

3.1 - Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

3.1.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing aesthetics, light, and glare setting and potential effects from project implementation on visual resources and the site and its surroundings. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on-site reconnaissance by FirstCarbon Solutions (FCS), as well as review of the City of American Canyon General Plan.

3.1.2 - Environmental Setting

Visual Character

Regional Setting

American Canyon, population 20,837, is located in southern Napa County between the east bank of the Napa River and the Sulfur Springs Mountains foothills. State Route (SR) 29—known locally as Broadway Street—bisects the City from north to south and serves as the primary commercial corridor. Residential uses are generally located in the southern portion of the City, with commercial and industrial uses located in the northern portion near the Napa County Airport. American Canyon is characterized by a contemporary, low-rise, suburban appearance, with most development having occurred within the last 40 years.

Project Site

The approximately 208-acre project site contains undeveloped land. There are no structures on-site. Vegetation consists of grasses and weeds. The project site gently slopes from east to west and the elevation ranges from 50 feet to 35 feet above mean sea level. The headwaters of No Name Creek are located in the northwestern portion of the site. No Name Creek flows off the site at the northwestern corner of the property into the Napa Logistics Park wetland preserve. Small soil mounds are located in various places throughout the site.

The City of American Canyon owns an approximately 8-acre strip of land that bisects the site north to south. This strip of land would support the planned extension of Devlin Road from Middleton Way to Green Island Road, which was under construction as of Summer 2021.

Chapter 2, Project Description, Exhibit 2-3 provides site photographs.

Surrounding Land Uses

West

The California Northern Railroad line, connecting American Canyon and Sonoma, and the Biagi Brothers distribution warehouse form the western boundary of the project site. The project site has unobstructed views of the railroad tracks and warehouse.

North

Devlin Road and the Napa Logistics Park form the northern boundary of the project site. Napa Logistics Park contains more than 2 million square feet of distribution warehouses as well as a planned Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) regional operations and maintenance center.

Further north is the Napa County Airport. The project site has unobstructed views of Napa Logistics Park and partial views of the airport.

East

The Napa Branch Line, a railroad that connects American Canyon and Napa, forms the eastern boundary of the project site. East of the branch line are several industrial and commercial businesses that front SR-29. The project site has unobstructed views of the railroad tracks and the businesses that front SR-29.

South

Green Island Road, Crown Hill Stone Supply, and the Wine Direct Warehouse form the southern boundary of the project site. Further south are industrial and commercial businesses in the Green Island Business Park. The project site has unobstructed views of the businesses along the road.

Light and Glare

The project site does not currently contain any sources of light and glare. Parking lot lights that employ full cut-off fixtures are present at the adjoining Wine Direct Warehouse along Green Island Road. Surrounding developed land uses including the Napa Logistics Park, the Wine Direct Warehouse, and the Biagi Brothers distribution warehouse have exterior lighting for safety and security purposes.

3.1.3 - Regulatory Framework

Local

City of American Canyon

General Plan

The City of American Canyon General Plan sets forth the following goals, objectives, and policies relevant to aesthetics, light, and glare:

- Goal 1B** Provide for the orderly development of American Canyon that maintains its distinctive character.
- Goal 1C** Create a pattern and character of land use development that establishes American Canyon as a distinct “place” differentiated from adjacent urban areas, maintains a semi-rural character, and respects the environmental setting.
- Objective 1.4** Provide for a pattern of development that (a) establishes distinct neighborhoods, districts, places of community activity and culture and open spaces that are interlinked and promote a cohesive image, (b) locates jobs, commerce, recreation, and other places of community activity within close proximity to all housing units, minimizing the need for vehicular use, (c) achieves a balance of uses to serve both sides of Highway 29, and (d) establishes an overall compact urban form surrounded by open space.

Objective 1.5 Maintain the character and quality of the natural environmental resources of the City and protect the population and development from the adverse impacts of environmental hazards.

Policy 1.22.4 Require that development be designed to achieve a high level of quality and compatibility with existing uses including the consideration of the following:

- a. Architectural treatment of all building elevations;
- b. Use of extensive landscape along the primary street frontages and parking lots; and
- c. Enclosure of storage areas visible from principal highways (including Highway 29) and peripheral residential and commercial districts with decorative screening or other elements.

Policy 1.22.5 Require that industrial areas developed as research and development and office-oriented business parks be designed to convey a unified character by consideration of Policy 1.22.4 and the following:

- a. Inclusion of pedestrian walkways, arcades, and/or other visual elements to interconnect individual buildings;
- b. Differentiation of building facades by materials, color, architectural details and modulation of building volumes;
- c. Incorporation of extensive landscape in parking areas, along building frontages, and other public areas;
- d. Use of consistent and well-designed public and informational signage; and
- e. Installation of elements that define the key entries to the industrial district.

3.1.4 - Methodology

FCS evaluated potential aesthetics, light, and glare impacts through site reconnaissance conducted in February 2021, as well as review of the City of American Canyon General Plan and project plans.

3.1.5 - Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines is a sample Initial Study Checklist that includes questions for determining whether impacts to aesthetics are significant. These questions reflect the input of planning and environmental professionals at the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the California Natural Resources Agency based on input from stakeholder groups and experts in various other governmental agencies, nonprofits, and leading environmental consulting firms. As a result, many lead agencies derive their significance criteria from the questions posed in Appendix G. The City has chosen to do so for this project. Thus, the proposed project would have a significant effect related to aesthetics if the proposed project would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic building within a state scenic highway. (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found not to be Significant.)
- c) In non-urbanized areas, 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).
- d) In an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- e) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

3.1.6 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Scenic Vistas

Impact AES-1: **The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

Impact Analysis

Phases 1 and 2

The approximately 208-acre project site contains undeveloped land. There are no structures on-site. Vegetation consists of grasses and weeds. The project site gently slopes from east to west and the elevation ranges from 50 feet to 35 feet above mean sea level. The headwaters of No Name Creek are located in the northwestern portion of the site. No Name Creek flows off the site at the northwestern corner of the property into the Napa Logistics Park wetland preserve. Small soil mounds are located in various places throughout the site.

A scenic vista is defined as a viewing point that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape available to the general public. Scenic resources are defined as those landscape patterns and features that are visually or aesthetically pleasing and that, therefore, contribute positively and define a distinct community or region. Neither the City of American Canyon nor the Napa County General Plan identifies the project site as a scenic vista or scenic resource. Additionally, the project site does not contain any scenic vistas or features associated with scenic vistas (e.g., ridgelines, peaks, overlooks), nor are any such views visible from the project site.

The project site is located in a portion of the City of American Canyon that is generally not visible from park and recreational areas, community gathering facilities, or residential areas. There are no prominent long-distance views of the project site, and, as such, the proposed project would not have the potential to obstruct views from high vantage points or sensitive viewpoints of the City.

In summary, the proposed project would not adversely affect views to or from a scenic vista. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Visual Character

Impact AES-2: The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Impact Analysis

The approximately 208-acre project site contains undeveloped land. There are no structures on-site. Vegetation consists of grasses and weeds. The project site gently slopes from east to west and the elevation ranges from 50 feet to 35 feet above mean sea level. The headwaters of No Name Creek are located in the northwestern portion of the site. No Name Creek flows off the site at the northwestern corner of the property into the Napa Logistics Park wetland preserve. Small soil mounds are located in various places throughout the site.

The project vicinity includes Napa Logistics Park, the Green Island Business Park, two railroad lines, and the Napa County Airport. Generally, the project vicinity can be characterized as an active, contemporary industrial area.

Phase 1

Phase 1 consists of the development of 1,069,904 square feet of high-cube warehouse on 94.7 acres of the eastern portion of the project site. Two warehouse buildings would be developed (627,976 square feet and 469,512 square feet). The larger building would be rail-served by the adjacent Napa Branch Line. Both buildings would provide docks, grade-level roll-up doors, and trailer parking stalls. The facility would be enclosed with a secure perimeter.

The high-cube warehouse buildings would be of Type VB construction, site cast, tilted concrete panels with a variety of architectural enhancements. The typical wall panels would be enhanced with reveals and a textured elastomeric, multicolored coating system. The roof would support mechanical equipment for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system screened with a roof parapet and/or with roof screens equal in height to the mechanical equipment. The areas around the building entries would also be enhanced with tinted glazing in aluminum frames with overhead steel-framed painted canopies. The placement of these enhancements would be focused at those locations most visible from the public roadways. Chapter 2, Project Description, Exhibit 2-5 depicts the building renderings.

The Phase 1 warehouses would be similar in appearance to the structures in the neighboring Napa Logistics Park and the Green Island Business Park.

Additionally, a 44.8-acre open space area containing No Name Creek and wetlands would be permanently preserved within the northern portion of the site. These are the most significant aesthetic features on the project site.

Phase 2

Phase 2 would support up to 1.3 million square feet of high-cube warehouse on 113.1 acres of the western portion of the project site. Phase 2 is conceptual and no design-level plans have been prepared at the time of this writing. It would be expected that the Phase 2 buildings would be similar in appearance to the Phase 1 buildings.

Conclusion

Although the development of the proposed project would fundamentally and irreversibly change the visual character of the project site, it would be compatible with surrounding uses and consistent with the City of American Canyon General Plan land use designation of “Industrial” for the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual quality of the project area or its surroundings, and the impact related to changed character would be considered less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Light and Glare

Impact AES-3: **The proposed project may create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

Impact Analysis

Phases 1 and 2

The project site does not currently contain any sources of light and glare. Parking lot lights that employ full cut-off fixtures are present in the adjoining Wine Direct Warehouse along Green Island Road. Nearby developed land uses, including Napa Logistics Park and the industrial uses south of Green Island Road, have exterior lighting for safety and security purposes.

The development of the proposed project would result in the installation of new sources of light and glare on the project site. These new sources of light include additional street lighting along internal roadways, building-mounted light fixtures, and pole-mounted light fixtures within parking areas. Additionally, illuminated signage may be employed. Mitigation Measure (MM) AES-3 requires the project applicant to prepare and submit a photometric plan to the City of American Canyon for review and approval to demonstrate that all exterior light fixtures would be directed downward or employ full cut-off fixtures to minimize light spillage and avoid interference with aviation operations

at the Napa County Airport. Downward-directed lighting and full cut-off fixtures would prevent the trespass of light and glare onto neighboring properties or conflict with aviation operations. With the implementation of this mitigation measure, potential light and glare impacts would be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM AES-3 Prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed project, the project applicant shall prepare and submit a photometric plan to the City of American Canyon for review and approval which demonstrates that all exterior light fixtures would be directed downward or employ full cut-off fixtures to minimize light spillage and avoid interference with aviation operations at the Napa County Airport. The approved plan shall be incorporated into the proposed project.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

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