

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

This section describes the City of Rocklin's visual resources and landscape. The analysis focuses on the anticipated changes that would occur to the visual character of the Planning Area as a result of the proposed project. Key issues include changes to scenic character and new sources of light and glare. This analysis is based on visual surveys of the area as well as local planning documents. Relevant state and local programs, standards, plans, and ordinances are identified. Abbreviated citations for each information source are provided in the text, with full references provided at the end of this section.

4.3.1 EXISTING SETTING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rocklin is located in the Loomis Basin, which is situated in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada range. The topography of the Planning Area varies from 150 to 525 feet above sea level, with terrain consisting of rolling foothills.

In general, the dominant visual characteristics within the City of Rocklin are residential and non-residential urban development with some preserved open space consisting primarily of hillsides, and riparian areas associated with creeks, wetlands, and other waterways. Some areas that are yet to be developed also contain grasslands and native oaks. Remaining areas consist of active and passive parks and two 18-hole golf courses.

Overall, the city is nearing residential buildout. Many areas which appear to be undeveloped or vacant actually have City-approved development plans or "entitlements" and will be developed at some point in the future. The City has master plans in place to guide development within most of the non-residential areas. The City has virtually no potential of expansion beyond the current city boundaries and Sphere of Influence (SOI) due to surrounding jurisdictional boundaries (the City of Lincoln to the north, the City of Roseville to the south and west, State Route (SR) 65 to the west, and the Town of Loomis to the east). Future growth following buildout would be limited to infill and redevelopment projects.

SIGNIFICANT VISUAL FEATURES

Built Environment

The City of Rocklin is highly urbanized with many remaining vacant lands entitled for future development. Existing development within the city includes residential, commercial (e.g., retail centers), industrial, office buildings, and public facilities (schools, golf courses, and parks). The main development type in the city is residential. Non-residential uses are located primarily along transportation corridors such as Sunset Boulevard, Stanford Ranch Road, Interstate 80 (I-80), State Route 65, and portions of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks. Locating large retail commercial businesses with warehouses and showrooms along I-80 and SR 65 provides high visibility for these uses.

Currently, the Planning Area is divided into 17 neighborhood areas: Croftwood, Delmar, Fairway Heights, Granite Drive/Sierra Meadows, Greenbrae Island, Mission Hills/Clover Valley, Central Rocklin/Downtown Area, Secret Ravine/Sierra Bluffs, Sierra College, Stanford Ranch, Whitney Oaks, Sunset East, Northwest Rocklin (Whitney Ranch), Sunset West, Sunset Whitney, Woodside, and the Highway 65 Corridor. Rocklin also has several special planning areas including the Rocklin Downtown Revitalization Plan (not yet adopted), the Rocklin Civic Center Plan, and the Front Street Historical Area Master Plan. Each planning area has a specific identity within the larger context of the city.

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

The mix of uses within the city serve to provide a wide array of services needed by residents and include shopping centers, car, boat, and recreational vehicle dealerships, restaurants, car washes, banks, and furniture stores. Newer development within the Planning Area generally blends with the natural environment through the use of earth-toned colors, wood and stone building materials, and architectural design, which is appropriate to the city's location. Incorporating colors and treatments in the built environment which blend with the natural environment creates a cohesive interface between the two environments and evidences compliance with the City's Design Review Guidelines (City of Rocklin 2008).

Continued expansion of the built environment is anticipated as existing project entitlements are implemented and new entitlements are applied for and if approved, acted upon. While open space will be retained throughout the Planning Area, urban development will become more pervasive as entitled areas are built out. Regulation of the design and appearance of new development will be essential to ensure that the relationship between new development and the character of the community as a whole is consistent with the City's vision. As vacant lands continue to develop, the City's Design Review Guidelines will be instrumental in directing the massing, style, and appearance of future development.

Urban Forest

Urban forests generally include preserved areas with dense native plants/trees as well as ornamental plants/trees installed as part of development projects. Examples of urban forests include urban parks, street trees, landscaped boulevards, public gardens, stream corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, and natural areas. Urban forests are key features that provide needed environmental benefits by cleaning air and water, helping to control stormwater, and conserving energy. They add form, structure, beauty, and breathing room to urban design, separate incompatible uses, provide places that strengthen social cohesion by aiding the creation of walkable communities, contribute to community revitalization, and add economic value (USDA 2008).

The City of Rocklin commissioned the firm of Phytosphere Research to evaluate, characterize, and provide recommendations regarding the city's urban forest. From this effort, a 2006 report titled "Planning for the Future of Rocklin's Urban Forest" was produced (City of Rocklin 2006a). One of the findings of this report was that the city's overall tree canopy cover has increased from 11 percent in 1952 to 18 percent in 2003 (a 63 percent increase) due to the growth of both new and existing trees (**Figure 4.3-1**).

FIGURE 4.3-1
CHANGES IN CANOPY 1952–2003



Plot 11 Area in 1952



Plot 11 Area in 2003

Source: City of Rocklin 2006a

The above photos demonstrate how existing oaks in the undeveloped area (lower right of top photo) have been preserved as part of residential development (lower right of bottom photo). Sparse tree coverage in the industrial area (upper left corner of top photo) and commercial area (upper middle area of top photo) have been generally retained and trees have been added as part of landscaping requirements for new development (upper left and middle area of bottom photo). Overall, residential neighborhoods (lower right of bottom photo) with

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

conserved oaks have higher levels of canopy cover. This finding of increased tree canopy supports, in part, the City's ongoing practice of requiring mitigation for oak tree removal through the Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance. Additionally, the citywide canopy has increased through requirements for shade trees in parking lots, requirements for trees in front yard landscaping, and right-of-way landscaping.

The City of Rocklin owns lands with substantial stands of oak woodlands in at least 11 locations throughout the city. Many of these woodland areas are adjacent to traditional multi-use city parks and are used recreationally to varying degrees. These woodland areas provide city residents with a nearby connection to the natural environment and Rocklin's natural history. Additionally, the City maintains approximately 218.6 acres of developed parkland that includes both planted trees and conserved native trees. Developed areas of parks are cared for by the Parks Division of the Community Services and Facilities Department. These parks are a key contributor to the quality of life in Rocklin. The trees in these parks increase the desirability and usability of the parks by providing critical shading and visual interest (see **Figure 4.3-2**).

FIGURE 4.3-2
ROCKLIN PARK TREES



Source: City of Rocklin 2006a

The City of Rocklin Public Works Department maintains trees along arterial streets and parkways throughout the city (City of Rocklin 2006a, pg. 69). These trees include plantings in street medians and along street shoulders. Well-designed and properly maintained street tree plantings not only enhance the aesthetics of city streets and the community as a whole, but can provide a variety of other benefits. Shading and evaporative cooling provided by trees are obvious benefits. In 2004, the City maintained an estimated 10,000 trees along approximately 28 miles of streets (City of Rocklin 2006a, pg. 69).

Light and Glare

The majority of the city includes existing sources of daytime glare and nighttime lighting and illumination. Sources of daytime glare include direct sunlight, reflections from windows, architectural coatings, glass, and other shiny reflective surfaces.

Nighttime light illumination and associated glare can be divided into stationary and mobile sources. Stationary sources of nighttime light include structure illumination, decorative landscape lighting, security lighting, lighted signs and streetlights, and intermittent sports field lighting from the facilities located at both of the city's high schools, as well as at the many community parks throughout the city (such as Johnson Springview Park, Lone Tree Park, Twin Oaks Park, Margaret Azevedo Park, and Whitney Park). The source of mobile nighttime light is primarily headlights of motor vehicles. In the winter, the ambient nighttime light in the city can be accentuated during periods of low clouds or fog. These conditions intensify the amount of light reflected, worsening ambient nighttime light and glare during the winter months.

Hillsides and Ridges

Hillsides and ridges comprise the most visible natural aesthetic feature of the city. Some of the hillsides are developed, primarily with residential uses, while some portions of the hillsides within the city have been retained as open space. This preservation helps prevent alteration of the natural aesthetic quality of these areas and preserves a portion of the existing views within the Planning Area. Undeveloped hillsides contain a mixture of grasslands and trees, with tree cover denser in some areas than others. During wetter months of the year, the hillsides are green with new growth of native vegetation. In the summer months as grasses die off, a tan backdrop is created against which the green canopies of trees become more visibly pronounced along ridges and hillsides.

Waterways and Wetlands

There are several creeks and waterways located within or adjacent to the Planning Area. While most creeks are not visually prominent, some creeks can be seen from roadway crossings, within parks, and from immediately adjacent properties. Some residential developments include creeks and waterways but have incorporated minimum 50-foot setback buffers along the creeks/waterways in keeping with City goals, policies, and development standards regarding development adjacent to creeks.

The waterways transecting the Planning Area include Antelope Creek, Secret Ravine Creek, Sucker Creek, Pleasant Grove Creek, and Clover Valley Creek. Antelope Creek passes through Johnson Springview Park, a regional recreational destination. Secret Ravine Creek (**Figure 4.3-3**) is a perennially flowing stream that flows 10.5 miles from its headwaters in the Newcastle area (east of the city) through the southeastern corner of Rocklin, to its confluence with Miners Ravine Creek in the City of Roseville. Riparian species and annual grassland line the margins of this waterway as it traverses Rocklin.

**FIGURE 4.3-3
SECRET RAVINE**



Source: Dry Creek Conservancy 2001

Sucker Creek is a perennial stream that drains the eastern side of the Loomis Basin. It flows through the southeastern portion of Rocklin, north of I-80. Pleasant Grove Creek meanders through the northwest corner of the city. Riparian and woodland classes typically occur sporadically along the Pleasant Grove Creek corridor.

Clover Valley Creek is contained within the Clover Valley, a narrow valley in the low foothills of Rocklin. Approximately half of the valley has been developed with homes. The other half of the valley is currently undeveloped and remains in its natural condition. The undeveloped portion of the Clover Valley area has entitlements for development but includes designated recreation/conservation areas along the creek corridor and the valley walls that are intended to preserve these natural features.

In addition to the perennial creeks described above, several ephemeral streams are present in the Planning Area during the rainy season. Seasonal wetlands and vernal pools also occur throughout the Planning Area within grassland habitats.

Rock Outcroppings and Quarries

Other notable features in the Planning Area include granite rock outcroppings as well as quarries. Granite rock outcrops occur throughout the Planning Area, providing visual accents on grass-covered hillsides and other undeveloped areas of the city. These natural features are characteristic of the geology of the area. In contrast, granite quarries are man-made features developed to support mining activity and provide a visual reminder of the city's history. The Central Rocklin/Downtown area includes abandoned quarry sites. The city's last active quarry, Big Gun Quarry, is located on Pacific Street.

4.3.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

STATE

State Scenic Highway Program

In 1963, the California legislature created the Scenic Highway Program to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to state highways. The state regulations and guidance governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. A highway may be designated scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. A scenic corridor is the land generally adjacent to and visible from the highway and is identified using a motorist's line of vision. A reasonable boundary is selected when the view extends to the distant horizon.

The city does not contain any officially designated state scenic highway. The status of a scenic highway changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a scenic highway (Caltrans 2007).

Nighttime Sky – Title 24 Outdoor Lighting Standards

The California legislature passed a bill in 2001 requiring the California Energy Commission (CEC) to adopt energy efficiency standards for outdoor lighting for both the public and private sectors. In November 2003, the CEC adopted changes to the Title 24, parts 1 and 6, Building Energy Efficiency Standards. These standards became effective on October 1, 2005, and included changes to the requirements for outdoor lighting for residential and non-residential development. The new standards will likely improve the quality of outdoor lighting and help to reduce the impacts of light pollution, light trespass, and glare. The standards regulate lighting characteristics such as maximum power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls to turn lighting on and off. Different lighting standards are set by classifying areas by lighting zone. The classification is based on population figures of the 2000 Census. Areas can be designated as LZ1 (dark), LZ2 (rural), or LZ3 (urban). Lighting requirements for dark and rural areas are stricter in order to protect the areas from new sources of light pollution and light trespass.

The majority of the Planning Area is characterized as LZ3, which typifies denser areas of development such as the retail commercial areas along I-80 as well as the areas north and south of Sunset Boulevard, central Rocklin, and southeast Rocklin. Lower lighting levels were present in hillside areas that were sparsely populated at the time of the 2000 Census. These areas generally include northwest Rocklin (Whitney Ranch) and the neighborhoods around Sierra College Boulevard in the southeast part of the city.

LOCAL

Current City of Rocklin General Plan

The General Plan Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element indicates that creeks and waterways in the Planning Area must be designated as recreation/conservation areas. This designation is applied along creeks, waterways, significant slope areas, in areas with natural

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

resources, and in areas of scenic beauty. The recreation/conservation designation is intended to protect fish and wildlife, natural vegetation and habitat, and scenic areas from encroachment by development (City of Rocklin 1991).

City of Rocklin Zoning Ordinance

The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance (Title 17, Rocklin Municipal Code) is to regulate the use of buildings, structures, and land between industry, business, residential, open space, recreation, and other land uses to ensure compatibility and to enhance the enjoyment of scenic beauty and other natural resources (Chapters 17.10 through 17.61). The City of Rocklin Zoning Ordinance includes direction regarding when Design Review is required (Chapter 17.72), Sign Regulations (Chapter 17.75), and Oak Tree Preservation (Chapter 17.77). These aspects of the Zoning Ordinance assist with regulating the visual character of the city (City of Rocklin 2009).

City of Rocklin Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance

Chapter 17.77 of the Zoning Ordinance constitutes the Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance, which was established to address the decline of oak woodlands due to urbanization through a considered attempt to balance the social benefits of preservation against private property ownership development (City of Rocklin 2006b). The ordinance implements a comprehensive design review process for new development, offers incentives for oak tree preservation, and provides feasible alternatives and options to removal where practicable. Furthermore, the ordinance requires that no oak tree shall be removed from a developed lot without first obtaining an oak tree removal permit.

Planning for the Future of Rocklin's Urban Forest (Management Plan for Rocklin's Urban Forest)

To ensure the development of a thriving urban forest that will benefit the community, the City has developed a long-term plan that accounts for the needs of trees in the urban environment. Both tree growth and tree decline are typically slow processes, so management actions related to these processes need to be initiated far in advance of the desired outcomes. The urban forest plan, "Planning for the Future of Rocklin's Urban Forest" (City of Rocklin 2006a), provides an overall strategy that will help the city maximize the benefits the urban forest will provide in the future.

The plan provides an overall framework for managing Rocklin's urban and natural forest resources. It is based on the condition of the forest in 2003 and an analysis of trends that have shaped Rocklin's urban forest to date and will continue to influence it in the future. Major portions of the document include:

- A management plan for the city's urban forest;
- The current state of the city's urban forest and tree management practices;
- Public education and outreach programs;
- Identification of funding sources for urban forestry; and
- Technical guides for urban forest management.

Design Review Guidelines

Zoning and subdivision ordinances are used to regulate the design and appearance of new development. However, these standards alone are not adequate to deal effectively with aspects of development related to building aesthetics, design quality, the relationship of new development with existing buildings, or in some instances, with the character of the community

as a whole. To address this issue, the City has adopted Design Review Guidelines (City of Rocklin 2008). The guidelines apply to the majority of projects but there are exceptions (e.g., single-family residential development is not required to undergo design review unless the lots are less than 6,000 square feet). The Design Review Board is responsible to review applications for various types of construction within all areas subject to design review under Rocklin Municipal Code Chapter 17.72.

Design review is carried out by the Rocklin Planning Commission. The objective of design review is to provide a forum to review small-lot single-family developments, multi-family residential, and non-residential development to encourage originality in building and landscaping design in a manner that will enhance the physical appearance of the community; encourage harmonious and compatible development; reduce potential visual conflicts with adjacent development (both existing and proposed); and involve area residents, owners, and merchants in the review process. The applicant is generally expected to comply with the criteria unless there are unique circumstances involved. The final determination as to whether or not a project meets the City's design review objectives and criteria rests with the approving body (i.e., the Planning Commission), the only exceptions to this being those instances when entitlements that are processed concurrently with design review require City Council approval or when a decision made by the Planning Commission is appealed to the City Council (City of Rocklin 2008).

In addition to the Design Guidelines, some individual projects (e.g., shopping centers) also include project-specific design guidelines. These guidelines direct the style and form of development within a specific area particular to a given project.

4.3.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

An aesthetic or visual resource impact is considered significant if implementation of the project would result in any of the following (based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines):

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

METHODOLOGY

The visual resource analysis is based on field review of the city, review of topographic conditions, and review of the proposed General Plan Update, including the Land Use Diagram. The visual quality standards of the City of Rocklin General Plan were used for guidance for this visual analysis. This analysis is based on anticipated changes within the Planning Area from implementation of the proposed Land Use Diagram as well as other anticipated development in the Planning Area.

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

Impact 4.3.1 Implementation of the proposed project would result in continued development within the Planning Area. However, no lands within the Planning Area are designated as a scenic vista. Therefore, a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista would not occur as a result of project implementation and **no impact** is identified.

While vacant areas have a natural aesthetic quality, there are no designated scenic vistas within the city or Planning Area. Alteration of vacant areas would change the visual quality of various areas throughout the Planning Area. However, since there are no designated scenic vistas, **no impact** would occur in this regard.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Substantially Damage Scenic Resources Within a State Scenic Highway

Impact 4.3.2 Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially damage any scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

The City of Rocklin does not contain an officially designated state scenic highway. SR 65 borders the western portion of the city but is not considered a scenic highway. Likewise, I-80 traverses the city but does not have a scenic designation. Therefore, **no impacts** are anticipated in association with damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character

Impact 4.3.3 Implementation of the proposed project would result in increased development that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area and its surroundings. Although the proposed General Plan Update has mitigating policies and associated action steps, these policies and associated action steps will not reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, this would be a **potentially significant** impact.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would result in continued expansion of development throughout the Planning Area that would change the existing visual character. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain essentially the same land use configuration as the existing General Plan with a few modifications.

The majority of development in the Planning Area would occur in areas adjacent to existing urbanized areas of Rocklin as well as the cities of Roseville and Lincoln. The proposed General Plan Update also proposes urban development adjacent to existing areas outside of the City of

Rocklin in unincorporated Placer County and the Town of Loomis. The bulk of remaining new development will occur in areas with existing entitlements including Sierra College Boulevard near I-80 (i.e., the Rocklin Crossings and Rocklin Commons shopping center projects), the Clover Valley project in the northeast portion of the city, and the currently undeveloped portion of Whitney Ranch. The alteration of visual character associated with urban development has been evaluated in project-specific EIRs such as Rocklin Crossings (City of Rocklin 2007, pg. 4.7-9), Clover Valley (City of Rocklin 2006c, pg. 4.3-12 through -24), and Northwest Rocklin Annexation (Sunset Ranchos) (City of Rocklin 2001, pg. M15 through M16).

Expansion and improvements to the city's circulation system would also result in visual alterations in the Planning Area. The proposed Circulation Element identifies special street improvement policies (Policies C-32 through C-49) regarding future roadway development. Among the improvements are new roads that would involve grade-separated over- or undercrossings at railroad tracks, widening of the roadway and/or construction of a new overcrossing at Rocklin Road and I-80, construction of an extension of Dominguez Road and associated overcrossing at I-80, and construction of a free-span bridge over Secret Ravine Creek. Continued development of the roadway network, including the potential for bridges, overcrossings, and undercrossings, would potentially create an impact to the visual environment.

Increased development, as well as redevelopment in the Downtown area and roadway improvements, would alter the visual character of the Planning Area. Development of vacant areas that are entitled (e.g., Northwest Rocklin and Clover Valley) or in the process of being built out, as well as the addition of infill development throughout the Planning Area, is expected to change/alter the area's character.

All development in the Planning Area is subject to existing City development standards set forth in the City's Zoning Ordinance as well as the City's Design Review Guidelines. Together, the Zoning Ordinance and Design Review Guidelines help to ensure that development form, character, height, and massing are consistent with the City's vision for the character of the community. In some cases (e.g., Northwest Rocklin, Stanford Ranch, Sunset West, and Whitney Oaks areas), General Development Plans in combination with adopted conditions of approval and mitigation measures for approved developments (e.g., Clover Valley) would also address visual impacts for these projects.

The 1990 Rocklin General Plan EIR analyzed the impacts of mixed urban development on viewsheds and vistas within the City of Rocklin, as well as the introduction of new sources of light and glare. Mitigation measures to address these impacts are incorporated into the General Plan in the Land Use Element and the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element in the form of policies that encourage the use of design standards for unique areas and that protect natural resources (including hilltops, waterways, geologically unique areas, oak trees, and open space) from the encroachment of incompatible land use. The EIR concluded that, despite these goals and policies, visual resources would be significantly impacted by development under the General Plan and cannot be reduced to a less than significant level. Findings of fact and a statement of overriding considerations were adopted by the Rocklin City Council in recognition of this cumulative impact. The boundaries of the Planning Area analyzed in the 1990 Rocklin General Plan EIR are consistent with the Planning Area boundaries of the proposed General Plan Update. It should also be noted that the Northwest Rocklin project EIR determined that project impacts to visual resources would be significant and unavoidable.

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

Proposed General Plan Update Policies That Provide Mitigation

The following proposed General Plan policies would assist in avoiding or minimizing land use incompatibilities and visual impacts within the Planning Area.

- Policy LU-8 Continue programs for the prevention of blight, utilizing public and private resources such as code enforcement, neighborhood rehabilitation programs, and Redevelopment Agency actions.*
- Policy LU-13 Review proposals for new residential development for compatibility with the character and scale of nearby neighborhoods, while providing a variety of densities and housing types as reflected by the zoning and land use designation of the infill property.*
- Policy LU-18 Establish residential design standards for planned unit developments, especially for hillsides and other unique areas, to reduce the impact of new development on the existing natural terrain and built environment.*
- Policy LU-19 Require projects that are approved on severe slopes (25 percent or greater) to establish grading design guidelines with their development application.*
- Policy LU-21 Maintain development standards unique to Central Rocklin that encourage residential development on infill parcels, including affordable housing, while maintaining compatibility with existing residential land uses.*
- Policy LU-38 Maintain development standards, including off-site parking provisions, unique to the Downtown Rocklin Plan Area along streets such as Pacific Street from Midas Avenue to Farron Street, Front Street, Rocklin Road and Railroad Avenue.*
- Policy LU-39 Implement the Downtown Rocklin Plan to address land use mix, design features, parking, pedestrian movement, traffic and circulation, and promotion opportunities to provide a clear and strong economic identity to the core downtown area.*
- Policy LU-50 Implement complimentary design concepts for all buildings, structures, driveways, parking areas, parks and landscaping within the government center area.*
- Policy LU-51 Enhance and preserve the special natural features of the Central Rocklin, Downtown Rocklin Plan and Civic Center area to the extent feasible, including oak trees, quarries and rock outcrops.*
- Policy LU-52 Ensure that residential infill development in the Civic Center area takes into consideration preservation of unique natural features and historic resources.*
- Policy LU-53 Utilize the planned development procedure for new residential projects in the Civic Center area.*

Policy LU-54 Ensure that the spacing, scale, mass, height, exterior materials and architectural design of new residential uses in Central Rocklin complement existing residential structures and the Civic Center Plan.

Policy LU-55 Ensure that design guidelines for the Downtown Rocklin Plan are compatible with concepts for the Civic Center area.

Policy OCR-43 Mitigate for removal of oak trees in accordance with the City of Rocklin's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance.

Mitigation Measures

Aside from the policies listed above, no other mitigation measures are available to fully mitigate impacts to existing visual character given the extent of development and density proposed. While compliance with the City's Design Review Guidelines, Zoning Ordinance, and General Plan policies would ensure visual compatibility with existing development, as well as an evaluation of the preservation of unique natural features, the visual character of the Planning Area would still be altered as further development occurs. Therefore, impacts associated with substantially degrading the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area and its surroundings are considered **significant and unavoidable**.

As part of the proposed General Plan Update, the City plans to amend the Redevelopment Plan to increase tax increment limitations, increase the limit on the principal amount of bonded indebtedness secured by tax increment revenue, and extend the time limit for the commencement of eminent domain proceedings to acquire non-residential property. These amendments are intended to provide the City's Redevelopment Agency with the financial and administrative resources necessary to continue assisting projects that implement its program of blight elimination within the Redevelopment Project Area. While the extended time and financial limits authorized by the Sixth Amendment may foster and encourage new development that might not occur without the Sixth Amendment, or may occur faster than had the Sixth Amendment not been adopted, all development would be consistent with the City's General Plan and with the development assumptions analyzed throughout this DEIR. Any future development resulting from amending the Redevelopment Plan would occur in areas designated for such development by the General Plan, as the land uses permitted by the Redevelopment Plan are the allowable uses under the City's General Plan. Therefore, the proposed Sixth Amendment to the Redevelopment Plan would not result in aesthetic impacts beyond what is analyzed for the General Plan Update above.

In addition to the activities identified above, the project includes a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to address climate change and identify greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction measures. The City of Rocklin CAP augments the objectives, goals, policies, and actions of the City of Rocklin General Plan Update related to the reduction of GHG emissions; however, the CAP is intended to be updated on a more frequent basis than the General Plan, ensuring that implementation of City efforts to reduce GHG emissions is in compliance with current regulation. The CAP determines whether implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would be consistent with the state's ability to attain the goals identified in Assembly Bill (AB) 32, identifies GHG emission reduction measures, and provides monitoring of the effectiveness of GHG emission reduction measures. Implementation of the CAP would promote the installation of renewable energy facilities that could further alter the existing visual character of the city associated with solar panels and small wind turbine facilities (see CAP Goal 2 Renewable Energy and associated reduction measures 5, 6, and 7). This would add to the significant and unavoidable visual impacts of the proposed General Plan Update.

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare

Impact 4.3.4 Implementation of the proposed project could result in an increase in daytime glare and/or nighttime lighting. This increase in daytime glare sources and nighttime lighting levels could have an adverse effect on day or nighttime views in the area. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would potentially introduce new sources of daytime glare and change nighttime lighting and illumination levels in association with additional development. Lighting nuisances typically are categorized by the following:

- Glare – Intense light that shines directly or is reflected from a surface into a person’s eyes
- “Skyglow”/Nighttime Illumination – Artificial lighting from urbanized sources that alters the landscape in sufficient quantity to cause lighting of the nighttime sky and reduction of visibility of stars and other astronomical features
- “Spillover” Lighting – Artificial lighting that spills over onto adjacent properties, which could interrupt sleeping patterns or cause other nuisances to neighboring residents

The main source of daytime glare in the City of Rocklin is from sunlight reflecting from structures with reflective surfaces such as windows. Subsequent development under the proposed General Plan Update would include residential, commercial, and office structures and other potential sources of glare. Building materials (e.g., reflective glass and polished surfaces) are the most substantial sources of glare. The amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight, which is most acute at sunrise and sunset because the angle of the sun is lower during these times.

Artificial light is a source of glare during the nighttime hours. The sources of new and increased nighttime lighting and illumination include, but are not limited to, new residential development, lighting from non-residential uses, lights associated with vehicular travel (e.g., car headlights), street lighting, parking lot lights, and security-related lighting for non-residential uses. Lighting from commercial/office development signage would also add to nighttime illumination levels. Increased nighttime lighting and illumination could result in adverse effects to adjacent land uses through the spillover of light into these areas and skyglow conditions (as described above).

All development in the Planning Area is subject to existing City development standards set forth in the City’s Zoning Ordinance as well as the City’s Design Review Guidelines (though most single-family residential is not subject to design review). As the guidelines are applied during the development review process, there is opportunity to revise the project if necessary to address potential elements of light and glare. Likewise, adopted General Development Plans for Northwest Rocklin, Stanford Ranch, Sunset West, and Whitney Oaks, as well as adopted conditions of approval and mitigation measures for approved developments, include provisions regarding architectural design, building materials, and lighting standards.

Proposed General Plan Update Policies That Provide Mitigation

The following proposed General Plan policies would assist in avoiding or minimizing impacts associated with increased daytime glare and/or nighttime lighting:

- Policy LU-4 Utilize techniques that minimize the adverse effects of light and glare on surrounding properties, and incorporate dark sky concepts to the extent practicable.*
- Policy LU-18 Establish residential design standards for planned unit developments, especially for hillsides and other unique areas, to reduce the impact of new development on the existing natural terrain and built environment.*
- Policy LU-21 Maintain development standards unique to Central Rocklin that encourage residential development on infill parcels, including affordable housing, while maintaining compatibility with existing residential land uses.*
- Policy LU-38 Maintain development standards, including off-site parking provisions, unique to the Downtown Rocklin Plan Area along streets such as Pacific Street from Midas Avenue to Farron Street, Front Street, Rocklin Road and Railroad Avenue.*
- Policy LU-39 Implement the Downtown Rocklin Plan to address land use mix, design features, parking, pedestrian movement, traffic and circulation, and promotion opportunities to provide a clear and strong economic identity to the core downtown area.*
- Policy LU-50 Implement complimentary design concepts for all buildings, structures, driveways, parking areas, parks and landscaping within the government center area.*
- Policy LU-52 Ensure that residential infill development in the Civic Center area takes into consideration preservation of unique natural features and historic resources.*
- Policy LU-54 Ensure that the spacing, scale, mass, height, exterior materials and architectural design of new residential uses in Central Rocklin complement existing residential structures and the Civic Center Plan.*

Implementation of existing City Design Review Guidelines and the proposed General Plan Update policies identified above would reduce the impacts to daytime glare and nighttime lighting by addressing light and glare issues in more detail in the Design Review Guidelines and through project-specific reviews. However, the impacts associated with increased light and glare would not be eliminated entirely, and the overall level of light and glare in the Planning Area would increase and cannot be fully mitigated given the extent and density of development under the proposed General Plan Update. Therefore, impacts resulting from creation of new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area are considered **significant and unavoidable**.

In addition, as discussed in Section 3.0, Project Description, and under Impact 4.3.3 above, the project includes the Sixth Amendment to the Redevelopment Plan and the Climate Action Plan, both of which would be consistent with the proposed General Plan Update and with the development assumptions analyzed throughout this DEIR. These project components would not result in land use activities or population growth beyond what is identified in the General Plan Update; however, implementation of the CAP would promote the installation of solar panels that could be a source of daytime glare depending on the design and orientation of the panel (see

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

CAP Goal 2 Renewable Energy and associated reduction measures 5, 6, and 7). This would add to the significant and unavoidable glare impacts of the proposed General Plan Update.

Mitigation Measures

None feasible beyond the policies listed above.

4.3.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CUMULATIVE SETTING

The cumulative setting for the Planning Area includes approved and proposed developments in the Planning Area as well as in the cities of Roseville and Lincoln, the Town of Loomis, and unincorporated Placer County, including the community of Granite Bay. Projects proposed in the City of Rocklin and in the adjacent cities and town would contribute to cumulative conditions. Potential development in the surrounding cities of Roseville and Lincoln, the Town of Loomis, and Placer County and the development of the remaining portions of the City of Rocklin would include a combination of new construction as well as redevelopment/infill projects. Buildout conditions discussed in Section 3.0 and Section 4.0 would alter the visual character of the region by constructing new and infill development and increasing the amount of development in the Planning Area.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Cumulative Impacts to Scenic Vista, Scenic Resources, Existing Visual Character, and Creation of Light and Glare

Impact 4.3.5 While the Planning Area does not contain any scenic vistas or scenic resources within a state scenic highway, implementation of the proposed project would result in alterations to the city's existing visual character through the increased expansion of urban development and creation of additional new sources of light and glare. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

Cumulative development would result in alteration of visual resources by increasing the amount of residential, commercial, retail, industrial, and business professional land uses in the Planning Area. While a portion of the Planning Area is designated Recreation-Conservation and would retain natural areas in their existing state, the overall level of development throughout the Planning Area would increase. Likewise, artificial sources of light and glare would be introduced in association with proposed development, which would increase the overall daytime and nighttime light and glare environment of the Planning Area.

The cities of Roseville and Lincoln, the Town of Loomis, and the unincorporated area of Placer County are immediately adjacent to the City of Rocklin. These areas are anticipated to experience growth in association with new and infill development, which would add to the alteration of existing visual conditions and increase the amount of light and glare in the region. The cumulative development of the Planning Area, in combination with the buildout of western Placer County, would result in a cumulatively considerable change in the visual character of the area.

As previously discussed, the Sixth Amendment to the Redevelopment Plan would not result in impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, existing visual character, and creation of light and glare beyond what is analyzed for the General Plan Update above. However, implementation of the CAP could add to the significant and unavoidable visual and glare impacts of the proposed General Plan Update.

Proposed General Plan Update Policies That Provide Mitigation

The proposed General Plan policies listed under Impact 4.3.3 and Impact 4.3.4 would assist in avoiding or minimizing land use incompatibilities, light and glare, and visual impacts within the Planning Area.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of existing City Design Review Guidelines and the proposed General Plan Update policies would assist in reducing the city's contribution to impacts on visual resources and light and glare. However, the visual character of the city and the region would still be substantially altered and overall light and glare would be increased. There are no feasible mitigation measures available to fully offset the extent of this visual impact given the extent and density of development under the proposed General Plan Update and its associated project components. Therefore, this impact is considered **cumulatively considerable** and **significant and unavoidable**.

4.3 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

REFERENCES

- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2007. *California Scenic Highway Program*. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/scpr.htm> (accessed March 2009).
- City of Rocklin. 1991. *General Plan and associated EIR*.
- . 2001. *Northwest Rocklin Annexation (Sunset Ranchos)*.
- . 2006a. *Planning for the Future of Rocklin's Urban Forest*. http://www.ci.rocklin.ca.us/government/development/planning/publications_n_maps/planning_for_the_future_of_rocklins_urban_forest.asp (accessed May 2009).
- . 2006b. *Oak Tree Preservation Guidelines*.
- . 2006c. *Clover Valley Large and Small Lot Tentative Subdivision Maps. Recirculated Draft EIR (SCH No. 1993122077). Volume 1 of 2*.
- . 2007. *Rocklin Crossing Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2006112097)*.
- . 2008. *City of Rocklin, Design Review Guidelines*.
- . 2009. Municipal Code, City of Rocklin, California. Title 17 Zoning. http://library1.municode.com/default-test/template.htm?view=browse&docaction=setdoc&doc_keytype=tocid&doc_key=97d7b73c6bc749fc117a141403792cfa&infobase=16050.
- Dry Creek Conservancy. 2001. *Secret Ravine Adaptive Management Plan. A Placer County Tributary of the Dry Creek Watershed*. Roseville, CA. <http://www.drycreekconservancy.org/SRAMP/sr1.html> (accessed March 2009).
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: Forest Service (USDA). 2008. *Urban and Community Forestry*. <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/program.html> (accessed November 12, 2008).