

4.14 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

4.14.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the EIR evaluates the potential changes to the existing visual characteristics of the project site that could result from future development of the Project area. The analysis focuses on the potential loss of visual resources, effects on views, compatibility with the visual characteristics of surrounding uses, and the likelihood that sensitive receptors would be disturbed by light and glare generated or reflected by new structures within the vicinity of the Project area.

While proposed land use designations are shown in the Specific Plan, the exact design of the projects to be developed under the proposed CSP is not known at this time. Also, information about the location and design of future development in the Urban Reserve area will not be available until applications for specific plans and other planning approvals are filed for this area. Therefore, specific uses or building designs are not analyzed. Rather, the general visual effects of development are evaluated.

Information contained in this section is based on review of existing documentation, including:

- *Placer County General Plan, 1992*
- *City of Roseville General Plan, 2010 as amended*
- *City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines, 2008*
- *West Roseville Specific Plan Final EIR, 2004*
- *Draft Creekview Specific Plan including Design Guidelines (Appendix B), 2010*

The documents listed above are available for review during normal business hours at:

City of Roseville Permit Center

311 Vernon Street

Roseville, CA 95678

No comments related to aesthetics and views were received in response to the NOP (see Appendix B).

4.14.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**Regional Visual Resources**

The west side of the City of Roseville is generally regarded as a transitional zone between the flat, open terrain of the Central Valley to the west and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east. The region consists of rolling topography with gentle slopes; the area typically drains from east to west.

The dominant visual feature to the west is non-native grasslands, which are dry and earth-tone in color most of the year (from June through early spring). Vernal pools are a component of the grassland habitat during early spring until June. The flower production in and around the vernal pools provides some color contrast on a seasonal basis.

Development has become a prominent feature of the landscape character in the vicinity and is evident throughout the region, reflecting a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Development in some areas of the region has completely eliminated the historically rural character associated with regional ranching and agricultural operations. In many locations, development has segmented the remaining natural areas, thereby heightening the aesthetic value of remaining contiguous open space.

Long-range views within the region include views of the Sierra Nevada, Sutter Buttes, and the Coast Range. No prominent landscape features or areas of unique scenic quality have been identified in the vicinity of the project site. The most prominent man-made features are the Roseville Energy Park (REP) and the

Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant (PGWWTP) located south of the project area.

The CSP and Urban Reserve areas are characterized by wide expanses of flat to rolling grasslands with a riparian corridor along Pleasant Grove Creek.

CREEKVIEW SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

The On-Site Project area encompasses 501 acres of land, north and west of the City of Roseville corporate boundaries. Within On-Site Project area, the topography generally consists of rolling grasslands and riparian vegetation along the Pleasant Grove Creek corridor.

Views to the Project Area

The Project area is visible to the north, as one travels west on current Phillip Road (an extension of Blue Oaks Boulevard in the future) a rural paved road. The project site is also visible from the Fiddymont portion of the West Roseville Specific Plan area, east of the project.

Views from the Project Area

Views to the south consist of the Roseville Energy Park (REP) and the Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant. The views to the west are open, and include flat grasslands and the Pleasant Grove Creek riparian corridor.

East of the project site, on a clear day, long-range views include views of the Sierra Foothills and Sierra Nevada mountain range, in the distance. In the foreground is the Fiddymont portion of the WRSP area, which is partially developed, as well as industrial towers and buildings associated with the REP and PGWWTP. Figures 4.14-1 through 4.14-6 illustrate views throughout the Project area.

URBAN RESERVE

The Urban Reserve area is comprised of approximately 40 acres that contain grasslands, a segment of the Pleasant Grove Creek corridor, and one rural residence.

4.14.3 REGULATORY SETTING

Federal and State

There are no specific federal or state regulations pertaining to visual quality or aesthetics.

State

The California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) identifies a state system of eligible and designated scenic highways that, if designated, are subject to various controls intended to preserve their scenic quality. There are no state-eligible or designated scenic highways within the view-shed of the proposed project.

Local

City of Roseville General Plan

The City of Roseville General Plan contains goals and policies for enhancement and protection of visual quality. The following policies are directly applicable to the visual characteristics of new development:

City of Roseville General Plan Policies

Community Design Goal 1: Achieve a consistent level of high quality aesthetic and functional design through the development of, and adherence to, superior design concepts and principles as defined in the Communitywide Design Guidelines.

Goal 3: Encourage the planning and building of a city which sensitively integrates open space and natural resources, and promotes compatibility within and between natural and the urban environment.

Policy 1: Through the design review process, apply design standards that promote the use of high quality building materials, architectural and site designs, landscaping signage and amenities.

Policy 2: Continue to development and apply design standards that result in efficient site and building design standards that result in efficient site and building designs, pedestrian friendly projects that stimulate the use of alternative modes of transportation and the establishment of a functional relationship between adjacent developments.

Policy 3: Encourage designs that strike a balance between the incorporation of aesthetic and development requirements, and the economic considerations associated with development.

Policy 4: Promote flexibility in the design review process to achieve design objectives, and encourage projects with innovative, unique and creative architectural style and design.

Policy 5: Encourage, promote, and support art in public spaces and programs to enhance the design of the City.

Policy 6: Through the design review process, encourage site and building designs that are in scale and compatible with adjacent development with respect to height, bulk, form, mass, and community character.

Policy 7: Encourage project designs that place a high priority and value on open space, and the preservation, enhancement and incorporation of natural resources and other features including consideration of topography, vegetation, wetlands and water courses.

Policy 8: Encourage and promote the preservation of historic and/or unique culturally and architecturally significant buildings, features, and visual environments.

**FIGURE 4.14-1
NORTH VIEW AT FUTURE BLUE OAKS/WESTBROOK BOULEVARDS**



This photo was taken on existing Phillip Road, which is on the southern boundary of the project site. The photo is taken from the approximate location of the Blue Oaks Boulevard/Westbrook Boulevard intersection looking north. Grasslands are in the foreground. The riparian corridor along the Pleasant Grove Creek is located mid-view in the photo.

**FIGURE 4.14-2
EXISTING PHILLIP ROAD AND
FUTURE BLUE OAKS BOULEVARD CORRIDOR**



Figure 4.14-2 was taken on Phillip Road, a rural paved road on the southern edge of the project site. The view is toward the west and the project site is on the right side of the photo. The planned extension of Blue Oaks Boulevard generally follows the existing alignment of Phillip Road. Therefore, the photo shows the corridor for the extension of Blue Oaks Boulevard. The West Roseville Specific Plan area is on the left side of the photograph.

FIGURE 4.14-3

**VIEW FROM WESTERN EDGE OF CREEKVIEW
TOWARD REASON FARMS PANHANDLE**



Figure 4.4-3 was taken from the western edge of the project area, immediately south of the Pleasant Grove Creek riparian corridor. The view is to the west into the Off-Site Improvement area on the Reason Farms property,

FIGURE 4.14-4
WEST SIDE OF CREEKVIEW TOWARD REASON FARMS



Figure 4.14-4 was taken in the center of the project site, north of Pleasant Grove Creek. The view is toward the west into the Off-Site Improvement area on the Reason Farms property. In the foreground is an earthen berm on the north side of Pleasant Grove Creek. In the far view is the riparian corridor of the creek on the Reason Farms property.

FIGURE 4.13-5

PLEASANT GROVE CREEK THROUGH CREEKVIEW



Figure 4.13-5 shows a small portion of the south side of Pleasant Grove Creek.

Policy 9: The location and preservation of native oak trees and oak woodlands shall be a primary factor in determining site design, building location, grading, construction and landscaping and in establishing the character of projects through their use as a unifying element in both new and existing development.

A full list of the City's General Plan policies is found in Appendix P.

Creekview Specific Plan Design Guidelines

The CSP Design Guidelines specify design treatments within the CSP area, such as landscaping, setbacks, berms and other treatments that reduce potential visual incompatibilities.

City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines

The Community Design Visioning Committee (CDVC) was appointed by the City Council to review existing design policies and guidelines and to make recommendations for modifications so that the City's vision for project design aligns with the community's expectations. The City Council approved the CDVC's recommendations in the *Community Design Guidelines* adopted in March 2008. The City's Community Design Guidelines, which specify site layout and design, architectural treatments, and specific exterior materials and lighting guidelines, ensure that design is taken into consideration at the time development is proposed.

Design Goals

- Foster project designs that create and enhance a sense of identity and place.
- To promote site designs that preserve, enhance, and incorporate the natural features of a site as an element within the overall design.
- Ensuring project designs that are attractive and safe for customers, yield a variety of retail and business opportunities, and contribute to creating active gathering places for the community.
- Creating projects of superior architectural and visual interest, while recognizing the need for balance between form, function, and economic limitations.
- Incorporate environmentally sustainable features into project design.
- Consider and respond to the relationship and context of adjacent projects.
- Natural topography should be integrated into site design to the extent feasible.

4.14.4 IMPACTS

Methods of Analysis

The value attached to changes in visual character is largely subjective. This EIR does not seek to assign a judgment of “good” or “bad” to a proposed change; rather, it identifies any “substantial adverse effect,” as defined below, as a significant environmental impact.

A description of the Project area has been constructed from site visits and site photographs. The City of Roseville General Plan, and other applicable planning documents were reviewed to determine what visual elements have been deemed valuable by the community. Analysis focuses on the manner in which development could alter the visual elements or features that exist in or near the Project area.

This analysis assumes that development within the Project area will comply with the City’s General Plan policies, Improvement Standards, and Design Standards; therefore, such policies and standards are not specifically identified as mitigation.

The determination of which changes to the visual environment cross a threshold of “substantial adverse effect” or degradation is based on the criteria described in the following methodology summary. Following professionally accepted practice in visual analysis, visual impacts are defined as a consequence of three primary factors: (a) the existing scenic quality of an area; (b) the level of viewer exposure and concern with visual change; and (c) the level of actual visual change caused by the project as seen by a given viewer group. The overall visual sensitivity of each location is first established based on existing visual quality, viewer exposure, and viewer concern. These factors are then considered together with the level of expected visual change or contrast, and significance. Visual change is an overall measure of contrast in basic visual attributes such as form, line, color and texture as a result of the proposed project. Scenic view obstruction refers to the degree to which the proposed

project would block or intrude upon scenic view corridors, especially those recognized in public policies. Thus, a substantial adverse effect can occur when viewers with high levels of overall visual sensitivity (i.e., high viewer concern and visual exposure, in settings of high existing visual quality) encounter high levels of visual change (contrast) or scenic view obstruction as a result of the project.

Thresholds of Significance

For purposes of this EIR, a significant impact would occur if development proposed in the Project area would do any of the following:

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character (day or night) of the site, including alterations to the natural terrain or topography
- Create a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage a scenic resource
- Introduce uses that are visually incompatible with existing or planned uses in areas that have visual access to the plan area
- Create new sources of light and/or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views on adjacent and nearby residences or public uses.

IMPACT 4.14-1	ALTERATION OF THE VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE AND VICINITY	
Applicable Policies and Regulations	Roseville General Plan Policies Roseville Community Design Guidelines CSP Design Guidelines	
	CSP	Urban Reserve
Significance with Policies and Regulations	Significant	Significant
Mitigation Measures:	None Available	None Available
Significance after Mitigation:	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable

Development of the project area would convert over 368 acres of currently undeveloped grassland to urban uses. The introduction of residences, commercial uses, and infrastructure in an area that is present undeveloped would change the existing visual character of the area. Potential impacts associated with the CSP and potential future development of the Urban Reserve area are discussed below.

CREEKVIEW SPECIFIC PLAN

The visual character of the CSP area is dominated by open, rolling grasslands, and is visible from a variety of short- and long-range viewpoints. The area to the east of the CSP area are currently undeveloped, but is anticipated to develop with residential uses in the future (approved Fiddymment Farms portion of the West Roseville Specific Plan). Development of the CSP would extend this urban edge. Although the CSP development would be visually compatible with surrounding developed and approved development to the east, it would substantially and permanently alter the existing visual character of the CSP area by introducing an extensive roadway network, houses, commercial uses and other urban facilities into an undeveloped area.

The CSP would convert an estimated 325 acres of the 501-acre On-Site Project area into urban uses. Approximately 136 acres would remain as open space and 40 acres would remain as Urban Reserve. Conversion of the majority of the site to urban uses would represent a significant and unavoidable impact for which there are no feasible mitigation measures that would reduce the impacts to an acceptable level. Because a majority of the grasslands on the site would be developed, and the remaining open space areas would either be adjacent to or surrounded by development, the character of the drainage corridors would change from meandering rural streams to open space corridors in open space preserves within an urban landscape.

Proposed 60 kV overhead electrical transmission lines will traverse the CSP area, extending west from the West Roseville Specific Plan area, along the south edge of the Pleasant Grove Creek open space corridor to Westbrook Boulevard, and

then north up Westbrook Boulevard where it will connect with a planned substation (parcel C-81). North of Pleasant Grove Creek open space preserve, the 60kV line easement is located adjacent to the east side of Westbrook Boulevard, which includes a 50-foot wide landscape corridor. The transmission poles will be buffered by landscaping and existing vegetation, yet visible from vehicles traveling along Westbrook Drive.

An electric substation would be constructed on the northwest corner of Westbrook Boulevard and Benchmark Drive. The substation would be on an approximately 0.90-acre site with a 12-foot-high fence surrounded by landscaping. Electrical structures associated with the substation would range in height from 10 to 40-feet. Approximately two, 60-foot tall, 60 kV tubular steel poles would be installed in order to connect the substation to the proposed power lines along Westbrook Boulevard, above the horizon. A paved driveway would be installed within the substation for internal circulation of vehicles.

Roseville General Plan Policies for Community Design serve to promote the visual compatibility of developments through the application of community design standards. Specifically, Policy 6 requires site and building designs that are in scale and compatible with adjacent development. In addition, the CSP Design Guidelines include specific screening requirements for utilities and mechanical units. Implementation of the General Plan policies and the CSP Design Guidelines would help reduce the significant impacts, but not to less than significant levels. The visual alteration of the project site would be **significant and unavoidable**.

URBAN RESERVE

If annexed to the City, it is more likely that the Urban Reserve area will develop in the future. It is assumed that the Pleasant Grove Creek Corridor would remain in open space. However, replacing the remaining portion of the grasslands and a rural residence with urban development would be a **significant and unavoidable** aesthetic and visual impact because it is assumed that a majority of the 40 acres of Urban Reserve area would be

converted to similar uses as are proposed for the CSP area, including residential, park, and supporting infrastructure.

IMPACT 4.14-2	NEW SOURCES OF LIGHT AND GLARE	
Applicable Policies and Regulations	Roseville Community Design Guidelines CSP Design Guidelines	
	CSP	Urban Reserve
Significance with Policies and Regulations	Significant	Potentially Significant
Mitigation Measures:	MM 4.14-1 Sight Lighting to Minimize Nuisance, MM 4.14-2 Low Glare Materials for New Development, and MM 4.14-3 Avoid Light Spill Over into Pleasant Grove Creek and Open Space Areas	WMM-4.13-2 Light and Glare Policies
Significance after Mitigation:	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable

CREEKVIEW

Introduction of artificial light into a rural area contributes to the change in character of that area from rural to urban. In addition, lighting can be an annoyance if it spills into backyards or homes, because it can interfere with sleeping or other activities. Development of the CSP area would create light from urban development such as residences and commercial uses, as well as recreational facilities, streetlights, and vehicles. This would increase the ambient nighttime illumination level and result in a substantial change in the amount of light generated in the CSP area. This would also alter nighttime

views to the site, which is currently unlighted, and would become views of a developed, lit environment.

The CSP area is currently undeveloped land, and contains very few light sources (except for light from the existing residential unit/trailer that is being rented on the site, and the Harris residence in the Urban Reserve). Development of the proposed CSP area would result in a substantial change in the amount of light generated on the site and alter nighttime views of the site. There would be light from residences, businesses, streetlights, and vehicles, all of which would increase the ambient nighttime illumination level.

The City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines specify that "cut-off" light fixtures must be used on new exterior lighting. These fixtures are screened to direct light into specific areas and prevent it from spilling into areas where it is not required. For example, with cut-off fixtures, a security light can be directed entirely toward the parking area and "cut off" at the fence line.

The CSP Design Guidelines do not include any provisions to control spillover lighting into commercial uses. A commercial area is planned in the project area at the corner of Blue Oaks and Westbrook Boulevards.

Neighborhood parks are typically not lighted using sports lights. Security lights are included in neighborhood parks. These lights are located in high use areas for ease of police surveillance. Security lights are 100 watts. In order to ensure impacts associated with exterior building lights, park lights, and street lights would be reduced, MM 4.14-1 requires siting of light-producing uses to minimize impacts on adjacent sensitive uses and shielding of light fixtures. Low-glare materials would be utilized for new buildings to reduce glare impacts as required by MM 4.14-2. To ensure lighting would not adversely affect wildlife in open space areas and along Pleasant Grove Creek and University Creek, MM 4.14-3 would reduce light impacts on nearby open space through design measures and light direction and placement. Further, the Roseville Parks Department uses energy efficient low emitting diodes (LED) lights which produce less light spill over.

Although proper site design and timing restrictions are likely to reduce light impacts to a large degree, if a level of lighting appropriate for competitive-level sporting event is necessary, it may not be feasible to significantly reduce the amount of light. Additionally, because construction of sports facilities associated with the school would be under the jurisdiction of the Roseville City School District, implementation of the CSP Design Guidelines and these mitigation measures would be at the discretion of the school district. The City of Roseville cannot compel the school district to implement these measures.

Due to its current open grassland character, the CSP area is not currently a source of daytime glare. Glare is caused by light reflection from pavement, vehicles, and building materials such as reflective glass and polished surfaces. During daylight hours, the amount of existing glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight; at night, artificial lighting can generate glare; particularly in commercial and business/professional areas. Windows comprise a large portion of building surfaces, creating potential for glare that would increase with the use of reflective coatings and reflective building materials. The problem is most noticeable with large buildings that have reflective surfaces. Residential and small commercial buildings are not generally considered sources of substantial glare. Daytime glare could result from commercial and office buildings associated with the CSP. MM 4.13-1 would ensure that low-glare materials would be used for development of new large-scale buildings associated with the CSP.

MM 4.14-1, MM 4.14-2 and MM 4.14-3, the City of Roseville Design Guidelines, and the CSP Design Guidelines provide effective methods to reduce light and glare impacts. Nevertheless, the change in the level of light and glare on the CSP site would remain **significant and unavoidable**, because the area currently lacks light and glare sources and would still be visibly changed in the context of nighttime lighting and daytime glare.

URBAN RESERVE

Any future development of the Urban Reserve area would result in light from new urban uses, which would increase ambient nighttime illumination and result in a substantial change in the amount of light generated on the site. Previously adopted WMM 4.13-2 Light and Glare Policies, identified in the WRSP EIR, continues to apply to the Urban Reserve area and requires that specific plans and development proposals include policies to reduce the effects of nighttime lighting and glare, including spillover, through the use of techniques such as shielding and construction with low glare materials. Nevertheless, because development of the Urban Reserve area would introduce urban lighting into this currently unlighted area, the impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

IMPACT 4.14-3	DEGRADATION OF SCENIC RESOURCES AND SCENIC VISTAS	
Applicable Policies and Regulations	None Applicable	
	CSP	Urban Reserve
Significance with Policies and Regulations	Significant	Significant
Mitigation Measures:	Compliance with the City's General Plan, Community Design Guidelines and the CSP Design Guidelines	Compliance with the City's General Plan, Community Design Guidelines and the CSP Design Guidelines
Significance after Mitigation:	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable

There are no designated scenic roads, resources, or vistas within or adjacent to the project area. The area is not a designated scenic area in the City of Roseville or Placer County General Plans. Long-range views include the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east, while short-range views include views of the adjacent residential area within the City of Roseville and undeveloped areas to

the west. Development within this area would change scenic resources and scenic vistas.

CREEKVIEW SPECIFIC PLAN

The proposed CSP would result in large-scale development projects that could impair views of the Sierra Nevada by placing buildings within view corridors. While views of the mountains to the east and the rural grasslands to the west are not designated scenic resources, they are a significant part of the visual landscape. The CSP includes open space areas that provide view corridors from within the site, but views would still be obstructed by surrounding development. While these views are not designated scenic vistas, development of the CSP would nonetheless change existing view corridors, which is considered a **significant** impact.

Mitigation is not available to reduce this impact. However, all CSP development would be required to comply with the City's Design Guidelines, General Plan policies, and Creekview Design Guidelines, all of which are intended to reduce aesthetic impacts. This impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**, even with compliance with these policies.

URBAN RESERVE

Similar to the CSP, future development of the Urban Reserve area would result in the obstruction of view corridors of the Sierras and views toward the undeveloped portions of Placer County. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Future development would be required to meet the City's Communitywide Design Guidelines and the General Plan policies to reduce aesthetic impact. Nevertheless, this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

4.14.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

The Project area was included in the program-level analysis of the West Roseville Specific Plan Final EIR. Mitigation adopted by the City Council at time of approval in 2004 is still applicable in the CSP area unless superseded by CSP project-specific mitigation, and will continue to apply to the Urban Reserve area unless noted. The following refers to the previously adopted WRSP mitigation measures as "WMM", and will show either ~~strikeout~~ for language that is being eliminated from the previously adopted WMMs or underline for language that is proposed to be added to the previously adopted WMMs.

WMM 4.13-2 *Light and Glare Policies (Impact 4.14-2 Urban Reserve)*

Specific Plans and/or other development proposals for the ~~Remainder Area~~ Urban Reserve shall include policies or conditions of project approval that reduce the effects of nighttime illumination and glare from the ~~Remainder Area~~ Urban Reserve. The Specific Plans and/or development proposals shall include policies and/or conditions that require that lighting for stadiums and ball fields be shielded and designed to distribute light in the most efficient manner, using the minimum amount of light to achieve the necessary illumination for the use, and that hours of operation be limited to avoid nuisances. In addition these policies and/or conditions should ensure that outdoor light does not spill over into creeks or open space preserves, and that low-glare materials are used on office, commercial and industrial buildings.

MM 4.14-1 *Site Lighting to Minimize Nuisance (Impact 4.14-2-CSP)*

Light producing uses, such as ball fields, within the CSP Area shall be located and oriented to minimize visual impacts on adjacent residential areas. Lighting shall be shielded and designed to distribute light in the most effective and efficient manner, using the minimum amount of light to achieve the necessary illumination for the use, as defined by suggested lighting standards for competitive play.

MM 4.14-2 *Low-Glare Materials for New Development (Impact 4.14-2- CSP)*

In order to reduce the effects of daytime glare from development of commercial or office uses within the CSP Area, building developers shall make use, when feasible, of low-glare materials.

MM 4.14-3 *Avoid Light Spill Over into Pleasant Grove Creek and Open Space Areas (Impact 4.14-2- CSP)*

Outdoor lighting shall be placed, designed and directed so as to avoid light spillover into the habitat of Pleasant Grove Creek and the Open Space Preserve areas located immediately adjacent to the open space and shown on the Land Use Map as parcels C-1 to C-7, C9-C-12, C-20- C-24, C-40, C-61 to C-62, C-71, and C-81 to C-84.

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