

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 land use designations have been applied to all land in the Project area, the exact design of the projects to be developed under the proposed SVSP 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, 2004 as amended*
- *City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines, 2008*
- *West Roseville Specific Plan Final EIR, 2004*
- Proposed Sierra Vista Specific Plan and Design Guidelines

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 were received relative to aesthetics and views 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 other 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 north of the West Roseville Specific Plan area, and the Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) corridor within the Project area.

The SVSP is characterized by wide expanses of flat to rolling grasslands traversed by Curry Creek. Three rural residences are located in the southwest portion of the project area.

SIERRA VISTA SPECIFIC PLAN

The Project area encompasses 2,064 acres of land, south and west of the City of Roseville corporate boundaries. Within the Project area, the topography generally consists of rolling grasslands.

Views to the Project Area

The Project area is visible as one approaches from either Fiddymment Road or Baseline Road. It is also visible from the residences on the east side of Fiddymment Road, or from the south boundary of the West Roseville Specific Plan. There are very few trees on the site, so the primary view is of grasslands, the WAPA corridor, and the strawberry patch on Baseline Road.

The western boundary of the Project area is not as visible because the Project area is indistinguishable from the landscape of the surrounding areas, which have similar topography and vegetation.

Views from the Project Area

Views to the north consist of construction activities and residential uses associated with the WRSP. Views to the east include Fiddymment Road, a sound wall, a meandering sidewalk, a landscape corridor, and residential uses associated with the North Roseville Specific Plan area. To the south is rural residential and open space associated with the proposed Placer Vineyards Specific Plan. No buildings over two-stories are located within the immediate vicinity. The views to the west are open, and include flat grasslands and a continuation of the WAPA corridor.

West of the project site, on a clear day, long-range views include views of the Sierra Foothills and Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Figures 4.14-1 through 4.14-6 illustrate views throughout the Project area.

URBAN RESERVE

The Urban Reserve area is comprised of 437 acres that contain grasslands and rolling topography. To the south is rural residential and open space associated with the proposed SVSP. No buildings over two-stories are located within the immediate vicinity. To the west is also grassland, associated with the Proposed Regional University project and the Curry Creek Study Area.

4.14.3 REGULATORY SETTING

Federal and State

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

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.

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.

**FIGURE 4.14-1
SIERRA VISTA SPECIFIC PLAN AREA
VIEW TOWARD THE CONLEY RESIDENCE**



**FIGURE 4.14-2
VIEW OF WAPA CORRIDOR
TOWARD EAST**



**FIGURE 4.14-3
VIEW OF STOCK POND
IN CENTRAL PORTION OF THE PROJECT AREA**



**FIGURE 4.14-4
VIEW FROM RICHLAND URBAN RESERVE
NORTH TOWARD THE WRSP OPEN SPACE BUFFER**



**FIGURE 4.14-5
CURRY CREEK DRAINAGE CHANNEL
VIEW SOUTH TOWARD BASELINE ROAD AND
THE PROPOSED PLACER VINEYARD SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**



FIGURE 4.14-6
AERIAL VIEW WEST FROM FIDDYMENT ROAD IN THE FOREGROUND,
OF THE SIERRA VISTA SPECIFIC PLAN AREA.¹



Sierra Vista Specific Plan Design Guidelines

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

The Design Guidelines are part of the specific plan, which can be found in Appendix L of this EIR.

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 modification 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.

¹ Photography by Jeff Glazner taken October 29, 2008.

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” change; rather, it identifies any substantial adverse change as significant.

A description of the Project area has been constructed from site visits, aerial photographs, and site photographs. The City of Roseville General Plan as well as 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.

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
- Create a substantial adverse effect on 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 directly illuminate 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 SVSP Design Guidelines	
	SVSP	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 1,600 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 SVSP and potential future development of the Urban Reserve area are discussed below.

SIERRA VISTA SPECIFIC PLAN

The visual character of the SVSP area is dominated by open, rolling grasslands, and is visible from a variety of short- and long-range viewpoints. The areas to the east of the SVSP have been developed with residential uses. Development of the SVSP would extend this urban edge. Although the SVSP would be visually compatible with surrounding developed and approved development to the north, it would substantially and permanently alter the existing visual character of the SVSP area by introducing an extensive roadway network, houses, offices, commercial and other urban facilities into an undeveloped area.

The SVSP would convert an estimated 1,626 acres of the 2,064-acre site into urban uses. Approximately 256 acres would remain as open space. 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 running through an urban landscape.

In 2007, the SACOG hired Urban Advantage, a visual simulation consultant, to look at options for what Greenfield development might look like if it were designed with smart growth principles consistent with the Blueprint. The following pictures in Figures 4.14-7 through 4.14-9 show the possible progression of the development of one of the commercial mixed-use centers in the Sierra Vista Specific Plan area.

Within the SVSP area, potable water tanks and recycled water tanks would be visible. The water tanks would be 25 to 30 feet in height and approximately 170 feet in diameter.

In addition, 60 kV overhead electrical transmission lines will traverse the SVSP area, extending the corridor from the West Roseville Specific Plan area south down Westside Drive until it reaches the WAPA corridor. These overhead electrical transmission lines will be located within a public utility easement. The 60kV line easement is located adjacent to the east side of Westside Drive, which includes a 35-foot wide landscape corridor. The transmission poles will be buffered but still visible from vehicles traveling along Westside Drive. Once the 60 kV line reaches the WAPA corridor it will take a 90 degree turn east and follow the open space/utility corridor where it will eventually

connect to the Fiddymment substation. There are two high density residential parcels on Westside Drive that would be adjacent to the 60 kV corridor.

The existing WAPA 230kV transmission corridor would remain a significant visual feature of the plan with development of the SVSP. The corridor would be visible from almost any land use north of proposed Road "B," because it cuts across the entire SVSP area.

A new electric distribution substation would be constructed north of the WAPA corridor on the east side of Westside Drive. The substation would be on a 1-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 Westside Drive, 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 SVSP Design Guidelines include specific screening requirements for utilities and mechanical units. Implementation of the General Plan policies and the SVSP 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. Replacing rural grasslands with urban development would be a **significant and unavoidable** aesthetic and visual impact because it is assumed that a majority of the 437 acres of Urban Reserve area would be converted to similar uses as are proposed for the SVSP area, including residential, commercial, and supporting infrastructure.

FIGURE 4.14-7 - EXISTING VIEW

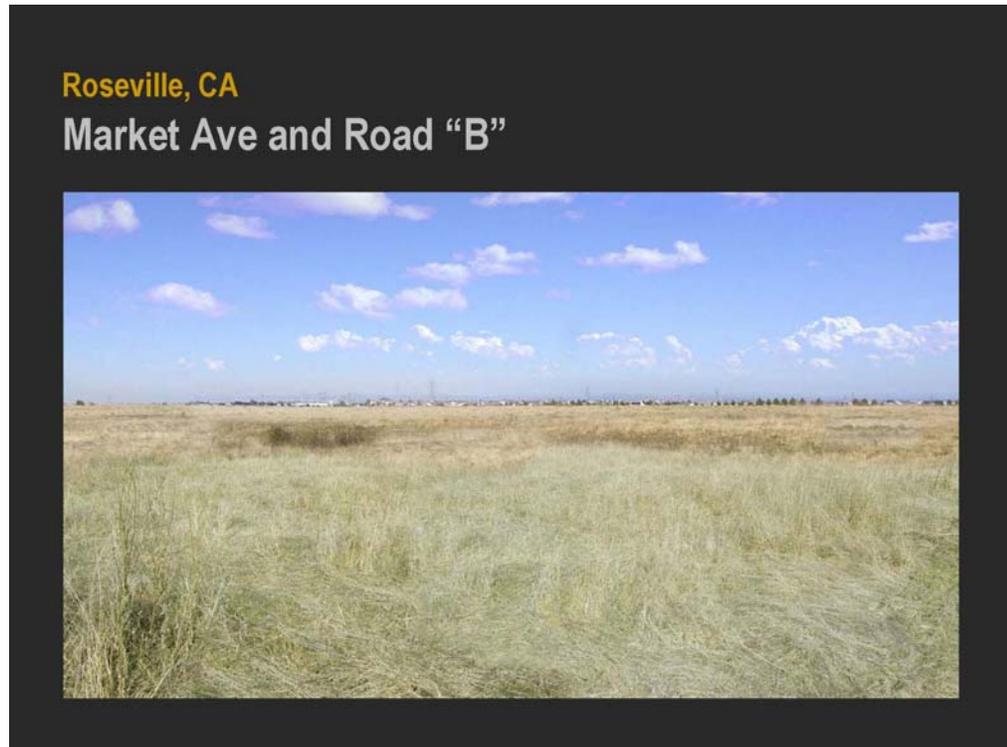
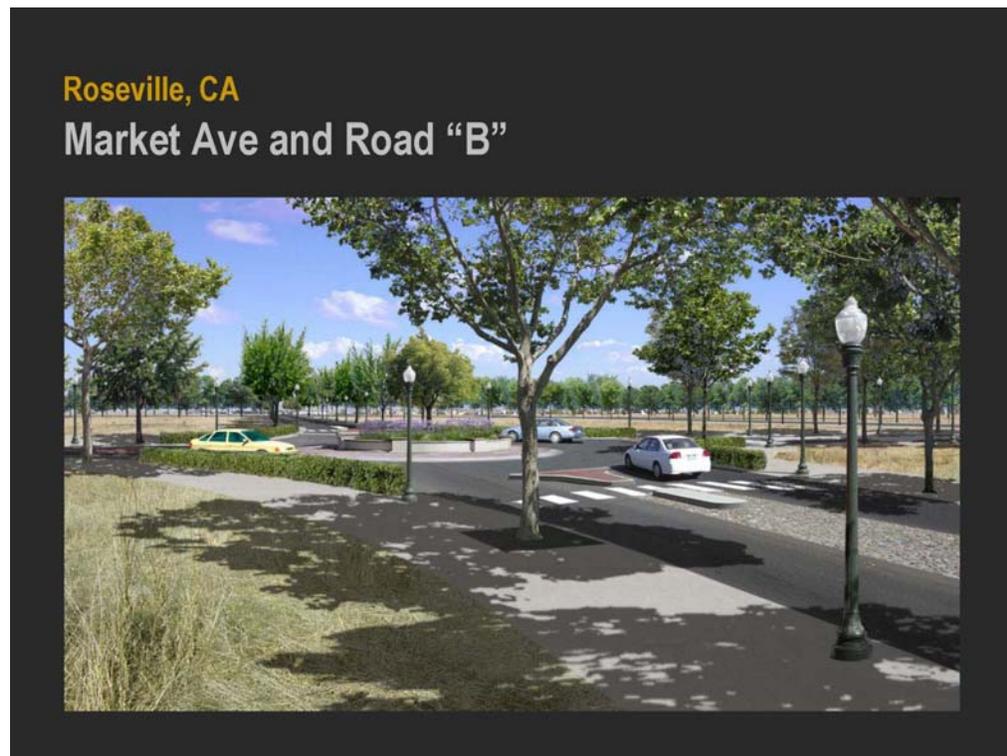
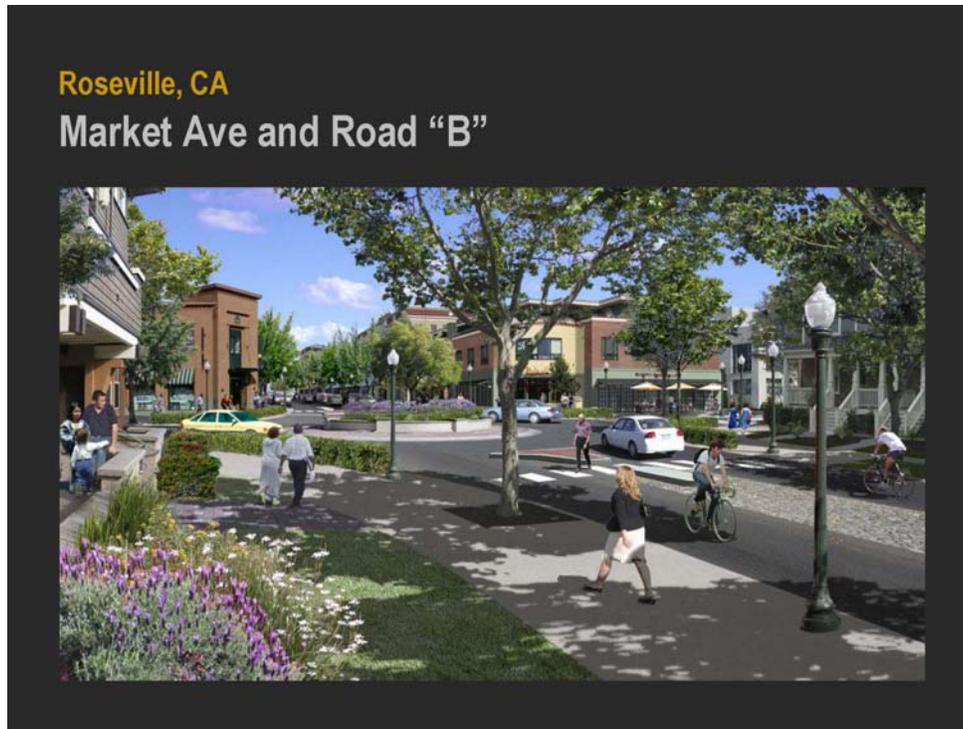


FIGURE 4.14-8 VISUAL SIMULATION - PARTIAL DEVELOPMENT





**FIGURE 4.14-9
VISUAL SIMULATION-DEVELOPMENT AT MARKET AND ROAD "B" AT BUILDOUT²**

IMPACT 4.14-2	NEW SOURCES OF LIGHT AND GLARE	
Applicable Policies and Regulations	Roseville Community Design Guidelines SVSP Design Guidelines	
	SVSP	Urban Reserve
Significance with Policies and Regulations	Significant	Potentially Significant
Mitigation Measures:	MM 4.14-1 (A), MM 4.14-1 (B), MM 4.14-2, and MM 4.14-3 Measures to reduce light impacts	WMM-4.13-2 Light and Glare Policies
Significance after Mitigation:	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable

² Source: Urban Advantage 2008

SIERRA VISTA

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 SVSP 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 SVSP area. This would also alter nighttime views to the site, which is currently unlighted, and would become views of a developed, lit environment.

The SVSP is currently undeveloped land, and contains very few light sources (except for light from several residences in the southwest portion of the SVSP). Development of the proposed SVSP 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. In addition, parks and schools with sports facilities could use high-intensity lights for playing fields, which would create increased nighttime light.

The City of Roseville Community Design Guidelines specifies 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 SVSP includes two elementary schools and one middle school. It also includes one Citywide park. Potential visual incompatibilities associated with the Citywide park would be from lighting associated with stadiums or ball parks that could illuminate adjacent residential areas. The SVSP Design Guidelines do not include any provisions to control spillover lighting into commercial uses. There is a commercial mixed use area located adjacent to the Citywide park. The intent is to located compatible commercial uses that would support the high-end baseball field complex concept. However, this CMU site could also contain high density residential uses, which may be affected by light and glare from the ball park uses. Lights will be installed that focus on the ball fields and cut-off spillage and glare within 100 feet of the ball field side-lines. Games during the season would be completed by 9 p.m. Figure 4.14-10 illustrates a ball field lighting example.

FIGURE 4.14-10
BALLFIELD LIGHTING EXAMPLE



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 (a) and (b) recommends 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 recommended by MM 4.14-2. To ensure lighting would not adversely affect wildlife in open space areas and along Curry 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 schools would be under the jurisdiction of the school districts, implementation of the SVSP Design Guidelines and these mitigation measures would be at the discretion of the School District. The City of Roseville cannot compel the school districts to implement these measures.

The SVSP, due to its current open grassland character, 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 SVSP. MM 4.13-1 would ensure that low-glare materials would be used for development of new large-scale buildings associated with the SVSP.

MM 4.14-1 (a) and MM 4.14-1 (b), MM 4.14-2 and MM 4.14-3, the City of Roseville Design Guidelines, and the SVSP Design Guidelines provide effective methods to reduce light and glare impacts. Nevertheless, the change in the level of light and glare on the SVSP site would remain **significant and unavoidable**, because the area, which currently lacks light and glare sources, 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 proposal 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	
	SVSP	Urban Reserve
Significance with Policies and Regulations	Significant	Significant
Mitigation Measures:	Compliance with the City's General Plan, Communitywide Design Guidelines and the SVSP Design Guidelines	Compliance with the City's General Plan, Communitywide Design Guidelines and the SVSP 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 designated a 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 existing views.

SIERRA VISTA SPECIFIC PLAN

The proposed SVSP 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 SVSP 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 SVSP would nonetheless change existing view corridors, which is considered a **significant and unavoidable** impact.

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

URBAN RESERVE

Similar to the SVSP, 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 and unavoidable** 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.

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 to the project, especially to the Urban Reserve areas. This document includes the WRSP mitigation as "WMM" and provides ~~strikeout~~ to language that is being eliminated or underline to denote new language.

WMM 4.13-2***Light and Glare Policies (Impact 4.14-1 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(a) *Site Lighting to Minimize Nuisance (Impact 4.14-2 SVSP)*

Light producing uses, such as ball fields, within the SVSP Area shall be located and oriented to minimize visual impacts on adjacent residential areas. Lighting should 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 4.14-1(b) The developers shall be required to disclose to all adjacent residential areas (as shown as KT-1 and KT-40 on the Land Use Plan), through a deed disclosure or other similar notice approved by the City Attorney, that a citywide park is proposed that will contain outdoor lighting and noise from recreation activities;

M 4.14-2 *Use Low-Glare Materials for New Development(Impact 4.14-2 SVSP)*

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

MM 4.14-3 *Avoid Light Spill Over into Curry Creek and Open Space Areas (Impact 4.14-3 SVSP)*

Outdoor lighting shall be placed, designed and directed so as to avoid light spillover into the habitat of Curry Creek and the Open Space Preserve areas located immediately adjacent to the open space, as shown on the Land Use Map as parcels KT-1, KT-40, KT-30, KT-41, DF-1, DF-2, DF-40, CG-1, CG-82m JM-21, JM-3, and JM-4.

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