

## **3.11 VISUAL RESOURCES**

### **3.11.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

Visual resources are the natural and artificial features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public's appreciative enjoyment of the environment. Visual resources or aesthetic impacts are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics and potential visibility, and the extent to which the project's presence would change the perceived visual character and quality of the environment in which it would be located. Exhibits 3.11-1 through 3.11-6 illustrate the locations and photographs of representative views of the project site and surrounding area taken during site visits in February 2004, February 2005, and June 2005.

#### **REGIONAL SETTING**

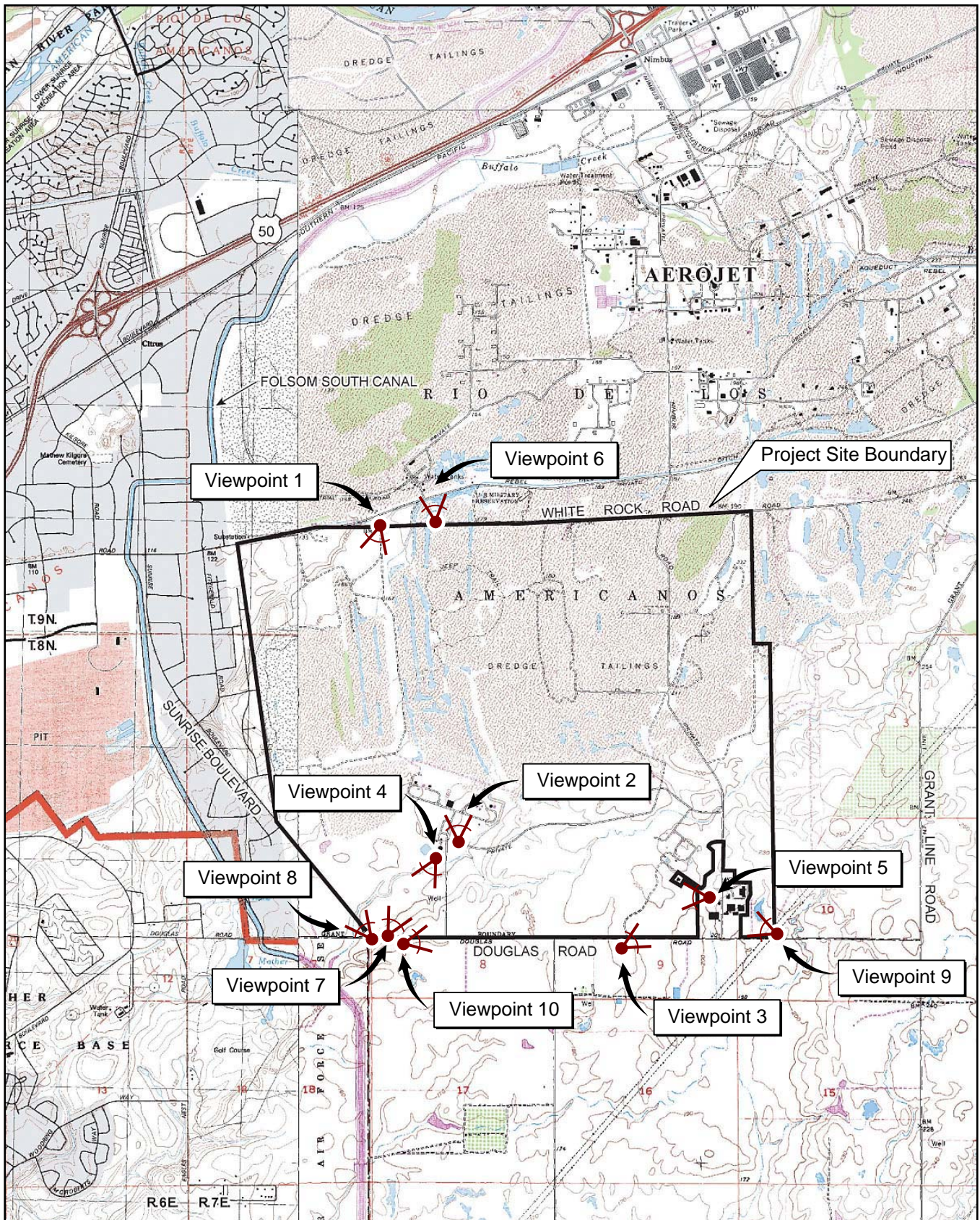
The various components of the Rio del Oro Specific Plan would be developed within the city limits of Rancho Cordova, a community located in the transition zone between the Sacramento Valley and foothills of the Sierra Nevada. The site is located in a flat alluvial plain that was once a channel of the American River. The project site is located within a much larger area of land that is currently undeveloped, but is planned for residential, retail, commercial, and light industrial land uses in the future. The City's vision for future growth includes the use of specific plans and community plans to ensure conformity with design standards, a mix of land uses, and orderly development. In addition to the Rio del Oro Specific Plan, the approved Sunrise Douglas Community Plan will guide development on the lands immediately south (across Douglas Road) and southeast (adjacent to the Security Park) of the project site; in addition, the proposed Westborough Project and Easton Community Plan, if approved, will guide development on a large portion of Aerojet General Corporation (Aerojet) lands north of the project site along U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50) (Exhibit 4-1 in Chapter 4, "Other Statutory Requirements"). Land immediately north of the project site, on the other side of White Rock Road, will remain under the control of Aerojet for aerospace testing activities and associated buffer lands. The land immediately adjacent to the northeastern part of the project site is being mined by Teichert Aggregates, Inc. (Teichert), but is part of the Grantline North Planning Area, which would include development of primarily residential housing and limited commercial/residential mixed uses.

Currently, land in the project vicinity has been developed for urban uses only from the western border of the project site westward into Sacramento (Exhibit 4-1). The project site itself, as well as the surrounding lands to the north, east, and south, are open in character, are generally undeveloped, and are covered primarily with annual grasses and forbs, along with scattered shrubs and trees. Wildlife, particularly deer, turkey, and numerous varieties of songbirds, are found throughout the area. From the southern part of the project site and from the adjacent surrounding lands, on a clear day eastward views extend to the Sierra Nevada mountain range in the background, and westward views include the skyscrapers of downtown Sacramento and extend to the Coast Range in the background. Roadways surrounding the project site are narrow and consist of two lanes. Because of the undeveloped nature of the project site and the lands to the north, east, and south, motorists traveling on the surrounding roadways would perceive the project site as being located in the middle of a rural area filled with natural vegetation and wildlife.

#### **VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE**

The project site has been substantially disturbed by historical gold mining activities that occurred approximately 50–100 years ago (see Section 3.7, "Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources," and Section 3.9, "Cultural Resources," for a detailed description of historical mining activities). Approximately 70% of the site is composed of mine tailings (piles of cobblestones laid down in rows) that have formed rolling ridges covered with vegetation (Viewpoint 1, Exhibit 3.11-2). In certain areas, these dredge tailings form broad, green mounds that are up to 30 feet tall. Cottonwood trees, shrubs, and annual grasses are growing in the dredge tailings. Cattle were historically grazed on the site when it was deeded as part of the Rio de los Americanos Mexican land grant, and continue to graze throughout the site today as part of the Clark Cattle Company operation.

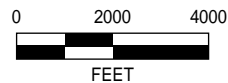




Source: USGS Citrus Heights/Carmichael Quads 1992, USGS Folsom/Bufalo Creek Quads 1980, EDAW 2004 and 2005

## Viewpoint Locations

Rio del Oro Specific Plan Project DEIR/DEIS  
 City of Rancho Cordova and USACE  
 P 3T089.01 06/05







Viewpoint 1 – A view of dredge tailings on the project site looking south from White Rock Road. The dredge tailings will be removed as part of separate Conditional Use and Implementation Permits for aggregate mining operations (not part of the Rio del Oro project).



Viewpoint 2 – This view of an abandoned rocket testing facility was taken from the southern portion of the project site looking north. All aerospace facilities would be removed prior to project construction activities.

Source: EDAW 2004 and 2005

## Representative Photographs of On-Site Features

EXHIBIT 3.11-2



Viewpoint 3 – This view of the project site from Douglas Road looking northeast shows wetlands in the foreground, buildings associated with Security Park (an industrial park not part of the project site) in the midground, and the Sierra Nevada mountain range in the background.



Viewpoint 4 – A view from the southern part of the project site looking west, showing Morrison Creek in the foreground and commercial buildings on the west side of Sunrise Boulevard in the background.

Source: EDAW 2004 and 2005

## Representative Photographs of On-Site Features

EXHIBIT 3.11-3





Viewpoint 5 – Westward views of the project site from the Security Park (an industrial park not part of the project site) include wetlands in the foreground, and abandoned aerospace facilities and trees in the background.



Viewpoint 6 – Looking north from the project site, typical views of Aerojet-owned land north of White Rock Road include security fencing, power lines, berms, and trees that screen aerospace facilities.

Source: EDAW 2004 and 2005

## Representative Photographs of On- and Off-Site Features

EXHIBIT 3.11-4



Viewpoint 7 – Views from the southern portion of the project site include the approved Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area, located south of Douglas Road. Shown here are new homes under construction in the Anatolia Phase 1 development.



Viewpoint 8 – Looking east from the southern portion of the project site, views include annual grassland and wetlands in the foreground, scattered trees in the middleground, and the Sierra Nevada mountain range in the background.

Source: EDAW 2004 and 2005

**Representative Photographs of On- and Off-Site Features**

**EXHIBIT 3.11-5**





Viewpoint 9 – This view from the intersection of Grant Line Road and Douglas Road looking west shows grassland that would be developed for industrial uses under the proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan and for residential uses under the approved Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area. The Security Park buildings and associated landscaping (an industrial park not part of the project site) are visible in the middleground, and the mountains of the Coast Range are visible in the background.



Viewpoint 10 – This view from the intersection of Douglas Road and Sunrise Boulevard looking northwest shows traffic along Sunrise Boulevard during the morning rush hour. Industrial buildings are visible in the distance on both sides of Sunrise Boulevard. Cattle grazing on the southwestern corner of the project site are visible in the foreground.

Source: EDAW 2004 and 2005

## Representative Photographs of On- and Off-Site Features

EXHIBIT 3.11-6

The remains of aerospace testing facilities developed in the 1950s through the 1970s are visible primarily in the southern part of the project site, but are also present in other locations (Viewpoint 2, Exhibit 3.11-2). Section 3.9, “Cultural Resources,” and Section 3.13, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” contain detailed descriptions of these sites and the associated historical activities. Although the project site is fenced and gated and public access restricted, some of the buildings have been damaged by vandalism and graffiti. A paved access road to these facilities winds throughout the site. Piping associated with groundwater monitoring wells that extends approximately 3 feet above the ground surface is visible at various locations throughout the project site. Facilities associated with groundwater extraction and treatment systems at the Beta Complex, which include a fenced area approximately 30 feet by 15 feet, are also visible in the southern part of the project site. Industrial development associated with the former Administration Area (now called the Security Park and not part of the Rio del Oro project site) is clearly visible immediately adjacent to the southeastern portion of the project site (Viewpoint 3, Exhibit 3.11-3). The Administration Area contains a 15-story light-colored concrete building, with the name “Security Park” painted at the top, that is clearly visible from all parts of the project site. The Administration Area also contains numerous other two- to three-story metal and concrete buildings, various types of heavy equipment, transport trucks, and metal cargo containers inside a secure perimeter (chain-link fence topped by barbed wire and a guard station). The buildings are partially screened by plantings of trees and shrubs.

A report conducted by Sierra Nevada Arborists, dated February 11, 2003, indicated that a total of 4,026 native and nonnative trees were observed on the project site. The majority of the trees are cottonwoods and willows. There are more than 1,500 trees on the project site with a diameter at breast height (dbh) of 6 inches or greater. A large wetland area is located along the southern boundary of the site and is composed of a flat, low vegetation area that includes vernal pools (Viewpoint 4, Exhibit 3.11-3; and Viewpoint 5, Exhibit 3.11-4).

Currently, Teichert holds a County of Sacramento (County) Conditional Use Permit (No. 98-UPB-0503) for surface mining of aggregate resources on 180 acres of the eastern portion of the project site (City of Rancho Cordova 2004). In June 2005, the City approved Teichert’s application for a second Conditional Use Permit to remove portions of the dredge tailings on the western portion of the project site in the Phase 1 development area. The City expects to receive a third Implementation Permit application from Granite Construction Company to remove a portion of the remaining dredge tailings from the central portion of the project site. Removal of the dredge tailings is a separate action that is not part of the Rio del Oro project. Assuming City approval of the remaining application, the site would be mined for most of the remaining aggregate resources, and the topography of approximately 70% of the project site would change radically, from low-lying hills to a flat landscape. The flat topography would open up views of the Sierra Nevada from the project site and would open up a much larger viewshed that would include land to the north and south of the project site. The aggregate mining process would not disturb vegetation within 250 feet of vernal pools; however, trees, shrubs, and grasses outside of the 250-foot buffer areas would be removed. While the mining applications are separate from the project, they are discussed here because they have the potential to change the appearance of the site.

## **VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA (FROM THE PROJECT SITE)**

Land uses surrounding the project site include limited amounts of industrial and commercial development; most of the land is undeveloped. The general character of the surrounding area is described below and is presented through photographs contained in Exhibits 3.11-4, 3.11-5, and 3.11-6.

- ▶ **North**—White Rock Road, industrial land uses, and undeveloped rural lands are located north of the project site. A portion of an existing industrial park that extends north along Sunrise Park Drive, including corrugated metal buildings, large metal storage containers in a variety of colors, high-mast lighting, and a chain-link fence, is visible to the northwest of the project site. Although industrial facilities associated with the Aerojet aerospace operations are present along the entire length of the north side of White Rock Road from the industrial park to Grant Line Road, they are generally screened by tall berms and trees, and thus are not visible from the project site (Viewpoint 6, Exhibit 3.11-4). Transmission lines and wooden poles, along with a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, are visible from the project site and run parallel along the entire



length of White Rock Road. The fence prevents authorized public access to Aerojet lands. Piping associated with groundwater monitoring wells, which extends approximately 3 feet above the ground surface, is visible at various locations on the north side of White Rock Road. Most of this area is undeveloped buffer land that is covered with annual grasses and forbs, shrubs, and a few scattered trees. Piles of dredge tailings are apparent in several areas. Five round corrugated metal storage tanks, approximately 20 feet wide by 20 feet tall, are plainly visible in foreground views across the street from the 1,100-acre Elliott Homes parcel (i.e., development Phase 1). The GEM Rancho Cordova site, associated with Aerojet's remedial activities, abuts the north side of White Rock Road roughly at the midpoint of the project site. Prominent visual elements of the GEM facilities include various one-story concrete and metal buildings, heavy equipment, transport trucks, and metal storage containers located within Aerojet's perimeter fence. Farther east from the northeastern portion of the project site, a tall red and white checkered water tower on Aerojet's property north of White Rock Road is visible in the background to the northeast.

- ▶ **South**—Douglas Road, industrial and residential land uses, and undeveloped rural lands are located south of the project site. From the southern portion of the project site, the Security Park with its 15-story concrete building is a prominent feature in the landscape, as are the metal transmission towers that form a line extending southwest of the project site. Undeveloped, rural grassland makes up the largest part of the foreground views to the southeast, with scattered trees in the background. A few farmsteads and abandoned agricultural buildings (barns and sheds) along Jaeger Road contribute to the rural nature of this area. From roughly the midpoint of the project site along Douglas Road, the most prominent feature of southern views is the start of new residential development and associated construction equipment on the south side of Douglas Road in the Anatolia housing development, which is part of the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan (Viewpoint 7, Exhibit 3.11-5). At full buildout, development associated with the community plan will fill the entire view from the southern part of the project site. Beginning at Jaeger Road and continuing west to Sunrise Boulevard, transmission lines and wooden poles parallel Douglas Road and are highly visible.
- ▶ **East**—Lands east of the project site are undeveloped and are covered with annual grasses, shrubs, and scattered trees (Viewpoint 8, Exhibit 3.11-5). The topography is gently rolling where dredge tailings have been deposited, but otherwise it is fairly level. Equipment and trucks associated with Teichert's aggregate mining operation on and to the east of the Rio del Oro property boundary are visible from a small area in the eastern portion of the project site. From the southern part of the project site looking east, where the land is flat and open, cars and trucks traveling on Grant Line Road and Douglas Road are clearly visible. On a clear day, the Sierra Nevada mountain range is visible in the background. Land immediately adjacent to the southeastern project site boundary is scheduled to be developed as part of the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan. When completed, these houses will be visible to motorists on Grant Line Road; they would block views of project-related development (Viewpoint 9, Exhibit 3.11-6).
- ▶ **West**—Sunrise Boulevard and commercial and industrial development are located west of the project site. Westward views from the northwestern portion of the project site are composed entirely of a light industrial park that has been developed on both sides of Luyung Drive and Mechanical Drive. Prominent visual features include corrugated metal and concrete buildings, heavy equipment, transport trucks, metal storage bins painted various colors, chain-link fencing, and high-mast lighting. Some of the buildings are partially screened by trees and shrubs. Views from the southwestern portion of the project site include Sunrise Boulevard and transmission lines and associated wooden poles in the foreground, and industrial development (one- to two-story concrete and metal buildings) in the middle ground and background (Viewpoint 10, Exhibit 3.11-6). Views of the industrial buildings are partially screened by deciduous landscape trees that have been planted in the median along Sunrise Boulevard, as well as shrubs and trees planted adjacent to the buildings. A tall, teardrop-shaped water tower that has been painted white (associated with the Stone Creek development) is visible in the background to the northwest. Sunrise Boulevard is a highly traveled four-lane roadway in the area immediately west of the project site, and it carries a high percentage of transport trucks associated with industrial development in the vicinity. The signalized intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Douglas Road fills the foreground view from the southwestern part of the project site. Douglas Road currently

consists of two lanes, as does Sunrise Boulevard south of Douglas Road. Retail shopping centers based around a Raley's grocery store and a Safeway grocery store are planned for the southeastern and southwestern corners of this intersection, respectively. When completed, these retail developments will be highly visible and will fill the entire view from this part of the project site. On a clear day, western views from the southern portion of the project site include the skyscrapers of downtown Sacramento and the mountains of the Coast Range in the background.

### **3.11.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

#### **FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS**

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to visual resources that are applicable to the proposed project or alternatives under consideration.

#### **STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS**

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

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the California Scenic Highway Program. The goal of the program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would affect the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to the highways. There are no state-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the project site (Caltrans 1999).

#### **REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES**

There are no regional or local plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to visual resources that are applicable to the proposed project or alternatives under consideration.

### **3.11.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

#### **THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a visual resources impact is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project or alternatives under consideration would do any of the following:

- ▶ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- ▶ substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- ▶ substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- ▶ create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

#### **ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY**

This visual impact analysis is based on field observations in 2004 and 2005 and a review of maps and aerial photographs. This analysis also incorporated research on design measures for incorporating new development into surrounding land uses. Analysis of the project's impacts was based on evaluation of the changes to the existing visual resources that would result from project implementation. In making a determination of the extent and implications of the visual changes, consideration was given to:



- ▶ specific changes in the visual composition, character, and specifically valued qualities of the affected environment;
- ▶ the visual context of the affected environment;
- ▶ the extent to which the affected environment contained places or features that have been designated in plans and policies for protection or special consideration; and
- ▶ the numbers of viewers, their activities, and the extent to which these activities are related to the aesthetic qualities affected by the project-related changes.

It should be noted that an assessment of visual quality is a subjective matter, and reasonable people can disagree as to whether alteration in the visual character of the project site would be adverse or beneficial. For this analysis, a conservative approach was taken, and the potential for substantial change to the visual character of the project site is generally considered a significant impact.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS

Effects that would occur under each alternative development scenario are identified as follows: PP (Proposed Project), HD (High Density), IM (Impact Minimization), NF (No Federal Action), and NP (No Project). The impacts for each alternative are compared relative to the PP at the end of each impact conclusion (i.e., similar, greater, lesser).

### Program Level Impacts and Mitigation Measures

<b>IMPACT 3.11-1</b>	<p><b>Alteration of a Scenic Vista.</b> <i>Project implementation would result in the potential for project-related construction of new homes and businesses to degrade the visual quality of a scenic vista.</i></p> <p>PP, HD, IM, NF</p> <p>A scenic vista is generally considered a view of an area that has remarkable scenery or a resource that is indigenous to the area. The project site itself does not provide any aesthetic resources that would be considered a scenic vista. The agricultural grazing lands, dredge tailings, and industrial development that make up the project site do not provide scenery of remarkable character. Because the project site has been extensively mined and portions have been used for rocket testing facilities, it does not provide views of the indigenous natural landscape. The piles of dredge tailings do not constitute a valuable scenic resource. Although the current land uses provide views of an agricultural landscape that is representative of the undeveloped areas of the project region, the project site does not contain resources that are exemplary of the agricultural history of the area. Views of the project site are not unique in the region, and they are obscured by elevated features such as the industrial park to the west, berms and trees on the Aerojet property north of White Rock Road, and dredge tailings and trees to the east of the project site.</p> <p>Background views of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range are currently available only on a clear day to motorists traveling on Douglas Road. Views of the Sierra Nevada for motorists traveling east on White Rock Road are obscured by berms and trees on the Aerojet property on the north side of the road, and westward views of the Coast Range are obscured by development in the industrial park. Views of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range from the project site are currently afforded only in the southern portion where the land is flat (e.g., no dredge tailings). Following removal of the piles of dredge tailings after the mining operations are complete, the site would afford better opportunities for background views of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range, as well as skyscrapers in downtown Sacramento. Because project development includes preservation of a large wetland area in the south, motorists along Douglas Road would retain</p>
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background views of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range. Although the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range are visible in the background from certain parts of the project site and to motorists traveling on Douglas Road, and would be more visible once the piles of dredge tailings are removed, these views would not qualify as a significant scenic vista because of the distance between the project site and the mountain ranges. Views would be substantially the same under all action alternatives. Thus, **direct** impacts related to alteration of scenic vista are considered **less than significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

NP Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter the visual character at the project site by removing the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as existing vegetation in the areas to be mined. Following removal of the piles of dredge tailings after the mining operations are complete, the site would afford better opportunities for background views of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range, as well as skyscrapers in downtown Sacramento.

No project-related residential, commercial, or industrial development would occur under the No Project Alternative; therefore, views of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range would not be obstructed for motorists traveling along local roadways. **No direct** or **indirect** impacts related to a scenic vista would occur. *[Lesser]*

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measures are required.

**IMPACT  
3.11-2**

**Damage to Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway.** *Project implementation could result in the potential for adverse changes to an outstanding scenic resource visible from a state scenic highway.*

PP, HD, IM,  
NF

A scenic resource within a state scenic highway is a resource that is noted for its outstanding scenic qualities and is visible from a state-designated scenic highway. There are no state-designated scenic highway segments adjacent to the project site. The closest County-designated scenic roadway is Scott Road, located approximately 6 miles to the east. The project site is not visible from any state- or County-designated scenic highways or roadways. Therefore, project implementation would not have any direct or indirect impacts on scenic resources within a state scenic highway. **No direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

NP Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Because the project site is not visible from any designated scenic highways or roadways, there would be **no direct** or **indirect** impacts on scenic resources under the No Project Alternative. *[Similar]*

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measures are required.



*Degradation of Visual Character. Project implementation could substantially alter the visual character of the project site through conversion of an expanse of primarily undeveloped land to developed urban uses.*

PP, HD

The project site consists of a 3,828-acre expanse of open space supporting grazing activities, dredge tailings, and abandoned aerospace facilities. Under the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives, project implementation would convert approximately 3,321 acres of undeveloped land to urban development, associated infrastructure, and supporting uses (e.g., parks, open space). The remaining 507 acres would be preserved as part of the proposed wetland preserve. Considering the relatively undisturbed and rural nature of land to the north, east, and west of the project site, the project's conversion from grazing land to urban development would result in a substantial alteration of the visual character of the project site. The altered visual condition would be readily visible to motorists on adjacent roadways (i.e., White Rock Road, Douglas Road, the southern portion of Sunrise Boulevard, and a portion of Grant Line Road), as well as existing and future residents in the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area, and employees at the nearby industrial parks.

Views of the project site from Douglas Road and the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area (Viewpoint 3, Exhibit 3.11-3; Viewpoint 8, Exhibit 3.11-5; and Viewpoint 10, Exhibit 3.11-6) would be substantially altered as agricultural grazing land and abandoned aerospace facilities were replaced by urban development. Motorists on Douglas Road, as well as early residents in the first phase of homes developed in the Anatolia subdivision, may perceive this as a substantial degradation of the visual character or quality of the site because one common type of viewshed found in the area (pastureland) would be replaced by another common local viewshed (urban). The presence of urban development on the project site would be consistent with, and appear as a continuation of, development on the developing Anatolia site and future development in the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area to the south and the existing commercial/industrial development to the west; however, the conversion of undeveloped land to urban development would be a substantial degradation of visual character as seen from Douglas Road and the first phase of the Anatolia housing development.

Views of the project site from White Rock Road (Viewpoint 1, Exhibit 3.11-2) would also be substantially altered. In addition to carrying local traffic, White Rock Road is heavily traveled during the morning and evening commute hours by motorists attempting to avoid traffic on U.S. 50. Because the undeveloped nature of Aerojet land immediately north of the project site would be maintained, conversion of the project site from grazing land to urban development would be more readily apparent, and could be perceived as a substantial degradation of the visual character of the site.

It should be noted that the appearance of approximately 70% of the project site would be substantially altered if removal of the piles of dredge tailings and removal of the majority of trees that currently exist on-site as a result of aggregate mining activities is approved under separate Conditional Use Permits. Thus, at the start of construction activities for each phase of project development, the project site may look substantially different than it does now.

The proposed 507-acre wetland preserve along the southern boundary of the project site would remain undeveloped and would preserve current views of undeveloped, rural land.

Reasonable people may consider the conversion of agricultural pastureland/undeveloped land to urban development on this scale (3,321 acres) as a loss of aesthetically pleasing and valuable viewshed. Agricultural pasturelands and rural areas can be considered a valuable aesthetic

resource that is representative of the visual character of much of rural Sacramento County. In general, most people prefer to view vast expanses of undeveloped rural/pasturelands over urban development.

Reasonable people may differ as to the aesthetic value of the agricultural lands in the project site, and whether development of urban uses in the project site would constitute a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. However, given the large scale of this urban development and the rural nature of its setting, the impacts on visual resources from project implementation are considered to be **direct** and **significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

**IM** Implementation of the Impact Minimization Alternative would have the same types of impacts on the visual character of the project site as the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives described above. However, under this alternative, the wetland preserve would encompass 994.5 acres, approximately 487.5 acres more than under either the Proposed Project or High Density Alternatives. Thus, a larger expanse of the existing undeveloped, rural land would be preserved under this alternative, which would benefit viewers traveling along Douglas Road and future residents within the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area. However, given the large scale of this urban development and the rural nature of its setting, the impact on visual resources under the Impact Minimization Alternative is considered to be a **direct** and **significant** impact. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

**NF** Implementation of the No Federal Action Alternative would have the same types of impacts on the visual character of the project site as described above. However, under this alternative, the wetland preserve would encompass 835 acres, approximately 328 acres more than under the Proposed Project Alternative. Thus, a larger expanse of the existing undeveloped, rural land would be preserved under this alternative, which would benefit viewers traveling along Douglas Road and future residents within the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area. However, given the large scale of this urban development and the rural nature of its setting, the impact on visual resources under the No Federal Action Alternative is considered to be a **direct** and **significant** impact. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

**NP** Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter the visual character at the project site by removing the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as existing vegetation in the areas to be mined.

Because no project-related development would occur under the No Project Alternative, there would be no project-related degradation of visual character, and thus, **no direct** or **indirect** project-related impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

### Mitigation Measure 3.11-3: Require Development to Conform to City General Plan Design Guidelines.

**PP, HD, IM, NF** The project applicant(s) for all project phases shall include design, architectural, development, and maintenance standards in the Rio del Oro Specific Plan that will ensure minimization of impacts on the existing visual character of the site. Though this process the project applicant(s) shall ensure that urban development at the project site is substantially consistent with the Design Guidelines adopted as part of the City General Plan.

OR



Before the approval of building permits, all structures and facilities shall adhere to the City's design review process.

**Timing:** Before approval of building permits for all structures within all project phases.

**Enforcement:** City of Rancho Cordova Planning Department.

**NP** No mitigation measures are required.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-3 would partially reduce impacts related to the degradation of the local viewshed through conversion of undeveloped rural lands (i.e., rural setting) to a large-scale urban development project under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but it would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because of the scale and location of the project site, there is no feasible mitigation available to address aesthetic impacts associated with the conversion of a large expanse of rural land to urban development. Although conformance of the specific plan with the City's design, architectural, development, and maintenance standards is included as mitigation to require development in the project site to conform to certain aesthetic guidelines, there is no mechanism to allow implementation of the project while avoiding the conversion of the local viewshed from rural lands to large-scale urban development. Therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-4**

**Temporary Degradation of Visual Character for Developed Project Land Uses Caused by Construction Staging Areas.** *Project implementation would involve five phases of construction over a 25- to 30-year buildout period. Construction activity would involve the temporary use of staging areas for construction equipment and materials, which would be visible to adjacent project land uses that have already been developed.*

**PP, HD, IM, NF** Project implementation would involve several phases of similar types of construction under all action alternatives over a 25- to 30-year phased buildout period. During that time, adjacent project development, including sensitive land uses such as residential housing, schools, and parks, would be occupied while construction is occurring in a different phase. Project construction would involve the temporary use of fenced staging areas for construction equipment and materials. Although these staging areas would be located in disturbed areas, construction equipment and materials would be visible to developed project land uses and to motorists on local roadways. Thus, these activities would have a temporary **direct, significant** impact on visual resources. **No indirect** impact would occur. *[Similar]*

**NP** Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Under the No Project Alternative, no project-related development would occur, and therefore no project-related construction activities would occur that could affect visual resources for developed land uses. **No direct or indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

**Mitigation Measure 3.11-4: Screen Construction Staging Areas.**

**PP, HD, IM, NF** The project applicant(s) for all project phases shall locate staging and material storage areas as far away from sensitive land uses (i.e., residential areas, schools, parks) and/or nearby roadways as possible. Staging and material storage areas shall be approved by the City before the approval

of grading plans and building permits for all project phases, and shall be screened from adjacent occupied land uses in earlier development phases to the maximum extent practicable. Screens may include berms or fences. The screen design shall be approved by the City to further reduce visual effects to the extent possible.

**Timing:** Before the approval of grading plans and building permits, and during all phases of construction for all project phases.

**Enforcement:** City of Rancho Cordova Public Works Department.

NP No mitigation measures are required.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-4 in addition to Mitigation Measure 3.16-1, “Implement Measures to Prevent Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Temporary Construction-Generated Noise,” would reduce significant impacts associated with temporary visual-quality degradation for developed land uses from concurrent construction staging areas (by providing visual screening) under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives. However, because screening may not always be feasible (i.e., projects covering a large area or tall buildings), this temporary impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-5**

**Temporary Degradation of Visual Character for Future Project-Related Land Uses from Ongoing Mining Activities.** *Aggregate mining activities could occur on the project site concurrently with project development, which could result in a temporary degradation of visual character for portions of development that are occupied.*

PP, HD, IM,  
NF

Mining activities at the project site are occurring now and would continue to occur in the future under separate Conditional Use Permits prior to and concurrently with project-related development. As project development phases become occupied with residents and workers, mining activities may increase in intensity, which could result in **direct, significant** visual resource impacts. The same types of alterations of visual character would result under all action alternatives. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Because project-related development would not occur, under the No Project Alternative no visual resources conflicts would occur between project residents or workers and ongoing mining activities. Therefore, **no direct or indirect** impacts related to temporary alteration of visual character from occupied development would occur. *[Lesser]*

**Mitigation Measure 3.11-5: Screen Mining Areas.**

PP, HD, IM,  
NF

Before the issuance of certificates of occupancy and final inspections for facilities where mining activities will be visible, the project applicant(s) for all project phases shall visually screen project-related development from mining activities to the maximum extent practicable. If mining activities, including reclamation activities, are anticipated to occur for more than 1 year after project approval, a combination of fast-growing shrubs and trees shall be planted around mining project boundaries to provide screening.

**Timing:** Before the issuance of certificates of occupancy and final inspections for facilities where mining activities would be visible for all project phases.

**Enforcement:** City of Rancho Cordova Planning Department.

**NP** No mitigation measures are required.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-5 in addition to Mitigation Measure 3.16-5, “Implement Measures to Improve Land Use Compatibility with Noise Sources,” would partially reduce significant impacts associated with temporary alteration of visual character for future project-related land uses from ongoing mining activities under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but not to a less-than-significant level. Because screening that would provide an appropriate and complete visual barrier may not be practicable, this impact remains **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-6**

**New Light and Glare Effects.** *Project implementation would require lighting of new development, which could inadvertently cause increased light and glare effects.*

**PP, HD**

Light associated with urban development can result in spillover lighting and glare effects. Spillover lighting is artificial lighting that spills over onto adjacent properties and could cause an annoyance to neighboring residents by disturbing sleep patterns. Glare is intense light that shines directly, or is reflected off of a surface, into a person’s eyes. Use of building materials such as reflective glass and polished surfaces can cause glare. During daylight hours, the amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight. Glare is particularly acute at sunrise and sunset because of the low angle of the sun in the sky.

Under current conditions, the project site has only a few small scattered areas of development associated with abandoned aerospace facilities that generate no significant sources of light or glare. Project development under the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives would require lighting of roadways; parks; schools and related outdoor sports playfields and a stadium; commercial, office, and light industrial developments; parking lots; and other facilities. In addition, nighttime lighting in the office/commercial areas, or the presence of reflective surfaces on buildings in this area (e.g., reflective window glazing), may result in light and glare shining primarily onto motorists on White Rock Road, but also onto motorists on portions of Sunrise Boulevard and Douglas Road. Nighttime lighting associated with proposed industrial development in the southeastern portion of the project site could result in light and glare effects for motorists on Douglas Road as well as future residents living in the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area adjacent to the southeastern project boundary and on the south side of Douglas Road. The proposed 507-acre wetland preserve that would be located along the southern boundary of the project site would provide a distance buffer between Douglas Road and project development that would lessen light and glare impacts; however, overall light and glare effects from project implementation would still create **significant** and **direct** visual impacts. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

**IM**

Effects from new sources of light and glare under the Impact Minimization Alternative would be similar to those under the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives. However, under this alternative an additional 487.5 acres of wetland would be set aside as a wetland preserve. Because 487 fewer acres would be developed, and thus would not generate new sources of light and glare effects, implementation of the Impact Minimization Alternative would generate a lesser degree of **significant** and **direct** impacts. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*



NF The same types of effects from new sources of light and glare would occur under the No Federal Action Alternative as under the Proposed Project Alternative. However, under this alternative an additional 328 acres would be set aside as a wetland preserve. Because 328 fewer acres would be developed, and thus would not generate new sources of light and glare effects, implementation of the No Federal Action Alternative would generate a lesser degree of **significant** and **direct** impacts. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

NP Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter the visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Because no development would occur, under the No Project Alternative there would be no project-related sources of light or glare. **No direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

#### Mitigation Measure 3.11-6: Establish and Require Conformance to Lighting Standards and Prepare and Implement a Lighting Plan.

PP, HD, IM, NF To reduce impacts associated with light and glare, the project applicant(s) for all project phases shall conform to the following guidelines:

- ▶ Meet the minimum City lighting standards for all project-related lighting. All lighting fixtures shall be designed to be consistent with the Design Guidelines contained in the City General Plan.
- ▶ Shield or screen lighting fixtures to direct the light downward and prevent light spill on adjacent properties.
- ▶ Place and direct flood or area lighting needed for construction activities or for nighttime sporting activities to not disturb adjacent residential areas and passing motorists.
- ▶ Prohibit the use of harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs for public lighting in residential neighborhoods.
- ▶ Use appropriate building materials, lighting, and signage in the office/commercial areas to prevent light and glare from adversely affecting motorists on nearby roadways.
- ▶ Design exterior lighting as an integral part of the building and landscape design in the Rio del Oro Specific Plan area. Lighting fixtures shall be architecturally consistent with the overall site design and character and shall be consistent with the City's Design Guidelines.
- ▶ Establish standards for outdoor lighting to reduce high-intensity nighttime lighting and glare as part of the Rio del Oro Specific Plan design guidelines/standards. Consideration shall be given to design features, namely directional shielding for street lighting, parking lot lighting, and other significant light sources, that will reduce effects of nighttime lighting. In addition, consideration shall be given to the use of automatic shutoffs or motion sensors for lighting features to further reduce excess nighttime light. All nighttime lighting shall be shielded to prevent the light from shining off of the surface intended to be illuminated.

A lighting plan shall be submitted to the City for review and approval which shall include the above elements. The lighting plan may be submitted concurrently with other improvement plans,

and shall be submitted before the installation of any lighting or the approval of building permits for all phases. The project applicant(s) of all future phases shall implement the approved lighting plan.

**Timing:** Before the approval of building permits for all phases.

**Enforcement:** City of Rancho Cordova Planning and Public Works Departments.

**NP** No mitigation measures are required.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-6 would reduce significant impacts associated with effects from new sources of light and glare (by reducing lighting intensity) under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives to a **less-than-significant** level.

**IMPACT  
3.11-7**

**New Skyglow Effects.** *Project implementation would require lighting of new development, which could inadvertently cause increased skyglow effects.*

**PP, HD** At night, artificial light can cause glare. Skyglow is artificial lighting from urbanized uses that alters the rural landscape and, in sufficient quantity, lights up the nighttime sky, thus reducing the visibility of astronomical features.

Under current conditions, the project site has only a few small scattered areas of development associated with abandoned aerospace facilities. These areas generate no significant sources of skyglow into the night sky. However, a substantial increase in the amount of nighttime light and glare would result from the development of the project with residential, commercial, and industrial uses under the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives, potentially obscuring views of the stars, constellations, and other features of the night sky, and potentially affecting nearby motorists and future residents. In addition, there is a potential that a 40-acre adult sports park could be constructed on the project site. This sports park could include a 3,000-seat stadium or amphitheatre, which would include high-mast nighttime lighting that would create skyglow effects. Skyglow effects from project implementation under both the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives would create similar **significant** and **direct** visual impacts related to new skyglow effects, because a similar amount of land would be developed. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Similar]*

**IM** Effects from skyglow under the Impact Minimization Alternative would be similar to those under the Proposed Project Alternative. However, under this alternative, an additional 487.5 acres would be set aside as a wetland preserve. Because 487 fewer acres would be developed and thus would not generate new sources of skyglow, implementation of the Impact Minimization Alternative would generate a lesser degree of **significant** and **direct** impacts. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

**NF** Similar types of effects from skyglow would occur under the No Federal Action Alternative as under the Proposed Project Alternative. However, under this alternative, an additional 328 acres would be set aside as a wetland preserve. Because 328 fewer acres would be developed and thus would not generate new sources of skyglow, implementation of the No Federal Action Alternative would generate a lesser degree of **significant** and **direct** impacts. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

NP Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Because no development would occur, under the No Project Alternative there would be no project-related skyglow effects. **No direct or indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

Mitigation Measure: Implement Mitigation Measure 3.11-6.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-6 above would partially reduce significant impacts associated with effects from skyglow under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because of the scale and location of the project site, screening or shielding light fixtures to direct light downward or the use of low-pressure sodium or other lighting would not reduce the effects of new skyglow on the night sky to a less-than-significant level; therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

### Project Level (Phase 1) Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**IMPACT  
3.11-8**

**Alteration of a Scenic Vista.** *Implementation of development Phase 1 would result in the potential for project-related construction of new homes and businesses to degrade the visual quality of a scenic vista.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-1 for further discussion of this impact.

**IMPACT  
3.11-9**

**Damage to Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway.** *Implementation of development Phase 1 could result in the potential for adverse changes to an outstanding scenic resource visible from a state scenic highway.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-2 for further discussion of this impact.

**IMPACT  
3.11-10**

**Degradation of Visual Character.** *Implementation of development Phase 1 would substantially alter the visual character of the project site through conversion of an expanse of primarily undeveloped land to developed urban uses.*

Impacts would be the same under development Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-3 for further discussion of this impact.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-3a would partially reduce impacts related to the degradation of the local viewshed through conversion of undeveloped rural lands (i.e., rural setting) to a large-scale urban development project under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because of the scale and location of the project site, there is no feasible mitigation available to address aesthetic impacts associated with the conversion of rural land to urban development. Although inclusion of design, architectural, development, and maintenance standards in the specific plan is included as mitigation to require development in the project site to conform to the City’s adopted Design Guidelines, there is no mechanism to allow implementation of the project



while avoiding the conversion of the local viewshed from rural lands to large-scale urban development. Therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-11**

**Temporary Degradation of Visual Character from Construction Activity and Staging Areas.**

*Implementation of the project would involve several phases of construction over a 25- to 30-year project horizon. Construction activity would involve the temporary use of staging areas for construction equipment and materials. In addition, construction activities would be visible to adjacent sensitive land uses.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-4 for further discussion of this impact.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-4 would reduce significant impacts associated with the temporary effects from concurrent construction activities under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives. However, because screening may not always be feasible, this temporary, construction-related impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-12**

**Temporary Degradation of Visual Character for Future Project-Related Land Uses from Ongoing Mining Activities.**

*Implementation of development Phase 1 would temporarily occur concurrently with mining operations, which could result in temporary visual character impacts on new residents.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-5 for further discussion of this impact.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-5 in addition to Mitigation Measure 3.16-5, “Implement Measures to Improve Land Use Compatibility with Noise Sources,” would partially reduce significant impacts associated with temporary alteration of visual character for future project-related land uses from ongoing mining activities under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but not to a less-than-significant level. Because screening that would provide an appropriate and complete visual barrier may not be practicable, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

**IMPACT  
3.11-13**

**New Light and Glare Effects.** *Development Phase 1 would require lighting of new development, which could inadvertently cause light and glare for motorists on White Rock Road, Sunrise Boulevard, and Douglas Road.*

PP, HD

Impacts related to light and glare would be greater under Phase 1 development than under the program (entire project site) level analysis under the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives. This phase of development would not include a wetland preserve along the southern boundary of the project site that would help to provide a buffer between project-related lighting and motorists and residents south of Douglas Road. Refer to Impact 3.11-6 for further discussion of this impact. Impacts would be **direct** and **significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur *[Similar]*

IM

Because the Impact Minimization Alternative provides for a wetland preserve in the southern portion of development Phase 1, a buffer between motorists and residents on the other side of Douglas Road would be created, and approximately 133 fewer acres of the project site would be developed in Phase 1, thus reducing the level of impacts as compared to the Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives. However, the same types of impacts would occur under Phase 1 development as under the program (entire project site) level, and because a large area of land would still be developed (967 acres), impacts would be **direct** and **significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

NF Because the No Federal Action Alternative provides for a wetland preserve in the southern portion of development Phase 1, a buffer between motorists and residents on the other side of Douglas Road would be created, and approximately 133 fewer acres of the project site would be developed in Phase 1, thus reducing the level of impacts as compared to the Proposed Project Alternative. However, the same types of impacts would occur under Phase 1 development as under the program (entire project site) level, and because a large area of land would still be developed (982 acres), impacts would be **direct** and **significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

NP Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. These mining activities would alter visual character at the project site by mining the existing piles of dredge tailings, as well as the existing vegetation.

Because no development would occur, under the No Project Alternative there would be no project-related sources of light and glare. **No direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. *[Lesser]*

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-6 would reduce significant impacts associated with effects from new sources of light and glare (by reducing lighting intensity) under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives to a **less-than-significant** level.

**IMPACT  
3.11-14**

**New Skyglow Effects.** *Development Phase 1 would require lighting of new development, which could inadvertently cause nighttime skyglow that would obscure views of stars, constellations, and other features of the night sky.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.11-7 for further discussion of this impact.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.11-6 above would partially reduce significant impacts associated with effects from skyglow under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, but would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because of the scale and location of the project site, screening or shielding light fixtures to direct light downward or the use of low-pressure sodium or other lighting would not reduce the effects of new skyglow on the night sky to a less-than-significant level; therefore, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Development is increasingly changing the visual character along roadway corridors in both the city and the county, from grazing/rural lands and vast areas of open space to urban uses, thus altering and limiting the views available to motorists along these roadways and residents living in the area. This trend will continue as future projects are implemented in the region and in Rancho Cordova as a whole, consistent with growth planned in the City General Plan. Substantial changes in visual conditions will continue as agricultural lands and open space are replaced by urban development. Increased urban development will also lead to increased nighttime light and glare and subsequent skyglow in the region and more limited views of the night sky. This is especially the case in the southern area of Rancho Cordova, which is planned to undergo a large-scale change from open space to urban uses. The cumulative effect of these changes on aesthetic resources from past and planned future projects, as well as the contribution from the project, is considered a direct, significant impact. Although these cumulative impacts can be minimized to a degree through vegetative and topographic screening of structures, use of outdoor lighting that limits glare, appropriate building design, and other measures, the significant cumulative impact cannot be fully mitigated. Therefore, the cumulative change of agricultural and open-space views in the project region to

urban land uses and the associated increase in nighttime light and glare and subsequent skyglow are considered direct, adverse, and significant and unavoidable impacts. In addition, the project's incremental contribution to these impacts is cumulatively considerable (i.e., significant in and of itself).

#### **3.11.4 RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

Residually significant visual-quality impacts would remain from the conversion of the rural, undeveloped viewshed in the project site to urban development and from new skyglow effects on the night sky because no feasible mitigation is available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. The impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.