

4.1 AESTHETICS

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE

Both natural and created features in a landscape contribute to its visual character. Landscape characteristics influencing visual character include geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreation, and urban features. The description of the visual character at the Project Site begins with a brief overview of the existing landscape characteristics. Next, the relevant Key Community Gateways as designated by Suisun City are described in detail and photographs from each gateway are provided. Finally, the remaining portions of the Project Site, and the off-site improvement areas, are described, and photographs from key viewpoints are provided to illustrate the descriptions. Exhibit 4.1-1 shows the location of each of the key viewpoints.

Overview

The Project Site and the off-site improvement areas consist of an open, flat, alluvial plain that slopes very gently to the south/southeast towards Suisun Marsh. The site historically has been used for cattle grazing, which continues today. There are no structures at the Project Site; barbed wire fencing is present around the perimeter of parcels that comprise the Project Site, and on both sides of LedgeWood Creek. Pennsylvania Avenue provides access to the center of the Project Site from the north, and Cordelia Road/Cordelia Street provides east-west access. A portion of LedgeWood Creek, which is designated as an Open Space Conservation area by the City of Fairfield, is adjacent to, and west of the proposed Development Area, off the Project Site. South of Cordelia Road, LedgeWood Creek flows through the Project Site (in the proposed Managed Open Space area) to the southeast towards Peytonia Slough. Several drainage channels flow through the Project Site, generally in a north-south direction. Wood power poles with overhead electrical lines are present along Cordelia Road/Cordelia Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Orehr Road. Two rows of tall, metal lattice towers with overhead high-tension power lines bisect the site in an east-west direction. The eastern edge of the Project Site is bordered by parallel sets of Union Pacific Railroad tracks (running north-south) surrounded by gravel. A set of California Northern Railroad tracks, surrounded by gravel, bisect the center of the site in an east-west direction.

Key Community Gateways

As discussed in the Suisun City General Plan, Chapter 2 Community Character & Design (City of Suisun City 2015), there are three Key Community Gateways (shown in Exhibit 4.1-2) whose viewsheds encompass portions of the Project Site. Each of these gateways are discussed separately below:

- ▶ State Route (SR) 12 east of LedgeWood Creek looking east;
- ▶ Cordelia Road east of LedgeWood Creek looking northeast; and
- ▶ Pennsylvania Avenue at its intersection with SR 12 looking south.

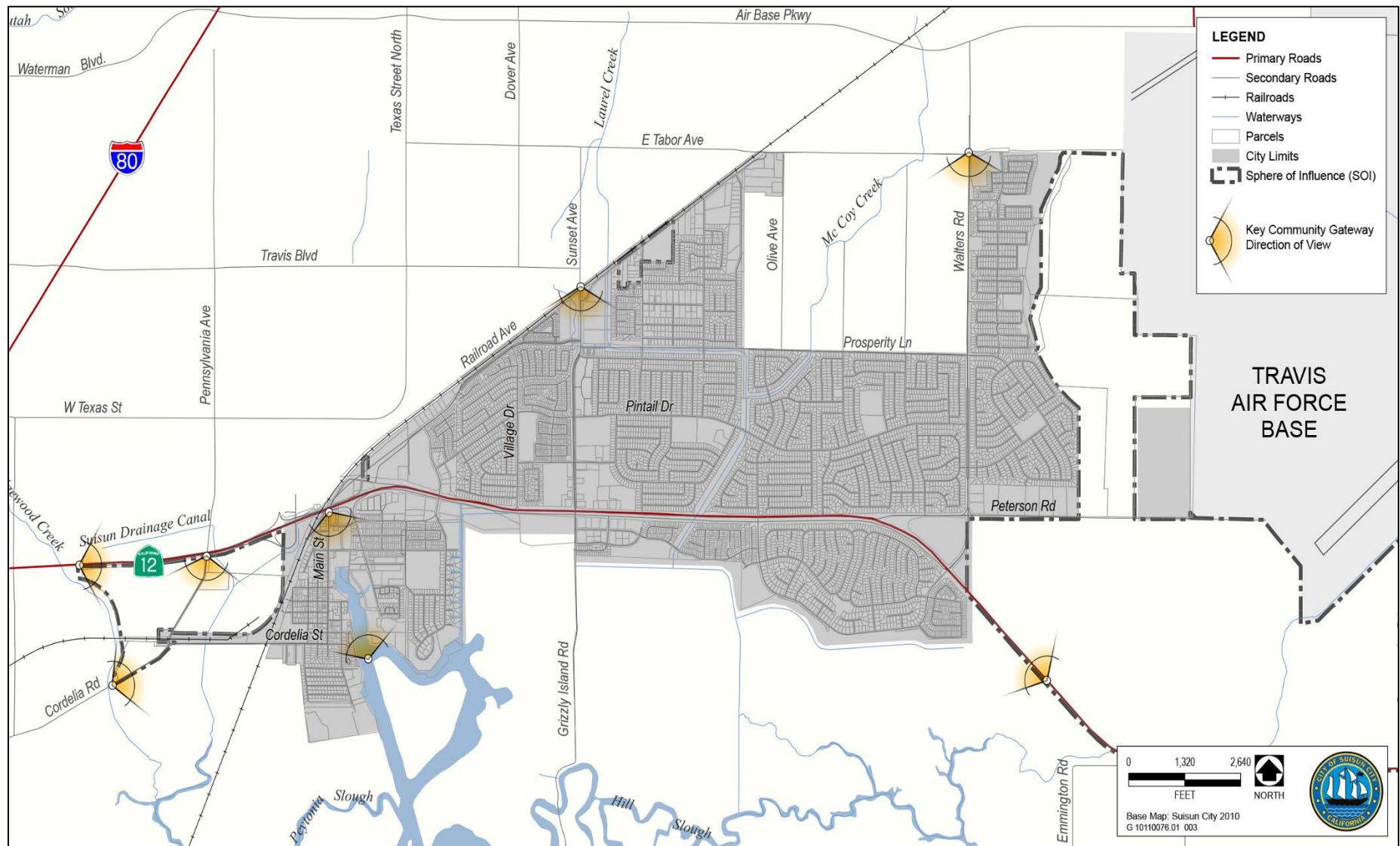
Key Gateway 1 – SR 12 East of LedgeWood Creek

The Project Site is bordered on the northern side by SR 12, which consists of four lanes and is topographically level with the surrounding properties. One small deciduous tree is present on the south side of SR 12, but views of the Project Site to the south/southeast from SR 12 are otherwise unobstructed and consist of flat grazing land. Grasses at the Project Site are green in the spring but brown the remainder of the year. A tall, three-story tan and



Source: AECOM 2023

Exhibit 4.1-1. Key Viewpoint Locations



Source: City of Suisun City 2015

Exhibit 4.1-2. Key Community Gateways

white building associated with the Meyer Corporation warehouse stands out in the landscape to the south. Trees adjacent to Ledge Creek, off the Project Site to the west, are visible in the foreground. The Potrero Hills are visible to the east in the background. A line of tall, metal power poles with overhead transmission lines across the Project Site are visible in the middleground (Viewpoint 1a). Large, two-story grey and white buildings associated with commercial and light industrial development, which are partially screened by mature landscaping, are visible on the north side of SR 12 in the city of Fairfield (Viewpoint 1b).



Source: Google Earth 2018

Viewpoint 1a. Key Community Gateway 1 Looking Southeast along SR 12



Source: Google Earth 2018

Viewpoint 1b. Key Community Gateway 1 Looking Northeast along SR 12

Key Gateway 2 – Cordelia Road East of Ledgewood Creek

Key Gateway 2 is located at the eastern edge of the Project Site, just east of the Cordelia Road overcrossing of Ledgewood Creek (Viewpoint 2). A portion of the proposed Development Area is visible in the foreground on the left side of the viewpoint and proposed Managed Open Space area is visible in the foreground on the right side of the viewpoint. The Project Site appears as a flat, featureless plain covered with grasses that are green in the spring but brown the remainder of the year. Wood power poles with overhead power lines dominate the view. Cement Hill is visible in the background to the north. Landscape trees and buildings associated with development in Suisun City are visible in the background to the east.



Source: Google Earth 2015

Viewpoint 2. Key Community Gateway 2 Looking Northeast along Cordelia Road

In the middleground, development associated with the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete businesses are visible, along with grazing cows. Cement Hill is visible in background views to the north. Trees on the north side of SR 12 and the east side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks appear as dark green, horizontal lines in the background.

Key Gateway 3 – Pennsylvania Avenue South of SR 12

Key Gateway 3 is located at the northern edge of the Project Site on Pennsylvania Avenue, just south of the intersection with SR 12 (Viewpoint 3). Signage for the Kings of Auto commercial business dominates the foreground view, along with grassland associated with the proposed Development Area (Building BC). Green shrubs on the left side of this viewpoint mark the former City of Fairfield landfill (not part of the Project Site). The middleground view includes buildings associated with the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete businesses, existing open space/grazing land on the Project Site, and metal lattice towers with overhead high-tension electrical lines, along with off-site trees along Ledgewood Creek and the east side of the Meyer Corporation warehouse building. Background views are dominated by the Coast Ranges.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 3. Key Community Gateway 3 Looking Southwest along Pennsylvania Avenue from the Intersection with SR 12

Other Project Site Views

Viewpoint 4 shows the location of proposed Building BC, looking northwest from Pennsylvania Avenue. A barbed wire fence along Pennsylvania Avenue and cows grazing on the flat grassland at the Project Site fill the foreground view. The middleground view is composed of off-site features: trees along Ledgewood Creek and the eastern edge of the Meyer Corporation warehouse building to the west; commercial/light industrial development to the northwest; and traffic on SR 12, along with residential development and associated landscaping to the north. Tall metal lattice towers with overhead high-tension power lines cross the Project Site in an east-west direction. Background views are dominated by the Howell Mountains.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 4. Location of Proposed Building BC from Pennsylvania Avenue Looking Northwest

Viewpoint 5 shows the proposed location of Building G in the foreground, looking northeast from Pennsylvania Avenue. Wood power poles with overhead transmission lines are present along Pennsylvania Avenue, along with barbed wire fencing. Flat, brown grassland is visible in the foreground, and green areas proposed for Managed Open Space are visible in the middleground. At the left side of the viewpoint, green shrubs on a low hill mark the location of the former City of Fairfield landfill. Trees and buildings visible in background views are located on the east side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, in Suisun City.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 5. Location of Proposed Building G from Pennsylvania Avenue Looking Northeast

Viewpoint 6 shows the location of proposed Building F in the middleground and the proposed underground sewer line in the foreground, looking north from Cordelia Road. Flat grassland on the Project Site dominates the foreground views. In the middleground, buildings associated with the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete commercial development are the main feature. The California Northern Railroad tracks, which bisect the site from east to west, are marked by a line of low green shrubs. Background views are dominated by Cement Hill and the Vaca Mountains. Landscape trees and commercial and light industrial buildings north of SR 12 are also visible in the background on the left side of the viewpoint.



Source: Google Earth 2015

Viewpoint 6. Location of Proposed Building F from Cordelia Road Looking North

Viewpoint 7 shows the southwestern portion of the proposed Managed Open Space area, from the intersection of Cordelia Road and Orehr Road looking southeast. A drainage channel and flat grasslands that comprise the Project Site fill the foreground and middleground views. A line of tall metal lattice towers with overhead high-tension power lines, which bisects the site in an east-west direction, is present at the left side of this viewpoint. Background views include the Potrero Hills and Mt. Diablo.



Source: Google Earth 2015

Viewpoint 7. Proposed Managed Open Space from the Cordelia Road/Orehr Road Intersection Looking Southeast

Viewpoint 8 shows the southwestern Project Site boundary, looking northeast from Orehr Road. Foreground and middleground views are dominated by the flat grassland at the Project Site. The Meyer Corporation warehouse building is visible in the middleground on the left side of this viewpoint. The background view is dominated by Cement Hill and the Vaca Mountains.



Source: Google Earth 2007

Viewpoint 8. Proposed Managed Open Space from Orehr Road Looking Northeast

Viewpoint 9 shows the northeastern portion of the Project Site, proposed for Managed Open Space, looking southwest from SR 12 at the eastbound Webster Street off-ramp. The viewshed is dominated by SR 12 and associated vehicles, concrete barrier, a tan concrete sound wall, signage, light standards, and power poles. Green grasses (part of a wetland area at the Project Site, are visible in the foreground and middleground to the south. The Howell Mountains and the Coast Ranges are visible in the background.



Source: Google Earth 2019

Viewpoint 9. Northeastern Edge of Project Site from SR 12 Looking Southwest

Viewpoint 10 shows the proposed location of Building G in the middleground and location of the proposed underground water line in the foreground, from Cordelia Street, just east of Pennsylvania Avenue, looking north. A wood power pole along Cordelia Street, and the California Northern Railroad tracks are visible in the foreground, along with a tan-colored metal storage container on grassland north of the railroad tracks that is proposed for Managed Open Space. Grassland in the middleground, north of the storage container, is proposed for Building G. A line of landscape trees adjacent to urban development north of SR 12 is visible in the background. Cement Hill and the Vaca Mountains dominate the background view.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 10. Location of Proposed Building G from Cordelia Street Looking North

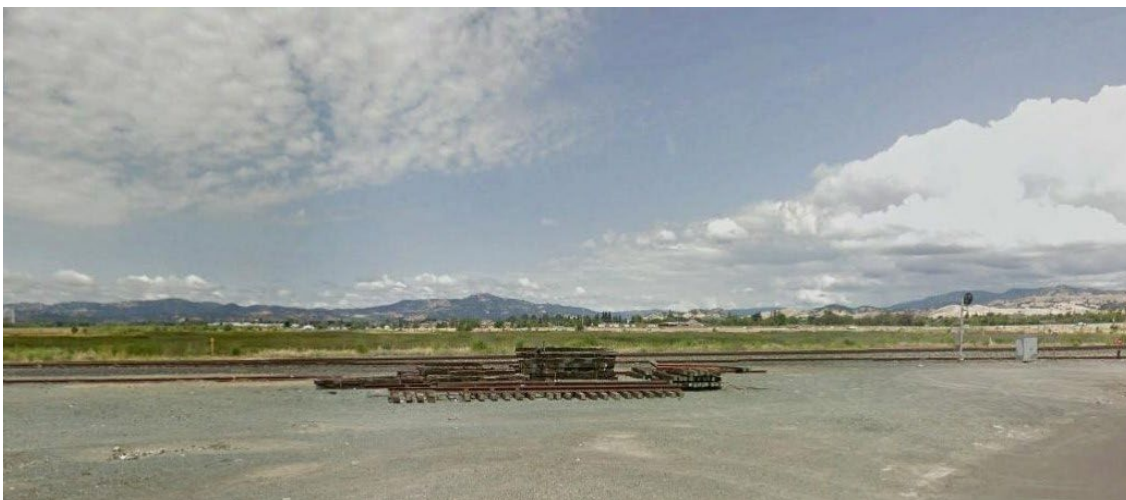
Viewpoint 11 shows most of the proposed Managed Open Space area south of the California Northern Railroad tracks, looking west from Cordelia Street near the Union Pacific Railroad tracks (east of its intersection with Pennsylvania Avenue, Cordelia Road becomes Cordelia Street). Wood power poles with overhead power lines, along with barbed wire fencing, are present on both sides of the roadway. The Northern California Railroad tracks with rail cars (not part of the Project Site) and the location of the proposed underground water line are visible in the foreground on the right side of this viewpoint. Flat grassland that comprises the Project Site to the south is visible in the foreground on the left side of this viewpoint. White buildings associated with development in Fairfield, west of the Project Site, are visible in the middleground. The Howell Mountains and the Coast Ranges dominate the background view.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 11. Proposed Managed Open Space from Cordelia Street near Union Pacific Railroad and California Northern Railroad Looking Southwest

Viewpoint 12 shows the proposed Managed Open Space area along the eastern edge of the Project Site north of the California Northern Railroad tracks, as viewed from West Street in Suisun City. The Union Pacific Railroad tracks are visible in the foreground, along with green wetland areas on the Project Site. Middleground views include buildings and landscaping north of SR 12. Background views consist of the Howell Mountains.



Source: Google Earth 2016

Viewpoint 12. Proposed Managed Open Space from West Street Looking West

VISUAL QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SITE

Definitions

Several sets of criteria have been developed for defining and evaluating visual quality. The criteria developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (FHWA 1988) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) (USFS 1995), which are used in this analysis, include the concepts of vividness, intactness, and unity. According to these criteria, none of these is itself equivalent to visual quality; all three must be considered high to indicate high-quality visual resources. These terms are defined below.

- ▶ “Vividness” is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
- ▶ “Intactness” is the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements.
- ▶ “Unity” is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole.

Viewer sensitivity, also considered in relation to visual quality, depends on the number and type of viewers and the frequency and duration of views. Visual sensitivity is also affected by viewer activity, awareness, and expectations in combination with the number of viewers and the duration of the view. The viewer’s distance from landscape elements plays an important role in the determination of an area’s visual quality. Landscape elements are considered higher or lower in visual importance based on their proximity to the viewer. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant, and therefore visually important, it is to the viewer.

Visual Quality Elements

Vividness—The flat land at the Project Site is composed of grassland used for cattle grazing; and grassland and other low-growing vegetation associated with wetlands. Several waterways bisect the Project Site, including Ledge Creek, Pennsylvania Creek, and a variety of unnamed drainage channels. Vegetation in and among the waterways is green most of the year, and presents a high degree of vividness (particularly during the summer and fall months when the surrounding cattle grazing land is brown). Background views that include the Coast Ranges and Howell Mountains to the west, the Vaca Mountains and Cement Hill to the north, and the Potrero Hills to the west, dominate the landscape and contrast with the grasslands in a way that is both vivid and memorable. Vividness at the Project Site is considered high.

Intactness—Most of the approximately 487-acre Project Site displays a high degree of intactness. The land has been used for grazing, or has existed as wetlands, for at least 100 years. As a result, most of the Project Site has a cohesive and uniform appearance. Although low barbed-wire fencing is present around the property boundaries, and there are two sets of high-tension power lines with metal lattice towers that bisect the site in an east-west direction, these encroaching elements represent only a minor degree of distraction.

Unity—Considered as a whole, particularly during the spring and summer months when most of the viewshed is green, the grasslands in foreground and middleground views, and the mountains in background views, blend together to provide a pleasing and harmonious visual pattern. Background views of the mountains and hills to the west, north, and southeast dominate the viewshed and provide a sense of visual coherence and compositional harmony in the landscape. Therefore, the Project Site viewshed has a moderate degree of unity.

Viewer Sensitivity—Viewer sensitivity is considered high for all parts of the Project Site and the off-site improvement areas. Public views of the Project Site are available from a variety of locations. SR 12, which is immediately adjacent to the Project Site to the north, is traveled daily by thousands of motorists and is considered to be one of the Key Community Gateways to Suisun City. Cordelia Road provides access to the Project Site and Suisun City from the west, and therefore is also considered a Key Community Gateway. Cordelia Street provides access to the Project Site and the City of Fairfield from Suisun City to the east. From SR 12, Pennsylvania Avenue (also a Suisun City Key Community Gateway) provides access to the Project Site and two existing businesses, plus access to the City of Fairfield via Cordelia Road and access to the City of Suisun City via Cordelia Street. Therefore, viewer sensitivity is considered high for all groups viewing the various Project components.

Visual Quality Rating

Considering the high degree of viewer sensitivity, and the high degree of vividness and intactness and the moderate unity, the viewshed encompassing the Project Site and off-site improvement areas is considered to be of high visual quality.

LIGHT AND GLARE

The Project Site itself does not have any existing sources of nighttime lighting or buildings or other structures that could generate glare. Minor nighttime security lighting is generated by the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete businesses at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Cordelia Road. Nighttime lighting is present to the west, north, and east of the Project Site from urban development in the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City. In addition, high-mast light standards that provide nighttime lighting are present along SR 12, along the Project Site's northern boundary. Pennsylvania Avenue and Cordelia Road, where off-site roadway improvements are proposed, do not have nighttime lighting. Beck Avenue, where off-site sewer improvements are proposed, does have high-mast light standards that provide nighttime lighting.

DESIGNATED SCENIC HIGHWAYS

SR 12 is not a designated or eligible State scenic highway (Caltrans 2021). Furthermore, SR 12 from Interstate-80 east to Main Street in the City of Suisun City is not a County-designated scenic roadway (Solano County 2008). The proposed Development Area at the Project Site is approximately 0.6 miles (3,000 feet) west of the County-designated portion of SR 12 at the Main Street overpass; from this location, the proposed Development Area is visible, but only in middleground views to the south from the westbound lanes of SR 12.

4.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND LAWS

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to aesthetics that would apply to the proposed Project.

STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

There are no state plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to aesthetics that would apply to the proposed Project.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES

Solano County General Plan

Continuing the existing land uses in the Managed Open Space area would not change the existing aesthetics in that area. However, the new land uses in the proposed Development Area would be visible from the Managed Open Space areas that would not be annexed and would remain under the County's jurisdiction. The Solano County General Plan (Solano County 2008) contains the following policies related to aesthetics that would apply to the proposed Project.

Land Use Element

- ▶ **LU.P-22:** Encourage development of commercial uses to use architecture and site design compatible with the rural character of the surrounding community, the county, and adopted County policies.
- ▶ **LU.P-24:** Ensure that commercial and industrial development that occurs adjacent to a city is developed consistent with the development design standards of the adjacent city.

Resources Element

- ▶ **RS.G-4:** Preserve, conserve, and enhance valuable open space lands that provide wildlife habitat; conserve natural and visual resources; convey cultural identity; and improve public safety.
- ▶ **RS.G-6:** Preserve the visual character and identity of communities by maintaining open space areas between them.
- ▶ **RS.P-6:** Protect oak woodlands and heritage trees and encourage the planting of native tree species in new developments and along road rights-of-way.
- ▶ **RS.P-35:** Protect the unique scenic features of Solano County, particularly hills, ridgelines, wetlands, and water bodies.
- ▶ **RS.P-36:** Support and encourage practices that reduce light pollution and preserve views of the night sky.

City of Fairfield General Plan

Because the northern portion of the Project Site (along SR 12), where Project-related development is proposed abuts the city of Fairfield, and a portion of the Ledge Creek Open Space area within the city of Fairfield is immediately adjacent to the northwestern property boundary where Project-related development is proposed, the City of Suisun City has considered the following City of Fairfield General Plan (City of Fairfield 2002) policies related to aesthetics.

Urban Design Element

- ▶ **Policy UD 1.1:** Create entryways to the City that achieve a sense of arriving into the City. These entryways shall incorporate signage, landscaping, architectural features, and combinations of land uses that enhance the image of the City.
- ▶ **Policy UD 1.4:** Develop positive, high quality edges along Interstate 80, major arterials, and the city limits.

- ▶ **Policy UD 2.2:** Encourage variety in the use of complementary colors, textures, forms, styles, structures, and/or materials.
- ▶ **Policy UD 2.3:** Allow the careful use of contrast where it would be appropriate for providing focus and interest to an area.
- ▶ **Policy UD 2.4:** Reinforce key patterns that positively characterize an area through the use of common design features.
- ▶ **Policy UD 4.2:** All aspects of development, including, but not limited to, grading, site planning, signage, fencing, landscaping, screening, lighting, color scheme, size, bulk, height, etc., must be integrated and relate to their surroundings in a complementary manner.
- ▶ **Policy UD 5.1:** Development should be designed to provide continuity with features of the surrounding area.
- ▶ **Policy UD 5.2:** Restrict development from significantly encroaching on public views of ridgelines, agricultural areas, the Cement Hill Range, and the Suisun Marsh.

Open Space and Conservation Element

- ▶ **Policy OS 6.1:** Preserve views of hills and other scenic features surrounding Fairfield.
- ▶ **Policy OS 6.3:** All grading shall be integrated and compatible with adjacent areas so as to create a natural topographical appearance and avoid abrupt changes in slope.

City of Suisun City General Plan

The City of Suisun City General Plan (City of Suisun City 2015) includes the following policies and programs related to aesthetics that apply to the proposed Project.

Community Character and Design

- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.1:** The City will review and condition new developments, as necessary, to ensure that development is consistent with the desired future character of the City. This review will take into consideration the size, location, orientation, and height of buildings, as well as proposed signs, fences, drainage, walls, landscaping, and lighting.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.2:** The City will require the use of durable, high-quality building materials to reduce maintenance and replacement needs and ensure the aesthetic appeal of new developments.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.3:** The architectural style, exterior materials, and other design features of accessory buildings, including garages, shall complement the primary structure.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.5:** New developments should locate and size proposed surface parking areas in a way that reduces the visual dominance of parking as viewed from the front property line. In general, street frontages should be composed of building fronts and complementary landscaping, with parking located to the side or rear of the site.

- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.6:** Proposed buildings of more than 20,000 square feet in gross floor area shall use balconies, bay windows or other window treatments, pitched roofs, arcades, or other architectural features to provide visual interest.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.17:** Trash bins, HVAC equipment, and other required mechanical equipment should be located in areas that are accessible for their intended use and screened from view along public rights-of-way.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-1.18:** Colors and logos associated with a company shall not be a significant architectural element in any new development. Commercial signage should be restrained in size and height and shall not involve any more than one square foot of building signage for each linear foot of building frontage facing a public street.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.1:** Key Community Gateways include SR 12 east of the City limits, Sunset Avenue at the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, Walters Road between Tabor Avenue and Prosperity Lane, SR 12 near Ledgewood Creek, Cordelia Road in the western edge of the Planning Area, Pennsylvania Avenue at SR 12, the pedestrian crossing from downtown Fairfield, and the Suisun Slough.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.2:** Key Community Gateways should provide distinctive entrances to Suisun City that enhance the image of, and reflect the natural environment, history, culture, and identity of the community.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.3:** New developments visible from Key Community Gateways should provide an attractive streetscape environment; preserve healthy native vegetation and add new landscaping to enhance aesthetics; and frame views of waterways and surrounding hills and mountains, where possible.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.4:** The City will support construction of attractive civic landmarks, public artwork, and other public improvements in areas near Key Community Gateways.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.5:** New private developments shall provide attractive building façades and locate surface parking in a way that reduces the visual dominance in areas adjacent to, and visible from Key Community Gateways.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-3.6:** The City will support the installation of attractive signage and lighting in Key Community Gateways that directs visitors to the Downtown, parks, schools, and other important civic areas.
 - **Program 3-1: Design Guidelines for Key Community Gateways.** The City will prepare and implement design guidelines for Key Community Gateways, consistent with General Plan policy. This will include landscaping requirements, building materials and orientation, lighting, signage, and other important physical elements of development. These guidelines should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance or Citywide design guidelines.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.2:** New developments shall provide connecting streets with short blocks that create a pedestrian-scale environment.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.3:** New developments shall provide direct access routes to buildings from sidewalks and parking areas for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.4:** The City will require visually attractive streetscapes with street trees, planting strips, attractive transit shelters, benches, pedestrian-scale streetlights in appropriate locations, and landscaping along fences and low walls, if present.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.5:** New developments shall provide for trees at an average frequency of one every 20 feet on center along City streets.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.8:** New utilities shall be installed underground. Aboveground utilities along public rights-of-way should be undergrounded, as feasible.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.9:** Benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bus shelters, signage, and other improvements should be located along sidewalks and designed to enhance the visual environment and provide a welcoming place for pedestrians.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.10:** The City will work with Caltrans to install aesthetic and functional improvements along the SR 12 corridor, including landscaping, trees, pedestrian and bicycle pathways separated from the travelway, and noise attenuation improvements.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-4.11:** The City will support efforts to reduce the visual impact of surface parking lots on the character of streetscapes.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-6.1:** Locally important scenic resources include the Suisun Marsh, the Coastal Range, Cement Hill, the Potrero Hills, and the Vaca Mountains. Locally important scenic vistas are those available from public properties and rights-of-way of locally important scenic resources.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-6.2:** New developments shall be designed to retain or enhance views along existing public rights-of-way of locally important scenic resources, to the extent feasible.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-6.3:** New developments should be designed, where feasible, to frame views of locally important scenic resources, by providing direct lines of sight along public rights-of-way and open space in areas where these features are prominently visible.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-6.4:** The City will not consider urban development that is consistent with General Plan community design policies to represent a degradation of visual character for the purpose of environmental impact analysis.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-6.5:** The City will preserve and enhance visual connections to Suisun Marsh, including the development of environmentally-sensitive recreational facilities, as funding is available.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-7.1:** Windows and active rooms in new buildings should allow occupants to view yards, corridors, entrances, streets, alleys, and other public and semi-public places.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-7.2:** New developments should front onto adjacent parks and open space, or provide windows, outdoor seating areas or other orientation to these features.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-8.1:** Low, pedestrian-scaled, ornamental lighting should be emphasized in new developments in order to avoid adverse effects on adjacent uses.

- ▶ **Policy CCD-8.2:** New developments shall use attractive lighting that is complementary to the design of proposed structures.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-8.4:** Light fixtures shall aim light sources downward and provide shielding to prevent glare and reflection.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-8.5:** Permanent lighting cannot blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness. Lighting standards shall avoid the use of harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs for lighting of public areas or for lighting within residential neighborhoods.
- ▶ **Policy CCD-8.6:** New developments shall not include reflective surfaces that could cast glare toward pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorists. Bare metallic surfaces, such as pipes, vents, and light fixtures shall be painted to minimize reflectance.
 - **Program 8-1: Site Design for Lighting and Glare.** The City will review and condition new developments, as necessary, to avoid introduction of light and glare that would adversely affect motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians using public travelways. New developments have several design options that can be used, as appropriate to avoiding substantial adverse light and glare effects, including: carefully planning the location and orientation of on-site lighting, use of non-reflective paint and building materials, use of vegetation screening or shielding of light at the source, use of directional or lower-intensity lighting, use of timing devices or sound/motion-controlled lighting, or other techniques.

Suisun City Development Guidelines for Architecture and Site Planning

The *Development Guidelines for Architecture and Site Planning* (City of Suisun City 1989) contains a combination of specific standards and general guidelines that are intended to guide development in the city in accordance with the General Plan. The Guidelines encourage new structures to provide community landmarks, and the planting of urban street trees. The scale and character of new buildings should relate to the existing surrounding development. Site design specifications for residential and commercial development are provided in the Guidelines, including building orientation, fencing, landscaping, open space, height limits, vehicular access, parking, screening of utilities, design of primary access points for commercial centers and large residential developments, outdoor storage, lighting, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Specific building design guidelines include requirements to provide for architecturally interesting and creative designs, and to avoid block-style, repetitious structures. The use of visually interesting and appropriate color schemes as well as a variety of building materials are encouraged. Mechanical and utility equipment must be screened from view. Commercial development should reflect “human-scale design” with abundant use of landscaping, entries, courtyards, and parking plazas. On-site lighting must be shielded and may not be visible from off-site viewpoints. Landscape buffers are required between commercial and residential land uses.

Suisun City Municipal Code Title 20 – Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance

The City’s Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (Title 20 of the Suisun City Municipal Code) promotes the values and benefits of landscapes while recognizing the need to invest water and other resources as efficiently as possible, and establishes a structure for planning, designing, installing, maintaining, and managing water efficient landscapes in new construction and rehabilitated projects. The ordinance achieves efficient water use without

waste by setting a maximum applied water allowance as an upper limit for water use and reducing water use to the lowest practical amount.

The ordinance applies to new construction and rehabilitated landscapes for public agency projects and private development projects with a landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review. Project applicants are required to submit a landscape design package to the City Planning Department for review, which must include the total landscape area, water supplier, hydrozone information, water budget calculations, soil management report, landscape design plan, irrigation design plan, and grading design plan.

Suisun City Municipal Code Title 18 – Zoning, Architectural Review, Lighting

Title 18, Article III, Sections 18.31 through 18.47 of the Suisun City Municipal Code contain specific standards that regulate residential and commercial development including lot sizes, setbacks, building heights, open space, driveways, parking and loading areas, fences and walls, and signage. All development in the city must be designed to comply with these requirements. In addition, Municipal Code Section 18.76 requires submittal of site plans and an architectural review by the Suisun City Planning Department.

As part of the City-required site plan and architectural review, project applicants are required to prepare and submit for review by the City Planning Department, an exterior lighting plan, which must present the size, orientation, location, height, and appearance of proposed fixtures (Suisun City Municipal Code Title 18, Chapter 18.76.030).

4.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

METHODOLOGY

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of the variety and contrast of the area’s visual features, the character and quality of those features, and the scope and scale of the scene, combined with the anticipated viewer response. The analysis of visual resources for this project uses a qualitative approach for characterizing and evaluating the visual resources of the areas that could be affected by the proposed Project. The analysis was based on evaluation of the changes to existing visual resources that would result from implementation of the proposed Project. In making a determination of the extent and implications of the visual changes, consideration was given to specific changes in the visual composition, character, and valued qualities of the affected environment and the extent to which the affected environment contained places or features that have been designated in plans and policies for protection or special consideration.

The above factors were considered in combination with the proposed Project elements that would be visible during operation, and the type and duration of anticipated construction activities.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed Project would have a significant impact related to aesthetics if it would:

- ▶ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;

- ▶ substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a state scenic highway;
- ▶ except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- ▶ create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

Damage to Scenic Resources within a State- or County-Designated Scenic Highway—SR 12 is not a designated or eligible State scenic highway (Caltrans 2021); thus, there would be **no impact**. Furthermore, SR 12 from I-80 east to Main Street in the City of Suisun City (which includes the portion along the northern boundary of the Project Site) is not a County-designated scenic roadway. The proposed Development Area at the Project Site is approximately 0.6 miles (3,000 feet) west of the County-designated portion of SR 12 at the Main Street (Suisun City) overpass; from this location, the proposed Development Area is barely visible in middleground views from the westbound lanes of SR 12. The proposed buildings at the Project Site would appear only as a low, thin line in the middleground; whereas the dominant view from this location on SR 12 is the foreground view of the roadway with its concrete barriers in the center and outer edges, along with the Howell Mountains in the background. Thus, there would be **no impact** from damage to scenic resources within a County-designated scenic roadway. Therefore, these issues are not evaluated further in this EIR.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Impact 4.1-1 Effects on Scenic Vistas. *The proposed Project would result in new urban development that would permanently block some views of Suisun Marsh, Howell Mountains, Vaca Mountains, Cement Hill, and Potrero Hills, and Mt. Diablo from several public viewpoints, which are defined by the City as locally important scenic vistas. This impact would be significant.*

The Project Site consists primarily of flat, featureless grazing land that is green in the spring and brown for the remainder of the year; along with wetlands and associated low-growing vegetation that are green most of the year. Most of the Project Site would not be developed and therefore would allow for the continuation of existing scenic views in the proposed Managed Open Space areas. However, the approximately 93 acres proposed for development would include six buildings with a maximum height of up to 47 feet. As shown in Exhibit 3-2, Project Site (Chapter 3, “Project Description”), nearly all of the proposed 93-acre Development Area is south of SR 12, west of Pennsylvania Avenue, and north of Cordelia Road.

The 2035 Suisun City General Plan (City of Suisun City 2015) Policy CCD-6.1 defines locally important scenic vistas as those that are available from public properties and rights-of-way, and states that Suisun City’s unique waterfront location and proximity to Suisun Marsh, the Vaca Mountains, Cement Hill, the Potrero Hills, and the Coast Ranges, provide for scenic views.

Construction of the proposed Project and the off-site improvements would occur in phases, as market conditions allow. As each of the buildings, with associated parking, landscaping, and stormwater retention basins; and the

off-site roadway, water, and sewer improvements; are built, construction equipment, materials, and personnel would be visible in foreground and middleground views from many of the previously described public viewpoints, such as SR 12, Pennsylvania Avenue, Cordelia Road, and Cordelia Street. Construction activities in each phase would be short-term and temporary, and background views of the surrounding mountains would not be blocked. Therefore, construction activities would have a **less-than-significant** impact on scenic vistas.

Given the distance of the proposed buildings from West Street in Suisun City (Viewpoint 12), and from the west side of Orehr Road in the city of Fairfield (Viewpoint 8), scenic views from these public locations would not be blocked by Project operation and there would be **no impact**.

Key Community Gateway 1, which encompasses SR 12 eastbound from the northwestern edge of the Project Site adjacent to the proposed Development Area, does not constitute a scenic vista (Viewpoints 1a and 1b). This viewshed includes a variety of large, tall, block-style grey and white commercial and industrial buildings on both sides of SR 12, with associated landscape trees in a variety of shapes and sizes. The buildings constructed at the Project Site would have a similar appearance and would be of a similar size as compared to nearby off-site buildings. Ledgewood Creek itself is not visible; instead, the northern edge of a variety of deciduous trees of non-uniform heights and shapes are visible in a narrow line heading southward away from the viewer. The Project Site to the south consists of flat, featureless grazing land. The western edge of the Potrero Hills are barely visible to the southeast, and appear as one long, low, brown hill. Therefore, operation of the proposed Project would have a **less-than-significant impact** on scenic vistas for motorists traveling east on SR 12 at Key Community Gateway 1.

From SR 12 westbound at the northeastern edge of the Project Site, motorists are afforded a view of wetlands at the Project Site in the foreground, and the Coast Ranges and the Howell Mountains in the background; however, most of the viewshed is comprised of the SR 12 pavement, concrete center barrier, tan concrete sound wall, vehicles, signage, high-mast light standards, and power poles along SR 12 (Viewpoint 9). At the Project Site, nearly all of the area south of SR 12 from the Union Pacific Railroad line west to Pennsylvania Avenue, and extending south to the Suisun Marsh, would be preserved as Managed Open Space. Therefore, this area would still afford motorists traveling westbound in SR 12 with scenic vistas of the natural environment. Improvements to SR 12 and Pennsylvania Avenue at this intersection would have a similar visual appearance to existing conditions. Because the proposed buildings would be developed approximately 0.6 mile to the west, motorists traveling westbound on SR 12 would still have views of the Coast Ranges and the Howell Mountains. Views of the Coast Ranges to the southwest would be blocked from SR 12 for westbound motorists for a few seconds, west of Pennsylvania Avenue. However, these motorists would still have west and northwest views of the Coast Ranges and the Howell Mountains. Therefore, operation of the proposed Project would have a **less-than-significant** impact on scenic vistas for motorists traveling west on SR 12.

During the Project's operational stage, the proposed buildings would block scenic views of the Coast Ranges, Howell Mountains, Vaca Mountains, and Cement Hill, which are considered by the City to be scenic vistas, from the following public viewpoints:

- ▶ Key Community Gateway 2: the north side of Cordelia Road, from the Ledgewood Creek overcrossing to Pennsylvania Avenue (Viewpoints 2 and 6);
- ▶ Key Community Gateway 3: Pennsylvania Avenue between SR 12 and Cordelia Road (Viewpoints 3 and 4);

- ▶ an approximately 800-foot section of Cordelia Street east of the Pennsylvania Avenue intersection (to the north) (Viewpoint 10).

The Suisun City 2035 General Plan (City of Suisun City 2015) contains several policies that are intended to help protect scenic vistas. For example, Policy CCD-6.2 requires new developments to be designed to retain or enhance views along existing public rights-of-way of locally important scenic resources, to the extent feasible. Policy CCD-6.3 requires new developments to be designed, where feasible, to frame views of locally important scenic resources, by providing direct lines of sight along public rights-of-way and open space in areas where these features are prominently visible. Policy CCD-3.3 states that new developments visible from Key Community Gateways should frame views of waterways and surrounding hills and mountains, where possible. Policy CCD-6.5 establishes that the City will preserve and enhance visual connections to Suisun Marsh, including the development of environmentally-sensitive recreational facilities, as funding is available.

Continuation of existing open space/grazing land uses on approximately 393 acres of the Project Site would preserve most of the existing views. However, scenic views to the north would be blocked by proposed buildings and landscaping from Key Community Gateway 2 and from Viewpoint 10 along Cordelia Street, and scenic views to the southwest would be blocked from Key Community Gateway 3. Scenic views of the Coast Ranges, Howell Mountains, Vaca Mountains, Cement Hill, and the Potrero Hills would still be available from all of these viewpoints looking in other directions. As shown in Exhibit 3-2, Project Site (Chapter 3, “Project Description”), the site design at the Project Site would provide a line-of-sight corridor from north to south for motorists along Pennsylvania Avenue that would provide limited views of Cement Hill and the Vaca Mountains to the north. Furthermore, most of the proposed Development Area is planned for future urban development—the Suisun City General Plan designates nearly the entire 93-acre development area (west of Pennsylvania Avenue and north of the California Northern Railroad tracks) for Commercial Mixed Use. The Solano County General Plan (Solano County 2008) designates the proposed development area for Urban Commercial and Urban Industrial land uses. Nevertheless, because the primary scenic views to the north and southwest, respectively, would be permanently blocked by the proposed development from Key Community Gateways 2 and 3, this impact is considered **significant**.

Mitigation Measure

No feasible mitigation measures are available.

Significance after Mitigation

No feasible mitigation is available that could fully preserve the existing views of the Coast Ranges, Howell Mountains, Cement Hill, or the Vaca Mountains while also accommodating operation of the buildings and landscaping that are proposed as part of the Project. Therefore, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

Impact 4.1-2 Degradation of Visual Character or Quality. *Implementing the proposed Project would result in new commercial and light industrial buildings and landscaping in an approximately 93-acre area of existing flat grazing land and open space, most of which has been previously designated for urban development in the Suisun City and Solano County General Plans. The Suisun City General Plan does not consider urban development that is consistent with General Plan community design policies to represent a degradation of visual character. A Planned Unit Development has been prepared, for*

*City approval, that contains design guidelines for the proposed Project. Project consistency with City Municipal Code and City Design Guidelines is also required. Therefore, this impact is considered **less than significant**.*

As defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15387, the Project Site is not located in an "urbanized area," which is "[A] central city or a contiguous group of cities with a population of 50,000 or more, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile." CEQA Guidelines Section 15387 states that a lead agency may make this determination by reviewing U.S. Census maps, which, in this case, show that the Project Site is not designated as an urbanized area (U.S. Census Bureau 2018).

Managed Open Space

Approximately 81 percent of the Project Site—393 acres, is proposed as Managed Open Space. The applicant proposes only grading of relatively small areas focused for the establishment of wetlands, and therefore the visual character and quality of this area would not change and there would be **no impact**.

Proposed Development Area

New warehousing and logistics land uses are proposed on approximately 93 acres of flat grazing land at the Project Site. Construction of the proposed Project would occur in phases, as market conditions allow. As each of the buildings, with associated parking, landscaping, and stormwater retention basins, are built, along with the proposed off-site improvements, construction equipment, materials, and personnel would be visible to motorists in foreground and middleground views from the following public roadways: SR 12, Pennsylvania Avenue, Cordelia Road, Cordelia Street, and Beck Avenue. Construction activities in each phase would be short-term and temporary, are a common sight in the nearby developed areas of Fairfield and Suisun City (through which motorists are passing before they arrive at the Project Site), and would be scattered across a large area during each phase of construction. Therefore, construction activities would have a **less-than-significant** impact on degradation of visual character.

As noted previously, the Suisun City General Plan designates nearly the entire 93-acre Development Area (west of Pennsylvania Avenue and north of the California Northern Railroad tracks) for Commercial Mixed Use. The Solano County General Plan (Solano County 2008) designates the proposed Development Area for Urban Commercial and Urban Industrial land uses. The proposed development would include relatively large floor area buildings on flat pads, with parking areas, truck maneuvering areas and loading docks, landscaping, fencing, and stormwater treatment/retention basins. Changes to existing site elevations, which are nearly flat, would be minimal. Existing grassy vegetation would be removed and replaced with buildings, paved surfaces, detention basins, and landscaping in the Development Area. No trees would be removed. Trash enclosures and permanent outdoor materials storage would be screened by solid walls constructed of masonry or concrete. Such walls may be incorporated in the structure of the primary building, or may be stand-alone structures separate from the building. All stormwater detention basins would be fenced around the perimeter. In addition, masonry wall or metal fencing would be installed around the perimeter of future building areas.

The Project applicant has prepared a Planned Unit Development (PUD), for City approval, to establish the land use, zoning, development standards, and regulations for development of the Project Site (David Babcock & Associates 2023). Chapter 5 of the PUD includes design guidelines for the Project Site, which are intended to guide development of the Project by establishing criteria for development character, site planning, architecture, detailing, and landscape themes for the Commercial Services and Fabricating (CSF) and Open Space (OS) zoning districts. The design guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the Development Standards in PUD Chapter 4,

which provide the standards for setbacks, building height, intensity of development, and the permitted and conditionally permitted uses. The PUD focuses on three design elements to create a framework for development: On-Site Landscape Theme and Design, Freeway and Street Frontage Corridors, and Building Architecture Theme and Design, as described below.

- a. **On-Site Landscape Theme and Design.** Landscaping will be a key element that will tie the Project together. Consistent use of landscape design concepts and planting palette throughout the Project will create a visual appearance that will complement the building design.
- b. **Freeway and Street Frontage Corridors.** The State Route 12 frontage has no site access, but is an important gateway to the city and as such, shall receive special attention as a Project design feature. An opportunity exists to create a gateway to the City at State Route 12 that is consistent with the City General Plan. The design and elements to be included in the gateway design have been developed in concept and are to be constructed when the adjacent phase is completed. State Route 12 and Pennsylvania Avenue are the main points of access to the Project [site]. The building architecture facing the street frontages and landscape design establish the visual appearance for the perimeter of the Project.
- a. **Building Architecture Theme and Design.** Building architectural design, detailing, and materials will be important in creating a cohesive warehouse and distribution development and sense of place... Materials and colors are to be consistent between all ... buildings to provide a consistent design theme for the Project.

Design guidelines for the Project as established in the PUD address site planning and building orientation, pedestrian circulation, screening and utilities, parking and circulation, walls and fences for screening and security, and lighting. Building design guidelines for CFS zoning district include the following elements, among others:

- ▶ Buildings should be designed with a consistent use of materials, design elements and detailing, and architectural design theme to create a unified look for the project.
- ▶ Building facades shall be articulated to add visual variety and distinctiveness by adding breaks in long building facades in the form of score lines, varying roof heights, and/or color variations.
- ▶ Building entries shall be designed with the human scale in mind by concentrating windows and enhanced colors and materials at the office uses.
- ▶ Decorative features, textural changes, or relief techniques should be used to break up large building elevations. Glass, or other surface and design treatments should be incorporated into the office portions of each building.
- ▶ Include landscape planting areas to reduce the visibility of the loading docks, truck trailer parking, and service doors from public streets.
- ▶ Vehicle parking located adjacent to streets shall be screened from view by the siting of buildings and through the use of landscaping, berming, screen walls, or any combination of these methods to the extent possible.

- ▶ Parking areas for truck trailer parking are allowed to face public streets with the use of screening to include landscaping, berming, screen walls, or any combination of these methods to the extent possible.
- ▶ Utilitarian portions of buildings, such as vents, gutters, downspouts, flashing, electrical conduit, and other wall-mounted utilities shall be painted to match the color of the adjacent surface or otherwise designed in harmony with the building exterior.
- ▶ All buildings shall be designed to screen any roof-mounted equipment, including, but not limited to, HVAC units, vents, fans, antennas, sky lights and satellite dishes from view from public rights-of-way only.

An architectural rendering illustrating a conceptual example of the visual appearance of the exterior of the proposed buildings is provided in Exhibit 4.1-3.



Source: David Babcock & Associates 2023, Adapted by AECOM in 2023

Exhibit 4.1-3. Conceptual Architectural Rendering of Logistics Center Building

A Community Gateway sign is proposed along SR 12, and four monument signs are proposed within the Project Site along Pennsylvania Avenue. The PUD specifies that structures which accommodate several tenants must use a single monument sign that identifies the overall Project name and individual tenants. Color palettes must match the materials and colors shown in the PUD for the various signage types to achieve Project consistency. The proposed Community Gateway sign would be 45 feet tall with a 12-foot-wide base. Monument signage may not exceed 10 feet in height and width (excluding the base). Conceptual renderings of the Community Gateway signage along SR 12 and the internal monument signage are shown Exhibit 4.1-4 and Exhibit 4.1-5.



Source: David Babcock & Associates 2023

Exhibit 4.1-4. Conceptual Architectural Rendering of Community Gateway Signage and Landscaping



Source: David Babcock & Associates 2023

Exhibit 4.1-5. Conceptual Architectural Rendering of Monument Signage and Landscaping

The PUD design guidelines also include landscape guidelines, and a preliminary landscape plan (see Exhibit 4.1-6) with a suggested plant list, with the goal of creating a framework that visually unifies signage, hardscape, and the landscape planting palette. Native and climate-adapted plantings are proposed, along with natural materials in simple designs to create a modern character. The landscape design guidelines include the following elements, among others:

- ▶ Vehicle parking and loading docks, when fronting public streets shall be screened by landscaping, walls and berming, or any combination of these methods.

- ▶ Fast-growing trees closely spaced in groupings to create visual mass are encouraged in the developed area frontage along State Route 12.
- ▶ Planting areas should be provided between parking and roads to provide visual relief in large expanses of hardscape.
- ▶ Landscape Design should include simple plant palettes, masses of native and climate adapted grasses and clustered tree plantings. There should be a consistency of landscape design throughout the project area.
- ▶ Portions of the Project not devoted to buildings, structures, parking, outdoor storage or paving should be landscaped, to the extent feasible. Landscapes should be designed to reach a reasonable level of maturity within five years.
- ▶ Trees shall be installed at a minimum size of 15 gallon, with larger 24-inch box trees at key design features.
- ▶ Shrub planting shall consist of 1- and 5-gallon container sizes.
- ▶ Trees may be clustered to define circulation routes, frame site views, and reinforce State Highway 12 edge planting. Large scale, high branching shade trees should be used in all visitor/employee parking areas.
- ▶ Enhanced building entries and other special landscape features are encouraged and should feature bold foliage, spreading shade trees and seating elements. Accent lighting is also encouraged.
- ▶ Vegetated bioswales are encouraged in parking lot planting islands to treat on-site stormwater and provide visual relief within the hardscape.
- ▶ Property owners are responsible for installing and maintaining the landscape within each of their properties. Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs) and landscape maintenance agreements will ensure for proper maintenance and planting replacement.
- ▶ Landscaping will be designed to minimize required irrigation and runoff, to promote surface infiltration, and to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides that can contribute to storm water pollution.
- ▶ Plantings for bioretention areas will be selected to be appropriate to anticipated soil and moisture conditions.
- ▶ Plants will be selected appropriate to site soils, slopes, climates, sun, wind, rain, land use, air movement, ecological consistency, and plant interactions.
- ▶ Turf should be minimized. The use of turf for solely decorative purposes is strongly discouraged.
- ▶ Stormwater Best Management Practices such as bioswales should be incorporated into the landscape to maximize on-site infiltration of stormwater, to the extent possible.
- ▶ Site furnishings [such as benches] should be high quality and contemporary in design and compatible with the overall building and landscape design.
- ▶ Large scale trees and shrubs appropriate to the scale of the architecture should be emphasized to minimize visual dominance of large architecture [see, for example, Exhibit 4.1-7].



Source: David Babcock & Associates 2023, Adapted by AECOM in 2023

Exhibit 4.1-6. Conceptual Landscape Plan



Source: David Babcock & Associates 2023

Exhibit 4.1-7. Conceptual Architectural Rendering of Buildings and Landscape Trees

Within the approximately 93-acre Development Area, approximately 31.5 percent would consist of buildings, approximately 45.4 percent would consist of hardscapes such as parking areas and drive isles, and approximately 27.5 percent would consist of landscaping or stormwater retention basins. The proposed on- and off-site water and sewer lines would be buried underground and not visible after construction. The proposed off-site roadway improvements would result in a similar appearance as compared to existing conditions.

The 2035 Suisun City General Plan (City of Suisun City 2015) contains policies that require high-quality design for new development. For example, Policy CCD-1.1 states that the City will review and condition new developments, as necessary, to ensure that development is consistent with the desired future character of the City. This review will take into consideration the size, location, orientation, and height of buildings, as well as proposed signs, fences, drainage, walls, landscaping, and lighting. Policy CCD-1.6 requires proposed buildings of more than 20,000 square feet in gross floor area to use balconies, bay windows or other window treatments, pitched roofs, arcades, or other architectural features to provide visual interest. Policy CCD-1.17 requires trash bins, heating, ventilation and air conditioning(HVAC) equipment, and other required mechanical equipment to be located in areas that are accessible for their intended use and screened from view along public rights-of-way. Policy CCD-1.18 requires that commercial signage must be restrained in size and height and may not involve any more than one square foot of building signage for each linear foot of building frontage facing a public street. Policy CCD-4.4 requires visually attractive streetscapes with street trees, planting strips, attractive transit shelters, benches, pedestrian-scale streetlights in appropriate locations, and landscaping along fences and low walls, if present. Policy CCD-4.5 requires new developments to provide for trees at an average frequency of one every 20 feet on center along City streets. Policy CCD-4.8 requires all new utilities to be installed underground. Policy CCD-4.9 requires benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bus shelters, signage, and other improvements to be located along sidewalks and designed to enhance the visual environment and provide a welcoming place for pedestrians. Policy CCD-4.10 states that the City will work with Caltrans to install aesthetic and functional improvements along the SR 12 corridor, including landscaping, trees, pedestrian, and bicycle pathways separated from the travelway, and noise attenuation improvements.

In addition, the *Development Guidelines for Architecture and Site Planning* (City of Suisun City 1989) contains a combination of specific standards and general guidelines that are intended to guide development in the city in accordance with the General Plan. The Guidelines encourage the planting of urban street trees, and the scale and character of new buildings should relate to the existing surrounding development. Site design specifications for commercial development include building orientation, fencing, landscaping, open space, height limits, vehicular access, parking, screening of utilities, design of primary access points, outdoor storage, lighting, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Specific building design guidelines include requirements to provide for architecturally interesting and creative designs, and to avoid block-style, repetitious structures. The use of visually interesting and appropriate color schemes as well as a variety of building materials are encouraged. Mechanical and utility equipment must be screened from view. Commercial development should reflect “human-scale design” with abundant use of landscaping, entries, courtyards, and parking plazas. On-site lighting must be shielded and may not be visible from off-site viewpoints. Landscape buffers are required between commercial and residential land uses.

The Suisun City’s Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (Title 20 of the Suisun City Municipal Code) establishes a structure for planning, designing, installing, maintaining, and managing water efficient landscapes in new construction. The ordinance requires submittal of a landscape design package to the City Planning Department for review, which must include the total landscape area, water supplier, hydrozone information, water budget calculations, soil management report, landscape design plan, irrigation design plan, and grading design plan.

The Suisun City Zoning Code (Suisun City Municipal Code Title 18) provides development standards that address building mass, setbacks, landscaping, fences, lighting, and signage to achieve an aesthetically-pleasing appearance. Section 18.76 requires submittal of site plans and an architectural review by the Suisun City Planning Department.

The proposed development on 93 acres of the Project Site would substantially alter the existing visual character from agricultural (grazing land) to urban development. There are no outstanding examples of visual character at the Project Site, which consists of flat, rural (non-urbanized) land used for cattle grazing. As stated in Suisun City General Plan Policy CCD-6.4, the City will not consider urban development that is consistent with General Plan community design policies to represent a degradation of visual character for the purpose of environmental impact analysis. The proposed development at the Project Site would be consistent with City General Plan policies, the City Municipal Code, and the City Design Guidelines. Furthermore, detailed site-specific architectural and landscaping design must comply with the standards in the PUD, which the City has required to be consistent with the City’s design guidelines and Municipal Code development standards. Future development within the Project site will be reviewed and conditioned, as necessary, to implement the design guidance provided in the PUD.

As discussed in detail in the Environmental Setting (see the heading entitled “Visual Quality of the Project Site”), the Project Site exhibits a high degree of visual quality. The Project Site also includes three designated Key Community Gateways (Exhibit 4.1-2). Furthermore, as discussed in Impact 4.1-1, the Project Site affords scenic views from several public locations, and the proposed installation of commercial and industrial buildings would alter the scenic quality of the viewshed. Aesthetics impacts are inherently subjective, and reasonable people can disagree as to the relative aesthetic merits of urban land uses versus agricultural land. Based on the design and landscape guidelines contained in the Project’s PUD, against which future development within the Project site will be reviewed and conditioned to comply, and consistent with Suisun City General Plan Policy CCD-6.4, the

change in visual character resulting from proposed urban development on 93 acres of the Project Site is a **less-than-significant** impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 4.1-3 Substantial New Light and Glare and Skyglow Effects. *Project implementation would result in new urban development on approximately 93 acres of the Project Site. The Development Area would require security lighting and other types of lighting during operation. This could inadvertently cause increased light and glare, potentially obscuring views of stars and other features of the nighttime sky. In addition, nighttime lighting or the presence of reflective surfaces on buildings could result in glare shining on motorists traveling along SR 12, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Cordelia Road. This impact is considered **significant**.*

Skyglow is artificial lighting from urbanized uses that alters the rural landscape and, in sufficient quantity, lights up the nighttime sky, and thus reducing the darkness of the night sky and the visibility of the stars. Under current conditions, there are no sources of light that are generated on the Project Site. However, the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete commercial areas, located at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Cordelia Road, emit minimal nighttime lighting for security purposes. In addition, SR 12 along the northern Project Site boundary contains high-mast light standards. Nighttime lighting is also present west, north, and east of the Project Site from commercial, light industrial, and residential development in the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City.

Glare is intense light that shines directly, or is reflected from a surface into a person's eyes. Daytime glare can be caused by reflective surfaces such as unpainted metal roofs, windows, and white or glossy finish paints; nighttime glare can be caused by lighting. Daytime and nighttime glare generated by urban development are present to the west, north, and east of the Project Site, in addition to the Kings of Auto and NorCal Concrete commercial areas located at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Cordelia Road.

Proposed urban land uses in the 93-acre Development Area would introduce new street lighting, parking lot lighting, pedestrian way lighting, interior lighted building signage, interior and front-lighted landmark and directory signage, interior lighted (light emitting diode [LED]) security lighting, and architectural lighting, during the Project's operational stage. These lights would be visible during nighttime hours and would represent a source of light and glare surrounding developed areas and roadways. Windows, particularly large areas of glass in commercial structures, large buildings that employ white or other light-colored paint colors, along with polished surfaces such as metal roofs, could also create substantial daytime glare. Thus, the proposed Project could represent a substantial new source of light and glare.

As described previously, the Project applicant has prepared a PUD, for City approval, to establish the land use, zoning, development standards, and regulations for development of the Project Site (David Babcock & Associates 2023). As acknowledged in Section 4.8 of the PUD, Project lighting must be developed per the standards established by the City Municipal Code Chapter 18.42.040. Chapter 5 of the PUD includes the following lighting guidelines for the proposed Project:

- ▶ Provide adequate lighting for pedestrian safety.
- ▶ Site lighting should be consistent with the overall character of the building design.
- ▶ Site lighting should highlight building entries, walkways, and architectural features.

- ▶ Pedestrian scale lighting should be used for pedestrian walkways throughout the parking areas.
- ▶ Lighting for pedestrian circulation should be architecturally compatible with the building and site design, and shall have a 15-foot maximum height for a freestanding light pole. Lighting should be low profile and in scale with the setting and may include post lights and light bollards.
- ▶ Parking areas shall have lighting which provides adequate illumination for safety and security. Parking lot lighting fixtures shall avoid conflict with tree planting locations so they do not displace intended tree plantings.
- ▶ All lighting fixtures shall be fully shielded with cut-off fixtures so that there is no glare emitted onto adjacent properties or above the lowest part of the fixture.
- ▶ Accent lighting shall be used to enhance the appearance of a structure, draw attention to points of interest, and define open spaces and pathways. Accent lighting will only be permitted when it does not impact adjacent development, roadways, or residences.
- ▶ Accent lighting [related to signage] should be concealed behind the text or located flush with grade to be used as signage up-lighting.

The Suisun City 2035 General Plan includes policies that are designed to avoid light spillage and reduce light and glare effects. For example, Policy CCD-8.1 and Program 8.1 require the City to review and condition new development, as necessary, to ensure that low, pedestrian-scaled, ornamental lighting is emphasized in order to avoid adverse effects on adjacent uses. New developments proposed within the City are required to use attractive lighting that is complementary to the design of proposed structures (Policies CCD-1.1, CCD-3.6, and CCD-8.2). Light fixtures are required to aim light sources downward and provide shielding to prevent glare and reflection (Policy CCD-8.3). The City will not allow permanent lighting that will blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness (Policy CCD-8.5). Lighting standards are required to avoid the use of harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs for lighting of public areas or for lighting within residential neighborhoods and the transition to LED streetlights would further reduce nighttime light and glare (Policy CCD-8.5). In addition, Policy CCD-8.6 prohibits reflective surfaces that could cast glare toward pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorists, and requires that bare metallic surfaces such as pipes, vents, and light fixtures must be painted to minimize reflectance.

These policies are implemented through the City's process of reviewing and conditioning new development, including an architectural review by the Suisun City Planning Department, to avoid the introduction of light and glare that would adversely affect motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians using public travelways. New developments have several design options that can be used, as appropriate, to avoid substantial adverse light and glare effects, including: carefully planning the location and orientation of on-site lighting, use of darker colored, earth-toned, non-reflective paint and building materials, use of vegetation screening or shielding of light at the source, use of directional or lower-intensity lighting, use of timing devices or sound/motion-controlled lighting, or other techniques.

Land use changes in the proposed 93-acre Development Area would substantially increase the amount of nighttime light and glare, as well as daytime glare from reflective surfaces, when compared to existing conditions, even with the lighting standards included in the PUD. This could obscure views of stars and other features of the

nighttime sky, as well as create a nuisance for motorists and others at public viewpoints. Suisun City 2035 General Plan policies would reduce impacts that could result from daytime glare and nighttime lighting sources in association with the proposed Project. However, nighttime lighting or glare from commercial and light industrial buildings, parking lots, and streets could still be created and result in adverse effects on nearby public areas. Therefore, this impact is considered **significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 4.1-3: Prepare an Exterior Lighting Plan Including an Off-Site Photometric Analysis.

The Project applicant or contractor(s) shall prepare and submit to the City Planning Division for review and approval, an Exterior Lighting Plan, which shall present the size, orientation, location, height, and appearance of proposed fixtures (Suisun City Municipal Code Title 18, Chapter 18.76.030). Before issuing any occupancy permit, the City will review each site-specific lighting plan to ensure that it includes the following standards:

- Shield or screen all exterior lighting fixtures to direct the light downward and prevent light spill on adjacent properties.
- Place and shield or screen flood and area lighting needed for security so as not to disturb adjacent properties or passing motorists.
- Light fixtures that are of unusually high intensity or brightness (e.g., harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs) or that blink or flash, shall not be used. Light-emitting diode (LED) lighting shall be used where feasible.
- Motion-controlled exterior nighttime lighting, rather than lighting that is always on, shall be used where feasible.
- Based on an off-site photometric analysis, proposed on-site lighting fixtures shall be demonstrated to avoid spillage onto any property other than the boundaries for which lighting is intended.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.1-3 would reduce potentially significant impacts from daytime and nighttime glare, and nighttime skyglow effects, to the maximum extent feasible because an exterior lighting plan with measures specifically designed to reduce nighttime light spillover, glare, and skyglow effects would be prepared and implemented. However, even with implementation of this mitigation measure, the proposed commercial and light industrial development on 93 acres of the Project Site would contribute to regional nighttime skyglow effects. No additional feasible mitigation measures are available. Therefore, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

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