and areas with sensitive vegetation or habitat; mature trees; unusual rock outcroppings; other unique or unusual geographic features; and significant cultural or historical features. Such resources can be protected through such measures as permanent open space easements or similar means that will ensure preservation.

Tree Protection

Section 33-1052 of Article 55 defines a protected tree as any oak that has a 10-inch or greater diameter at breast height (DBH), or any other species or individual specimen listed on the local historic register, or determined to substantially contribute to the historic character of a property or structure listed on the local historic register, pursuant to Article 40 of the Escondido Zoning Code.

Section 33-1068 of the Zoning Code is intended to safeguard life, limb, property, and the public welfare by regulating grading, clearing, and removal of mature trees on private property, as well as to reflect and achieve the goals and policies of the Escondido General Plan which recognizes oak trees and other mature trees as significantly aesthetic and ecological resources. Further, Section 33-1068 is intended to protect sensitive biological species and habitats and historically significant trees which are located within the boundaries of the City. Section 33-1068 sets forth regulations to control habitat destruction, the clearing of land, and the removal of mature and protected trees; to establish standards for the preservation, protection, and selected removal of sensitive habitat and mature and protected trees; to set forth the administrative procedure for issuance of permits; and to provide standards for the replacement of vegetation approved for removal.

Section 33-1069 of the Zoning Code provides for the protection of vegetation and mature trees, requiring that a person not destroy, clear, trim, or cut protected trees, including deliberately damaging a mature or protected tree so that the removal of the tree is necessary to maintain public safety. Every feasible effort shall be made to preserve sensitive biological habitat, sensitive biological species, mature trees, and protected trees in-place on a project site through consideration of alternative means of accomplishing the desired action or project, to the satisfaction of the director. Additionally, sensitive biological habitat and sensitive biological species which are removed shall be mitigated either on-site or off-site by the planting of the same habitat species at a minimum ratio of one to one (1:1). Higher replacement ratios, or different plant species, may be required by the director for conformance with other federal, state, or local codes and agreements in effect at the time of the review of the application. If replacement of sensitive biological species and/or habitat is not feasible on-or off-site, other equivalent mitigation measures may be considered by the director. If mature trees cannot be preserved on-site, they shall be replaced at a minimum one to one (1:1) ratio. Protected trees shall be replaced at a minimum two to one (2:1) ratio.

City of Escondido Master Plan for Parks, Trails, and Open Space

The City's Master Plan for Parks, Trails, and Open Space guides the development of a comprehensive and integrated open space system to enhance the Quality of Life Standards established in the General Plan.

The Master Plan evaluates the current and future need for public park lands; a trail system comprising a network of primary and secondary urban, spur, and rural trails totaling approximately 116 miles in length to link the urbanized areas of the City with surrounding rural and open space lands; and open space consisting of a conceptual wildlife corridor to connect key habitat areas in a continuous link around the City's perimeter via coordination with the Natural Communities Conservation Program (NCCP) and the Multiple Habitat Conservation Plan (MHCP) to enable planning efforts at a regional level. Funding (e.g., Park Development Fees) for such amenities is also addressed in the Master Plan.

The Master Plan is aimed at providing passive and active outdoor recreation as well as physical and social opportunities; access to cultural and natural landscape via the anticipated trail network, protect the City's landscape character; protection of biodiversity; interpretive and educational recreational programs and opportunities to interact with the natural environment; and a greenbelt around the City to discourage urban sprawl and buffer Escondido from surrounding regional development.

County of San Diego, Light Pollution Code

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

County of San Diego, Grading Ordinance

Title 8 Chapter 4 of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances includes guidance and restrictions for grading activities in the county. The Grading Ordinance establishes restrictions for the maximum slope allowed for cut and fill slopes; requirements for drainage terraces on cut or fill slopes exceeding 40 feet in height; expansive soil requirements for cuts and fills; minimum setback requirements for buildings from cut or fill slopes; and reporting requirements (e.g., a soil engineer's report and a final engineering geology report to be prepared by an engineering geologist), which includes specific approval of the grading to be performed, as influenced by geological conditions.

County of San Diego, Resource Protection Ordinance

The County's Resource Protection Ordinance provides detailed development standards and thresholds for the protection of sensitive environmental resources including floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, cultural resources, and biologically/visually significant areas. The ordinance requires certain discretionary projects to undergo review to ensure that such

resources are protected for the long-term through dedication of open space land. Lands affected by the Resource Protection Ordinance are present on the project site.

County of San Diego, Zoning Ordinance

Portions of the County Zoning Ordinance that may affect the assessment of visual impacts are generally zoning special area designators. Relevant designators to the visual resources analysis include the following:

- B – Community Design Review Area
- D – Design Review Area
- G – Sensitive Resource
- H – Historic/Archaeological Landmark or District
- J – Special Historic District
- S – Scenic Area
- F – Floodplain

None of the above designators, or Special Area Regulations, apply to any of the affected parcels.

County of San Diego, General Plan

Portions of the project site are located within the boundaries of the area covered by San Diego County General Plan. The Land Use Element and the Conservation and Open Space Element include background information, goals and policies, and measures intended to protect the county's visual resources. The County's General Plan contains additional policies, goals, and implementation measures that are more general in nature and not specific to development such as the project. Refer to the Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan (see **Appendix 1.1**) which provides an analysis of project conformance with general and subregional plan goals and policies relevant to aesthetics and visual resources.

2.1.3. Thresholds for Determination of Significance

City of Escondido Environmental Quality Regulations (Zoning Code Article 47)[1] and Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as amended contain analysis guidelines related to the assessment of aesthetics and visual resources impacts. A project would result in a significant impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

[1] The environmental quality regulations identified in the Article 47 of the City's Municipal Code implement CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines by applying the provisions and procedures contained in CEQA to development projects proposed in Escondido.

3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

2.1.4. Analysis of Project Effects and Determination of Significance

Threshold 1: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

According to the City's General Plan EIR, based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and applicable City policies and regulations, a project would result in a significant impact if it would obstruct, interrupt, or detract from a scenic vista, skyline ridge, or intermediate ridge that is visible from a public viewpoint (e.g., a roadway, recreational area, designated trail or scenic vista, or highway). Skyline ridges include those which define the horizon. Intermediate ridges are those with visible land behind them which creates a backdrop to a ridge as viewed from the valley floor.

As indicated in Section 4.1, Aesthetics, of the General Plan EIR, the City does not specifically designate scenic vistas. The General Plan indicates that ridgelines are considered the most important views from scenic vistas within the planning area; however, important views also include valleys, natural vegetation, historic or unique structures, agricultural lands, rivers and lakes, rock outcroppings, and large open spaces (Escondido 2012b). As shown in **Figure 2.1-1, Slopes and Ridgelines**, one intermediate ridgeline traverses the central portion of the site from northeast to southwest; a similar trending intermediate ridgeline is present just north of the northwestern property boundary. No skyline ridges have been identified on-site; therefore, no such resources would be affected by the proposed development.

No historic or unique structures, agricultural lands, rivers, or lakes are present on the project site. Therefore, project development would not substantially alter any such resources on-site that may contribute to any important existing views from scenic vistas in the surrounding area. Due to the undeveloped nature of the site, expansive views of large open space areas contribute to the visual quality of the area, reflecting other relatively undisturbed natural lands within the project vicinity, particularly to the north and east.

The site supports sensitive natural vegetation (e.g., oaks and oak woodland habitat) that contributes to the rural visual character of the site and is similar to that present on adjacent lands in the surrounding area. Additionally, rock outcroppings are present on-site. Although project development would result in the removal of a limited number of oaks and/or rock outcroppings, the loss of such resources is not considered to substantially change the visual character of the site or existing views to the site from surrounding public vantage points or scenic vistas. Refer to Threshold 3 for additional discussion.

As discussed in Section 2.1, Aesthetics, of the General Plan EIR, Section 33-1067.F, Design Guidelines for HRO [Hillside and Ridgeline Overlay] District,[2] of Escondido Municipal Code Chapter 33, Article 44 identifies major roadways and public open space areas that may offer important public views in the City's planning area. Such major roadways include I-15 (4.7 miles to the west of the project site), Del Dios Highway (5.7 miles to the west), Centre City Parkway (4.2 miles to the west), Bear Valley Parkway (2.4 miles to the west), North Broadway (4.6 miles to the west/northwest), El Norte Parkway (2.2 miles to the northwest), and Valley Parkway (2.2 miles to the northwest/west).[3] Additionally, as stated in the General Plan EIR, major public open space areas that may offer important views include Hodges Reservoir (5.9 miles to the southwest of the project site), Lake Wohlford (1.8 miles to the northeast), Lake Dixon (2.9 miles to the southeast), and Kit Carson Park (4.2 miles to the southwest).

Because of the proposed placement of structures on-site (e.g., below the on-site ridgeline), varied on-site topography that would help to obscure off-site public views of the proposed development, existing intervening off-site development and established vegetation, and elevational differences between the project site and the resources discussed above that may offer important public views, views to the proposed on-site improvements would generally be obscured and/or limited particularly for motorists and residences (see also **Figures 2.1-3** through **2.1-9B** and discussion under Threshold 3). Additionally, the scale of the proposed structures (maximum 28 feet in height at the roofline for residential structures and 25 feet for recreational facilities) would further minimize the visibility of the proposed structures within the viewshed. Proposed ornamental landscaping, combined with the large areas of on-site open space to be permanently protected with project implementation, would further reduce the potential of the project to substantially alter public views of the site and/or to substantially affect a scenic vista.

As indicated in Section 4.1, Aesthetics, of the General Plan EIR, future development in the City's planning area would have the potential to result in the obstruction, interruption, or detraction of a scenic vista. To ensure that site-specific solutions are implemented for the SHR site to reduce the potential adverse effects of the development on the existing visual setting, new draft zoning standards and design guidelines are being prepared in the form of a Specific Plan to respond to the project's specific setting. Under the proposed Specific Plan, the development would be context sensitive and be appropriately sited, scaled, and designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses. Clustered development land use patterns proposed would also help preserve on-site open space, minimize potential visual impacts, and decrease grading activities required in environmentally sensitive areas. Refer to **Appendix 1.1, Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan**.

To further reduce potential effects of landform modification associated with such development, the City requires all proposed development to conform to the City's Grading

[2] The HRO District generally encompasses parcels with a slope of 15 percent or greater on any portion of the parcel, and/or located in proximity to an identified intermediate or skyline ridge, and located in an area that has not been developed to its full potential at the time of adoption of the ordinance. The project site is subject to the HRO District requirements (see also **Figure 2.1-1**).

[3] Distances from such roadways and open space area are measured to the nearest property boundary; however, actual development on-site would generally occur at a greater distance, as developed areas on-site would be generally set back within the interior of the property.

and Erosion Control Ordinance, which includes measures to ensure that grading on steep slopes is minimized, that existing views of ridgelines are protected, and that any proposed development does not adversely affect any skyline ridges on-site. Therefore, in addition to clustered lot orientations as a tool to preserve slopes, ridgelines, and sensitive habitat, project conformance with existing regulations would continue to protect on-site topography from grading design that would have the potential to obstruct, interrupt, or detract from views of the existing ridgelines.

The SHR project has been designed to locate the majority of the development in both flatter portions of the site and the lower slopes, thereby preserving on-site ridgelines. The overall grading concept is intended to maintain the natural character of the landscape by designing within the natural contours of the land. To minimize the potential effects of grading on existing on-site landforms, the SHR Specific Plan requires that cut slopes would have a maximum inclination of 1.5:1 (horizontal: vertical). Fill slopes are proposed at a maximum inclination of 2:1. Various grading techniques are proposed, including contour grading and terracing, to reduce the overall visual effects of project grading activities. Following project grading, all slopes would be planted for erosion control, and major slopes would be landscaped in accordance with an approved landscape plan to blend the manufactured slopes into the existing visual setting.

As discussed, project compliance with existing City design regulations, conformance with the City's General Plan, and SHR Specific Plan design guidelines would reduce impacts related to obstruction, interruption, or detraction of skyline and intermediate ridgelines to below a level of significance. For the reasons above, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Threshold 2: Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

As indicated above, there are no officially designated or eligible state scenic highways in the immediate project vicinity. The closest designated state scenic highway is a portion of SR 125, located approximately 23 miles to the south of the project site. The project site is not located within the viewshed of any designated state scenic highway, and the project would not adversely affect or disrupt existing views from any such roadways.

The project site supports a substantial number of mature trees, largely consisting of individual oaks and oak woodland, which contribute to the overall visual character of the property. As indicated in Section V.C.3, Preserving Natural Land Features, of the SHR Specific Plan, existing mature trees would be preserved on-site wherever possible. However, a total of 5.2 acres of oak woodland habitat/oak riparian woodland, as well as 417 individual oak trees, would be removed or otherwise impacted with project implementation. Mitigation in the form of conservation easements (as compensatory mitigation) for such impacts would be implemented at appropriate mitigation ratios to ensure that project effects on such resources are minimized (see **Section 2.3, Biological Resources**, Threshold 5). Further, the project would protect approximately 629.09 acres in on-site dedicated open space easements, plus

approximately 128.6 acres of HOA-managed open space and over 13 acres of recreational open space, to ensure the long-term protection of such resources as part of the visual setting.

Rock outcroppings are interspersed throughout the property, particularly along the hillsides. Such resources are also found on surrounding lands and contribute to the rural character of the area. Although the project would require the removal of some rock outcroppings to allow development of the site as proposed, the project has been designed to largely avoid such resources to the extent feasible. As indicated in Section V.C.3, Preserving Natural Land Features, of the SHR Specific Plan, natural outcroppings would be preserved wherever possible and avoided and protected in dedicated open space. Those that require removal would be repurposed as feature elements (such as boulder elements) to enhance the effect of blending the project into the natural surroundings. It is not anticipated that the removal of a limited number of on-site boulders in the visual landscape to allow project construction would substantially change the overall character of the site (or its contribution to the visual appearance of the viewshed) when viewed from a distance, as the remaining on-site rock outcroppings would still be a part of the visual setting.

No historic buildings are present on-site. Therefore, no such resources would be affected by the project.

Additionally, future development would be appropriately sited, scaled, and designed to complement the existing environment and the project would not result in a physical loss, isolation, degradation, or destruction of a natural resource. Based on the analyses above, the project would not substantially damage scenic resources and resulting impacts would be **less than significant**.

Threshold 3: Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Figure 2.1-2, Conceptual Views, is an illustrative view of the intended character of several key project components. The SHR Specific Plan identifies specific design measures that will guide future development of the proposed project to ensure the development reflects the existing rural character of surrounding areas and minimizes the potential for the project to substantially alter public (or private) views of the site and/or adversely affect the existing visual setting. In particular, Specific Plan Chapter V, Design Standards and Guidelines, discusses the overall design themes and architectural standards to be implemented with project development in order to achieve the intended character of Safari Highlands Ranch.

The following describes the visual setting evaluated to determine the potential for the project to substantially degrade the existing visual character or the quality of the site or its surroundings.

Viewshed

The viewshed is generally the area that is visible from an observer's viewpoint and includes the screening effects of intervening vegetation and/or physical structures. Viewsheds may occur from designated scenic viewpoints or from singular vantage points where an unobstructed view of visual components in the landscape exists. The viewshed is composed

of such elements as topography and natural land features (e.g., hillsides, mountains) and other physical features in the landscape, such as buildings, vegetation, or water features. Potential visual impacts within the viewshed may be affected by the viewer's distance from a site, the frequency and length of views, the viewer's personal perception, and physical and/or atmospheric conditions at the time viewing occurs.

Figure 2.1-3 identifies the project viewshed [candidate key observation points (cKOPs) are discussed below]. Although this area is expansive, consideration of this viewshed provides the most comprehensive (largest) and conservative (worst-case) estimate of the area that could potentially be affected by the project. The viewshed selected for the project generally includes those lands in proximity to properties affected by the project and those having views to the site from public roadways or public recreational areas in the surrounding area. It may be possible to view the project site from vantage points beyond the viewshed. However, such views would not be significantly affected or changed with the project due to the relative size of the proposed structures, distance to the site, topography of the site and the siting of the structural elements within the development area, intervening development and established vegetation, and natural and proposed project landscaping.

Landscape Character Units

Landscape character units are used to divide the visual sphere of influence (VSOI) into individual units having similar landscape values and receptor (e.g., viewer) types. LCUs are sometimes considered outdoor "rooms," with each having its own unique character and relatively homogenous visual receptors. An LCU can generally be defined by visual and physical characteristics and may be composed of a limited area (e.g., meadow) or a larger area (e.g., portion of a mountain range). The overall boundaries of an LCU may generally be defined by topography, natural vegetation, architectural design, landforms, or similar types of land uses. Each LCU can be described individually and as varying from other adjacent landscape units. Each LCU is a portion of the regional landscape that often corresponds to a place or district that is commonly known among local viewers.

Boundaries between LCUs may also be transitional and not clearly defined. The LCU boundary may also be vividly distinct, such as agricultural uses immediately adjacent to higher-density residential or industrial uses.

The San Pasqual VSOI, in which the project site lies, is divided into six LCUs: Open Space LCU, Agricultural LCU, East Escondido LCU, Ranchos LCU, Eagle Crest LCU, and State Park LCU. The landscape character units considered in the analysis of the proposed project are described in Attachment C of **Appendix 2.1**.

Key Observation Points

As described in the Aesthetics Technical Report, a candidate key observation points (cKOPs) sensitivity matrix was developed as a method to quantitatively identify vantage points that are the most sensitive through the use of the five criteria identified for the project's visual sphere of influence (VSOI). The key criteria used to evaluate potential cKOPs included proximity of the nearest proposed residence; duration of view, or amount of time the project is within a cKOPs occupied viewshed; scenic quality from the cKOP towards the project; basic scenic quality from the cKOP towards the project; viewer sensitivity; number of viewers; and

landscape character units (LCUs), or units having similar landscape values and receptor types. Potential viewer groups considered to have the potential to experience views to the site from off-site vantage points include motorists on surrounding area roadways, occupants of area recreational areas (e.g., Eagle Crest Golf Course, San Diego Zoo Safari Park), and/or surrounding residential uses. Refer to **Appendix 2.1** for additional discussion.

To evaluate the potential for the project to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site, the Aesthetics Technical Report evaluated 22 cKOPs in the surrounding viewshed from which the proposed improvements may be visible if the project is implemented (see **Appendix 2.1**). Based on this evaluation, five key observation points (KOPs) representative of each of the five identified landscape character units were selected for preparation of visual simulations to illustrate a before- and after-project scenario and in-depth evaluation in the EIR (see **Figures 2.1-3** through **2.1-9B**). The simulations are not intended to represent photorealistic detail of the completed project, but rather to inform as to scale, massing, and visibility of landscape changes. An evaluation of the project's potential effect on each of the KOPs selected (KOPs 1, 10, 14, 19, and 20) is evaluated below under Operation (Long-Term).

Construction (Short-Term)

Construction of the project would have the potential to create temporary visual impacts through the use of heavy-duty construction equipment, movement of vehicles and equipment to and from the site, and construction of the proposed uses and associated roadway and infrastructure improvements. The assessment of construction impacts to visual quality considers each construction phase; however, construction work would vary substantially from day to day, depending on the level of activity, the specific type of operation, and the prevailing weather conditions.

Grading activities and construction staging areas/construction equipment would temporarily change the visual quality of the property. Such effects when viewed would have the potential to result in a substantial change in the visual character or image of the site; however, such effects would be temporary. Because of the project site's expansive scale, it is anticipated that all construction staging areas would be accommodated on-site and thereby distanced from existing land uses on adjacent lands.

By siting construction staging areas in the interior of the site, the potential for views of project construction equipment and building materials to occur from off-site vantage points during the construction of each phase would be greatly reduced. As the staging areas would be located in proximity to each phase being developed, on-site topography and distance from adjoining land uses would further obscure views of project construction activities.

Operation (Long-Term)

The following is a discussion of views that would occur from the identified key vantage points in the surrounding area. Viewpoint locations are identified in **Figure 2.1-3, Viewshed/cKOP Locations.**

KOP 1

KOP 1 is representative of the Open Space LCU. Views from this vantage point, located to the east/southeast of the site, generally occur at the same elevation as the project site; all of the other KOPs in the San Pasqual visual sphere of influence occur at a lower topographic elevation than the site. Therefore, views experienced from such vantage points require the viewer to look upward to the project site. It should be noted that views from KOP 1 occur from a "private" street that is accessible to several homeowners who live east of the project site.

Many of the interior structures would be screened from view by the proposed perimeter structures and site topography. When a receptor is located at a similar elevation as the proposed project site, it is anticipated that a greater number of residential units are likely to be visible. This concept is demonstrated graphically in **Figure 2.1-3**, which shows that up to 100 homes may be visible to viewers in the areas in the Ranchos LCU.

Viewers at vantage points that are at similar or higher elevations (e.g., KOP 1) would be able to see an estimated 2–4 times as many structures as those vantage points occurring in this LCU at a lower elevation than the project site. Even though the Open Space LCU (represented by KOP 1) has a limited number of potential viewers due to its rural nature and lower-density development, its location provides a valuable perspective as to what receptors outside of the valley floor are anticipated to experience in terms of visual change within the viewshed as a result of project implementation.

As shown in **Figures 2.1-4A** through **2.1-5B,** views from this vantage point (view from 16778 Rockwood Road) generally consist of the upper portions of the on-site hillsides and are largely unobstructed. The foreground and middleground comprise undeveloped lands supporting low-lying vegetation; the hillsides visible on the project site dominate the background. Rock outcroppings and low-lying scrub vegetation are present along the hillsides, and no structures are in view. The existing visual landscape does not offer highly memorable landscape components, although somewhat distinctive visual patterns are formed by the rock outcroppings and the established vegetation, combined with the varied topography.

As shown in **Figures 2.1-4B** and **2.1-5B**, a large portion of the proposed development in the southwestern/southeastern portions of the site would be visible from this vantage point; however, as stated above, it should be noted that the high visibility of the project elements is increased due to the viewing elevation of KOP 1 relative to the proposed development area. The majority of views in the viewshed would occur from vantage points located to the west/southwest where high-density development is present, and therefore, a greater number of viewers would experience such views. Additionally, the majority of views from points to the west/southwest would occur at lower elevations than the site (e.g., within the valley) and therefore would not occur across the site, as otherwise shown in **Figures 2.1-5A** through **2.1-5B**. Therefore, **Figures 2.1-4B** and **2.1-5B** show a relatively "worst-case" scenario that would be experienced by a limited number of viewers.

Views of a number of proposed homes, as well as manufactured slopes, would be experienced from KOP 1. Although the site likely would be somewhat visible, it would not obstruct a public view. Further, all development would be designed to be in compliance with new Specific Plan design guidelines which would ensure appropriate scale of development and an

aesthetically pleasing architectural character. Design guidelines pertaining to building height and scale; type, color, and integration of building materials; overall architectural style; building articulation; and other such characteristics are provided in the Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan to ensure that future development achieves the intended overall character and does not result in development that is visually obstructive or that is in visual conflict with the established character of surrounding residential neighborhoods. Such measures would reduce the potential for the project to have an adverse effect on the existing visual character or quality of the site as viewed from KOP 1, as well as for the other KOPs evaluated herein. Refer to **Appendix 1.1, Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan**, for additional discussion.

In order to minimize the high visibility of such elements from this location and to visually blend the project into the surrounding natural setting, project grading has been designed to incorporate contour grading to reflect the existing topography and avoid the appearance of unnatural landforms. Grading would be required to conform to grading guidelines identified in the SHR Specific Plan and to the City's Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance to minimize the visibility of manufactured slopes resulting with the project. The manufactured slopes would be planted to ensure these elements blend into the visual landscape over time and respect the natural setting.

All structures on-site would be constructed to respect the rural character of the landscape, integrating earth-toned colors and building materials to minimize potential contrast with surrounding natural elements. Ornamental landscaping installed on-site in the residential and recreational areas, and along proposed roadways, would further reduce the visibility of the proposed project elements from this vantage point.

As demonstrated in **Figures 2.1-4B** and **2.1-5B**, it is not anticipated that the project would substantially change or visually degrade the character of the site as viewed from this vantage point (KOP 1). Conformance with the City's Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance, General Plan policies, and design measures in the SHR Specific Plan would ensure that a quality development is achieved and that potential effects on the existing visual setting are minimized. Although some development would be visible, the existing visual quality or character of views from this vantage point would not be substantially degraded with project implementation.

KOP 10

KOP 10 is the vantage point from the intersection of Cloverdale Road and San Pasqual Road. This KOP represents views from the Agricultural LCU (see **Figure 2.1-6A**). This observation point is anticipated to have the greatest number of viewers in the VSOI, and the KOP considers the City's identification of the scenic value of SR 78 (not an officially designated or eligible state scenic highway; considered by the City to be scenic from San Pasqual Valley Road/SR 78 from Bear Valley Parkway to the eastern boundary of the General Plan planning area.

A large ranch is visible in the foreground, with views of varied established natural and ornamental vegetation and an open field, in combination with the intersection of Cloverdale Road and San Pasqual Road. The communities of Rancho San Pasqual and Rancho Vista Monte are minimally visible in the middleground. The background is dominated by the rocky

silhouette of the mountains to the east. The varied, somewhat rugged topography of the mountains in the background provides a medium degree of visual interest, contrasting somewhat with the lower, flatter lands of the valley, which support a greater degree of vegetation.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-6B**, limited portions of the residential development planned in the southwestern portion of the project site would be visible along the hillsides from this vantage point. Views of the site from this location would occur at approximately 1.5 miles from the nearest project boundary, thereby significantly reducing the visual size and visibility of the structures within the landscape. Several manufactured slopes would also be visible from this location; however, proposed landscaping and the distance from the site would also reduce the visibility of such elements within the viewshed. Although visible from this vantage point, no proposed features of substantial bulk or scale would dominate the visual setting or substantially reduce the quality of existing views from KOP 10. Further, it is anticipated that, as landscaping in the development matures over time, project elements shown in **Figure 2.1-6B** would further blend into the visual setting, thereby reducing the project's visibility from off-site locations in the valley, such as from KOP 10.

As demonstrated in **Figure 2.1-6B**, it is not anticipated that the project would substantially change or visually degrade the character of the site as viewed from KOP 10. Although some development would be visible, the existing visual quality or character of views from this vantage point would not be substantially degraded with project implementation.

KOP 14

KOP 14 is the vantage point from Vista Monte Glen in the gated community of Rancho Vista Monte, located south of the project site. Views from KOP 14 to the project site from this vantage point are somewhat obstructed by the existing built environment (see **Figure 2.1-7A**).

Existing views consist of the hillsides in the southwestern portion of the project site with sparse, low-lying vegetation and intermittent rock outcroppings in the background, and residential development in the middleground and foreground. Ornamental landscaping and roadways associated with the Vista Monte Glen development are also visible. No distinctive visual patterns or unique visual elements or features can be seen from this vantage point.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-7B**, the project elements would generally be obscured from view from this vantage point, with the exception of the upper portion of several residential units planned in the southwestern portion of the site and a manufactured slope. As shown, the manufactured slope would be landscaped and would blend into the surrounding natural landscape over time. Only minor views of the proposed residential uses would be visible from this viewpoint, and they would not contrast or conflict with the visual setting, due to the presence of the existing residential uses in Vista Monte Glen. Views from this location would be largely left intact with implementation of the proposed project.

As demonstrated in **Figure 2.1-7B**, it is not anticipated that the project would substantially change or visually degrade the character of the site as viewed from KOP 14. Although some development would be visible, the existing visual quality or character of views from this vantage point would not be substantially degraded with project implementation.

KOP 19

KOP 19 represents views from the Ranchos and the Eagle Crest LCUs. The Ranchos LCU comprises two small islands of dense residential that include the developments of Rancho San Pasqual and Rancho Vista Monte. The Eagle Crest LCU is adjacent to the northern portion of the Ranchos LCU.

KOP 19 is located in the Eagle Crest LCU and is representative of the approximately 20 existing residences located on Old Ranch Road between Rosewood Lane and Plum Tree Lane in the gated community of Rancho San Pasqual. The specific location of KOP 19 is at the western edge of the 12th fairway at Eagle Crest Golf Club (see **Figure 2.1-8A**).

As seen in **Figure 2.1-8A**, views from this vantage point are generally unobstructed views of the hillsides located in the southwestern portion of the project site. Views are generally of the hillsides that support varied, low-lying vegetation with intermittent rock outcroppings in the background, with the golf course and associated ornamental vegetation in the foreground. No structures are visible. The undeveloped nature and natural vegetation along the hillsides create a visual contrast with the ornamental, manicured landscaping and colors of the developed golf course. No distinctive visual patterns or unique visual elements or features can be viewed from KOP 19.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-8B**, the proposed development would be generally obscured from sight from this vantage point, with the exception of the upper portions of several residential units located just below the ridgeline. Consistent with the design measures identified in the SHR Specific Plan, the visibility of these homes would be reduced through the use of muted, earth-toned colors and a maximum building height of 28 feet (as measured to the roofline).

A number of manufactured slopes would be visible from this vantage point; however, over time, project landscaping would mature and these slopes would visual blend into the surrounding natural landscape, thereby avoiding visual contrast with undeveloped lands. Views of the development would be further reduced due to distance of this vantage point from the proposed homes. As demonstrated in **Figure 2.1-8B**, it is not anticipated that the project would substantially change or visually degrade the character of the site as viewed from KOP 19. Although some development would be visible, the existing visual quality or character of views from this vantage point would not be substantially degraded with project implementation.

KOP 20

KOP 20 is located in the Eagle Crest LCU and is representative of the view afforded at San Pasqual Union School, across Rockwood Road (see **Figure 2.1-9A**). The school is one of the few locations in the San Pasqual VSOI that can be considered a local gathering place (where parents routinely drop off and pick up their children from school on a daily basis Monday through Friday). Therefore, frequent views of the project site are experienced from this location.

As seen in **Figure 2.1-9A**, similar to **Figure 2.1-8A**, views from this vantage point are generally views of the hillsides located in the southwestern portion of the project site. Views are generally of the hillsides, which support varied, low-lying vegetation with intermittent rock

outcroppings in the background. In the middleground, limited views of existing residential development in the Rancho San Pasqual subdivision and associated landscaping vegetation are visible, with the golf course and associated ornamental vegetation visible in the foreground. No distinctive visual patterns or unique visual elements or features can be viewed from this vantage point; however, the hillsides do provide somewhat of a rugged, contrasting backdrop to the manicured nature of the golf course.

As shown in **Figure 2.1-9B**, the proposed entry road and associated manufactured slopes would be visible from this vantage point. The upper portions of several proposed residential units in the southwestern portion of the site would be visible just below the ridgeline; however, due intervening topography (hillsides), the development would largely be obscured from this location. Additionally, due to the height and size of the proposed residences, combined with distance from the vantage point, the visibility of the development within the visual landscape would be greatly diminished. Landscaping is proposed along the manufactured slopes that would mature over time, thereby visually blending such slopes into the natural setting and reducing their visibility from off-site vantage points.

As demonstrated in **Figure 2.1-9B**, it is not anticipated that the project would substantially change or visually degrade the character of the site as viewed from KOP 20. Although some development would be visible, the existing visual quality or character of views from this vantage point would not be substantially degraded with project implementation.

Overall, while the majority of the project site's natural features would be preserved in on-site open space, the project design would require the integration of manufactured slopes to allow development on the property as proposed; however, if left untreated and/or exposed following grading, manufactured slopes would have the potential to significantly change the existing character of the hillsides and adversely impact the visual character of the project site as well as the surrounding community. As shown on the preliminary grading plans prepared for the project, manufactured cut-and-fill slopes would be constructed on-site to allow future lot development.

The site's topography and the distance from off-site area roadways and other off-site public vantage points would obscure or minimize views of many of these slopes, due to their limited height; however, cut and/or fill slopes would be visible and may have the potential to adversely affect visual resources through the removal or substantial adverse change of the site's features that contribute to the valued visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or localized area. As noted above, the SHR Specific Plan requires that the project implement sensitive grading techniques that would minimize the potential visual change in on-site topography. Through project conformance with the City's Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance and the SHR grading guidelines, the project would minimize the potential for the development to substantially alter or degrade the existing on-site topographical features that contribute to the project site's character.

Further, as demonstrated in **Figures 2.1-4A** through **2.1-9B,** off-site vantage points from surrounding lands would afford varying views of the project site. A large portion of the proposed manufactured slopes would occur within the interior of the property and would therefore be obscured from view due to on-site topography. Under such conditions, existing

views to the site of areas where such landform modification would occur would therefore remain unchanged, as they would not be visible.

Additionally, an on-site water tank is proposed for the purposes of water storage. The City of Escondido would pump water to the tank for distribution via pump stations and gravity feed to all on-site structures and for purposes of fire flows. The tank is anticipated to have a diameter of approximately 58 feet and a maximum height of 35 feet. To minimize the visibility of the water tank within the visual landscape, the tank would be painted in earth-toned colors, reflective of the surrounding natural setting. Similar water tanks are currently present in the viewshed (e.g., two tanks located approximately 1.3 miles west and two tanks located approximately 0.6 mile south of the site); therefore, the proposed tank would not represent a new visual element that would substantially conflict with the existing visual setting.

Development on SHR would be required to comply with proposed standards and design guidelines that takes into consideration the unique setting in order to deliver a project that is context sensitive and is designed to fit into the project's setting. In addition to the site design and community's specific settings, the proposed Specific Plan design guidelines respond to neighborhood character and promote basic best practices in urban design to appeal to the area's growing demand for high quality and luxury housing. The resulting development would be appropriately scaled and designed to intensity, character, and type of nearby subdivisions. Therefore, the project would not introduce features which would conflict with important visual elements or the quality of the community/neighborhood (such as theme, style, setbacks, density, size, massing, coverage, scale, color, architecture, building materials, etc.) and would not thereby negatively and substantially alter the existing character of neighborhoods.

In addition to using clustered lot orientation as a tool to preserve slopes, ridgelines, and sensitive habitat, project compliance with the City's Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance, General Plan policies, and proposed design standards and guidelines in the SHR Specific Plan would reduce the project's potential to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and would minimize the visibility of the development in the affected viewshed, during both the short-term construction and long-term operational phases. With project conformance to such regulations and design measures, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Threshold 4: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Because the site is currently undeveloped, project implementation would result in the introduction of new sources of nighttime lighting in the area. As described above, existing land uses in the vicinity include single-family homes of a rural nature to the north and east, open space lands and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park to the south, the 580-unit Rancho San Pasqual residential development and Eagle Crest Golf Course to the west, and the 80-unit Rancho Vistamonte residential development to the southwest. Such uses, in addition to street lighting and vehicles traveling along area roadways, are existing sources of nighttime lighting.

Proposed outdoor lighting installed for the purposes of public safety and security and to allow for circulation on project roadways would have the potential to contribute to nighttime

lighting effects in the area. Exterior lighting on individual homes may be functional (e.g., for dwelling unit security and/or access) and/or ornamental (e.g., for highlighting landscaping or other exterior features). Light trespass from windows may also occur to a degree.

Article 35, Outdoor Lighting, of the Escondido Municipal Code provides guidance and restrictions for installation and operation of nighttime exterior lighting. The ordinance is intended to protect the county's dark skies and to "minimize glare, light trespass, and artificial sky glow for the benefit of the citizens of the City and astronomical research at Palomar Observatory, and to promote lighting design that provides for public safety, utility and productivity while conserving energy and resources." These goals are achieved through the implementation of certain measures such as shielding outdoor lighting fixtures; using low pressure, narrow-spectrum amber light emitting diodes (LEDs) or other energy-efficient outdoor light fixtures; using light fixtures only when necessary (e.g., through use of timing devices); and using the minimum amount of light to meet the established lighting criteria.

As indicated in V.D.4, Architectural Standards and Requirements, Section 11, Conceptual Lighting Guidelines, of the SHR Specific Plan, outdoor lighting would be designed and installed to minimize potential nighttime lighting effects. All outdoor lighting would be required to comply with the County's Light Pollution Code. Community lighting would be designed to provide adequate illumination for safety, security, and architectural accents without over-lighting. Parking areas, access drives, internal vehicular circulation, and outdoor pedestrian use areas would be designed to have sufficient illumination for safety purposes, per City design standards. All project lighting would be shielded and directed downward to avoid light trespass and/or spill onto adjacent properties or escape upward into the nighttime skies. Conformance with the measures in the SHR Specific Plan, the City's Municipal Code, and the County's Light Pollution Code would ensure that the project does not result in adverse nighttime lighting effects on dark skies.

Additionally, as identified in V.D.4, Architectural Standards and Requirements, of the SHR Specific Plan, design guidelines established for future development of the site indicate that proposed structures would be constructed of materials typical of residential and recreational uses (e.g., stone, tile, wood, brick, glass, stucco) and treated or painted, thereby minimizing the potential for glare effects to occur. Due to the nature of the proposed structures, the use of large expanses of reflective material, such as glass or metal siding, is not anticipated. As such, the project is not anticipated to result in a new source of substantial day or nighttime glare.

Implementation of the project would have the potential to result in increased light and glare that may adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; however, the project would be required to conform with applicable outdoor lighting regulations, including the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and the County's Light Pollution Code, as well as design regulations identified in the SHR Specific Plan relative to controlling project-related lighting and glare. The project is also subject to the City's review and approval to ensure project design is consistent with the rural character of the area, thereby further minimizing the potential for light and/or glare effects to occur with project implementation. Impacts in this regard would be **less than significant.**

2.1.5. Sources Cited

CALTRANS (California Department of Transportation). 2011. *San Diego County – Officially Designated Scenic Highways*. http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/.

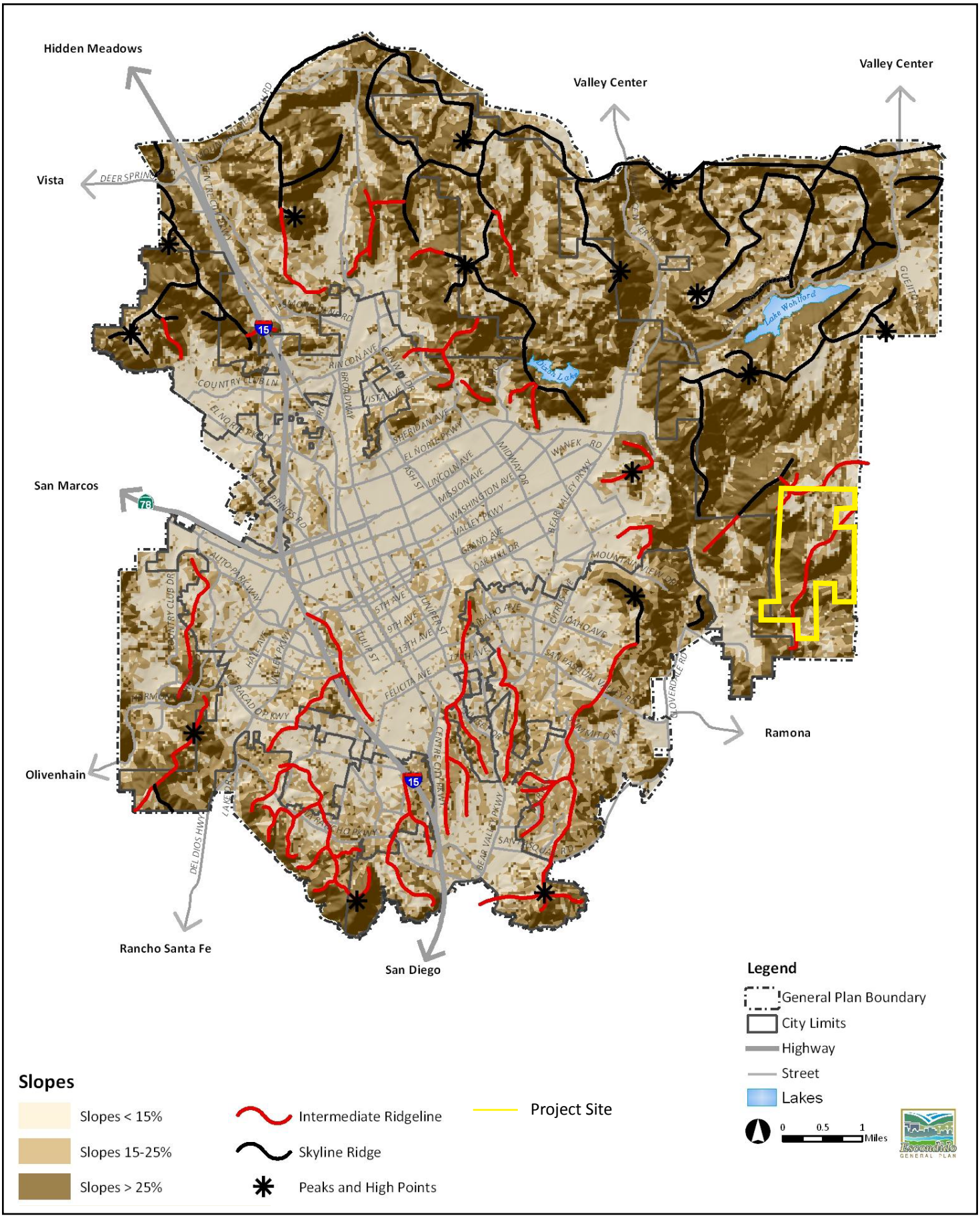
Escondido, City of. 1994. *Master Plan for Parks, Trails, and Open Space*. Updated September 1999. https://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/pdfs/Planning/MasterPlanPTOSept99.pdf.

———. 2012a. *General Plan*. https://www.escondido.org/general-plan.aspx.

———. 2012b. *General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and Climate Action Plan Environmental Impact Report*. https://www.escondido.org/general-plan-update.aspx.

Geo/Graphics, Inc. 2017. *Aesthetics Technical Report*. Appendix 2.1

TRS Consultants. 2017. *Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan*. Appendix 1.1



Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation
153095Figures.indd

N

Not to Scale

Safari Highlands Ranch and Citywide SOI Update ▪ Environmental Impact Report

SLOPES AND RIDGELINES

Figure 2.1-1

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Community Core - Roundabout Entry, Community Park and Community Market Entry

Fire Station

Private Recreation Facility

Gate Guarded Entry Perspective

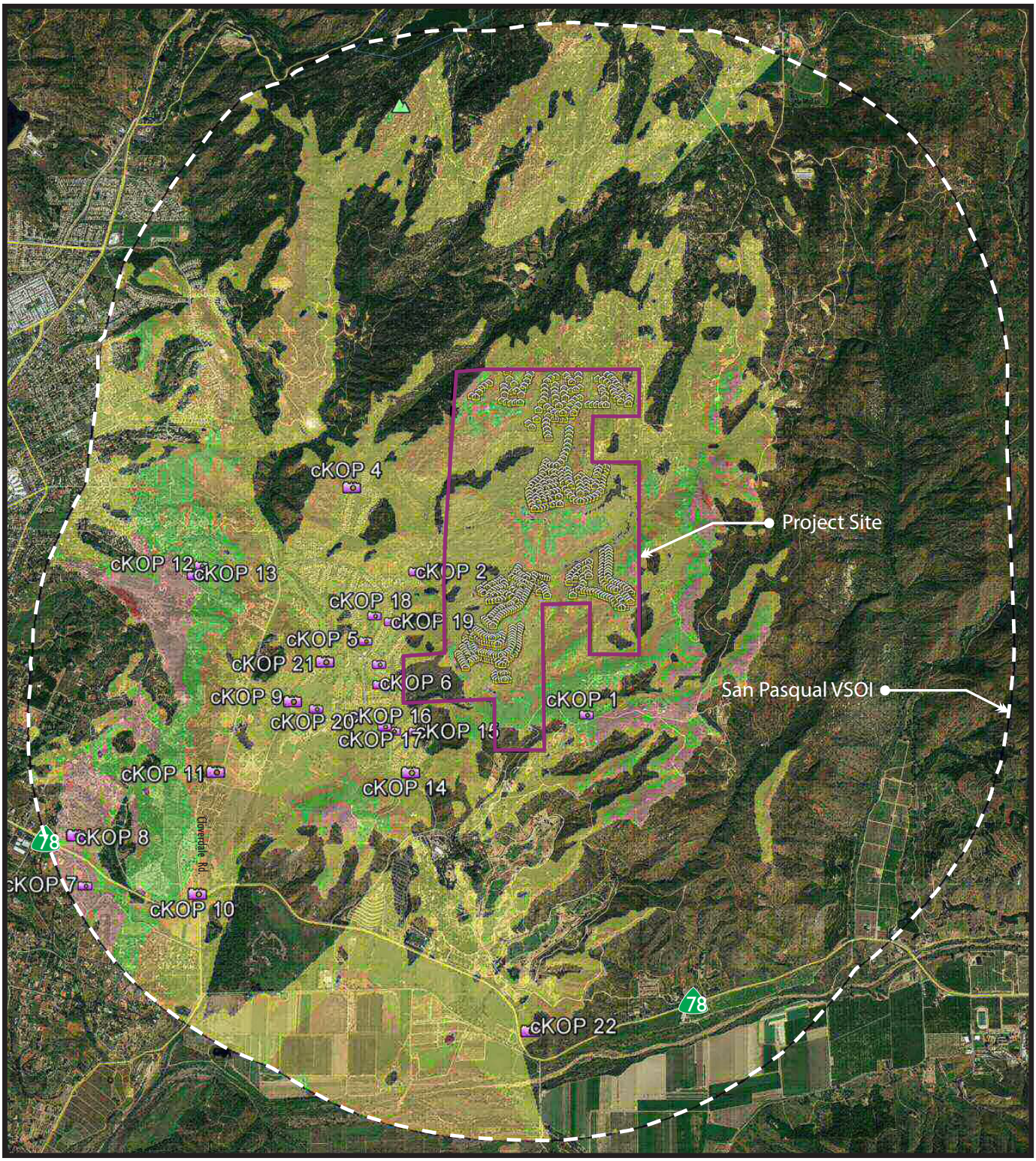
Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: TRS Consultants, Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan, 2016.
153095Figures.indd

CONCEPTUAL VIEWS

Figure 2.1-2

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Viewshed (number of homes visible)

- 0
- 0-100
- 100-200
- 200-300
- 300-400
- 400-428

VSOI = Visual Sphere of Influence
cKOP = Candidate Key Observation Points

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

N

Scale
0 1800 3600
f e e t

Safari Highlands Ranch and Citywide SOI Update ▪ Environmental Impact Report

VIEWSHED/cKOP LOCATIONS

Figure 2.1-3

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 1 (VIEW 1 OF 2) - 16778 ROCKWOOD ROAD (ZOO ROAD)

Figure 2.1-4A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 1 (VIEW 1 OF 2) - 16778 ROCKWOOD ROAD (ZOO ROAD)

Figure 2.1-4B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 1 (VIEW 2 OF 2) - 16778 ROCKWOOD ROAD (ZOO ROAD)

Figure 2.1-5A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 1 (VIEW 2 OF 2) - 16778 ROCKWOOD ROAD (ZOO ROAD)

Figure 2.1-5B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 10 - INTERSECTION OF SAN PASQUAL ROAD AND SR-78

Figure 2.1-6A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 10 - INTERSECTION OF SAN PASQUAL ROAD AND SR-78

Figure 2.1-6B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 14 - SOUTHERN END OF VISTAMONTE GLEN

Figure 2.1-7A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 14 - SOUTHERN END OF VISTAMONTE GLEN

Figure 2.1-7B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Safari Highlands Ranch and Citywide SOI Update ▪ Environmental Impact Report

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 19 - WESTERN EDGE OF EAGLE CREST GOLF CLUB'S 12TH FAIRWAY

Figure 2.1-8A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 19 - WESTERN EDGE OF EAGLE CREST GOLF CLUB'S 12TH FAIRWAY

Figure 2.1-8B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

EXISTING VIEW FROM KOP 20 - WEST OF EAGLE CREST GOLF CLUB'S 15TH GREEN

Figure 2.1-9A

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Source: GEO/Graphics, Inc., 2017.
153095Figures.indd

PROPOSED VIEW FROM KOP 20 - WEST OF EAGLE CREST GOLF CLUB'S 15TH GREEN

Figure 2.1-9B

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK