

## 4.1 AESTHETICS

This section identifies the existing visual characteristics and aesthetic resources on the project site and in the surrounding area and evaluates the potential for changes in visual character that could result from project implementation. This section also evaluates the potential loss of existing visual resources, effects on public views, and light and glare impacts.

### 4.1.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes the existing visual character of the project site, the areas immediately surrounding the project site, and the area in the general vicinity of the project site.

#### 4.1.1.1 Local Context

As described in **Section 4.9: Land Use and Planning**, the City of Fairfield is located in Solano County, in north-central California. It has a population of 119,897 as of 2021 and is approximately 38 square miles in area. The City is located 40 miles northeast of San Francisco. The City lies between the foothills of the Coast Ranges and Suisun Bay.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the City of Fairfield is located within the Fairfield, CA Urbanized Area.<sup>1</sup> As described in the *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15387 and defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, an “urbanized area” is a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more people, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. Because the City qualifies as an urbanized area per CEQA and U.S. Census Bureau definition, the project site is also located within an urbanized area.

#### 4.1.1.2 Existing Visual Character of the Project Site

As described in **Chapter 3.0: Project Description**, the 5.78-acre project site is located at 4840 Business Center Drive in the City of Fairfield, Solano County. Prior to 1968, the project site was occupied by mixed agriculture with semi-regular discing occurring. The project site consists of one parcel, Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 0148-540-350, which is currently undeveloped. Small portions of developed, paved surfaces exist along the northeast boundary of the project site. A narrow strip of landscaping vegetated with ornamental shrubs and mulching is present in the east corner of the project site by the Fairfield Business Center entrance. A drainage that is tributary to Green Valley Creek and an associated riparian corridor are located along the western edge of the project site. Overall, the project site is relatively flat, with elevations ranging from 15 to 20 feet above mean sea level. The site is dominated by herbaceous and ruderal vegetation consisting of non-native, annual grassland species.

#### 4.1.1.3 Visual Character of the Surrounding Area

The proposed project site is in an area of Fairfield that is characterized by a mix of office uses, low rise single-family residential development, roadways, and a four-story hotel that is under construction. Undeveloped areas consist of vacant parcels covered in non-native grasses and the

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. Fairfield, CA Urbanized Area No. 28657. Website: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftigerweb.geo.census.gov%2Farcgis%2Frest%2Fservices%2FTIGERweb%2FUrban%2FMapServer&source=sd> (accessed March 1, 2022).

riparian areas associated with Green Valley Creek and connecting drainages. Existing developments contain building structures, parking and driveway areas, mature trees, and ornamental landscaping. Due to the generally level topography and intervening development, views from the site in all directions are limited to the immediate vicinity. Refer to **Figure 3-5: Photos of Surrounding Land Uses** in **Chapter 3: Project Description**, for views of existing land uses in the immediate vicinity of the site.

#### 4.1.1.4 Views from the Project Site

**Figure 4.1-1: Representative View Locations** illustrates two vantage points from which photographs of existing representative views were taken. **Figure 4.1-2: Existing Representative Views 1 and 2** depicts the existing views as seen from the following:

- **Existing Representative View 1** depicts views of the project site from Malvasia Court to the northwest of the project site. This view represents the view of the project site as seen by single-family residences on Malvasia Court as one looks southeast towards the project site. The fore and middle-ground of this picture shows a grassy field with no structures or other obstructions to the view. The background of this picture shows construction equipment and the tree line on the south side of Business Center Drive. Business Center Drive is not a scenic corridor, and none of the features in this photograph are visually remarkable, being typical of this suburban area.
- **Existing Representative View 2** depicts views of the project site from the adjacent parking lot to the east of the site. This view represents the view of the project site as seen from the adjacent surface parking lot of the Fairfield Business Center as one looks southwest across the project site. The fore and middle-grounds of this picture show a grassy field. The background of this picture shows the riparian corridor associated with the constructed drainage that is tributary to Green Valley Creek. None of the features of this photograph are visually remarkable, being typical of this suburban area.

#### 4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

The following discusses applicable standards and policies related to aesthetics, including those from State, regional, and local agencies. There are no federal standards or policies related to aesthetics that would be applicable to a privately proposed residential development project such as the proposed project.

##### 4.1.2.1 State Laws and Regulations

**Caltrans Scenic Highway Program.** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program protects the natural scenic beauty of the State's highways and corridors by designating sections of state highways as scenic highways. Caltrans defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that traverses an area of exceptional scenic quality. Other considerations given to a scenic highway designation include how much of the natural landscape a traveler may see and the extent to which visual intrusions degrade the scenic corridor.

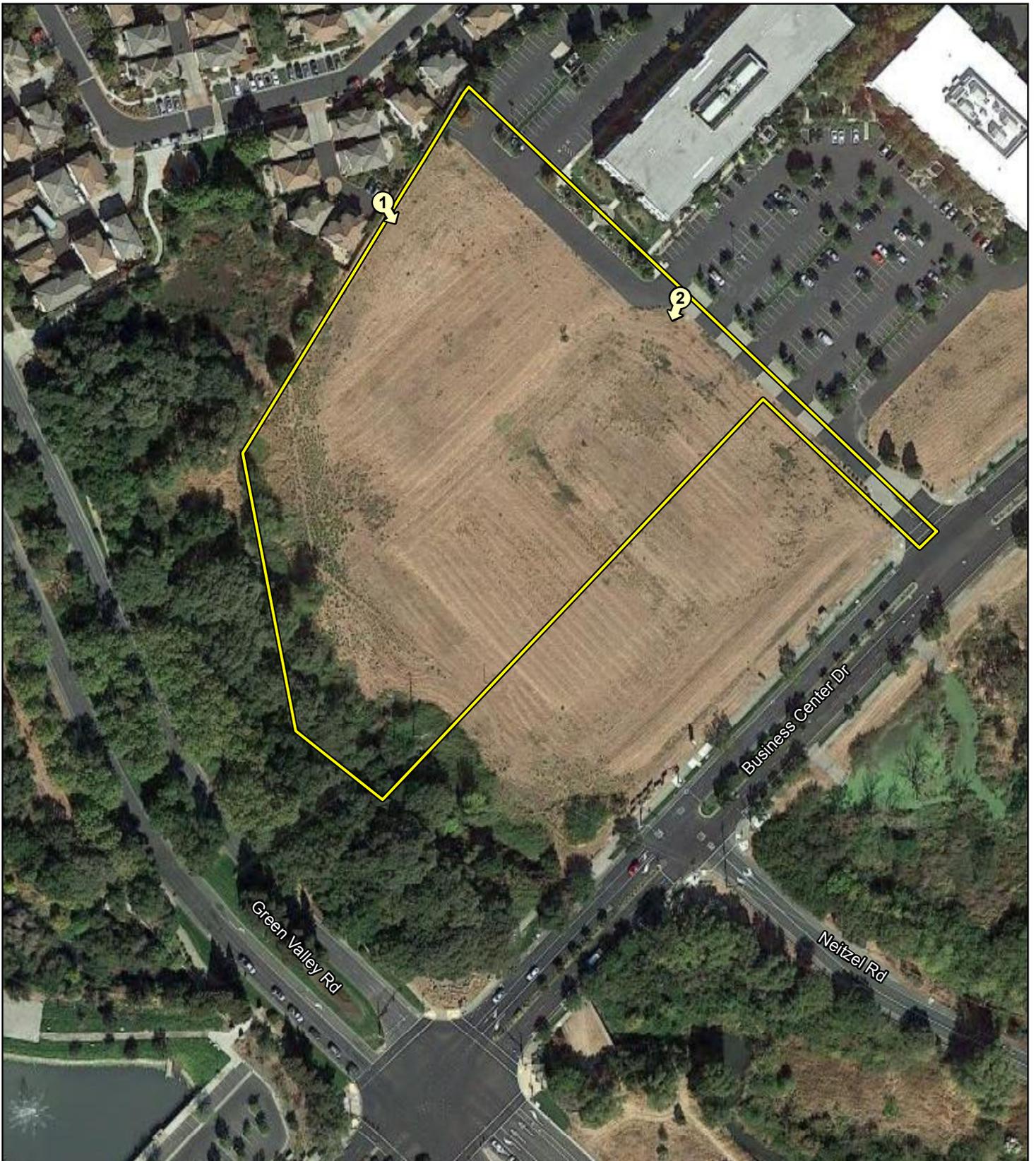


FIGURE 4.1-1

LEGEND

-  Project Location
-  Representative View Locations



SOURCE: Google (2021)

I:\BTI2101\GIS\MXD\KeyViewLocations.mxd (5/13/2022)

Green Valley 3 Apartment Project  
Representative View Locations

**This page intentionally left blank**



**Existing Representative View 1:** Existing view facing southeast from northwest edge of site.



**Existing Representative View 2:** Existing view facing southwest.

FIGURE 4.1-2

**This page intentionally left blank**

The proposed project is not located in the vicinity of a State Scenic Highway. According to the List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways published by Caltrans, State Route 12 (SR-12) from mile marker 22.5 to 34 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.<sup>2</sup> This portion of SR-12 is approximately 15 miles northwest of the project and the project site is not within view of this scenic highway segment.

#### 4.1.2.2 Regional and Local Plans and Regulations

**City of Fairfield General Plan.** The following policies of the *City of Fairfield General Plan* pertaining to aesthetics would be applicable to the proposed project:

**Policy UD 1.2:** Enhance core areas of more intensive image development to function as centers in the key areas of the City (i.e., Downtown and the Fairfield Gateway in Central Fairfield, the Fairfield-Vacaville Train Station, and the Interstate 80 (I-80)/I-680 Interchange in Cordelia).

**Policy UD 1.4:** Develop positive, high quality edges along I-80, major arterials, and the city limits.

**Policy UD 2.1:** New development should be compatible with the City's overall development profile.

**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 3.1:** Include guidelines in the Urban Design Plan to enhance the City's small-scale identity, such as creation of a sense of neighborhood in residential areas.

**Policy UD 3.3:** Require new development to respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences.

**Policy UD 4.1:** Adhere to the design guidelines of the Fairfield Urban Design Plan.

**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.

---

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2015, last modified July 2019. List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Website: <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca> (accessed March 1, 2022).

**Policy UD 4.3:** Require the use of water features, sculptures, or other elements to help define the entrance to large projects.

**Policy UD 4.5:** Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices.

**Policy UD 5.1:** Development should be designed to provide continuity with features of the surrounding area.

**Policy UD 6.1:** Preserve existing significant trees and extensively plant new trees where appropriate.

**Policy UD 6.2:** Landscape materials should consist of drought resistant plant varieties complementary to the area.

**Policy UD 6.3:** Landscaping shall be continuously maintained in good condition in accordance with the City's Property Maintenance Ordinance.

**Policy UD 7.3:** Encourage shared use of parking facilities and promote planning for land uses that can utilize the same parking area at different times.

**City of Fairfield Municipal Code.** Section 25.20.4.8 of the *City of Fairfield Municipal Code* specifies requirements for multifamily zoning, which are applicable to the project. The following provisions apply:

1. **Open space.** No less than 50 percent of the required common open space in a project shall be usable, having a dimension of 20 by 35 feet, and improved for passive or active open space. This standard may be adjusted through the approval of an individual project to a lower percentage where the review authority determines that high quality design will maximize the functional and aesthetic purposes of open space, such as creation of large consolidated open areas and/or the addition of landscape features which decrease the perceived mass and scale of large buildings and parking lots.
2. **Landscaping.** All landscaping shall include one street tree per 25 feet of street frontage, located within eight feet of back of sidewalk and shall maintain all frontage areas. Additionally, one tree shall be planted on-site for each 325 square feet of landscape area. Preliminary and final landscape plans for multifamily developments shall be prepared by a landscape architect licensed by the State of California.
3. **Maintenance plan and program.** A continuous maintenance and management program shall be required for each development and compliance with the approved plan and program shall be required as a condition of approval of the development.
  - a. **Maintenance standards.** Definitive standards for maintenance of landscaping for each project shall be established in the form of conditions of approval. The City, to the extent legally permissible, shall establish a lien process whereupon making specified findings, the

City may perform the required maintenance and place a lien on the property to recover maintenance costs.

- b. **On-site management.** An on-site resident property manager shall be provided for any multifamily development consisting of 16 or more apartment units.

**City of Fairfield Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan.** In 1999, recognizing that urban development posed a risk to the city's scenic character, the City of Fairfield prepared the *Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan* to ensure that the visual integrity of the city's scenic vantage points and scenic roadways is preserved even as the city grows. The plan identifies scenic vista points in the city; the scenic vista point nearest to the project site is Nelson Hill along I-80. The plan also identifies certain areas of the city as Scenic Vista Areas (SVA) and identifies certain roadway segments as scenic roadways. Green Valley is identified in the plan as a SVA and Green Valley Road from Business Center Drive north to the vicinity of Green Valley Country Club is identified as a scenic roadway. The plan contains recommendations and policies for areas in middle and upper Green Valley and does not contain policies for lower Green Valley, including the area where the project would be located.

**City of Fairfield Standard Conditions of Approval.** The City of Fairfield has adopted standard Conditions of Approval (COAs) for major development projects. The following COA related to aesthetics would apply to the proposed project:

- COA 10.1** A detailed on-site exterior lighting and photometric plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Community Development Department prior to issuance of building permits. The plan shall indicate fixture design, illumination, location, height, and method of shielding, so as not to adversely affect adjacent properties and so as to provide a minimum of one-foot candle luminance at all exterior parking lot locations. Buffering techniques to reduce light and glare impacts shall be required for projects adjoining residential land and at no time shall light exceed one-foot candle luminance at the property lines for any project.

#### 4.1.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for aesthetics impacts used in this analysis are consistent with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The proposed project may be deemed to have a significant impact with respect 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.**
- **In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.**

- **Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

#### 4.1.4 Methodology

Information in this section is based on photographs of the project site taken during field surveys and site visits; renderings of future development associated with the project; the *City of Fairfield Municipal Code*; and the *City of Fairfield General Plan*. The following describes the key concepts and terminology used in this section and the approach to the analysis.

##### 4.1.4.1 Key Concepts and Terminology

The assessment of aesthetic impacts is subjective by nature. This analysis identifies and examines factors that contribute to the perception of aesthetic impacts that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project. The potential aesthetic impacts of the proposed project are assessed based on consideration of several factors, including scale, mass, proportion, and the concepts described below.

- **Scenic Resources:** Scenic resources are defined as natural or manmade elements that contribute to an area's scenic value and are visually pleasing. Scenic resources include landforms, vegetation, water, or adjacent scenery and may include a cultural modification to the natural environment. The degree to which these resources are present in a community is clearly subject to personal and cultural interpretation. However, it is possible to qualify certain resources as having aesthetic characteristics and establish general guidelines for assessing the aesthetic impacts of new development.
- **Scenic Vista:** A scenic vista is a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the public's benefit. It is usually viewed from some distance away. Aesthetic components of a scenic vista include (1) scenic quality, (2) sensitivity level, and (3) view access. A scenic vista can be impacted in two ways: a development project can have visual impacts by either directly diminishing the scenic quality of the vista or by blocking the view corridors or "vista" of the scenic resource. Important factors in determining whether a proposed project would block scenic vistas include the project's proposed height, mass, and location relative to publicly accessible viewing locations.
- **Sensitive Views:** Sensitive views are generally those associated with designated public vantage points and public recreational areas, but the term can be more broadly applied to encompass any valued public vantage point. Sensitivity level has to do with the (1) intensity of use of a visual resource; (2) visibility of a visual resource; and (3) importance of the visual resource to users.
- **Scenic Corridors:** Scenic corridors are channels that facilitate movement (primarily by automobile, transit, bicycle, or foot) from one location to another with expansive views of natural landscapes and/or visually attractive manmade development. Scenic corridors analyzed under CEQA typically include State-designated scenic highways and locally designated scenic routes.

- **Scenic Quality:** Scenic quality relates to a streetscape, building, group of buildings, or other manmade or natural feature that creates an overall impression of an area within an urban context. For example, a scenic vista along the boundary of a community, a pleasing streetscape with trees, and well-kept residences and yards are scenic resources that create a pleasing impression of an area. In general, concepts of scenic quality can be organized around four basic elements: (1) site utilization, (2) buildings and structures, (3) landscaping, and (4) signage. Adverse scenic quality effects can include the loss of aesthetic features or the introduction of contrasting features that could contribute to a decline in overall scenic quality.
- **Glare:** A continuous or periodic intense light that may cause eye discomfort or be temporarily blinding to humans.
- **Light Sources:** A device that produces illumination, including incandescent bulbs, fluorescent and neon tubes, halogen and other vapor lamps, and reflecting surfaces or refractors incorporated into a lighting fixture. Any translucent enclosure of a light source is considered to be part of the light source.
- **Regulations Governing Scenic Quality.** Visual impacts are evaluated based on the project's consistency with design guidelines in the *City of Fairfield General Plan*, development standards related to aesthetics in the *City of Fairfield Municipal Code*, and the guidance in the *City of Fairfield Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan*.

The impact analysis focuses on aesthetic-related changes to the project site and to views from the surrounding area that may result from construction and operation of the proposed project. This would include changes in vistas and viewsheds where visual changes would be evident, changes to scenic resources along designated scenic roads, potential conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, and the introduction of new sources of light and glare.

The viewshed impact analysis evaluates project impacts from three viewing distance zones, as explained below.

- **Foreground Views:** These views include elements that are seen at a close distance and that dominate the entire view. These vantage points are generally 50 feet or less from the project site, surrounding topography, and other prominent physical features in the project vicinity.
- **Middle-Ground Views:** These views include elements that are seen at a moderate distance and that partially dominate the view. These vantage points are generally located between 500 feet and 1 mile from the project site.
- **Background Views:** These views include elements that are seen at a long distance and typically comprise horizon-line views that are part of the overall visual composition of the area. These vantage points are generally farther than 1 mile from the project site.

**Light and Glare.** The analysis of light and glare identifies the location of light-sensitive land uses and describes the existing ambient conditions on and in the vicinity of the project site. The analysis describes the proposed project's light and glare sources and the extent to which project lighting,

including any potential illuminated signage, would spill off the project site onto adjacent light-sensitive areas. The analysis also describes the affected street frontages, the direction in which the light would be focused, and the extent to which the proposed project would illuminate sensitive land uses. The analysis also considers the potential for sunlight to reflect off windows and building surfaces (glare) and the extent to which such glare would interfere with the operation of motor vehicles, aviation, or other activities. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by artificial light sources, such as illuminated signage and vehicle headlights. Glare-sensitive uses generally include residences and transportation corridors (i.e., roadways).

#### 4.1.4.2 Approach

The project's potential aesthetic impacts are assessed based on consideration of several factors, including scale, mass, proportion, and the concepts described above. The analysis includes conceptual renderings of the proposed project that illustrate the scale, massing, and design of the project, as seen from representative locations surrounding the project site.

#### 4.1.4.3 Project Renderings

To determine impacts related to aesthetics, the existing conditions are compared to project conditions as shown in renderings presented in **Figure 4.1-3: Project Views 1 and 2**. The renderings are illustrative of the apartment complex that would exist upon project implementation and are representative of the scale, mass, and proportion of the components associated with the proposed project.

As depicted in **Figure 4.1-3: Project Views 1 and 2, Simulated View 1**, views of the project site from nearby residences to the northwest (looking southeast) would be of the two-story parking structure in the foreground and would partially blend with the existing surrounding setting from the incorporation of intermittent tree planting and ornamental vegetation. In addition to the parking structure, the upper stories and roofline of the apartment building would be visible in the middle ground to adjacent residents. Note that these views would be screened by the row of evergreen trees planned for the northern site boundary.

As depicted in **Figure 4.1-3: Project Views 1 and 2, Simulated View 2**, views of the site from the nearby surface parking associated with the Fairfield Business Center to the northeast (looking southwest) would be of additional outdoor parking and the northeast corner of the apartment complex. Some of the middle-ground views would be partially obstructed by ornamental landscaping and trees. The upper stories and roofline of the apartment building would be visible to adjacent offices.

#### 4.1.5 Project Impacts

The following describes the potential impacts related to aesthetics that could result from implementation of the proposed project. As applicable, conditions of approval (COAs) and mitigation measures (MMs) are presented to reduce significant impacts.



**Simulated View 1:** Simulated view facing southeast.



**Simulated View 2:** Simulated view facing entry to the southwest.

FIGURE 4.1-3

**This page intentionally left blank**

#### 4.1.5.1 Effect on a Scenic Vista

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

The proposed project would be developed within the City of Fairfield within an existing urbanized setting, on a currently undeveloped site. The project site is dominated by herbaceous and ruderal vegetation consisting of non-native, annual grassland species. Small portions of developed, paved surfaces exist along the northeast boundary of the project site and a narrow strip of landscaping vegetated with ornamental shrubs and mulching is present in the eastern corner of the project site by the Fairfield Business Center entrance. A drainage and an associated riparian corridor are located along the western edge of the project site. According to the *City of Fairfield General Plan*, there are no designated scenic vistas within the city.

According to the *City of Fairfield Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan*, the nearest scenic vista is Nelson Hill along I-80; however, this is located outside the City and is not visible from the project site.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, there are no publicly accessible vantage points in the project area from where scenic vistas can be observed that could be affected or obstructed by the development of the proposed project. Therefore, no scenic vistas are visible from the project site or would be blocked by implementation of the proposed project. There would be no impact on scenic vistas.

**Level of Significance prior to Mitigation:** No Impact

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation:** Not Applicable

#### 4.1.5.2 Damage Scenic Resources in a State Scenic Highway

**Impact AES-2: The proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.**

The proposed project is not located in the vicinity of a State Scenic Highway. According to the List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways published by Caltrans, State SR-12 from mile marker 22.5 to 34 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.<sup>4</sup> This portion of SR-12 is approximately 15 miles northwest of the project site. Due to the intervening topography, distance, existing buildings, and vegetation, the project site is not visible from SR-12. According to the *City of Fairfield Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan*, an approximately 2-mile portion of Green Valley Road extending from Business Center Drive to the City limits near the Green Valley Country Club is designated as a scenic roadway. Thus, the project site is located in the vicinity of a scenic corridor designated by the City. However, due to the approximately 200-foot-wide riparian corridor located along the east side of the roadway, the project site is not visible from Green Valley Road. As the

<sup>3</sup> City of Fairfield Department of Planning and Development. 1999. Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan. Adopted by the Fairfield City County on June 15, 1999 (Resolution 99-175).

<sup>4</sup> California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2015, last modified July 2019. List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Website: <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca> (accessed March 1, 2022).

project would not remove any trees or other riparian vegetation associated with this corridor and the apartment building would be set back from the riparian area by an additional between 60 and 90 feet, the proposed project would not result in a visual intrusion that would substantially degrade the scenic character of Green Valley Road. Proposed landscaping along the western portion of the development area, which would include native interior live oak trees, would also further screen the proposed project from Green Valley Road. The proposed project would not conflict with the guidelines in the *City of Fairfield Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan* pertaining to scenic roadways. Furthermore, the project site is not currently occupied by rock outcroppings, historic buildings, or any other scenic resources. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway or within the view corridor of Green Valley Road. There would be no impact on scenic resources within a scenic corridor.

**Level of Significance prior to Mitigation:** No Impact

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation:** Not Applicable

#### 4.1.5.3 Conflict with Zoning or Other Regulations Pertaining to Scenic Quality

**Impact AES-3: The proposed project, which is located in an urbanized area, would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.**

According to the United State Census Bureau (2010), the City of Fairfield is located within the Fairfield Urbanized Area. As described in *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15387 and defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, an “urbanized area” is a central city or group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more people, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. Because the City is in an urbanized area, for the purposes of this analysis, the project site is considered to be in an urbanized area. Therefore, the analysis below focuses on the proposed project’s potential to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations that govern scenic quality.

The proposed project would include the development of a single four-story, approximately 204,144-square-foot apartment building with 185 rental units situated around a central clubhouse area. The four-story building would consist of three wings and the building height, plus all rooftop appurtenances, would be no taller than 49 feet.

As discussed in **Section 4.9: Land Use and Planning**, the project site is currently within the IBP-NC zoning district, which does not permit residential uses. Therefore, the proposed project would require approval of a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning to Residential Very High Density (RVH-NC), which allows the development of multi-family residential uses at a density of 22 to 32 dwelling units per acre, and is consistent with the residential uses and density proposed by the project (refer to **Section 4.9: Land Use and Planning**, for further discussion).

Applications for development within the RVH-NC zoning district require conformance with design standards, development parameters, and zoning standards such as site layout, setbacks, lot sizes, and building heights, among others.

RVH-NC zoning standards related to aesthetics include building height limit of 50 feet; setbacks of 20 feet average from habitable portions of the building and 15 feet average from parking; 35 percent of the net parcel dedicated to open space; and landscaping requirements of one tree for every 25 feet of street frontage and one tree for each 325 square feet of landscape area.

As noted above, the tallest portion of the proposed building (plus all rooftop appurtenances) would be approximately 49 feet, which is consistent with the maximum height limit for the RVH-NC zoning district (maximum 50 feet). The building would be set back a minimum of 60 feet, and 20 feet from surface parking. As shown in **Figure 3-9: Proposed Open Space Plan in Chapter 3.0: Project Description**, of the net (improved) site acreage of 5.2 acres, approximately 1.8 acres, or 78,817 square feet, would be devoted to open space, resulting in 35 percent of the project site being dedicated to open space. As reflected in **Section 3.2.3 in Chapter 3.0**, trees would be planted every 20 feet of street frontage and would be planted at one tree per 325 square feet of landscape area. Therefore, the proposed project would meet or exceed all the requirements for setbacks, and would exceed the open space requirement and landscaping tree requirements. Additionally, landscaping trees adjacent to surrounding existing land uses would screen views of the project site; for example, Italian cypress trees would be planted along the northern property boundary adjacent to the existing single-family residential neighborhood to serve as a screen.

In addition, the proposed project would be subject to the City's development review process, which ensures that proposed projects meet all guidelines, standards, and objectives related to building design and aesthetics, prior to final approval. Also evaluated in this process is a proposed project design's compatibility with or appropriateness for its surroundings. Development review also includes assessment of the compatibility of the development project with surrounding properties in terms of colors, materials, architectural details, façade lengths, and roof forms. Conformance with this process and review would ensure that the project would be consistent with community standards. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the design standards and requirements applicable to the RVH-NC zoning and the project would have a less-than-significant impact related to scenic quality.

**Level of Significance prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation:** Not Applicable

#### 4.1.5.4 Create New Glare or Light

**Impact AES-4: The proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

The project site is in an urbanized area of the City of Fairfield where light and glare already exist. The site is adjacent to residential units in a single-family residential neighborhood, with associated street lighting, and is also adjacent to an office complex with associated parking lot and lightings as well as a four-story hotel that is currently under construction and will add a parking lot and lighting to the area. Street lighting is also present along Business Center Drive.

Most construction activities on the project site would occur during daylight hours. Any construction-related illumination during evening and nighttime hours would consist of minimum lighting required for safety and security purposes only and would occur only for the duration required. Due to the limited nature of the nighttime construction lighting, illumination resulting from construction activities would not substantially impact sensitive receptors, substantially alter the character of off-site areas surrounding the project site or interfere with the performance of an off-site activity. For these reasons, construction of the proposed project would not create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Lighting and glare impacts associated with construction activities would be less than significant.

Once the project is built and operational, additional lighting and illumination in the area would occur during evening and nighttime hours. Although residents of the new apartments would be expected to use drapes and blinds to cover windows, some light would be visible at night due to spillover from windows in the building. With respect to exterior lighting, downward facing, shielded security lighting would be installed on the facades of the building. Bollard lighting with auto-dimming to 50-percent capacity would be on pedestrian walkways. Car ports would be lit by ceiling mounted canopy lighting which would operate with auto-dimming similar to the bollard lighting. Exterior parking lots and the parking garage would be illuminated by D-series full downward shielded lighting fixtures that would operate with auto-dimming similar to the bollard lighting. Furthermore, the project would be required to comply with **COA 10.1** which would require the project lighting plan to meet city standards that are designed to minimize nighttime glare and light spill.

Glare from vehicular traffic accessing surface parking or the parking garage would be minimized through the use of screened tree plantings around the perimeter of the site. Additionally, glare from vehicles accessing or parked on the upper deck of the parking garage would be minimized with the placement of the parapet and screening provided by tall evergreen trees (i.e., Italian cypress) that would be planted along the northern site boundary adjacent to single-family homes to the north.

Therefore, the proposed project's impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

**Level of Significance prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation:** Not Applicable

#### 4.1.5.5 Cumulative Impacts

**Cumulative Impact C-AES-1: The proposed project, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development in the project area, would not result in significant cumulative impacts related to aesthetics.**

The cumulative geographic context for aesthetics consists of the project site in addition to the related projects identified in **Table 4.A: Cumulative Projects in the Vicinity of the Project Site in Chapter 4.0: Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures** of this EIR within a 1.5-mile radius of the project site. Development of the proposed project would increase the intensity of residential development in the project area; however, with the exception of one project (the Residence Inn Hotel under construction adjacent to the project site), other related projects are dispersed in the 1.5-mile radius around the project site and at considerable distance from the proposed project, such that they would not combine with the project to result in cumulative impacts related to aesthetics.

As discussed above, there are no designated scenic vistas or publicly accessible vantage points near the project site that provide views of scenic vistas that would be altered or obstructed as a result of project construction. Similarly, the four-story hotel would also not obstruct or alter views of scenic vistas. Therefore, there would not be a cumulative effect on scenic vistas.

With regard to a cumulative impact on scenic resources within a State scenic highway, as noted above, the project site is not within the viewshed of a State scenic highway. While the project site is located in the vicinity of a portion of Green Valley Road that has been designated as a scenic roadway by the City, the proposed project would not result in the removal of any riparian vegetation that currently screens the site from Green Valley Road. The apartment building would also be set back from the riparian area by a minimum of 60 feet and landscaping would be installed along the western portion of the development area to further ensure that the proposed project would not degrade the scenic character of Green Valley Road. Further, there are no scenic resources on the project site or the adjacent hotel project site. There would not be a cumulative impact on scenic resources.

With the General Plan Amendment and Rezoning, the project site would be zoned RVH, and as the analysis above shows, the project's design would not conflict with the standards that apply to RVH zoning, and the project would have a less-than-significant impact on visual quality of the project area. Similarly, other approved projects have been reviewed by the City for their consistency with the applicable zoning and approved following the determination that they comply with the City's design standards. Other reasonably foreseeable project will also undergo the same review process. The objective of the City's development review process is to preserve the character of the neighborhood and community. The development review process is intended to assure the proposed development is well designed, in and of itself, and in relation to surrounding properties, and that individual rights are weighed against the needs and requirements of the community. As a result, cumulative development in the project area, including the proposed project, would not result in a significant cumulative impact on visual quality of this part of the City.

Although the Residence Inn Hotel and the proposed project would combine to increase the amount of nighttime light and glare in the immediate vicinity of the project, both projects are subject to the City of Fairfield standard condition of approval related to lighting, which requires a project to submit

a detailed on-site exterior lighting and photometric plan for review and approval by the Community Development Department prior to issuance of building permits. Therefore, the combined increase in light and glare would not be substantial. With the implementation of **COA 10.1** the project would not make a considerable contribution to cumulative light and glare impacts. The impact would be less than significant.

**Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation:** Not Applicable