

5. *Environmental Analysis*

5.1 *AESTHETICS*

This section of the DSSEIR describes the impacts of the 2012 Modified Project on existing land form and aesthetic characteristics, as compared to the 2011 Approved Project. The information in this section is based on the 2011 Certified EIR, field reconnaissance, review of the Proposed Project Site, aerial photographs, and topographical mapping.

5.1.1 *Environmental Setting*

Visual Setting

Scenic Features

The 2011 Certified EIR discussed the visual setting associated with the development of the 2011 Approved Project adjacent to various arterial highways and state and federal highways. None of the roadways discussed in the 2011 Certified EIR or this DSSEIR are designated County or State scenic highways; although Sand Canyon Avenue is designated as a highway with rural/natural character. The City's General Plan also designates the Interstate 5 (I-5) Freeway as an urban character Scenic Highway.

Generally, views of the former military base are from the surrounding highways. From these highways, a variety of land uses, structures, and facilities of differing ages, sizes, and architectural styles may be viewed. Though agricultural areas are adjacent to and within the base, the predominant features are associated with the military use of the former MCAS El Toro, including runways, aprons, hangars, warehouses, barracks housing, recreational facilities, abandoned golf course, single-family housing, offices, and commercial structures. However, since certification of the 2003 OCGP EIR, over 1,000 pre-existing buildings, structures, and ancillary facilities have been demolished; a portion of the pre-existing runway has been removed; and the Great Park Western Sector Development Plan (Phase 1) has been established on the western edge of the former military base.

The city of Lake Forest and the James A. Musick Branch Jail are to the southeast of the Proposed Project Site; the Irvine Spectrum abuts the eastern and southern boundaries; and existing and developing residential developments are located to the north and west. Further to the south are the residential areas of the cities of Laguna Woods and Laguna Hills. Portions of these communities are at higher elevations and therefore have panoramic views of the Proposed Project Site. However, because residences with views of the Proposed Project Site are at least two miles from the property, those residences are not impacted by existing light sources on the Proposed Project Site.

Landform

The topography of the Proposed Project Site is nearly flat and gently sloping down to the west-southwest with elevations ranging from 200 feet above mean sea level (msl) to 450 feet above msl. Existing Planning Area 30 is at the southeast margin of the Tustin plain with elevations ranging from about 260 to

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300 feet above msl. Existing Planning Area 51 includes some slopes of the Santa Ana foothills which reach elevations of about 750 feet above msl.

Light Sources

Parts of the Proposed Project Site are vacant land containing no light sources. Most of the developed area onsite is vacant and likewise does not contain light sources. There are a few buildings onsite with existing uses that have outdoor nighttime parking areas and security lighting. Additionally, nighttime light sources associated with the Orange County Great Park Western Sector Development (Phase 1) also exist.

Regulatory Setting

Local regulations, plans, and guidelines that are potentially applicable to the 2012 Modified Project are summarized below.

City of Irvine Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance

The City of Irvine Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance identify land use categories, development standards, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the City's General Plan and proposed development projects. The following provisions from the City's Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance help minimize aesthetics and light and glare impacts associated with new development projects and are relevant to the 2012 Modified Project.

- **Irvine Municipal Code, Title 5 (Planning), Division 9 (Building Regulations), Chapter 5 (Uniform Security Code).** The Uniform Security Code is designed, in part, to limit light and glare to the extent feasible while providing sufficient light in a safe manner. Section 5-9-517 (Special Nonresidential Building Provisions) of Chapter 5 discusses standards and requirements for lighting and glare in the City, including heights of lighting fixtures; design, installation, and maintenance of lighting fixtures; standards for new development of multifamily and non-residential development; lighting for parking areas; and sign illumination.
- **Irvine Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3-16 (Lighting).** As required by Chapter 3-16 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, outdoor lighting is required to be designed and installed so that all direct rays are confined to the site and adjacent properties are protected from glare. The level of lighting on the site shall comply with the requirements of the City's Uniform Security Code (Irvine Municipal Code, Title 5, Division 9, Chapter 5).
- **Irvine Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3-15 (Landscaping).** This chapter of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the minimum site landscaping and maintenance requirements. This chapter also outlines the screening and landscaping requirements for parking areas and parking structures.
- **Irvine Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 3-37 (Zoning District Land Use Regulations and Development Standards).** This chapter of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the regulations and development standards that are applicable to land uses proposed throughout the various planning areas of the City, including setbacks, building heights, landscaping, and maximum building intensity (IBC only).
- **Irvine Zoning Ordinance, Division 7 (Signs).** The intent of this division of the Zoning Ordinance, also known as the Sign Ordinance, is to promote and protect the public health, safety and welfare by regulating existing and proposed signs of all types within the City. This division outlines the standards and

regulations that apply to the design and installation of signage, including quantity, location, dimensions, lighting, etc.

5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

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

Chapter 8, *Impacts Found Not to Be Significant*, substantiates the City's determination in the Initial Study for the 2012 Modified Project (Appendix A to this DSSEIR) that the following impacts of the 2012 Modified Project, as compared to the 2011 Approved Project, would be less than significant: AE-1 and AE-2. These impacts will not be addressed in the following analysis.

5.1.3 The 2011 Approved Project

Visual Character Impacts

The 2011 Certified EIR concluded that after compliance with the City's Zoning Ordinance, including City approval of architectural plans, landscape plans, and signage for each development to ensure new development is consistent with the City's Land Use Element, Circulation Element design policies, Zoning Ordinance, and the City's Landscape Ordinance and Guideline Manual, impacts to the visual character of the Approved Project Site and its surroundings due to development of the 2011 Approved Project would be less than significant.

Light and Glare Impacts

Mitigation Measure A-1 in the 2011 Certified EIR and associated mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the 2011 Approved Project (MMRP) requires the City Community Development Department to review lighting plans and signage plans for new development to ensure that there will be minimal light intrusion and spillover into adjacent residential areas. Mitigation Measure A-2 from the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP for the 2011 Approved Project requires the Director of Community Development to ensure that mirrored and highly reflective surfaces are discouraged or, where proposed, are accompanied by a design-level glare impact analysis that demonstrates no adverse visual impairment to motorists or other visual nuisance occurs. Light and glare impacts of the 2011 Approved Project were determined to be less than significant after implementation of mitigation.

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5.1.4 Environmental Impacts of the 2012 Modified Project

Existing Plans, Programs, and Policies

The following measures are existing plans, programs, or policies (“PPPs”) that apply to the 2012 Modified Project and that will help to reduce and avoid potential impacts related to aesthetics and light and glare:

- PPP 1-1 Prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate it has met the Irvine Uniform Security Code requirements for lighting by providing the below listed items for a complete review by the Police department. Failure to provide a complete lighting package will result in the delay of satisfaction of this condition (City Standard Condition 3.6).
- a. Electrical plan showing light fixture locations, type of light fixture, height of light fixture, and point-by-point photometric lighting analysis overlaid on the landscape plan with a tree legend. The photometric plan should only show those fixtures used to meet the Irvine Uniform Security Code requirements.
 - b. Corresponding fixture cut-sheets (specifications) of those lights used to meet the Irvine Uniform Security Code.
 - c. Site plan demonstrating that landscaping shall not be planted so as to obscure required light levels.
 - d. Site plans that are full-scale and legible.

Project Design Features

There are no project design features of the 2012 Modified Project that help to reduce and avoid potential impacts related to aesthetics and light and glare.

The following impact analysis addresses impacts that the Initial Study for the 2012 Modified Project disclosed as potentially significant impacts. The applicable potential impacts are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

IMPACT 5.1-1 DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO THE 2012 MODIFIED PROJECT WOULD CHANGE, BUT NOT SUBSTANTIALLY DEGRADE, THE VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT SITE COMPARED TO LAND USES TO BE DEVELOPED UNDER THE 2011 APPROVED PROJECT [IMPACT AE-3].

Conversion of Non-Residential Land Use to Residential Use

The overall aesthetic impact of the 2012 Modified Project would be similar to the impact of the 2011 Approved Project. The Proposed Project Site would be developed with a mix of open space and recreational land uses as well as mostly low and medium-density residential, mixed-use development and research and development land uses. Although the 2012 Modified Project would convert existing non-residential entitlement to residential uses, the bulk and massing of the proposed structures would be

similar to those considered in the 2011 Certified EIR. In addition, the proposed residential uses would likely provide more opportunities for landscaping and parkland. Under the 2012 Modified Project, large non-residential buildings would be replaced by smaller residential structures with intervening landscaping. Further, the additional residential units will require dedication of neighborhood parkland which was not required with the non-residential development in the 2011 Approved Project.

Additionally, the visual impact of developing residential versus non-residential uses would be similar, as both land uses would involve the development of single- and multi-story buildings and structures, as well as other hardscape and landscape elements. Furthermore, the development of residential and non-residential land uses would be required to adhere to the land use regulations and standards outlined in Chapter 3-37 (Zoning District Land Use Regulations and Development Standards) of the Irvine Zoning Ordinance. This chapter of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the regulations and development standards that are applicable to land uses proposed throughout the various planning areas of the City, including setbacks, building heights, and landscaping. Landscaping of both residential and non-residential land uses would also be required to adhere to the landscaping and maintenance requirements outlined in Chapter 3-17 (Landscaping) of the Irvine Zoning Ordinance.

Therefore, the aesthetic impacts of the 2012 Modified Project's proposed conversion of non-residential uses to residential uses, as compared to the 2011 Approved Project, are not expected to be significant, and aesthetic impacts may improve with implementation of the proposed conversion.

Main Street Development

The 2012 Modified Project includes two options for the "Main Street" development along Trabuco Road east of "O" Street. Option 1 would involve Community Commercial and Multi-Use north of Trabuco Road with Residential south of Trabuco in District 1 South. Option 2 would involve Residential uses north of Trabuco Road with Community Commercial, Multi-Use, and Residential uses south of Trabuco Road in District 1 South. All of the areas proposed for development within District 1 North and South under the 2012 Modified Project were approved for development as part of the 2011 Approved Project, and the potential aesthetic impact of development within these districts on the Proposed Project Site was studied in the 2011 Certified EIR. The range of permitted land uses, and the permitted density, would also not exceed permitted land uses and density approved as part of the 2011 Approved Project. As a result, development of either Option 1 or Option 2 of the 2012 Modified Project would have similar aesthetic impacts as the 2011 Approved Project and would not be substantially greater than those described in the 2011 Certified EIR.

Development of Additional Acreage

The 2012 Modified Project proposes development of two additional areas not previously planned for vertical development in the 2011 Approved Project: 1) the TCA Parcel; and, 2) 13 acres within District 6 (currently designated as District 9) which is currently zoned 1.1 Exclusive Agriculture. The TCA parcel is a remainder parcel associated with construction of the SR-133 Freeway. Since it is a remainder parcel, it is not a large, wide expanse of undeveloped land and is not highly visible scenically due to its location adjacent to the SR-133 Freeway. It is currently vacant and covered by very little vegetation other than non-native grasses. As a result, it does not exhibit any visual resources and would not result in a significant aesthetic impact, if developed.

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The 13 acres located in District 6 is currently in agricultural production and surrounded by industrial and warehouse uses to the north and east, the A.T. & S.F. rail line to the south and Marine Way to the west. Implementation of the 2012 Modified Project would convert 13-acres of agricultural land to preservation uses and associated landscaping. For impacts related to conversion of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses refer to Section 5.2, *Agriculture and Forestry Resources*, of this DSSEIR. While the existing agricultural uses provide some visual character, they are surrounded by urban uses including industrial/warehouse uses, a rail line, and an existing road. Additionally, the 2012 Modified Project proposes to convert this area to 1.4 Preservation for the Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature, which will involve landscaping of the area with trees and vegetation. Therefore, implementation of the 2012 Modified Project would improve the aesthetic value of this portion of the Proposed Project Site. Accordingly, the conversion of 13-acres of agricultural land to preservation uses would not be a significant aesthetic impact.

Comparison to 2011 Certified EIR

Impacts of the 2011 Approved Project on the visual character of the Approved Project Site and its surroundings were determined to be less than significant assuming compliance with existing City ordinances and policies. The net incremental impact of the 2012 Modified Project on the visual character of the Proposed Project Site and its surroundings would also be less than significant, and the overall impact is similar to that analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR.

Mitigation Program and Net Impact

No additional mitigation measures are introduced here in this DSSEIR as net impacts on visual character would be less than significant.

IMPACT 5.1-2 DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO THE 2012 MODIFIED PROJECT MAY DECREASE SOURCES OF LIGHT AND GLARE COMPARED TO LAND USES PROPOSED IN THE 2011 APPROVED PROJECT [IMPACT AE-4].

Conversion of Non-Residential Land Use to Residential

The 2012 Modified Project would convert a portion of the existing non-residential entitlement within Districts 2, 3, 5 and 6 (including existing District 9) to residential uses. Outdoor lighting on non-residential land uses typically includes lighted building faces for advertising/visibility purposes, parking lot lighting, and signage lighting. By contrast, outdoor nighttime lighting in residential areas is generally limited to security lighting and street lighting. Non-residential structures can have exterior surfaces that generate substantial glare. In contrast, residential dwelling units are generally built using low-glare materials. Therefore, the 2012 Modified Project's conversion of some non-residential uses to residential uses would likely reduce the overall nighttime lighting resulting from the 2012 Modified Project as compared to the 2011 Approved Project. The optional conversion of 535,000 square feet of non-residential Multi-Use intensity to residential uses would further increase this overall reduction.

As with the 2011 Approved Project, implementation of the land uses associated with the 2012 Modified Project would be required to adhere to the provision of the Uniform Security Code (Chapter 5 of the Irvine Municipal Code) and Chapter 3-16 (Lighting) of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Uniform Security Code outlines standards and requirements for lighting and glare in the City, including heights of lighting fixtures; design, installation, and maintenance of lighting fixtures; standards for new

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development of multifamily and nonresidential development; lighting for parking areas; and sign illumination. As required by Chapter 3-16 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, outdoor lighting is required to be designed and installed so that all direct rays are confined to the site and adjacent properties are protected from glare.

Additionally, development associated with the 2012 Modified Project would be required to implement the light and glare mitigation measures of the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP, which are reproduced at the end of this Section. For example, as outlined in Mitigation Measure A-1, prior to issuance of grading permits, lighting plans and signage plans for new development shall be reviewed by the Community Development Department to ensure that there will be minimal light intrusion and spillover into adjacent residential areas. Also, as outlined in Mitigation Measure A-2, prior to the issuance of grading permits, and during the master plan review process for future development in the project area, the Director of Community Development shall ensure that mirrored and highly reflective surfaces are discouraged or, where proposed, shall be accompanied by a design-level glare impact analysis that demonstrates no adverse visual impairment to motorists or other visual nuisance occurs.

Furthermore, lighting of signage associated with non-residential land uses would be required to adhere to the provisions of the City's Sign Ordinance, which outlines the standards and regulations that apply to the design and installation of signage, including quantity, location, dimensions, lighting, etc.

Therefore, there are no new impacts, as compared to those identified in the 2011 Certified EIR, related to nighttime lighting and glare associated with the 2012 Modified Project's conversion of non-residential uses to residential uses.

Main Street Development

The 2012 Modified Project includes two options for the "Main Street" development along Trabuco Road east of "O" Street. Option 1 would involve Community Commercial and Multi-Use north of Trabuco Road with Residential south of Trabuco in District 1 South. Option 2 would involve Residential uses north of Trabuco Road with Community Commercial, Multi-Use, and Residential uses south of Trabuco Road in District 1 South. Although Options 1 and 2 involve relocation of residential and non-residential uses, the building heights, setback requirements, and landscaping would be similar under either option and result in similar aesthetic impacts. All of the areas proposed for development within District 1 North and South under the 2012 Modified Project were approved for development as part of the 2011 Approved Project, and the potential impact of development within these districts on the Proposed Project Site was studied in the 2011 Certified EIR. As a result, development of either Option 1 or Option 2 would have similar light and glare impacts and would not be greater than those identified in the 2011 Certified EIR.

Development of Additional Acreage

The 2012 Modified Project proposes development of two additional areas not previously planned for vertical development in the 2011 Approved Project: 1) the TCA Parcel; and, 2) 13 acres within District 6 (currently designated as District 9) which are currently zoned 1.1 Exclusive Agriculture.

Development of the TCA Parcel would introduce new light sources within the area, since it is currently undeveloped. The 13 acres within District 6 (currently designated as District 9) will not introduce new light sources since the 2012 Modified Project proposes to convert this area to 1.4 Preservation for the Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature. Further, both areas are surrounded by existing or planned

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development. The amount of light or glare would not be substantially different than existing development surrounding the Proposed Project Site. Additionally, as noted above, as with the 2011 Approved Project, implementation of the land uses associated with the 2012 Modified Project would be required to adhere to the provisions of the Uniform Security Code (Chapter 5 of the Irvine Municipal Code) and Chapter 3-16 (Lighting) of the City's Zoning Ordinance, and would be required to implement the light and glare mitigation measures of the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP, which are reproduced at the end of this Section. Furthermore, lighting of signage associated with non-residential land use would be required to adhere to the provisions of the City's Sign Ordinance, which outlines the standards and regulations that apply to the design and installation of signage, including quantity, location, dimensions, lighting, etc.

Therefore, development of these parcels would not result in light and glare impacts substantially greater than those identified in the 2011 Certified EIR.

Relocation of the Approved Wildlife Corridor Feature

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, the 2012 Modified Project proposes to relocate a 132-acre portion of the Approved Wildlife Corridor Feature, currently located between Irvine Boulevard and the SCRRA track, to an area located to the east adjacent to the existing Borrego Canyon Channel (the "Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature"). The Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature shall still consist of approximately 132 acres and will be zoned 1.4 Preservation. To assess potential light and glare impacts on the Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature, light measurements were taken at eight locations along the Proposed Project Site's eastern boundary along Borrego Canyon Channel. Although a number of industrial uses are located east of the Borrego Canyon Channel, including lit parking areas, due to the distance from these uses, measured light levels were only between 0.03 and 0.14 foot candles. These levels are very low - for reference, light levels from a full moon are approximately 0.5 foot candles. As a result, light and glare from adjacent industrial uses would not impact the Relocated Wildlife Corridor Feature at its proposed location.

Comparison to the 2011 Certified EIR

Light and glare impacts of the 2011 Approved Project on the 2011 Approved Project Site and its surroundings were determined to be less than significant after implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1 and A-2 from the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP. The net incremental impact of the 2012 Modified Project relating to light and glare would be less than significant, and the overall impact is similar to that analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR.

Mitigation Program and Net Impact

No additional mitigation measures are introduced in this DSSEIR as net light and glare impacts would be less than significant with the mitigation measures identified in the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP.

5.1.5 Cumulative Impacts

The redistribution of various land uses under the 2012 Modified Project, in conjunction with other cumulative development in accordance with the City's General Plan buildout, could cause areawide aesthetic and light and glare impacts. Some cumulative developments would develop vacant land with urban land uses, while others would redevelop or re-use developed sites. Cumulative developments would

result in urbanizing some of the vacant land in the area, and changes to the intensity and/or type of development on some currently developed land.

Aesthetic and light and glare impacts of the development of parts of the Proposed Project Site were analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR and this DSSEIR. As with the 2011 Approved Project, the 2012 Modified Project would also create a cohesive community of residential and other support uses, in turn contributing to the development of a high quality, master-planned urban neighborhood. Additionally, as with the 2012 Modified Project, future cumulative development projects would be subject to compliance with the local and regional plans, programs and policies reviewed in this section, in order to ensure orderly urban development. Net incremental impacts of the 2012 Modified Project in combination with impacts of cumulative development in accordance with the City's General Plan would not result in substantial cumulative impacts concerning visual character or light and glare.

5.1.6 Applicable Mitigation Measures from the 2011 Certified EIR

Each mitigation measure related to aesthetics that was specified in the 2011 Certified EIR is set forth below. Mitigation Measures A-1 and A-2 from the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP are incorporated into the 2012 Modified Project.

- A-1 Prior to issuance of building permits, lighting plans and signage plans for residential or non-residential development shall be reviewed by the Community Development Department to ensure that minimal light intrusion and spillover into adjacent residential areas occurs.
- A-2 Prior to the issuance of building permits for residential and non-residential development, and during the master plan review process for future development in the project area, the Director of Community Development shall ensure that mirrored and highly reflective surfaces are discouraged or, where proposed, shall be accompanied by a design-level glare impact analysis that demonstrates no adverse visual impairment to motorists or other visual nuisance occurs.

5.1.7 Level of Significance Before Additional Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, PPPs, and mitigation measures previously adopted by the MMRP for the 2011 Approved Project, the following impacts of the 2012 Modified Project would be less than significant: 5.1-1 and 5.1-2.

5.1.8 Additional Mitigation Measures for the 2012 Modified Project

No additional mitigation measures are required because the mitigation measures identified in the 2011 Certified EIR and associated MMRP would reduce aesthetic impacts of the 2012 Modified Project to a level of less than significant.

5.1.9 Level of Significance After Additional Mitigation

With implementation of the existing regulations, PPPs and mitigation measures outlined above from the 2011 Approved Project, potential impacts of the 2012 Modified Project associated with visual character and light and glare would be reduced to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, no significant impacts relating to aesthetics or light and glare have been identified.

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