

**Lyons Canyon Ranch
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5.9 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources information for this section was compiled from photographs and site surveys conducted by RBF Consulting in April 2004 and follow-up site surveys completed by David Magney Environmental Consulting in July 2005 and Diamond West Engineering in August 2005. The purpose of this section is to describe the existing aesthetic environment and analyze potential project impacts to the aesthetic character upon project implementation. Consideration of public scenic vistas and views, impacts to scenic resources and the introduction of new sources of light and glare are also included in this section. Visual simulations were prepared in order to assist in determining aesthetic impacts. The viewpoints for the visual simulations were chosen after reviewing the comments received during the Notice of Preparation and consultations with the County of Los Angeles Planning Department. The view locations illustrate the project's visibility from public and private spaces. The photographs of locations were reviewed and the final selections were made by the County of Los Angeles Planning Department prior to completing the visual simulations. Please refer to Exhibit 5.9-1, Site Photographs Key Map.

5.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Elevations in and around project site range from approximately 1,325 feet above mean sea level (msl) to approximately 1,654 feet amsl and the topography consists of gradual to very steep slopes. The project site is characterized by hilly topography on either side of the site's central feature, the southeast-northwest trending Lyons Canyon drainage.¹ Lyons Canyon trends easterly across the southwesterly portion of the project site and turns northerly in the central and northern portions. Numerous tributary canyons "branch" out from Lyon Canyon and extend to the southerly property boundary. The southerly portion of the project site encompasses the northern ridges and canyons of Towsley Canyon.² The Simi Fire burned the entire project site in October 2003.

VIEWS NORTH ONTO PROJECT SITE

The primary views northward from the Old Road are obstructed by the northern ridgelines of Towsley Canyon and privately owned undeveloped parcels adjacent to the project site (refer to Exhibit 5.9-2, Photos 1 and 2). The ridgelines are vegetated with Chaparral, Coastal Sage Scrub, Southern California Walnut Woodland and Non-Native Grassland.

A view from the central portion of Towsley Canyon Park is shown in Exhibit 5.9-3, Photo 3. From this vantage point along the primary roadway/trail in Towley Canyon Park, the existing topography effectively screens the majority of the subject site's southern property boundary. As one travels east on this primary roadway, an existing vacant property not part of the proposed development effectively screens the southern boundary of the subject site.

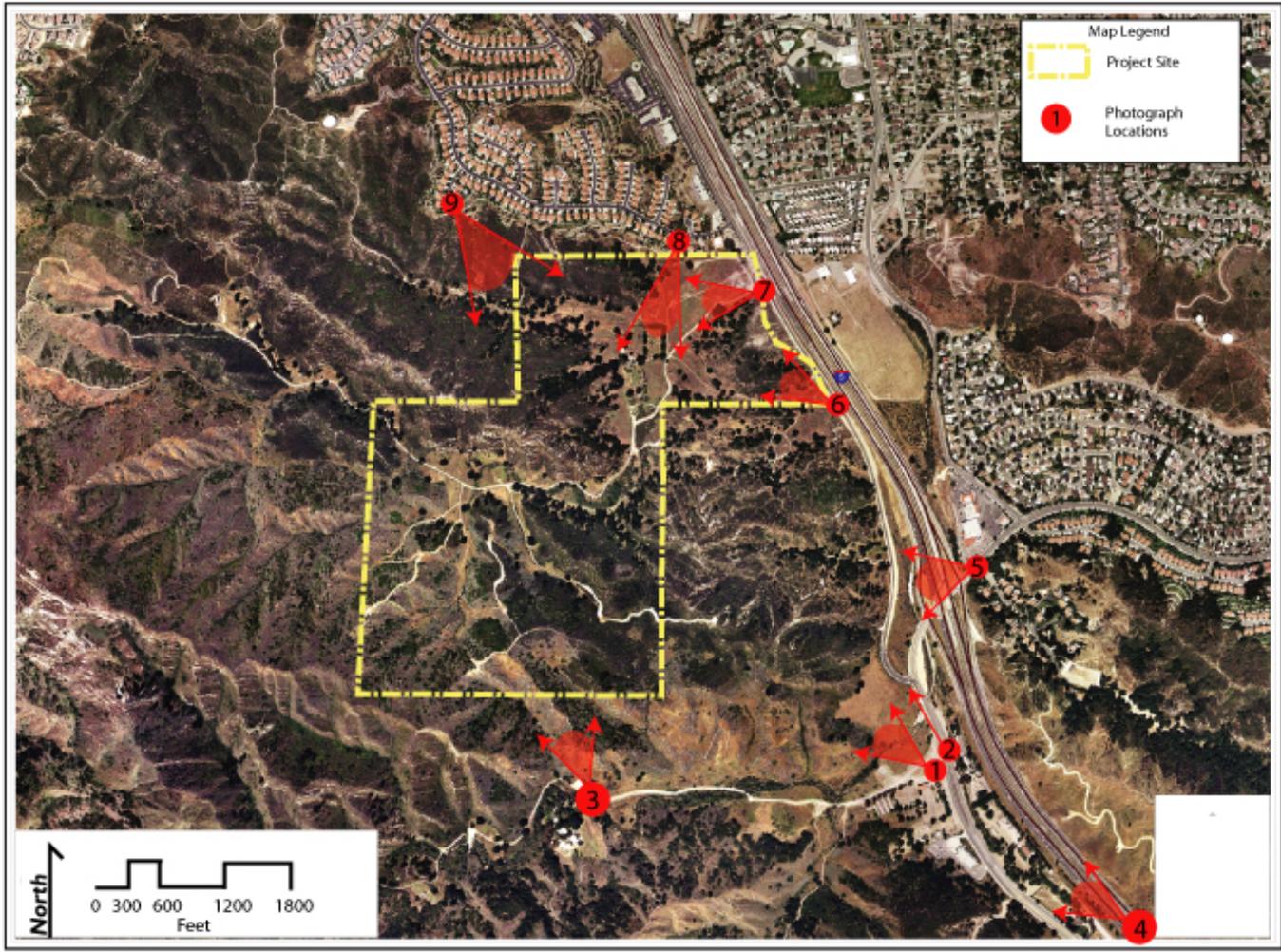
¹ *Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment for Lyons Canyon Ranch Specific Plan*, BonTerra Consulting, November 5, 2004.

² *Preliminary Geotechnical Report*, Pacific Soils Engineering, Inc. March 10, 2004.

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A third northern view of the subject site is depicted in Exhibit 5.9-4, Photo 4. From this vantage point along the northbound lanes of the I-5 Freeway, the southern portions of the subject site are visible. This photograph also depicts the surrounding hillsides and ridgelines that comprise the western rim of the Santa Clarita Valley.

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Site Photographs Key Map

Exhibit 5.9-1



1



2

Views North From Old Road and Towsley Canyon Park

Exhibit 5.9-2



..... Approximate Project Site Boundary

3

View North From Towsley Canyon Park

Exhibit 5.9-3



----- Approximate Project Boundary

4

View North from I-5 Freeway Towards Project Site

Exhibit 5.9-4

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VIEWS WEST ONTO PROJECT SITE

The project site cannot be viewed from east of the I-5 Freeway along Calgrove Blvd. due to intervening ridgelines on the adjacent property to the east (refer to Exhibit 5.9-5, Photo 5). This property consists primarily of hilly terrain vegetated with Non-Native Grassland, Coastal Sage Scrub, Coast Like Oak Woodland and Chaparral.

Some relatively flat areas exist on the northeast portion of the project site and thus provide view opportunities for vehicles traveling along The Old Road and the I-5 Freeway (refer to Exhibit 5.9-5, Photos 6 and 7). Between the southern and northern portions of the property, a primary ridgeline that extends north-south just east of the project site obstructs westward views from The Old Road.

VIEW SOUTH ONTO PROJECT SITE AND BEYOND

Views southward of the project site and beyond, from Sagecrest Circle look down as the elevation decreases down to the Lyon Canyon drainage. The northern ridges of Towsley Canyon partially obstruct views further south (refer to Exhibit 5.9-6, Photo 8). The ridgelines are vegetated primarily with Chaparral and Coast Live Oak Woodland with pockets of Coastal Sage Scrub and Non-Native Grassland located at the northeast portion of the project site.

VIEWS SOUTHEAST ONTO PROJECT SITE

Views eastward from the northern portion of the project site contain hilly topography that decreases in elevation down to the Lyons Canyon drainage, the Old Road and the I-5 freeway. Areas of Southern California Walnut Woodland and Oak Woodlands are visible on the hillsides. The ridgelines east of the I-5 freeway are also visible from then northern portion of the project site (refer to Exhibit 5.9-6, Photo 9). The primary ridgeline has sparse vegetation, consisting primarily of Chaparral and Coastal Sage Scrub with pockets of Southern California Walnut Woodland and Coast Live Oak Woodland within the western portion of the project site.



5



Views West Into Project Site from The Old Road.

Exhibit 5.9-5



8



9

----- Approximate Project Boundary

Views South and Southeast Into Project Site

Exhibit 5.9-6

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LIGHT AND GLARE

The project site is currently vacant and therefore, there are no sources of light or glare. Light sources visible from the project site include headlight glare from traffic along Interstate 5 and The Old Road located east of the site. Sources of light affecting the project site include the single-family residential development along Sagecrest Circle (Sunset Pointe) and commercial uses, located north of the project site. Areas west and south of the project site are undeveloped and therefore do not impact the project site with any sources of light or glare.

RIDGELINE PROTECTION

The County of Los Angeles Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (SCVAP) and the County of Los Angeles Development Code include provisions that are designed to preserve ridgelines. The SCVAP includes land use classifications such as the “Hillside Management” land use category under the “Special Management Areas” Section of the SCVAP. Development within Hillside Management Areas requires adherence to special precautions that are intended to limit development to the most suitable and least environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, it is intended that the scale and intensity of development be proposed in a manner that is compatible with the natural resources and character of the area.

Although the project site is not located within the City of Santa Clarita and thus is not subject to the City’s Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Development Ordinance, the southern portion of the project site is located adjacent to the city boundary and this discussion is provided for that reason. The City of Santa Clarita General Plan identifies significant ridgelines as ridgelines that are visually dominant and important within the community.³ The City of Santa Clarita General Plan specifies that “Development should be strictly regulated in these areas [significant primary, secondary, and landmark ridges within the planning area] and significant ridgelines should generally not be graded nor construction placed upon them.” In order to protect these formally designated significant ridgelines, the Santa Clarita Municipal Code includes Section 17.80, Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Development Ordinance.

5.9.2 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of a project Initial Study. The Initial Study of Los Angeles County for this project is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to aesthetics and visual resources. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist are also utilized as thresholds of significance in this EIR. Accordingly, a project may create a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following occurs:

- ◆ Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

³ Development on significant ridgelines is regulated by Chapter 17.80, Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Development Ordinance of the City’s Municipal Code.

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- ◆ Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, primary/secondary ridgelines, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- ◆ Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- ◆ Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

5.9.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

COMMUNITY DESIGN CONCEPT

The Lyons Canyon Ranch community design concept was designed to create the community aesthetic and define a framework for the design of the individual projects (neighborhoods).

Community-Wide Landscaping

The Landscape Concept Plan is intended to provide a common thread throughout the project site, and distinguish the residential neighborhoods from the natural areas.

The Landscape Concept Plan also includes management guidelines, a fuel modification zone plan (consistent with the Los Angeles County Fire Department Fuel Modification Plan Guidelines) and a description of the project entries.

Hardscaping and Lighting

Fencing

Walls and fences within the project site would serve as an important component of the community design theme. The basic fence/wall designs that are envisioned would be rural “equestrian-style” theme fence, privacy wall or the open theme/view fence.

Lighting

No formal lighting plans have been developed as of the preparation of this EIR; however, certain basic lighting elements can be anticipated. Project lighting will likely include street lighting, building and landscape accent lighting. Three basic principals are considered in the provision of lighting:

- ◆ Streetlights should provide a safe and desirable level of illumination for both motorists and pedestrians without intruding into residential areas.
- ◆ Lighting fixtures should relate to the human scale especially in pedestrian areas.

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- ◆ Lighting and lighting fixtures should complement the design and character of the environment in which they are placed.
- ◆ Lighting and lighting fixtures shall be designed to avoid light spillover into adjacent properties and the night sky.

The project would ensure that all street lighting conforms to County standards or an approved theme lighting program, which would be approved by the appropriate County department. Any lighting for recreation areas would be considered as an element of final development plan review. Any such lighting, would not illuminate a recreational area past the hour of 10:00 PM per the project C,C,&R's. In addition, timers shall be installed on all proposed lighting for common recreational structures to ensure these areas will not be illuminated after 10:00 PM. Illuminated entries are required to direct lighting low to the ground and be limited to only the immediate vicinity of the entry.

Site-Specific Architecture

Architecture is a critical component to the appearance of the Lyons Canyon finished environment. The goal of the design guidelines is to provide general design criteria and guidance to promote both visual compatibility and variety in a community setting achieved by utilizing a variety of compatible styles through architectural innovation.

SHORT-TERM CONSTRUCTION AESTHETIC IMPACTS

- ◆ ***THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD RESULT IN GRADING AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD TEMPORARILY ALTER THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SITE***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Project construction activities would alter views across the northern and southwestern portions of the project site from surrounding locations. In these areas, the primary impact would be the grading of manufactured slopes with a maximum 2:1 (horizontal to vertical) gradient and heights up to 150 feet. Within these areas, construction materials and construction equipment would also be visible. Soil would be stockpiled and equipment for grading activities would be staged at various locations throughout the project site. These visual impacts can be considered significant unless mitigated. With implementation of the recommended mitigation pertaining to equipment staging areas and the use of screening, impacts in this regard are concluded as less than significant. Further, construction-related activities are not considered significant as they are anticipated to be experienced only during the estimated 12-month site preparation phase.

Short-term light and glare impacts associated with construction activity would likely be limited to nighttime lighting necessary for security purposes. Relative to potential short-term construction impacts, lighting from construction activities may pose a nighttime lighting impact

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to the residences located north of the project site. Although this is considered a short-term impact, mitigation is identified to reduce the significance of impact to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

- AES1 Construction equipment staging areas shall be located a minimum of 500 feet from existing residential uses and appropriate screening (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material), shall be used to buffer views of construction equipment and material. Staging location shall be indicated on project Final Development Plans and Grading Plans. Equipment staging areas shall be located in the least environmentally sensitive areas, as determined by the County of Los Angeles Planning Department.
- AES2 All construction-related lighting shall be located and aimed away from adjacent residential areas and consist of the minimal wattage necessary to provide safety at the construction site. A construction safety lighting plan shall be submitted to the County of Los Angeles for review concurrent with Grading Permit applications for the subdivision of the lots.
- AES3 The project biologist shall review the construction staging and construction safety lighting plans and determine the most appropriate location for the staging of construction equipment and construction lighting so that impacts to wildlife are minimized. The project biologist shall provide written certification of his/her approval of these plans to the County of Los Angeles Biologist prior to issuance of a grading permit.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

LONG-TERM AESTHETIC IMPACTS

- ◆ ***THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA AND PERMANENTLY ALTER THE EXISTING VISUAL CHARACTER AND VIEWSHED FROM SURROUNDING LOCATIONS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The alteration of the project site from an undeveloped condition to suburban uses would be permanent. Currently, the project site consists of undeveloped hillsides with vegetative cover including Coast Live Oak Woodland, Southern California Walnut Woodland, Mule Fat Scrub, Coastal Sage Scrub, Chaparral and Non-Native Grassland.

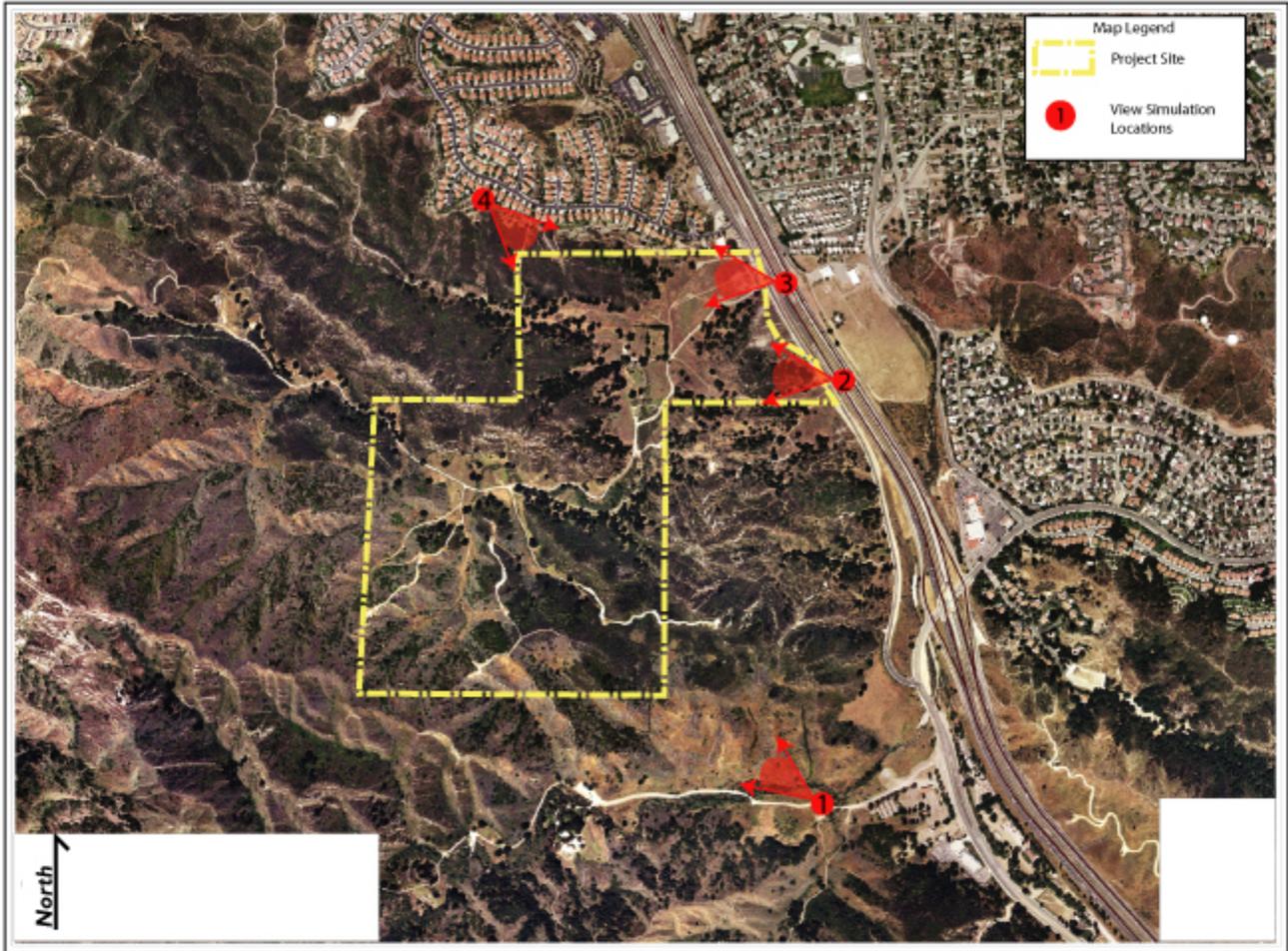
The existing visual characteristics of the project site and viewshed from surrounding locations would be altered with implementation of the Lyons Canyon Ranch project. Construction of the proposed project will require the grading of manufactured cut and fill slopes in the northern,

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central, and southern portions of the site. On-site grading, combined with development of the proposed residential structures, local streets and associated infrastructure, will have a substantial effect on scenic vistas and would permanently modify the existing visual character and viewshed from surrounding locations.

Visual simulations were prepared in order to assist in determining the project's aesthetic impacts (refer to Exhibit 5.9-7, *Visual Simulation Site Locations*).

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Visual Simulation Key Map

Exhibit 5.9-7

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VIEWS TO THE NORTHWEST FROM TOWSLEY CANYON PARK

Currently, views of the project site from the northeastern portion of Towsley Canyon Park and the entrance to Towsley Canyon Park from The Old Road are obstructed by the ridgelines of Towsley Canyon (Please refer to [Exhibit 5.9-8](#)). These ridgelines obstruct views north across the site. Foreground views from this location are of the adjacent property to the east. Further west along the primary access road within Towsley Canyon Park, a small portion of the subject site is visible (Please refer to [Exhibit 5.9-3](#)).

After project development, views from these vantage points would continue to include the visible ridgelines as undeveloped open space. This is achieved by locating the graded lots for single-family residential units and flood control purposes a minimum of 700 feet north of the southern property line in a “bowl” configuration. The siting of lots in this configuration creates a ridgeline buffer where the highest pad elevation is approximately 75 feet below the nearest on-site or off-site ridgeline. As a result, none of the lots proposed for residential development or flood control purposes can be seen from these vantage points. [Exhibit 5.9-8, Site 1 Visual Simulation](#), illustrates the extent of project visibility from the eastern portion of Towsley Canyon Park.

VIEWS TO THE WEST FROM THE OLD ROAD AND I-5 FREEWAY

Currently views from vehicles traveling along Interstate 5 and The Old Road are of rolling hills with sparse vegetation and of primary ridgelines that obstruct views further westward. Implementation of the proposed project would result in development of single-family lots and senior housing in the form of attached condominiums which would be surrounded by open space areas in Lots A,B,C and D. Vehicles traveling along The Old Road and Interstate 5 along the project frontage will not be able to view the southern portion of the development, as the topography present on the undeveloped property to the east effectively screens the project.

Portions of the project will be visible from the central and northern portions of the site (refer to [Exhibit 5.9-9](#) and [Exhibit 5.9-10](#)). Grading of the proposed secondary access road (“E” Street) will require grading on an existing ridgeline. Consequently, both the roadway and the residential structures proposed on Lots 73-87 will be visible from The Old Road and the I-5 Freeway at this location (refer to [Exhibit 5.9-9](#)). The most prominent views of the proposed project along the Old Road and the I-5 Freeway would be from the northern portions of the project site at the intersection of the primary access road (“A” Street) and The Old Road. From this vantage point, the fire station and the senior condominiums located at northeast corner of the project site will be prominent (refer to [Exhibit 5.9-10](#)).

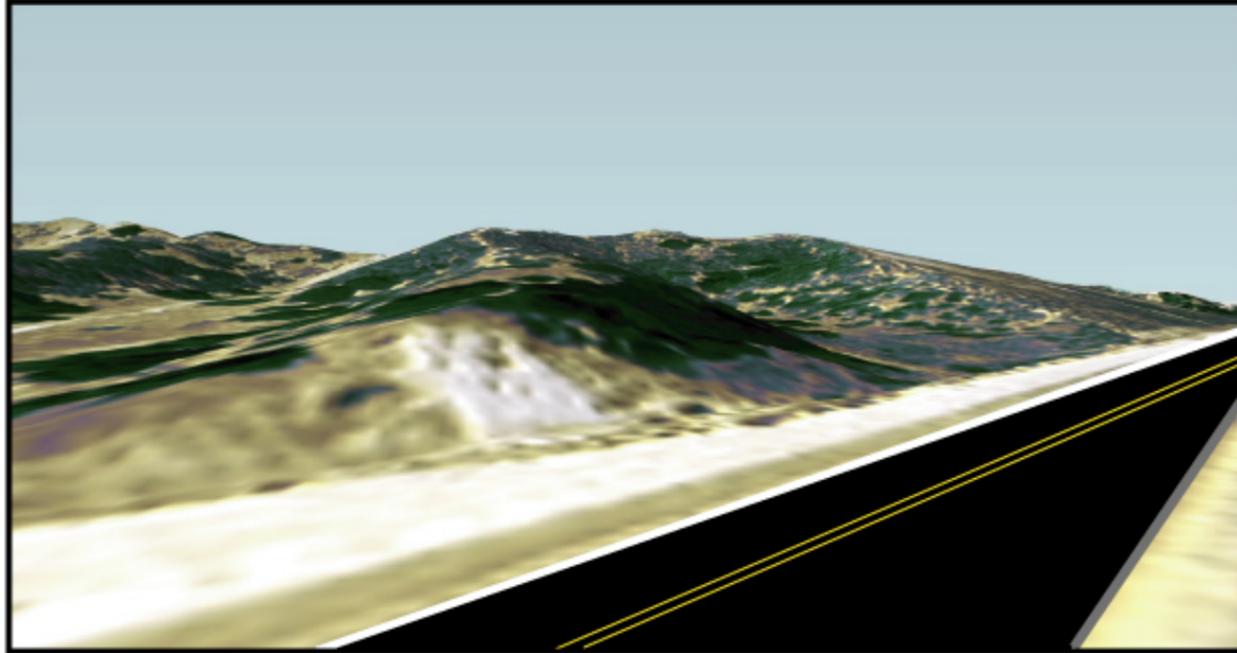


View of Project Site From Location #1

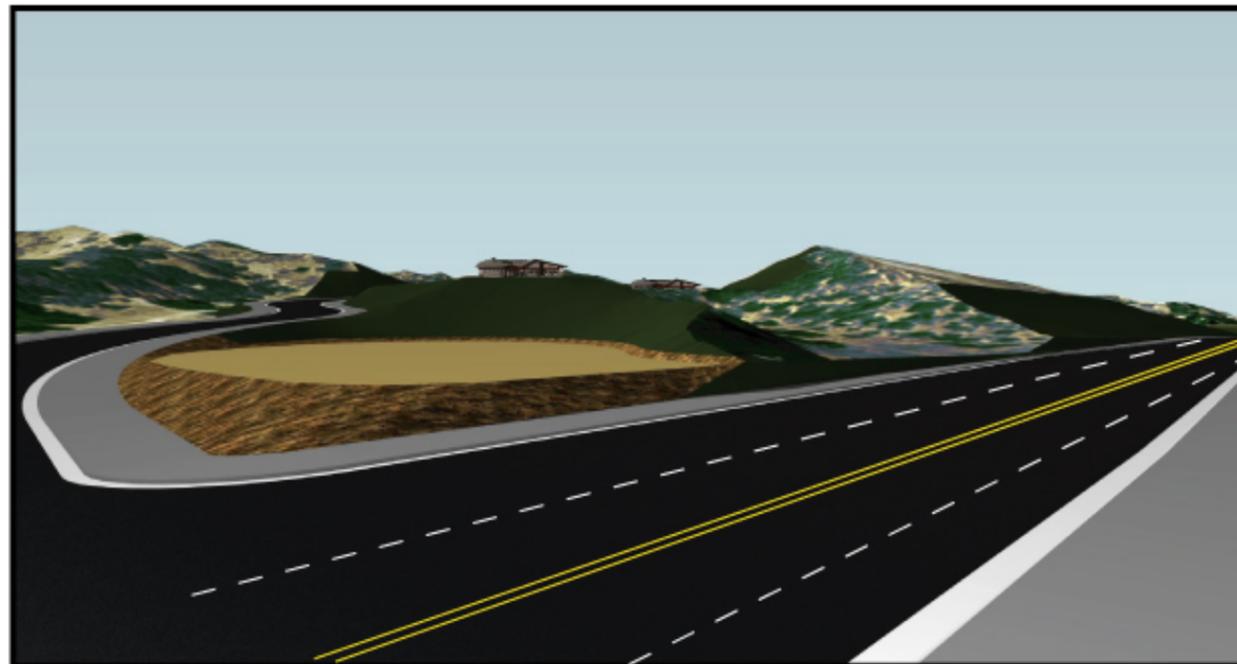
Exhibit 5.9-8

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3D Terrain Model - Existing Condition



3D Terrain Model - Proposed Condition



Map Key



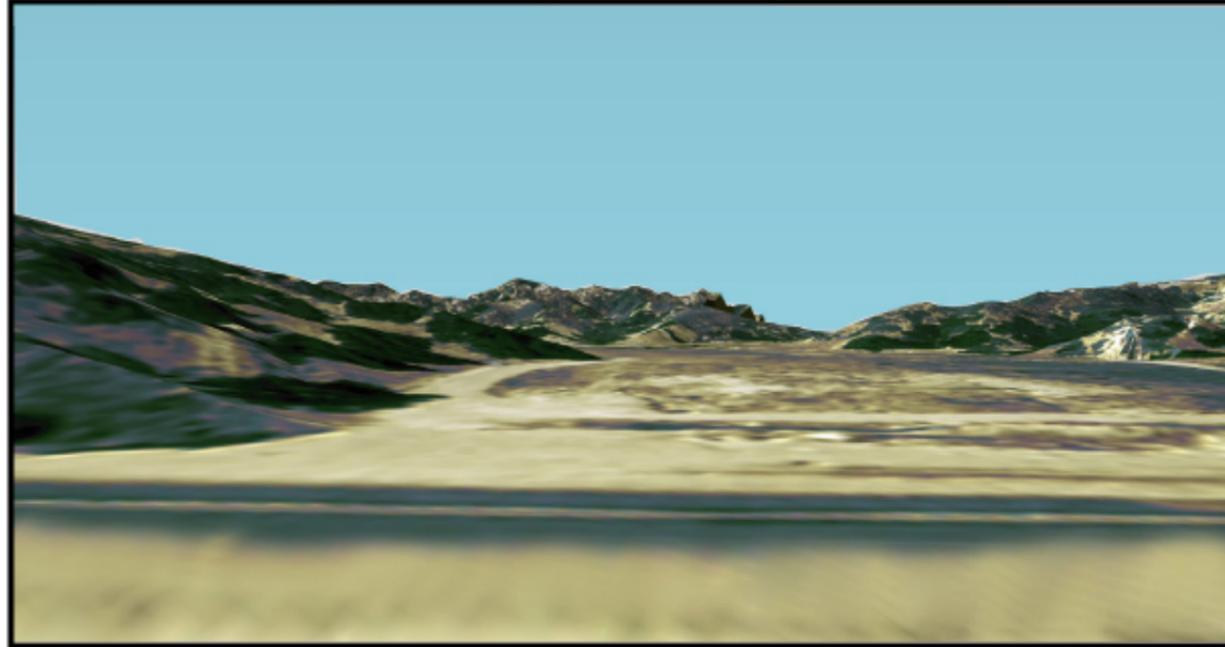
Site Photograph - Existing Condition

View of Project Site From Location #2

Exhibit 5.9-9

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3D Terrain Model - Existing Condition



3D Terrain Model - Proposed Condition



Map Key



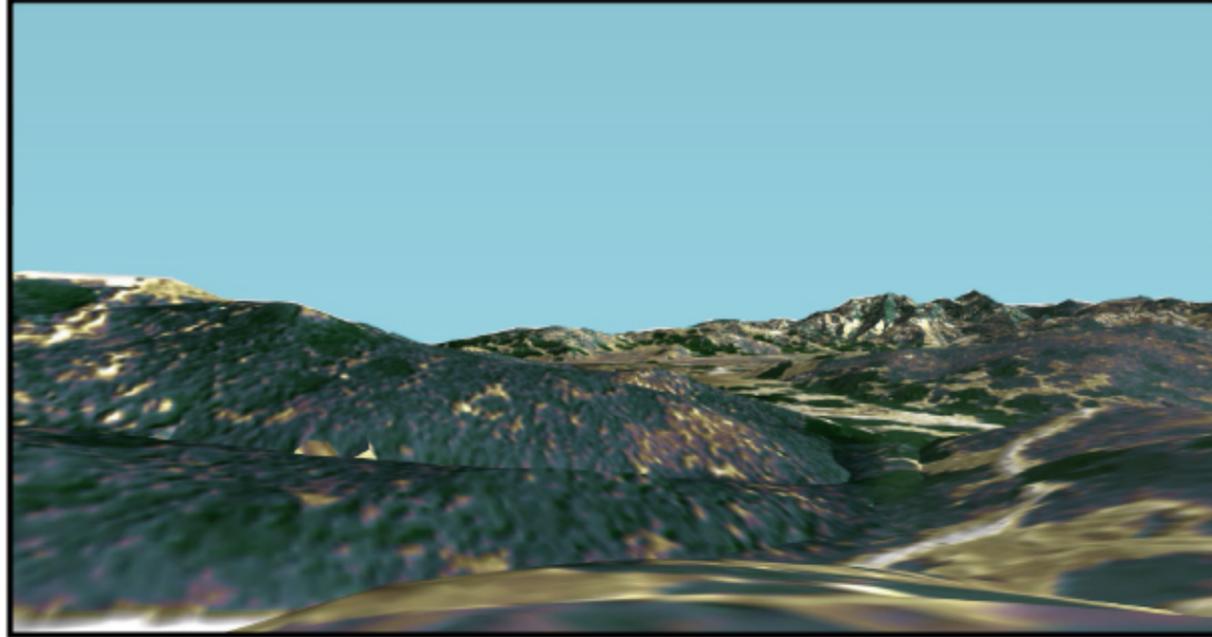
Site Photograph - Existing Condition

View of Project Site From Location #3

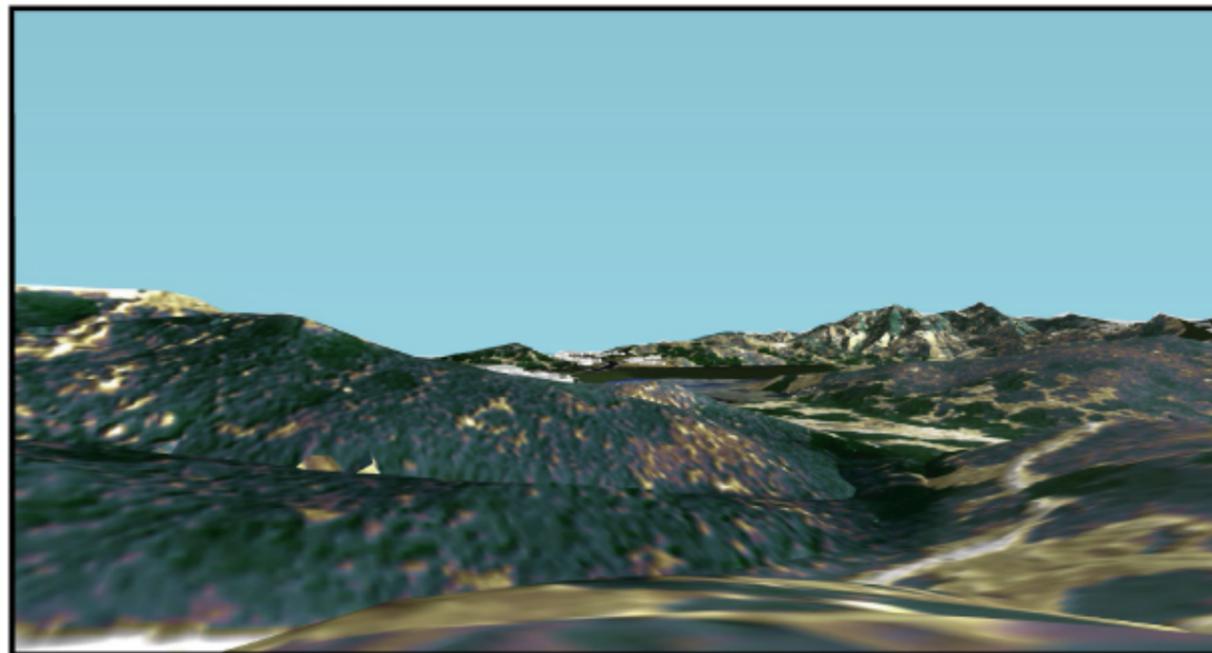
Exhibit 5.9-10

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3D Terrain Model - Existing Condition



3D Terrain Model - Proposed Condition



Map Key



Site Photograph - Existing Condition

View of Project Site From Location #4

Exhibit 5.9-11

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VIEWS TO THE SOUTH AND EAST FROM RESIDENTIAL LOTS ALONG SAGECREST CIRCLE

Currently, views from an undeveloped area west of existing homes along Sagecrest Circle are of vegetated hillsides that include ridgelines, which partially obstruct views to the east. Implementation of the proposed project would maintain the majority of the western portion of the project site as disturbed or natural open space (Open Space Lot "A"), and passive recreation areas (trails). However, single-family residential units (portions of Lots 73-87 and 88-91), the senior housing area, the fire station site, and "A" Street would be partially visible from this location (refer to Exhibit 5.9-11).

Impact Conclusion

The development of the proposed project would permanently alter the views of and across the project site. Project grading would convert approximately 100 acres of natural open space to suburban residential uses, flood control facilities, recreational uses, and an institutional use, which would obstruct or alter current views of and through the project site. Therefore, implementation of the Lyons Canyon Specific Plan would result in significant long-term aesthetic impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are recommended that could feasibly reduce the significant impacts referenced.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and Unavoidable.

◆ ***THE PROPOSED PROJECT MAY SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE SCENIC RESOURCES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, PRIMARY/SECONDARY RIDGELINES, TREES, AND ROCK OUTCROPPINGS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Portions of the proposed development are adjacent to and visible from the Old Road and the I-5 freeway, both routes with scenic qualities. Both of these highways were thus designated by the County of Los Angeles because of the high quality of the scenic vistas within their viewsheds. Within the vicinity of the project site, those resources include (but are not limited to) scenic vistas of the Newhall Pass and nearby undeveloped hillsides, Towsley Canyon Park and the steep and complex topography of the mountains that form a visual backdrop for the project site.

The proposed project would introduce a residential development into the scenic vistas afforded by the I-5 Freeway, The Old Road, and Sagecrest Circle, resulting in a substantial alteration of existing vistas. In some places, the existing terrain would be altered and the natural forms of the hillsides reshaped into horizontal planes to support the proposed development. Portions of the new residential development would be clearly visible from both northbound and southbound

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traffic on both the I-5 Freeway and the Old Road. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant impact on scenic vistas as viewed from the I-5 Freeway and the Old Road.

Within the vicinity of the project site, scenic resources include (but are not limited to) expanses of undeveloped hillsides, steep and complex topography, rugged rock outcroppings, a meandering water course, and undisturbed native vegetation. Concentrating the proposed homes in two distinct enclaves assists in preserving open space on the project site. The proposed site plan, utilizing previously disturbed land to the maximum extent possible, will minimize the impacts to the most sensitive scenic resources on the project site. For example, there would be minimal grading of visible ridgelines in and around the project site. In addition, the project will preserve approximately 67 percent of the on-site wetlands and 63 percent of the riparian habitat within Lyons Canyon Creek. However, the proposed project would cause landform alterations to approximately 104.76 acres (or 45% of the project site), due to on-site grading. Fuel modification for fire prevention purposes would result in view alterations to approximately 64 acres of currently undisturbed native habitat. The native vegetation of the project site and the surrounding open space constitutes a major scenic resource. Within the proposed development areas, grading would transform the complex terrain of the hillsides into more regular ordered patterns of horizontal planes. Notwithstanding that the proposed project would preserve approximately 163 acres of the project site as either disturbed or undisturbed open space, substantial portions of the development "footprint" would involve the removal or alteration of existing scenic resources such as major landforms and undisturbed native vegetation, which would substantially impact scenic resources. Therefore, the proposed project's impacts on scenic resources would be considered significant.

The project applicant has prepared a 3-dimensional computer model which illustrates the proposed project's impacts on primary and secondary ridgelines. As depicted in Exhibit 5.9-12 and 13, 3-Dimensional "Bird's Eye Views of Proposed Project" the majority of the two primary ridgelines and two secondary ridgelines would be preserved. Nevertheless, some modification of these ridgelines is necessary to establish the proposed vehicle circulation system and the proposed residential development areas. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this analysis, the proposed development would substantially affect the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings. Therefore, project impacts with respect to significant ridgelines and the existing visual character would be considered significant.

Mitigation Measures:

- AES4 The project applicant/developer/builder shall prepare and implement a Landscape Plan that provides planting and maintenance guidance for common landscaped areas, slopes, and undeveloped building pads. The project applicant/developer/builder shall be responsible for the Plan's implementation until such time as a homeowners' association is prepared to take over landscape maintenance responsibilities. The Landscape Plan shall be subject to the review and approval by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and Regional Planning, prior to issuance of the grading permit. To ensure its implementation, the Landscape Plan shall be incorporated into the project's Conditions, Covenants,

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and Restrictions (CC&Rs) to be recorded prior to final map recordation. Major features of the landscape plan shall include:

- ◆ A listing of plant species appropriate for use for both temporary slope stabilization purposes and long-term landscaping designs for common slope and private yard areas. The plan shall use drought-tolerant, fire retardant, locally indigenous plant species. Only non-invasive native plant species shall be included in the listing of acceptable planting materials. In addition, wherever practical, plants which are relatively pest resistant and which require a minimum of added nutrients shall be utilized in landscaping;
- ◆ Requirements that all proposed private residential landscape plans conform to the project's landscape plan requirements for plant material selection, irrigation systems, and the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers;
- ◆ Retention of a landscape contractor thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the Landscape Plan, by the project's homeowners' association, for ongoing implementation of the Landscape Plan; and
- ◆ The project's Homeowner's Association shall be responsible for the preservation and protection of existing trees and shrubs. Procedures for the care and maintenance of native trees retained on private properties shall be specified in the project's CC&R's which is to be reviewed by the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning prior to its recordation.

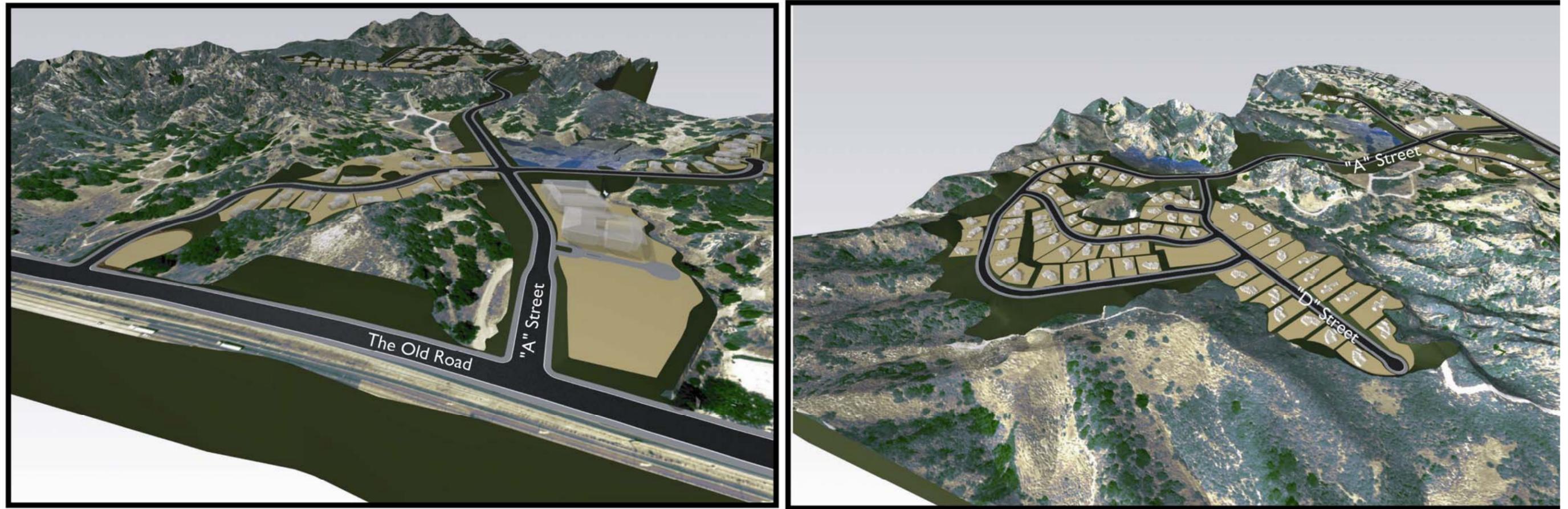
In addition, the following measures are required:

- ◆ Exterior buildings finishes shall be non-reflective and use natural subdued tones.
- ◆ Vines and/or other clinging plant material shall be used to soften views of exposed walls where space or fuel modification requirements may preclude the use of other larger plant materials.
- ◆ Drainage devices (terrace drains, benches and intervening terraces) visible from surrounding areas shall be bermed and placed in swales.
- ◆ Concrete drains and all other drainage devices shall be tinted with an appropriate earth tone to effectively conceal them from surrounding views.
- ◆ Lighting standards shall employ fixtures with cut-offs that focus the light directly onto streets and shoulders, and shall be redesigned and placed in such a manner as to prevent ambient illumination beyond the boundaries of the project site.
- ◆ Project street lighting shall be the lowest intensity necessary for security and safety purposes, while still adhering to the recommended levels of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. All lighting sources shall be shielded to avoid light spill-over onto adjacent properties, and directional lighting shall be used.

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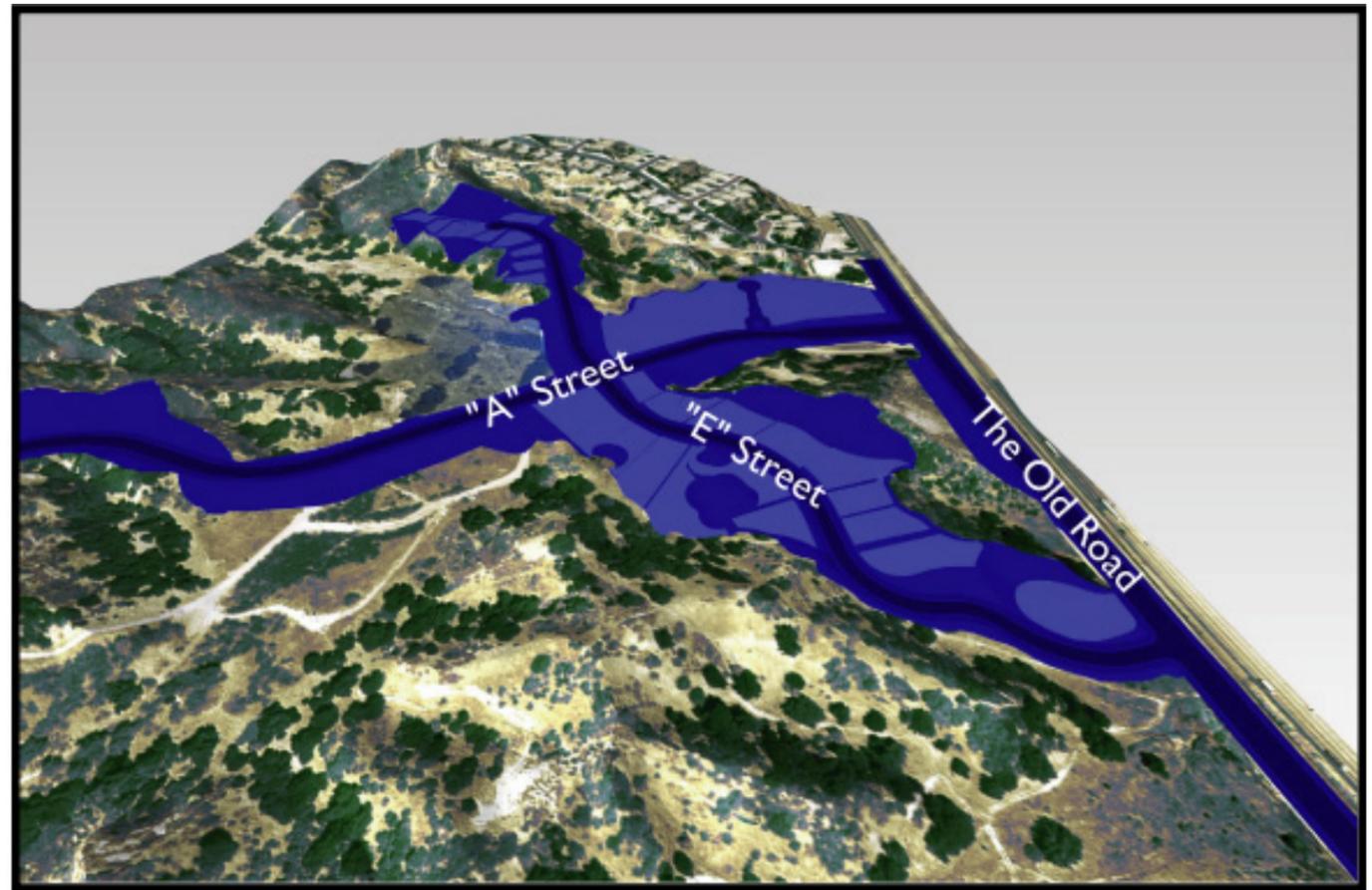
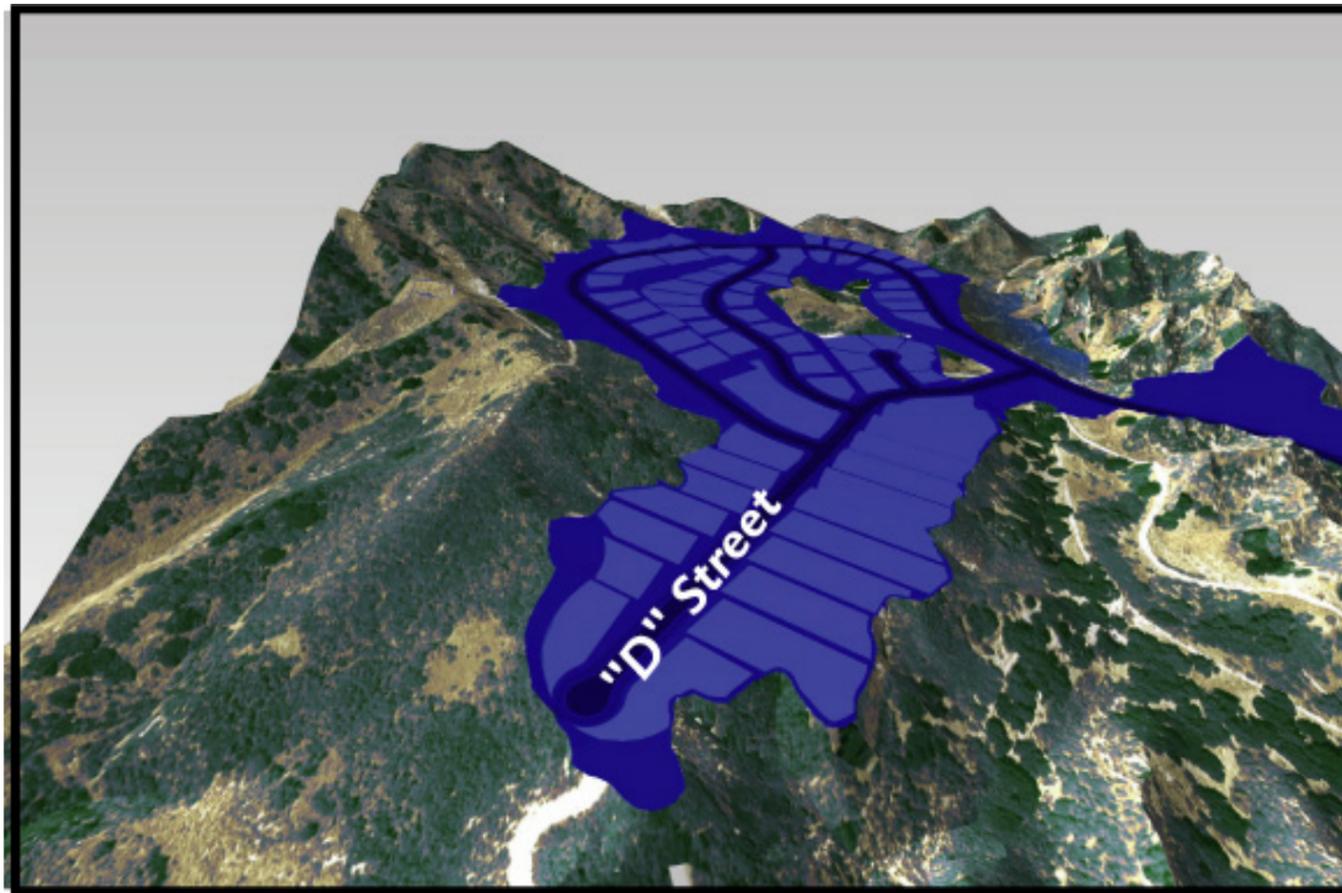
- ◆ Atmospheric light pollution shall be minimized by utilizing street lighting fixtures that cut-off light directed to the sky.
- ◆ Low level bollards rather than tall lighting standards shall be deployed to minimize lighting levels.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and Unavoidable Impact.



3-Dimensional "Bird's Eye" Views of Proposed Project

Exhibit 5.9-12



 = Graded Areas

3-Dimensional "Bird's Eye" Views of Proposed Project

Exhibit 5.9-13

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◆ ***THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INTRODUCE NEW SOURCES OF LIGHT/GLARE INTO THE PROJECT AREA.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Currently, there are no sources of light and glare within the project site. Implementation of the Lyons Canyon Ranch may result in light/glare impacts to off-site uses and introduce new sources of lighting into the project area impacting adjacent residential areas located to the north and roadways. The proposed project would include lighting for activity areas involving nighttime uses, parking, lighting around the structures (security lighting, walkways) and lighting for interiors of buildings.

As previously described, the project includes requirements for lighting. Specifically, the project would ensure that all street lighting conforms to County standards or an approved theme lighting program, which would be approved by the appropriate County department. Any lighting for recreation areas, which would illuminate a residential area past the hour of 10:00 PM, would be required to be clearly identified on the submitted plans and illuminated entries would be required to direct lighting low to the ground and be limited to only the immediate vicinity of the entry and would not be distracting, create visual hot spots or glare. In addition, recommended mitigation, which includes providing low-intensity lighting that is shielded from adjacent sensitive receptors would reduce light and glare impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

AES5 Prior to issuance of building permits, the following elements are included in all project plans, as appropriate:

- ◆ All exterior lighting shall be designed and located as to avoid intrusive effects on adjacent residential properties and undeveloped areas adjacent to the project site. Low-intensity street lighting and low-intensity exterior lighting shall be used throughout the development, as permitted by the Los Angeles County Public Works Department. Lighting fixtures shall use shielding, if necessary to prevent spill lighting on adjacent off-site uses;
- ◆ Design and placement of site lighting shall minimize glare affecting adjacent properties, buildings, and roadways by utilizing “cut-off” fixtures on all street and parking lot lighting;
- ◆ All exterior lighting intended for security shall utilize motion sensors to reduce unnecessary usage.
- ◆ Fixtures and standards shall conform to state and local safety and illumination requirements;
- ◆ All trail and park lighting shall provide optimum public safety, while at the same time reducing nighttime light spillover and glare;

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- ◆ Development projects shall use minimally reflective glass and all other materials used on exterior building and structures shall be selected with attention to minimizing reflective glare; and
- ◆ Automatic timers on all lighting fixtures within any on-site recreational structures shall included in the building design to maximize personal safety during nighttime use while saving energy and reducing light pollution. The timers shall be set so that structure lighting within common areas is turned off at 10:00 PM.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

5.9.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- ◆ ***IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH RELATED PROJECTS IN THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, WOULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT CUMULATIVE AESTHETIC AND VISUAL RESOURCES IMPACTS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The proposed project, in combination other development identified in Section 4.0, would contribute to the alteration of the aesthetic character of the southern end of the Santa Clarita Valley from rural to more suburban. The project and other development in the unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County and the City of Santa Clarita would transform the character of the area by adding urban uses in currently undeveloped hillside areas. The aesthetic impacts of individual development projects can often be mitigated through careful site design, avoidance of significant visual features, and appropriate building and landscape standards. Despite the mitigation that can be applied to individual development projects, the overall change in visual character associated with the proposed project and cumulative projects is considered an unavoidable significant cumulative impact.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are recommended that could feasibly reduce the impacts referenced to the less than significant level.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and Unavoidable Impact.