

### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the affected visual environment and regulatory setting, as well as the potential impacts on the aesthetics of the site and surrounding area that would result from implementation of the Project or its alternatives. This section also includes a description of mitigation measures that may reduce such impacts. The analysis of visual quality presented in this section is based primarily on the 2003 *Riverside County General Plan* (GPA No. 618), Land Use and Open Space Elements, *General Plan EIR No. 441* (2003), Riverside County Ordinance Nos. 460 and 655, the *Southwest Area Plan*, proposed Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area (2011), Wine Country zones of Ordinance No. 348, and the *Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines*.

### 4.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Below are descriptions of the environmental setting within the Project area. These descriptions provide background regarding the regional/ project setting in relation to other parts of the County, the existing visual conditions within the Project area, light and glare conditions of the area, and a description of the scenic resources located in the Project area and surroundings.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

##### Regional Setting

The Project is generally located in the southwestern portion of unincorporated Riverside County bordered by San Diego County to the south and San Diego and Orange Counties to the west. The Project area is made up of approximately 18,990 partially developed acres. It sits to the east of the City of Temecula, south of Lake Skinner and generally west of DePortola Road. From north to south it extends from Tualota Creek to Highway 79 and includes a small area to the south of Highway 79.

##### Project Setting

The Project is generally located in the Southwest Area Plan of the Riverside County General Plan. There are eleven policy areas designated within the Southwest Area Plan. They are important locales that have special significance to the residents of this part of the County. Many of these policies derive from citizen involvement over a period of decades in planning for the future of this area. In some ways, these policies are even more critical to the sustained character of the Southwest Area Plan than some of the land use designations, because they reflect deeply held beliefs about the kind of place this is and should remain. The Project area is defined by the proposed Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area of the Southwest Area Plan of the General Plan.

##### Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area

The Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area encompasses some of the most important agricultural land in the County. Three Districts have been established for this policy area – Winery, Equestrian, and Residential – to ensure the long-term viability of the wine industry while protecting the community's rural lifestyle. The many wineries and equestrian uses provide a significant tourist attraction to the region, which provides a continual economic benefit to the surrounding businesses. The overarching



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policies for this region promote a strong identity for Temecula Valley Wine Country and prevent land uses that are incompatible with existing agriculture and equestrian uses.

### Surrounding Land Uses

The Project area includes approximately 42 operating wineries, numerous rural residential parcels and equestrian facilities. Surrounding the Project area are the urbanizing cities of Temecula and Murrieta to the west, San Diego County to the south, and the unincorporated community of Sage to the east. Land surrounding the Project area varies from agricultural and natural open spaces, rural communities and suburban lots, to vacant land designated for future residential and commercial developments (refer to Table 4.1-1 *Surrounding Land Uses*).

Table 4.1-1  
Surrounding Land Uses

Area	Existing Land Use
North	Rural Mountainous, and Conservation - Habitat
South	Medium Density Residential, Conservation, Rural Mountains
East	Open Space Rural, Rural Residential,
West	City, Medium Density Residential

### Existing Visual Conditions within the Project Area

The Project is generally located within the Southwest Area Plan in the southwestern portion of unincorporated Riverside County. The visual character of the Southwest Area is described in the *Riverside County General Plan* as being framed by the Santa Ana Mountains, Santa Margarita, Agua Tibia ranges, and the Black Hills and consisting of a series of valleys separated by rolling hills. The eastern slopes of the Santa Ana Mountains are characterized by steep slopes and valleys, citrus and avocado orchards, and the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Preserve.

The Project area can generally be characterized as rural. Its scenic resources include vistas created by rolling hills, large lot residential and equestrian estates, equestrian centers, vineyards and other agricultural activities, and open space with views of ridgelines, rugged terrain, and a variety of natural habitats such as oak woodlands, tree stands and chaparral environments. Exhibit 4.1-1, *Site Area Photographs* depicts the existing visual conditions within the Project area.

### Light and Glare

Light pollution may most simply be described as the alteration of natural light levels in the outdoor environment owing to artificial light sources. It is commonly taken to mean excessive or obtrusive artificial light. There are two typical types of light intrusion. First, light emanates from the interior of structures and passes out through windows. Second, light projects from exterior sources passing in through the windows, such as: street lighting, security lighting, and landscape lighting. "Light spill" is

typically defined as the presence of unwanted and/or misdirected light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated.

Night lighting and glare can affect human vision, navigation and other activities. Glare is the sensation produced by luminance within the visual field that is significantly greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted, which causes annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility.

A major scientific resource, the Palomar Observatory, is located in San Diego County approximately 5.5 miles south of the Riverside County border. In general, astronomic observatories need to be sited at least 30 to 40 miles away from large, brightly lit areas, such as cities and other urban concentrations, in order to ensure adequate nighttime darkness of the sky. Back when established, over a century ago (1908), the Palomar Observatory was located in a remote, undeveloped region. However, in the last century, growth and urban development have spread tremendously throughout Southern California, particularly in western Riverside County and the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, as well as within the Coachella Valley.

### Scenic Routes

Scenic Highways are a unique component of the circulation system as they traverse areas of unusual scenic or aesthetic value that are not typical of other areas in the County. The intent of the scenic highway designation is to conserve significant scenic resources along scenic highways for future generations and to manage development along scenic highways and corridors so that it will not detract from the area's natural characteristics.

Three highways within the Southwest Area Plan have been nominated for Scenic Highway status. One of them is the portion of State Route 79 South that passes through the Project area is designated as an Eligible Scenic Highway. State Route 79 South offers views as diverse as adjacent the rural horse ranches in Valle de los Caballos, the grapevines of Wine Country, and distant views of Palomar Mountain. Development along the designated scenic highways and roadways are managed so as not to detract from the areas scenic quality.

Since 2000, the State of California has not designated any new State Scenic Highways nor has the State added any roadways to the State Eligible list within Riverside County. While a number of roadways within Riverside County remain as County Eligible Scenic Highways, no roadways have been officially designated as County Scenic Highways.

### **4.1.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

Descriptions of the existing Federal, State, and Local regulations pertaining to aesthetics, light and glare are provided below. In addition, descriptions of the relevant General Plan policies, development standards of the proposed zoning, and design guidelines are summarized to provide context regarding the current regulatory framework that governs this resource within the Project area.

#### **EXISTING STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS**

The California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) State Scenic Highway Program provides for the designation of scenic or eligible scenic highways, as well as scenic corridors. Scenic corridors are evaluated based on existing scenic areas adjacent to and visible from (but not within) the highway right-

of-way and featuring primarily scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance and jurisdictional lines determine corridor boundaries. CalTrans scenic highway consideration is based upon "how much of the natural landscape a traveler sees and the extent to which visual intrusions impact the scenic corridor." As part of the designation process, the local governing body must develop and implement a corridor protection program containing the following five legislatively-required elements:

1. Regulation of land use and density of development (i.e., density classifications and types of allowable land uses);
2. Detailed land and site planning (i.e., permit or design review authority and regulations for the review of proposed developments);
3. Control of outdoor advertising (i.e., prohibition of off-premise advertising signs and control of on-premise advertising signs);
4. Careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping (i.e., grading ordinances, grading permit requirements, design review authority, landscaping and vegetation requirements); and
5. The design and appearance of structures and equipment (i.e., design review authority and regulations for the placement of utility structures, microwave receptors, wireless communication towers, etc.).

### EXISTING COUNTY REGULATIONS

#### **Ordinance No. 655: Regulating Light Pollution**

The intent of this ordinance is to restrict the permitted use of certain light fixtures emitting into the night sky undesirable light rays which have a detrimental effect on astronomical observation and research. Ordinance No. 655 defines lighting sources, establishes the type and manner of installation and operation of lighting, and details lighting prohibitions, as discussed above. Ordinance No. 655 applies to restriction zones Zone A and Zone B. These radius zones are based on the distance from the Palomar Observatory. Zone A encompasses a 15 miles radius and Zone B encompasses a 45 miles radius; both are centered on the observatory. See Exhibit 4.1-2, *Palomar Observatory Zones*.

#### **Ordinance No. 915: Regulating Outdoor Lighting**

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has initiated preparation of a County-wide Lighting Ordinance. If and when enacted, Ordinance No. 915, an Ordinance of the County Of Riverside Regulating Outdoor Lighting, would establish a County-wide standard for outdoor lighting that would generally prohibit light trespass. Existing nonconforming outdoor light fixtures that were not regulated by previously enacted development standards would be authorized for a limited amortization period. Additionally, consideration would be given to limited exceptions when appropriate (e.g., law enforcement activities).

#### **Ordinance No. 460 (Regulating the Division of Land) and Ordinance No. 461 (Road Improvement Standards and Specifications):**

The road standards provided in Ordinance No. 461 conform to the Circulation Element of the General Plan for the purpose of establishing proper standards, specifications, and directions for design and construction of any road or other land division improvements required to be constructed in the unincorporated territory of Riverside County. In regulating the road right-of-way, Ordinance No. 461

requires that the right-of-way be kept clear for the traveling public, subsequently protecting the visual aspects of scenic highways.

Ordinance No. 460 regulates the division of land for unincorporated Riverside County including the necessary improvements associated with the division of land. In regulating the division of land, the ordinance promotes maintaining visual resources by requiring that subdivisions comply with “Street Tree” provisions as well as installation requirements for electrical and communication facilities, specifically when located near scenic highways.

Together, Ordinance No. 460 and Ordinance No. 461 aid in the preservation and protection of existing aesthetics and visual resources while also potentially adding new visual resources to the County when street trees are required.

### **County Design Guidelines:**

Design guidelines provide development guidance for the congruent aesthetic character of a community as envisioned by the community. This may include development guidance for scale, intensity, architectural design, landscaping, light fixtures, sidewalks, trails, community logo, signage program and other visual design features of a project. The County’s current community guidelines include the following documents:

- *Community Center Design Guidelines* (Appendix J of the General Plan)
- *Countywide Design Standards and Guidelines*
- *Third and Fifth District Design Guidelines*
- *Design and Landscape Guidelines for Development in the 2nd Supervisorial District*
- *Citrus Vineyard Policy Design Guidelines*
- *Bermuda Dunes Design Guidelines*
- *Desert Edge Design Guidelines*
- *Lakeview Nuevo Design Guidelines*
- *Temescal Valley Design Guidelines*
- *Vista Santa Rosa Design Guidelines*
- *Rubidoux Village Design Workbook*
- *Landscape Review Design Guidelines*
- *Live Oak Tree Management Guidelines*
- *Mecca Design Guidelines*
- *Thermal Design Guidelines*
- *Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines* (proposed)

### **County Resource Guidelines:**

Resource guidelines provide guidance for the protection, maintenance and beautification of the County. These guidelines include requirements for the protection of existing oak trees on those parcels proposed for development as well as water efficient landscaping for development proposals. The current Riverside County Resource Guidelines include the following documents:

- *Landscape Review Design Guidelines* (with Ordinance No. 859)
- *Oak Tree Management Guidelines*

### EXISTING COUNTY GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Relevant aesthetic resources policies are identified in the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element, Circulation Element, and Multipurpose Open Space Element (MOSE). The General Plan policies are aimed at the preservation and enhancement of aesthetic resources and within the County. As development activities have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts on the County's aesthetic resources, the General Plan policies are also intended to guide the reasonable, safe, and orderly development of areas where potential aesthetic impacts can be properly mitigated for to reduce such impacts.

The following policies are identified in the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element, Circulation Element and the MOSE. These policies are considered applicable to the Project as proposed; however, as the County is currently updating the General Plan, it should be noted that such policies may be revised at a future date.

#### Land Use (LU) Element Policies

Policy LU 2.1 Accommodate land use development in accordance with the patterns and distribution of use and density depicted on the General Plan Land Use Map and the Area Plan Land Use Maps, in accordance with the following:

- a. Provide a land use mix at the countywide and area plan levels based on projected need and supported by evaluation of impacts to the environment, economy, infrastructure, and services.
- b. Accommodate a range of community types and character, from agricultural and rural enclaves to urban and suburban communities.
- c. Provide for a broad range of land uses, intensities, and densities, including a range of residential, commercial, business, industry, open space, recreation, and public facilities uses.
- d. Concentrate growth near community centers that provide a mixture of commercial, employment, entertainment, recreation, civic, and cultural uses to the greatest extent possible.
- e. Concentrate growth near or within existing urban and suburban areas to maintain the rural and open space character of Riverside County to the greatest extent possible.
- f. Site development to capitalize upon multi-modal transportation opportunities and promote compatible land use arrangements that reduce reliance on the automobile.
- g. Prevent inappropriate development in areas that are environmentally sensitive or subject to severe natural hazards.

Policy LU 4.1 Require that new developments be located and designed to visually enhance and not degrade the character of the surrounding area through consideration of the following concepts:

- a. Compliance with the design standards of the appropriate area plan land use category.
- b. Include consistent and well-designed signage that is integrated with the building's architectural character.

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- c. Mitigate noise, odor, lighting and other impacts on surrounding properties.
- d. Preserve natural features, such as unique natural terrain, drainage ways, and native vegetation, wherever possible, particularly where they provide continuity with more extensive regional systems.
- e. Require that new development be designed to provide adequate space for pedestrian connectivity and access, recreational trails vehicular access and parking, supporting functions, open space, and other pertinent elements.

Policy LU 4.4 Permit historically significant buildings to vary from building and zoning codes in order to maintain the historical character of the County; providing that the variations do not endanger human life and buildings comply with the State Historical Code. (AI 1)

Policy LU 6.1 Require land uses to develop in accordance with the General Plan and area plans to ensure compatibility and minimize impacts. (AI 1, 3)

Policy LU 6.2 Direct public, educational, religious, and utility uses established to serve the surrounding community toward those areas designated for Community Development and Rural Community uses on the applicable Area Plan land use maps. These uses may be found consistent with any of the Community Development, Rural Community, or Rural foundation designations, including the Rural Village Overlay, as well as the Open Space – Rural and Agriculture designations, under the following conditions: (AI 1, 3)

- a. The facility is compatible in scale and design with surrounding land uses, and does not generate excessive noise, traffic, light, fumes, or odors that might have a negative impact on adjacent neighborhoods.
- b. The location of the proposed use would not jeopardize public health, safety, and welfare, or the facility is necessary to ensure the continual public safety and welfare.

Policy LU 6.4 Retain and enhance the integrity of existing residential, employment, agricultural, and open space areas by protecting them from encroachment of land uses that would result in impacts from noise, noxious fumes, glare, shadowing, and traffic. (AI 3)

Policy LU 6.6 Require buffering between urban uses and adjacent rural/equestrian oriented land uses. (AI 3)

Policy LU 6.7 Buffer and/or maintain a natural edge for proposed development directly adjacent to national forests. (AI 3)

Policy LU 8.1 Provide for permanent preservation of open space lands that contain important natural resources, hazards, water features, watercourses and scenic and recreational values.

Policy LU 8.3 Incorporate open space, community greenbelt separators, and recreational amenities into Community Development areas to enhance recreational opportunities and community aesthetics, and improve the quality of life.

Policy LU 8.4 Allow development clustering and/or density transfers to preserve open space, natural resources, and/or biologically sensitive resources.

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- Policy LU 11.1 Apply the following policies to areas where development is allowed and that contain natural slopes, canyons, or other significant elevation changes, regardless of land use designation:
- Require that hillside development minimize alteration of the natural landforms and natural vegetation.
  - Allow development clustering to retain slopes in natural open space whenever possible.
  - Require that areas with slope be developed in a manner to minimize the hazards from erosion and slope failures.
  - Restrict development on visually significant ridgelines, canyon edges, and hilltops through sensitive siting and appropriate landscaping to ensure development is visually unobtrusive.
  - Require hillside-adaptive construction techniques, such as post and beam construction, and special foundations for development when the need is identified in a soils and geology report which has been accepted by the County.
  - Encourage the limitation of grading and cut and fill to the amount necessary to provide stable areas for structural foundations, street rights-of-way, parking facilities, and other intended uses.
- Policy LU 13.1 Preserve and protect outstanding scenic vistas and visual features for the enjoyment of the traveling public.
- Policy LU 13.3 Ensure that the design and appearance of new landscaping, structures, equipment, signs or grading within Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways corridors are compatible with the surrounding scenic setting or environment.
- Policy LU 13.4 Maintain at least a 50-foot setback from the edge of the right-of-way for new development adjacent to Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways.
- Policy LU 13.5 Require new or relocated electric or communication distribution lines, which would be visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways, to be placed underground.
- Policy LU 13.6 Prohibit off-site outdoor advertising displays that are visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways.
- Policy LU 13.7 Require that the size, height and type of on-premise signs visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways be the minimum necessary for identification. The design, materials, color and location of the signs shall blend with the environment, utilizing natural materials where possible.
- Policy LU 13.8 Avoid the blocking of public views by solid walls.
- Policy LU 15.4 Except in unusual circumstances, no wind turbines shall be sited on lands in excess of 25% of slope. (AI 3)



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- Policy LU 15.5 Except in unusual circumstances, restrict lands in excess of 25% of slope from uses associated with wind turbine development, such as access roads, except in specific instances where site-specific investigation indicates that no adverse impacts or increased hazard would result, and that visual impacts can be mitigated. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 15.12 Require the design and location of commercial wind energy developments to mitigate visual impacts. Issues which may be included in the review may be, but are not necessarily limited to, the following list, depending on turbine types, densities, and siting: (AI 3).
- a. Color of turbines;
  - b. Location and design of associated facilities such as roads, fencing, non Public Utilities Commission regulated utility lines, substations and maintenance buildings to minimize intrusion or disruption of the landscape;
  - c. Minimizing of disturbed ground and roadway, and restoring of the surface to natural vegetation;
  - d. Prohibition of brand names or advertising associated with wind turbines visible from any scenic highways or key viewpoints;
  - e. Need for interpretation and/or visitors center located at the end of the view shed of turbines.
- Policy LU 15.13 Require design measures for commercial wind energy development on sites near official or eligible State or County Scenic Highways designated (Figure C-7, Circulation Element) by Riverside County, and sites within those areas identified as "critical" and "very critical" by Environment Impact Report No. 158. Issues which may be included in the review may be, but are not necessarily limited to, the following list, depending on turbine types, densities, and siting:
- a. Except in unusual circumstances, no wind turbine would be sited on slopes in excess of 25%; the purpose of this standard is to prevent disturbance and degradation of landforms, and visual scarring by cut and fill, side casting, retaining walls, trenching, and vegetation removal; avoid skyline and ridgeline location.
  - b. Wind turbines should be set back from scenic highways and viewpoints; set back individual turbines far enough from scenic highways and key viewpoints so they do not obscure or overwhelm distinctive skylines; set back large turbines from small important landmarks so that they do not overwhelm the landform.
- Policy LU 17.1 Require grading to be designed to blend with undeveloped natural contours of the site and avoid an unvaried, unnatural, or manufactured appearance.
- Policy LU 17.3 Ensure that development does not adversely affect the open space and rural character of the surrounding area.
- Policy LU 20.1 Require that structures within Open Space-Rural be designed to maintain the environmental character in which they are located.
- Policy LU 20.2 Require that development be designed to blend with undeveloped natural contours of the site and avoid an unvaried, unnatural, or manufactured appearance. (AI 23)

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- Policy LU 20.4 Ensure that development does not adversely impact the open space and rural character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 22.6 Require setbacks and other design elements to buffer residential units to the extent possible from the impacts of abutting agricultural, roadway, commercial, and industrial uses. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 22.10 Require that residential units/projects be designed to consider their surroundings and to visually enhance, not degrade, the character of the immediate area. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 23.9 Require that commercial development be designed to consider their surroundings and visually enhance, not degrade the character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 24.8 Require that industrial development be designed to consider their surroundings and visually enhance, not degrade the character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 25.5 Require that public facilities be designed to consider their surroundings and visually enhance, not degrade the character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)

### **Circulation (C) Element Policies**

- Policy C 5.3 Require parking areas of all commercial and industrial land uses that abut residential areas to be buffered and shielded by adequate landscaping.
- Policy C 19.1 Preserve scenic routes that have exceptional or unique visual features in accordance with Caltrans' Scenic Highways Plan.
- Policy C 20.1 Ensure preservation of trees identified as superior examples of native vegetation within road rights-of-way through development proposals review process.
- Policy C 20.8 Avoid, where practicable, disturbance of existing communities and biotic resource areas when identifying alignments for new roadways, or for improvements to existing roadways and other transportation system improvements.
- Policy C 25.2 Locate new and relocated utilities underground when possible. All remaining utilities shall be located or screened in a manner that minimizes their visibility by the public.

### **Multipurpose Open Space (OS) Element Policies**

- Policy OS 5.5 New development shall preserve and enhance existing native riparian habitat and prevent obstruction of natural watercourses. Incentives shall be utilized to the maximum extent possible. (AI 25, 60)
- Policy OS 5.6 Identify and, to the maximum extent possible, conserve remaining upland habitat areas adjacent to wetland and riparian areas that are critical to the feeding, hibernation, or nesting of wildlife species associated with these wetland and riparian areas. (AI 60, 61)
- Policy OS 9.3 Maintain and conserve superior examples of native trees, natural vegetation, stands of established trees, and other features for ecosystem, aesthetic, and water conservation purposes. (AI 3, 79)

- Policy OS 9.4 Conserve the oak tree resources in the County. (AI 3, 78)
- Policy OS 21.1 Identify and conserve the skylines, view corridors and outstanding scenic vistas within the County.
- Policy OS 22.1 Design developments within designated scenic highway corridors to balance the objectives of maintaining scenic resources with accommodating compatible land uses.
- Policy OS 22.2 Study potential scenic highway corridors for possible inclusion in the Caltrans Scenic Highways Plan.
- Policy OS 22.4 Impose conditions on development within scenic highway corridors requiring dedication of scenic easements consistent with the Scenic Highways Plan, when it is necessary to preserve unique or special visual features.
- Policy OS 22.5 Utilize contour grading and slope rounding to gradually transition graded road slopes into a natural configuration consistent with the topography of the areas within scenic highway corridors.

### **Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Requirements**

- SWAP 13.1 Adhere to the lighting requirements of County ordinances for standards that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.

## **4.1.4 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

The Project would result in a potentially significant impact on aesthetic or visual resources if it would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and historical buildings within a State scenic highway.
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or aesthetic quality of a site and its surroundings.
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the areas.
- e) Interfere with the nighttime use of the Palomar Astronomical Observatory, as protected through Riverside County Ordinance No. 655.

## **4.1.5 IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION**

### **IMPACT METHODOLOGY**

The Project proposes a general plan amendment, zoning ordinance amendment, and design guidelines within a portion of the Southwest Area Plan. This change in land use policy and guidance is intended to promote the expansion and co-existence of winery, residential, and equestrian uses within this part of the County. As a result, an evaluation was performed to determine if any of the proposed changes would have the potential to significantly adversely affect scenic resources, nighttime uses of Mt.

Palomar Observatory, and light and glare within the Project Area. Existing and proposed land uses were examined for aesthetic compatibility with the existing conditions on and surrounding the sites. Proposed changes were evaluated on their potential to adversely affect the Project area's existing scenic values.

For each topic below, programmatic, construction, operational, and infrastructure improvement-related impacts associated with the Project have been identified and analyzed. When considering the significance of an individual impact, the EIR considers the existing local, State and Federal regulations, laws and policies in effect, including applicable County General Plan policies. In addition, the impact analysis considers the Project Design Features that have been incorporated into the Project to avoid, reduce or offset potential impacts. In cases where existing regulations and policies and Project Design Features may not adequately reduce Project impacts, the County has proposed additional mitigation measures in EIR No. 441 to reduce, avoid or offset Project-related impacts. These mitigation measures will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, which will be adopted as part of the Project approval process.

### **Southwest Area Plan (Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area)**

The following policies within the Southwest Area Plan (as proposed by the Project) address aesthetic resources:

- SWAP 1.2 Maintain distinct characters of the Winery, Equestrian, and Residential Districts through implementing zones to promote harmonious coexistence of these uses.
- SWAP 1.3 Permit wineries that maintain established on site vineyards on 10 acres or more provided that at least:
- 75% of the project site is planted in vineyards;
  - 75% of the grapes utilized in wine production and retail wine sales are grown or raised within the County; and
  - The winery facility has a capacity to produce 3,500 gallons of wine annually.
- SWAP 1.4 Permit limited commercial uses such as wineries, sampling rooms, and retail wine sales establishments on a minimum lot size of ten (10) acres to promote viticulture potential of this region.
- SWAP 1.5 Require a density of ten (10) acres minimum for tentative approval of residential tract and parcel maps after (adoption date) regardless of the underlying land use designation except in the Wine Country – Residential District where a density of five (5) acres minimum shall apply.
- SWAP 1.6 Allow small-scale cottage inns or cottage industries. Encourage agricultural operations, equestrian activities and vineyard planting with such uses to reflect the unique character of this Policy Area.
- SWAP 1.7 Develop and implement an integrated trails network that carefully considers equestrian uses, incidental commercial activities and agricultural operations, and includes, but is not limited to, regional trails, combination trails, bike paths, open space trails, historic trails, etc.

### Wine Country – Winery District

SWAP 1.9 Encourage new incidental commercial uses that promote tourist related activities for the wine industry as described in the Wine Country – Winery (WC-W) Zone.

### Wine Country – Equestrian District

SWAP 1.12 Encourage equestrian establishments that promote the equestrian lifestyle as described in the Wine Country – Equestrian (WC-E) Zone.

SWAP 1.13 Permit incidental commercial uses such as western stores, polo grounds, or horse racing tracks, petting zoos, event grounds, horse auction facilities, horse show facilities, animal hospitals, restaurants, delicatessens, and special occasion facilities in conjunction with commercial equestrian establishments on lots larger than 10 acres to encourage equestrian tourism in this community.

### Wine Country – Residential District

SWAP 1.14 Encourage residential development that complements the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area as described in the Wine Country – Residential (WC-R) Zone.

SWAP 1.15 Encourage tentative approval of residential tract and parcel maps to cluster development in conjunction with on-site vineyards or equestrian land provided that the overall project density yield does not exceed one dwelling unit per five (5) acres. While the lot sizes in a clustered development may vary, require a minimum lot size of 1 acre, with at least 75% of the project area permanently set-aside as vineyards or equestrian land.

## PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

The following Project Design Features are incorporated into the Project to avoid, reduce or offset potential significant environmental impacts, as reflected in the Project proposal materials, including the proposed General Plan Amendment, Zoning Ordinance Amendment, and Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines:

1. The Project will require that implementing projects adhere to the new development standards proposed under the Zoning Ordinance Amendment. This will include additional setbacks on major roadways, consistent allowable maximum height requirements, etc.
2. The Project will require that implementing projects comply with the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area Design Guidelines which provides recommendation and design guidance for implementing projects and expansion of roadways and trail facilities within the Project area.
3. The Project will require 75% of implementing project on future winery sites be planted with vineyards on 10 acres or more (revised SWAP Policy 1.3 and 1.4). This minimum planting requirement will effectively reduce building mass, increase open space, and promote the rural agricultural feel of the Project site.
4. The Project (revised SWAP Policy 1.5) will require a minimum lot size of ten (10) acres for new residential tract maps and parcel maps except in the Wine Country – Residential District. This large lot size requirement will preserve and enhance the rural feel in the Project area.

5. The Project (revised SWAP Policy 1.6) will encourage agricultural operations, equestrian activities and vineyard planting which will reflect the unique character of this Policy Area.
6. The Project (revised SWAP Policy 1.2) will maintain distinct rural, agricultural and equestrian characters in the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area through implementation of the Wine Country Districts and corresponding zones.
7. The Project (proposed SWAP Policy 1.11) will allow incidental commercial uses such as special occasion facilities, hotels, resorts, restaurants and delicatessens in conjunction with wineries on lots larger than 20 acres for WC-W zone and on lots larger than 10 acres for WC-WE zone, which will effectively reduce building mass, increase open space, and promote the agricultural feel of the Wine Country – Wine District.
8. The Project (proposed SWAP Policy 1.12) will encourage equestrian establishments and permit incidental commercial uses that compliment existing equestrian establishments on lots larger than 10 acres. This will promote the equestrian and rural nature of the Wine Country – Equestrian District.
9. The Project (proposed SWAP Policy 1.15) will encourage residential tract and parcel maps with an overall project density yield not to exceed one dwelling unit per five (5) acres. This large lot size requirement will preserve and enhance the rural feel in the Wine Country – Residential District.
10. The Circulation Element Amendment is anticipated to reduce average daily trips while maintaining the rural feel of Wine Country through adherence to the Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines. In addition, the *Proposed Circulation Map* (refer to Exhibit 3.0-7) shows several roadways would be downgraded from the current County's Circulation Element, and several intersections would be improved through the creation of roundabouts which would enhance or maintain the rural character of the Project area.
11. The Project through the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area Design Guidelines would recommend that all exterior lighting fixtures be directed downward and properly aimed at targeted areas, which will minimize light spillover. The Guidelines would also recommend that, if grading is necessary, contoured slopes or rounded slopes should be manufactured and buffer zones should be provided between buildings and vineyards for an easy transition from built areas to grapevines.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### ***Impact 4.1-1: Scenic Highways and Scenic Resources***

- Threshold:**
- a) *Would the project have a substantial effect upon a scenic highway corridor within which it is located?*
  - b) *Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and unique or landmark features; obstruct any prominent scenic vista or view open to the public; or result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?*

***Determination: Less than Significant with Mitigation***

### **Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts**

Scenic vistas created by rolling hills, vineyards, and open space occur throughout the Project area and will potentially be affected by activities authorized through the implementation of the Project. The Project will increase the number of wineries in the area with the goal of increasing tourism within the Project area. In addition, the Project will support a network of pedestrian/equestrian trails and country roadways to promote the rural feel of the area.

SR-79, which runs east to west through the southern portion of the Project area, is a County Eligible Scenic Highway and may one day be designated as a State Scenic Highway. The construction of buildings, fencing, signage, and lighting could detract from the scenic country feel for travelers using this highway. However, the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment would require a 100 to 300-foot setback depending upon the proposed use for implementing projects.

### **Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Development resulting from the Project is expected to occur over a 25-year period. Temporary construction-related impacts are anticipated to involve grading to construct building pads, access roads, walls or other fencing, signage, lighting, landscaping, onsite utilities, trails and necessary infrastructure improvements to support the implementing projects. In addition, offsite infrastructure improvements such as streets, sanitary sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities may be required, which are anticipated to be constructed within existing roadways/ right-of-ways. Construction activities will comply with applicable County policies and standard conditions, as well as the mitigation measures from EIR No. 441 noted below. Individual projects are also subject to site-specific construction measures to further reduce the potential for temporary aesthetic impacts. Therefore, construction-related impacts to scenic highways and scenic resources would be less than significant.

### **Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

The portion of Highway 79 located within the Project area runs through the Winery and Equestrian Districts in the southern portion of the Project area. The Project will support the wine industry and promote the establishment of wineries and other commercial activities that encourage tourism while continuing to encourage residential and equestrian uses. Impacts will mainly be associated with the change in visual character of the Project area resulting from implementing projects associated with new wineries and equestrian uses on vacant/ agricultural lands and/or the expansion of existing uses (i.e., wineries, equestrian facilities, single-family homes). As the overall character of the area will be maintained, consistent with current General Plan and zoning, and the Project serves to maintain the overall rural Wine Country feel through the proposed amendment to Zoning Ordinance No. 348, the proposed Policy Area policies, and the proposed Design Guidelines, the operational impacts to scenic highways and scenic resources would be less than significant.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities will be placed underground, out of view. However, the potential placement/ construction of infrastructure facilities (pump stations, water tanks, etc.) may detract from the scenic resources if located in close proximity to Hwy 79 South and not properly screened. Above-grade utilities are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, subject to County review if associated with a implementing project, or utility provider review

if a backbone facility. Site-specific CEQA review may be required depending on the nature and location of the proposed infrastructure.

Foreseeable near-term infrastructure projects may also include the development of roundabouts for Project area roadway intersections. Conceptual design guidelines for the anticipated roundabouts are included in the revised Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines. The Design Guidelines show roundabouts at major intersections along Rancho California Road and the Traffic Impact Study (Appendix I) described exact which intersections will require the construction of a roundabout within the Project area. These roundabouts would include landscaping features within the center of the roundabout and are intended to visual support the rural feel of Wine Country. As such, these roadway aesthetic features would create a beneficial impact to scenic resources in the Project area.

Therefore, infrastructure-related impacts to scenic resources are not anticipated to be significant considering the existing regulations (summarized below), as well as Project Design Features and EIR No. 441 mitigation measures.

### Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies

- a) Riverside County currently has programs in place that address the protection of Scenic Highways through the implementation of programs and ordinances that address each of the five standards set forth by the state's Scenic Highway Program.
- b) Riverside County Ordinance No. 460 requires that the installation of electrical and communication "distribution lines be underground when alignments parallel or cross scenic highways, natural scenic and historic sites... when it is deemed feasible," in order to promote scenic vistas and highways."
- c) General Plan policies LU 4.1, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.8, 15.4, 15.5, 15.12, 17.1, 22.6, 22.10, 23.9, 24.8 and 25.5 directly address avoiding impacts to scenic vistas by requiring that implementing projects be designed in such a manner that the visual aspects within a particular area are enhanced and not degraded. Specific development standards such as setback and grading requirements are set forth in these policies in order to protect scenic vistas as well as those policies set in place for the protection of open space in order to ensure reduced impacts to scenic vistas.
- d) General Plan policies LU 13.6 and 13.7 specifically address the protection of scenic vistas through the regulation of signage, including outdoor advertising displays for the County.
- e) General Plan policies LU 4.4, C 20.1, OS 9.3 and 9.4, provide requirements for development near trees, rock outcroppings and historical buildings within a State Scenic Highway.

### Mitigation Measure

**AES-1** The County shall work with utility and infrastructure providers to make sure that all sewer, water, and storm drain infrastructure improvements located along the Highway 79 South corridor do not significantly detract from the scenic quality of this area, or affect the County's ability to designate this roadway as a County Scenic Highway at a later date.

**AES-2** All implementing projects shall provide a signage plan for the project area prior to approval. This plan shall include the location of onsite buildings and structures, the location of existing buildings and structures within surrounding properties, the distance between existing buildings and structures and proposed signage, and other details of the proposed signage (i.e. type, size,



lighting, and architectural design) during each phase of project development. No off-site signage shall be considered for an implementing project during any phase of project development without prior approvals per Article XIX of County Ordinance 348.

### **Conclusion**

Adherence to the existing programs, ordinances, General Plan policies, and mitigation measure listed above would ensure that impacts associated with the Project remain less than significant

#### ***Impact 4.1-2: Mt. Palomar Observatory***

***Threshold:*** *Would the project interfere with the nighttime use of the Mt. Palomar Observatory, as protected through Riverside County Ordinance No. 655?*

***Determination:*** *Less than Significant*

### **Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts**

As shown in Exhibit 4.1-2, *Palomar Observatory Zones*, the Project is located within both Zones B and A of the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy area. Development of the Project area is expected to occur over a 25-year period and will involve constructing buildings, signage, lighting and utilities. The Project would introduce new sources of light within 15-45 miles of the Palomar Observatory. New sources of light from the Project would contribute to the overall skyglow of the region, which interferes with nighttime operations at the Observatory.

### **Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Construction related to the Project would occur within in the Palomar Observatory Zone. Any night time lighting associated with construction would comply with Riverside County Ordinance No. 655, and would be temporary in nature. Construction-related impacts to the Mt. Palomar Observatory would be less than significant

### **Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

The Project will support new and existing wineries, as well as other commercial activities that encourage tourism. The Project would also maintain large residential parcels and continue to support equestrian uses. Any facilities located within the Project area would be required to comply with Riverside County Ordinances No. 460 and No. 655. With implementation of Project Design Features and compliance with existing County requirements, operational impacts to the Mt. Palomar Observatory would be less than significant.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities will be placed underground, out of view. Any lighting from infrastructure associated with the Project would comply with Riverside County Ordinance Nos. 460 and No. 655 and other standard conditions or requirements. Utility lighting is typically limited to that necessary for safety and security. Infrastructure impacts to the Mt. Palomar Observatory would be less than significant.

### Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies

- a) Riverside County Ordinance No. 460 includes standards for residential lighting, as well as lighting for highways, roadways, intersections and traffic signage, requiring that all lighting standards, including private residential lighting comply with Riverside County Ordinance No. 655 which regulates light pollution.
- b) Riverside County Ordinance No. 655 addresses standards for acceptable nighttime lighting within Riverside County related to development within 15 to 45 miles of the Palomar Observatory by requiring the usage of low pressure sodium lamps for outdoor lighting fixtures and regulating the hours of operation for commercial/industrial uses in order to reduce lighting impacts on the Observatory. Both Zones A and B require the use of low-pressure sodium lamps, shielded outdoor lighting, restricted hours of operation as well as restrictions for outdoor advertising displays.
- c) Southwest Area Plan policy 13.1 requires that new developments adhere to the lighting requirements of County ordinances for standards that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.
- d) General Plan policy LU 4.1 requires that new developments be located and designed to visually enhance and not degrade the character of the surrounding area through consideration of a number of concepts, including, mitigating noise, odor, lighting and other impacts to surrounding properties.

### Mitigation Measures

No additional mitigation is necessary.

### Conclusion

Compliance with existing regulatory programs, including General Plan policies, County ordinances, and standard conditions or requirements will reduce impacts to the operation of the Palomar Observatory to less than significant.

### ***Impact 4.1-3: Other Lighting Issues***

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

*b) Would the project expose residential property to unacceptable light levels?*

***Determination: Less than Significant with Mitigation***

### Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts

Implementation of the Project could increase the effects of light and glare upon existing day or nighttime views by introducing development into previously agricultural and undeveloped areas, as well as increasing urban intensities. Development of the Project area is expected to occur over a 25-year period and would involve the construction of buildings, signage, lighting and utilities.

### **Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Construction related to the Project would be temporary, and should not result in a substantial source of light or glare. All lighting within the Project area would comply with Riverside County ordinances and General Plan policies. Construction-related impacts to the level of light or glare would be less than significant

### **Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

The Project will support new and existing wineries, as well as other commercial activities that encourage tourism. As discussed in the *Project Description*, Section 3.7, the total available land for development of wineries would accommodate approximately 105 total wineries and tourist-related uses. There are approximately 42 wineries currently operating within the Project area. The Project would also maintain large residential parcels and continue to support equestrian uses. Wineries, equestrian facilities, and residential properties would comply with Riverside County ordinances and General Plan policies which limit the type and location of lighting. However, there is the potential that implementing projects may place lights within areas that could impact surrounding existing uses. Mitigation Measure AES-3 is proposed to ensure that new uses in close proximity to existing uses will require a lighting plan that will identify the locations of lit structures within the implementing project site, the distance these structures are from existing structures surrounding the site, and the details of the proposed lighting (i.e. shielding used, wattage/ lumens). The purpose of this mitigation is to ensure that existing structures surrounding a implementing project site are not impacted from the implementing project's lighting. With implementation of this mitigation measure, as well as adherence to County standards and regulations, operational impacts to the level of light or glare would be less than significant.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities will be placed underground, out of view. Any lighting from infrastructure associated with the Project would comply with Riverside County Ordinances No. 460 and No. 655 and other standard conditions or requirements. Infrastructure impacts to the level of light or glare would be less than significant.

### **Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies**

- a) Riverside County Ordinance No. 460 includes standards for residential lighting, as well as lighting for highways, roadways, intersections and traffic signage, requiring that all lighting standards, including private residential lighting comply with Riverside County Ordinance No. 655.
- b) Riverside County Ordinance No. 655 addresses standards for acceptable nighttime lighting within Riverside County within 15-45 miles of the Palomar Observatory by requiring the usage of low pressure sodium lamps for outdoor lighting fixtures and regulating the hours of operation for commercial/industrial uses in order to reduce lighting impacts on the Observatory.
- c) Ordinance No. 915, an Ordinance of the County Of Riverside Regulating Outdoor Lighting, if and when enacted, would establish a County-wide standard for outdoor lighting that would generally prohibit light trespass.
- d) Riverside County Design Guidelines set forth standards requiring hooded, shielded, or low to the ground lighting, standards promoting "night skies" which include but are not limited to backlit and indirect lighting are also included in the guidelines in order to reduce potential lighting and glaring impacts.

- e) Southwest Area Plan policy 13.1 requires that new developments adhere to the lighting requirements of County ordinances for standards that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.
- f) General Plan policy 4.1 requires that new developments be located and designed to visually enhance and not degrade the character of the surrounding area through consideration of a number of concepts, including, mitigating noise, odor, lighting and other impacts on surrounding properties.
- g) General Plan policy 13.6, directly addresses prohibiting off-site outdoor advertising displays that are visible from designated and eligible Scenic Highways.
- h) **Standard Conditions or Requirements.** Five mitigation measures prepared for the 2003 General Plan were adopted to reduce night lighting. Refer to discussion above in Impact 4.1-2.

### Mitigation Measure

**AES-3** All implementing projects shall provide a lighting plan for the project area prior to approval. This plan shall include the location of onsite buildings and structures, the location of existing buildings and structures within surrounding properties, the distance between existing buildings and structures and proposed light sources, and other details of the proposed lighting (i.e., type, size, wattage, lumens, shielding type, etc.) during each phase of project development.

### Conclusion

Adherence to the existing ordinances, and General Plan policies, design guidelines, standard conditions or requirements listed above, and Mitigation Measure AES-3, would ensure that impacts remain less than significant.

## 4.1.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

**Threshold:** *Would the project result in cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the Wine Country Community Plan?*

**Determination:** *Less than Significant*

Cumulative impacts to aesthetics, light, and glare are addressed in the Riverside County General Plan Final EIR No. 441, which is incorporated by reference into this EIR. Implementing projects allowed under the Project have the potential to affect the aesthetic value of the area and increase the amount of additional light and glare in the region. However, the incremental amount of light and glare from the implementing projects would be limited and would make a minimal contribution to the cumulative impact in the region due to existing regulatory programs, including General Plan policies, County ordinances, and standard conditions or requirements currently in place. The Project has incorporated various Project Design Features specifically intended to maintain and protect the rural Wine Country character, including limitations on the location, nature and allowed density of the implementing project, and requirements for all future implementing projects to adhere to the proposed Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated with implementation of the Project. As previously noted, there are approximately 60 pending applications within the Wine Country, each of which will require consistency determinations. These pending planning cases are in various stages of the process ranging from the initial submittal of applications to projects that have been tentatively approved and are awaiting final approval by County staff. Some of these proposed developments may conflict with the proposed Project and would require special consideration related to



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aesthetic, light or glare impacts, especially if these conflicts generate impacts to surrounding uses. These projects are proceeding separately from the proposed Project, and are therefore subject to their own discretionary review and CEQA compliance process. Therefore, cumulatively impacts related to aesthetics, light or glare are not considered significant.

### 4.1.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The impact of the Project on aesthetic resources and the Mt. Palomar Observatory would be less than significant due to adherence to existing laws, regulatory programs, General Plan policies, and mitigation measures.



## 4.1 Aesthetics, Light and Glare

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