4.1 AESTHETIC RESOURCES

This section of the EIR identifies and evaluates potential visual resource (aesthetics) impacts resulting from implementation of the project. The analysis focuses on the potential for the project to result in impacts to visual resources as seen from within the Nipomo Community Park (NCP) and from other public vantage points in the area. This section provides a photographic and written inventory of existing site conditions, establishes the baseline visual character, and documents the overall extent and quality of project visibility. The aesthetics analysis specifically identifies the visual resources on-site and any related landforms, vegetative groupings, and other features which are of significance from key viewing areas (KVAs). All critical viewing areas are identified, and photographs provided from each of the KVAs are used as the basis for analyzing the potential effects of the project.

Existing on-site and through-site visual resources are compared with project features as proposed and potential impacts to visual character are identified. The evaluation includes all proposed park structures and site amenities, vegetation removal, roads, grading and earthwork, utilities, lighting, revegetation, landscaping, and other improvements for their complete effect on views. The aesthetics analysis evaluates the cumulative effect that each of the individual project components have on the visual character of the surrounding landscape.

Although the project would be implemented over a 20-year timeframe, the specific recreational facilities and infrastructure included in each of the various construction phases has not been determined at this time. As a result, the aesthetics section analyzes the complete build-out of the project and makes recommendations, as necessary, regarding phasing strategies as they might relate to visual resources.

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

The NCP is located in the community of Nipomo, approximately 1 mile west of U.S. Highway 101 (US 101), and approximately 6 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The regional landscape can be broadly defined as an ancient marine terrace between the coast and the hills to the east. Sand dune complexes along the beach transition to wide mesas inland. Creeks and drainages in the region generally have an east-west orientation on their way to the ocean. The native landscape generally includes coast live oak woodland and coastal sage chaparral with riparian corridors along the drainage ways. Eucalyptus trees were introduced into the area as a forest crop and have since become established over much of the Nipomo Mesa. The large stature of eucalyptus groves creates a dominant visual element throughout the area landscape and along the skyline.

The Nipomo region has a generally rural visual character, with agriculture, open space, and residences at various densities making up much of the land use. The unincorporated community of Nipomo is located mostly along US 101 and serves as the commercial center of the region. In recent years, the Nipomo area has been recognized as one of the faster growing areas of San Luis Obispo County. Several residential subdivisions have been constructed and others are planned for the area. This increased development has had an incremental effect on the rural appearance of the region. West Tefft Street, just east of the project, is considered part of the central business district of Nipomo. Although the region is becoming somewhat more urbanized, the area still maintains a well-vegetated visual character, due in large part to the mature eucalyptus trees and the native oaks scattered throughout the area.

Photograph 4.1-1. Characteristic landscape of Nipomo including skyline trees, open space, and scattered development.

Photograph 4.1-2. The commercial center of Nipomo along West Tefft Street, approximately 0.5 mile east of the NCP.

The 140-acre NCP is surrounded mostly by residential land use, and is bounded by Pomeroy Road to the north, West Tefft Street to the southeast, Tejas Place to the south, and Osage Street to the west (refer to Figure 4.1-1). The eastern portion of the NCP is developed with sports and play fields, including baseball fields with night lighting, group and individual picnic facilities, children's play areas, lighted tennis courts, basketball courts, restrooms, and parking lots. The maintenance yard and buildings are located in the approximate center of the NCP and include a wooden residential-scale building with scattered maintenance accessory structures and vehicles. The northern, eastern, and southern portions of the NCP appear mostly natural and are developed with trails, interpretive gardens, and open space areas. The Mesa Meadows portion of the site consists of a residential development, a loop trail around the

perimeter, and a portion of open space serving as a stormwater detention area and buffer from the adjacent agricultural field.

The topography of the NCP is generally flat along the eastern side, in the area of the existing play fields. The southern perimeter of the site is slightly elevated along the back yards of residences on Tejas Place. Moving north from Tejas Place toward the interior of the site, the landform drops off then rises again forming a natural depression in the landscape. The landform elevates gently from this area to form an east-west oriented ridge along the northern third of the site, rising noticeably above the surroundings. North of the ridge toward Pomeroy Road, the landform flattens out again to match the terrain of the adjacent neighborhoods. The Mesa Meadows area to the west is mostly level.

Vegetation within the more developed eastern side of the NCP includes mature pines and eucalyptus, reaching heights of up to approximately 80 feet, as well as a variety of non-native shrubs. Turf areas cover most of this developed portion of the NCP. The southern portion of the NCP is more open and has predominantly scattered native shrubs with native and non-native grasses. The ridge area along the mid-section of the site is mostly covered with well-established native oak woodland species. The oak trees in this area form a moderately dense visual canopy, are evergreen, and average approximately 15 to 30 feet in height. The forest understory is comprised of a variety of native shrubs, perennials, and related plants. Scattered oaks and native shrubs are located on the flatter portion of the site north of the ridge, appearing less dense than the forested area along the ridge. Two separate native plant gardens are located in the northern corner of the NCP. Each of these gardens is in the developing stage and the associated plantings are not yet major visual elements in the landscape. Vegetation within the Mesa Meadows area of the NCP includes oaks along the perimeter pathway, large windrows of eucalyptus trees along the northwest and southeast corners, and typical residential plantings associated with the houses and neighborhood streets. The majority of the NCP is bounded by some type of fencing, including post and wire, pipe, wood, and chain-link.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

The proposed project is located within the jurisdiction of the County of San Luis Obispo (County). The regulatory setting pertaining to visual resources includes review of the proposed development's consistency with various elements of the County General Plan and Land Use Ordinance (LUO), in addition to the review of findings made in this document per CEQA Guidelines.

4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

The determinations of significance of project impacts are based on applicable policies, regulations, goals, and guidelines defined by CEQA and the County. In addition to comparing the project to relevant policies and standards, the aesthetic resources assessment identified which specific criteria contribute most to the existing quality of each view and if change would occur to that criteria as a result of the project. If a change in visual criteria was identified, this change was analyzed for its potential effect on the existing scenic character. This analysis was combined with the potential number of viewers, their sensitivities, and viewing duration in order to determine the overall level of impacts. Specifically, the project would be considered to have a significant effect on the environment if the effects exceed the significance criteria described below.

4.1.3.1 County of San Luis Obispo

The significance of potential aesthetic resources impacts are based on thresholds identified by the County in accordance with within Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Aesthetic impacts would be considered significant if the proposed project would:

Create an Aesthetically Incompatible Site Open to Public View

Visual contrast may be used as a measure of the potential impact that the project may have on the visual quality of the site. If a strong contrast occurred where project features or activities attract attention and dominate the landscape setting, this would be considered a potentially significant impact on visual character or quality of the site. Project components that are not subordinate to the landscape setting could result in a significant change in the composition of the landscape.

Introduce a Use within a Scenic View Open to Public View

A substantial adverse impact would occur if the proposed project would significantly degrade the scenic landscape as viewed from public roads, or from other public areas. The degree of potential impact on scenic views varies with factors such as viewing distance, duration, viewer sensitivity, and the visual context of the surrounding area (such as urban versus rural). The aesthetics section analyzes the extent that the proposed development would alter the visual quality of the project site and its surroundings. The specific characteristics that define important views, or vistas, are identified, and the project's effect on those characteristics is assessed. If the fundamental quality of the vistas are substantially reduced, significant impacts would result.

Change the Visual Character of an Area

Consideration of potential significance includes analysis of visual character elements such as land use and intensity, visual integrity of the landscape type, and other factors. Project related actions would be considered to have a significant impact on the visual character of the site and surroundings if they altered the area in a way that significantly changed, detracted from, or degraded the visual quality of the site and was inconsistent with community policies regarding visual character. The degree to which that change reflects documented community values and meets viewers' aesthetic expectations is the basis for determining levels of significance. County policies as well as community scoping workshops have identified the preservation of rural character as a goal for the NCP site.

Create Glare or Night Lighting Which May Affect Surrounding Areas

The project would result in a significant impact if it subjected viewers from public roads or other public areas to a substantial amount of point-source lighting visibility at night, or if the collective lumination of the project resulted in a noticeable spill-over effect into the nighttime sky, increasing the ambient light over the region. The placement and heights of lighting, source of illumination, and fixture types combined with hours of operation, viewer locations, adjacent reflective elements, and atmospheric conditions can affect the degree of change to nighttime views.

Impact Unique Geological or Physical Features

County planning documents and regulations do not by themselves set a specific threshold regarding the degradation of a unique geological or physical feature, such as hillside resources. However, review of applicable planning document language indicates that among

other features, obstruction of views of unique or character defining landscape elements can be considered significant.

4.1.3.2 Consistency with County of San Luis Obispo Plans and Policies

County planning documents do not contain specific criteria for determining thresholds of significance regarding aesthetic resources. However, in comparing the project to the above thresholds, substantial consideration was given to the project's consistency with public policies, plans, goals, and regulations concerning scenic vistas, scenic roadways, visual character, and night lighting. The following goals, policies, and guidelines provide a basis for determining levels of potential impact as well as an indication of aesthetic values and sensitivity to visual change.

Parks and Recreation Element

In order to support the goal of an equitable and quality public park system, Policy 2.1 states that the County should "*Provide parks which are aesthetic and consistent with community needs*." Appendix F cites the following mitigation measures identified in the programmatic EIR for the Parks and Recreation Element. A stated intent of these measures is to "*guide future environmental review and to provide consistency as future projects are developed."*

Aesthetics

Building location. Development, including access roads, shall minimize visibility as viewed from any designated scenic road or highway to the greatest extent practical. Alternative locations or standards may be approved where visual effects are reduced to an insignificant level or where visibility is desired.

- **Screening of New Development.** When screening is necessary to protect a sensitive visual resource, the following is appropriate. The site design shall use existing topographic features to the extent feasible. Where use of topography is not feasible, existing vegetation, new landscaping plants, berms and fencing may be used. Where feasible, the use of natural vegetation and/or landscaping shall take precedence over berms or fences. In cases where vegetation is used, the design shall provide that at least 80% of the structure(s), as viewed from public rights-of-way, shall be screened by plants at maturity. New landscaping should use native species to the extent feasible.

- **Ridgetop Development.** New structures shall be located so that they are not silhouetted against the sky as viewed from public roads or the ocean.

- **Significant rock outcrops.** Grading and placement of structures shall occur at least 150 feet from bedrock outcroppings visible from public right of way.

Slope Limitations for Grading and New Structures. No grading or structures shall occur on slopes greater than 20% (except in the case of trails) unless the County finds that there is no feasible alternative or that by allowing such grading or structures, the overall impacts would be better minimized. Grading shall be designed so that landform alterations are minimized to the extent

feasible and blend with the natural topography by following existing contours where feasible.

Building Height and Mass of new buildings as viewed from public rights-of-way shall be minimized to the extent feasible by using low-profile design and other methods. Colors shall not markedly contrast with the surrounding environment but should complement and be similar to colors of surroundings.

Light and Glare. Facilities shall be designed to minimize new light, except for the minimum required for safety. In general, lighting fixtures shall be downcast and hooded. Night lighting for active sports fields shall limit spillover visible at sensitive uses such as residences to the maximum extent practical. Use of glare-producing materials shall be minimized.

West Tefft Corridor Design Plan – Incorporated by reference in the San Luis Obispo County Land Use and Circulation Element – South County Inland Area Plan

Portions of the project would be adjacent to West Tefft Street and are within the boundary of the West Tefft Corridor Design Plan area. The Design Plan "*gives guidance for the desired appearance and scale of streets, buildings and open spaces, which are to be achieved through the public review of new projects and their completion*." The Plan provides design goals and policies regarding site planning, architecture, landscaping, and streetscapes.

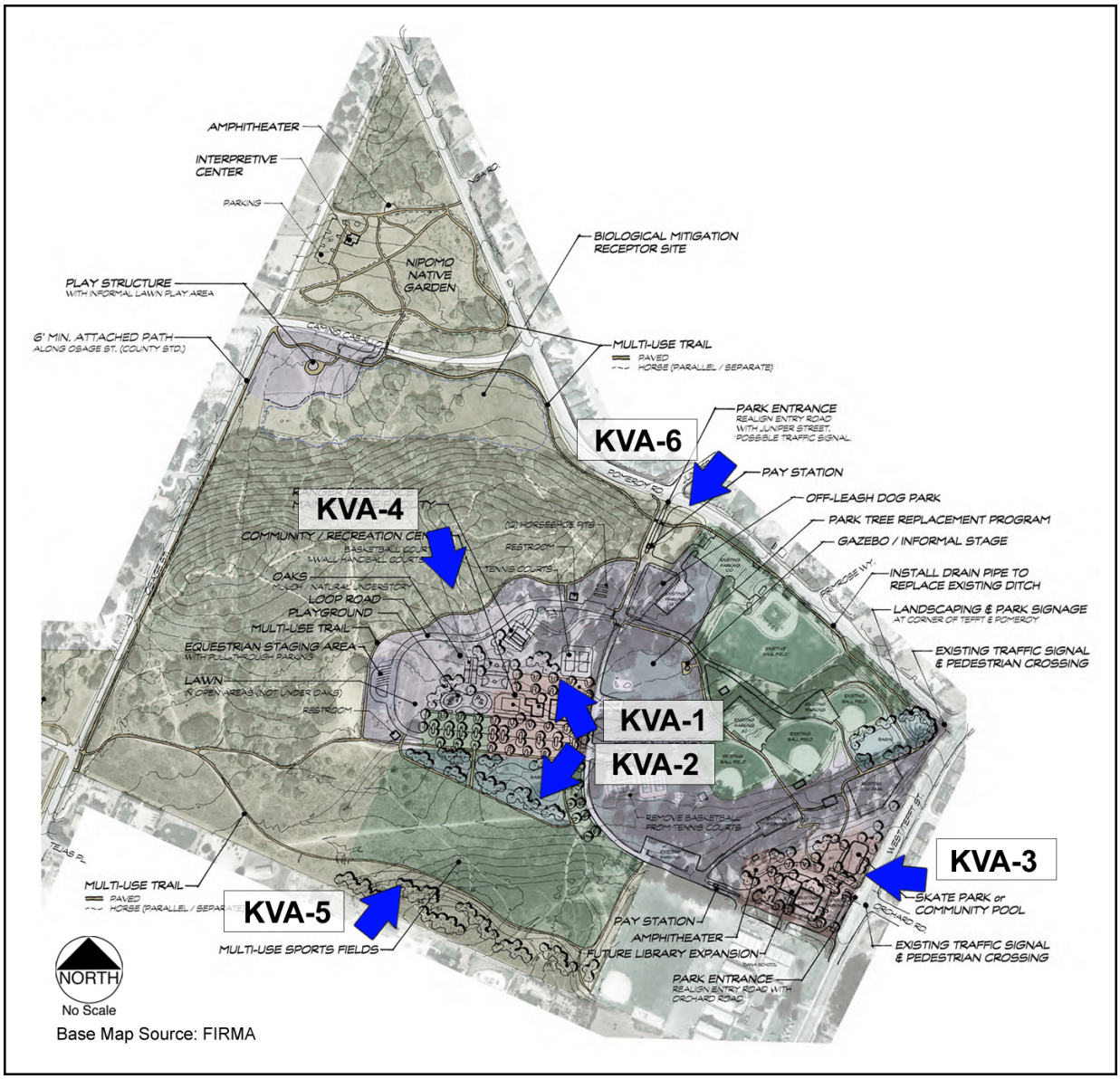
4.1.4 Impact Assessment and Methodology

4.1.4.1 Analysis Methodology

In order to understand the type and extent of physical change expected by project implementation, the sizes and locations of proposed recreational facilities were developed by comparison with the known heights and locations of existing site features as well as placed reference-poles and other markers. These visual scale references were used for estimating structure heights and massing, increasing accuracy of photo-simulations, and for determining overall project visibility. Locations of critical structure elements were identified based on preliminary and conceptual site plan information and architectural elevations (Firma 2010).

The project was viewed from all potential public viewer group locations and local roads in the vicinity of the project. Following this initial investigation, in conjunction with review of the Constraints Analysis (Morro Group 2004), representative viewpoints were determined for further analysis, based on dominance of the site within the view, duration of views, and expected sensitivity of the viewer group. Of those representative viewpoints, KVAs were selected that would best illustrate the visual changes proposed by the project (refer to Figure 4.1-1). Photographs were taken from the KVAs and photo-simulations were prepared illustrating the appearance of the project as proposed by the County (refer to Figures 4.1-18 through 4.1-23 at the end of this section). The completed simulations were used to quantify potential project visibility and to assess related impacts. The project site was then field-reviewed to assist in determining appropriate mitigation measures.

Figure 4.1-1. Locations of Key Viewing Areas and Corresponding Photo-simulations



The analysis considers the existing development as part of the visual baseline. This includes the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the project, the development along West Tefft Street, and other areas of the community that define the overall character of Nipomo. The visual quality of the community has as much to do with the built environment as it does the natural setting. Patterns of development, architecture, scale, massing, and vegetation combine to define how the community is perceived by residents and visitors alike.

In determining levels of impact, this study also compares the proposed project to the specific visual resource goals of the County. When the stated goals demonstrate that a high degree of value is placed on the visual environment, the standards to which the project must be compared are equally high. As a result of the expressed value for the rural park setting, combined with an awareness of visual character as reflected in county planning policy, it is

anticipated that community and viewer sensitivity to visual changes on this prominent site will be moderately high.

Photo-simulations

Photo-simulations were prepared in order to better understand and communicate the potential visual changes associated with the proposed project. Photo-simulation locations were selected to best show critical views, how the project would compare to applicable planning policy, or from viewpoints which would provide a good representation of the overall project character. The photo-simulations show the development at a time period approximately seven to 10 years after construction (see Figures 4.1-18 through 4.1-23).

At this stage in the Master Plan process, preliminary concept images of the community center/gymnasium, and a preliminary grading plan for the multi-use sports field and stormwater basins, have been provided (refer to Figures 2-7 and 4.1-4). Other specific details and architectural styles of proposed project elements have not yet been determined. The particular appearance and architectural style of project elements would be developed based partly on recommendations of this study and with input from the community. The appearance of project elements shown in the photo-simulations are only conceptual representations of the types of recreational features defined in the Master Plan.

Project Visibility

The project is proposed on a highly visible and sensitive site in terms of proximity to the surrounding community. Portions of the NCP can be seen from several public roads and from residential areas on all four sides. The Constraints Analysis (Morro Group 2004) quantified general visibility of the existing park from the surrounding community and from areas within the NCP itself. Building on that report, the following section verifies identified public viewpoints and describes the extent and quality of critical project features.

Views from the Surrounding Community

The NCP is surrounded by development and, as a result, has some degree of visibility from all sides. Views of the NCP from the surrounding area potentially include adjacent and distant neighborhoods, public roadways, and other public facilities such as Dana Elementary School, the Nipomo Community Library, and a local church. Views to the interior of the NCP are limited to some extent by existing vegetation and/or topography. As seen from farther distances, views of the NCP are generally limited to the tops of the existing trees near the sports fields and the oak covered ridge. During evening sporting events, lighting from the existing sports fields can be seen from the surrounding area, although the existing trees filter some of the light and glare.

Views from Surrounding Roadways

Public roadways surround the NCP on all four sides and allow direct visual access to the project site. The greatest degree of visibility to the project from the surrounding community would be from these public roadways. As seen from Osage Street, Camino Caballo, and the western portion of Pomeroy Road, the viewshed is predominantly dense oak woodland on slopes rising up from the perimeter of the property. Project features most visible from these three street segments would include the play structure at the corner of Camino Caballo and Osage Streets, the interpretive center and amphitheater associated with the Nipomo Native Garden, and the perimeter path and multi-use trails.

Photograph 4.1-3. An existing view of the NCP from westbound Pomeroy Road.

The eastern portion of Pomeroy Road fronting the NCP is adjacent to the northern park entrance. Existing views along this section of Pomeroy Road include the developed sports field section of the NCP. The most visible proposed element as seen from this area would be the realigned park road entrance. Visible elements associated with the proposed entry would include a pay station, signage, a traffic signal, grading, and tree removal. The perimeter multi-use trail would also be seen from this location.

From the intersection of Pomeroy Road and West Tefft Street, existing views to the developed portion of the NCP are available, although heading south on West Tefft Street from this point, views to the interior of the site are somewhat blocked by mature landscaping. Further south along West Tefft Street, visual access to the site is generally blocked by the Nipomo Community Library and Dana Elementary School. The eastern entrance road to the NCP is located along this section of West Tefft Street. As viewed from roadways surrounding the NCP, the section of West Tefft Street between Pomeroy Road and Dana Elementary School would see the greatest amount of visual change. The project proposes a community pool or a skate park in this area, along with an expansion of the existing library, an amphitheater, and a realignment of the NCP entrance.

Tejas Place parallels the southern perimeter of the NCP. Existing residences along the north side of this street block the majority of views to the NCP from this public roadway. The existing landform knoll along the southern side of the NCP also precludes views to much of the interior of the NCP as seen from Tejas Place. The existing houses and landform would also block most of the view to the proposed project elements in the center of the NCP such as the community center, parking lots, basketball courts, and playground. Much of the proposed multi-use sports fields would also generally not be seen from this location. The most noticeable project features as seen from Tejas Place would be the proposed lighting for the multi-use sports fields.

Views from Neighborhoods Southeast of the NCP in the Vicinity of West Tefft Street and Orchard Avenue

These residential areas are at a higher viewing elevation, which allows potentially greater visibility of the NCP site. From these areas, however, existing views to the interior of the NCP are largely screened by the masses of tall trees near the eastern perimeter of the NCP. From areas closest to West Tefft Street the proposed community pool or skate park, library expansion, amphitheater, and realigned park entrance would be potentially visible.

From Dana Elementary School, the existing developed portion of the NCP is visible to the north. As with most viewing locations surrounding the NCP, much of the view from the school is somewhat blocked by landform and existing vegetation. The project proposes several changes that would be visible from the school, including the expansion of the existing library, the relocation of the entry road, a pay station, and further to the north a community pool or a skate park. The multi-use sports fields proposed for the southern portion of the NCP would be mostly blocked from view as seen from Dana Elementary School, although the sport field lighting would be seen during nighttime operation.

Photograph 4.1-4. The existing view from near Orchard Avenue toward the NCP.

Views from the Residential Area to the South near Tejas Place

The homes adjacent to the NCP along the north side of Tejas Place have views of the NCP, especially the oak covered ridge and various masses of skyline trees. These homes also substantially restrict views toward the NCP from the remainder of the neighborhood. In addition, the existing landform knoll along the southern side of the NCP precludes views to the interior of the NCP as seen from many of the homes in this neighborhood, including the ones on the north side of Tejas Road.

Intervening houses and landform would also block much of the view to the proposed project elements in the center of the NCP such as the community center, parking lots, basketball courts, and playground. The proposed multi-use sports fields would also generally not be seen from this location. The most noticeable project features as seen from the Tejas Place neighborhood would be the proposed lighting for the multi-use sports fields. Perimeter trail

improvements along the south side of the NCP would also be seen from portions of this neighborhood.

Photograph 4.1-5. The existing view from Tejas Place toward the north. A glimpse of the oak-covered park ridge can be seen between the residences in the distance.

Views from the Residential Neighborhoods West of Osage Street

Existing views of the NCP from the residential neighborhoods west of Osage Street are primarily of the wooded slopes and the native garden areas near Camino Caballo. In the vicinity of the Mesa Meadows neighborhood, limited views are available to the interior of the park, along the southern more open portion of the site. As seen from the residential neighborhoods west of Osage Street, the most noticeable project elements would be the native garden, the interpretive center, the play structure near Camino Caballo, and the perimeter trail. From some areas of the neighborhood along the southern portion of Osage Street, the proposed lighting for the multi-use sports fields would be seen.

Photograph 4.1-6. The existing view from Osage Street looking east toward the park.

Views from the Neighborhoods North of Pomeroy Road

The neighborhoods north of Pomeroy Road have existing views of the NCP that mostly consist of either the wooded ridgeline along the western section or the tops of the trees at the developed area to the east. From this residential area the existing sports field lights can be seen above or through the trees. As with most of the neighborhoods surrounding the park, unless a residence is directly across a street from the park, the existing views of the NCP are substantially blocked by structures and/or landscaping.

From the neighborhoods north of Pomeroy Road the most noticeable new project elements would be the realigned park entry road, the native garden and interpretive center, and the perimeter trail. Most of the proposed recreational elements closer to the center and southern portions of the NCP would not be easily seen from this neighborhood because of distance, topography, and/or vegetation.

Photograph 4.1-7. The existing view from Pomeroy Road looking southwest toward the park.

Views from Within the NCP

From inside much of the park, existing close- and mid-range views are generally unobstructed. The open character of the existing sports fields allows visibility across much of the developed eastern area of the park. The undeveloped area along the southern portion of the site also has generally clear visibility of the NCP surroundings. The areas of the NCP near the native and interpretive gardens have views of the adjacent parkland which are somewhat screened by trees and shrubs in the vicinity. From the oak-covered ridge area, dense vegetation limits most views to other parts of the park. Along the perimeter of the woodland, however, the generally elevated position provides several good viewing opportunities to other parts of the park.

Longer-range views within the NCP are often screened by vegetation, topography, or existing site amenities. The oak-covered ridge near the northern section of the NCP substantially limits distant views in that direction. As a result, certain sub-areas of the existing park tend to be somewhat visually isolated from one another. Four such areas include: the developed eastern

portion, less developed southern and western portions, interior oak ridge, and Nipomo Native Garden in the northern triangle.

The Eastern, More Developed Area of the NCP

The most intensely developed area of the NCP is the eastern portion. Existing views in this area of the NCP include the lighted baseball fields, tennis/basketball courts, internal paved roadways, parking lots, and picnic areas. The eastern end of the NCP also contains the existing library, pre-school, and park entrance off West Tefft Street.

Photograph 4.1-8. Existing views of some of the more developed areas within the park.

Photograph 4.1-9. Existing views of some of the more developed areas within the park.

The project proposes few substantial visual changes to the existing recreational features in the northeastern portion of the park. However new park features visible in the southeastern area would include the community pool or skate park, the expanded library, a realigned entrance road, and an amphitheater. Along Pomeroy Road, a realigned park entrance, an off-leash dog park, a new gazebo, and an oak tree restoration area would be seen.

Photograph 4.1-10. View of the existing ball field and sports lighting.

The Less Developed Area throughout the Western and Southern Portions of the NCP

The existing park road generally separates this area from the more intensely developed section to the east. The western and southern sections of the NCP are the most open, and current recreation uses are predominantly the trails along the southern side. Oak trees are scattered throughout some of this area. Existing caretaker's and maintenance facilities are some of the few structures found here.

Photograph 4.1-11. The existing view of the less developed western, southern, and central portions of the park.

The majority of the visible new development proposed by the project would occur in this central and southern portion of the park. The proposed community center, gymnasium, pool, tennis courts, parking lots, equestrian staging area, playground, restrooms, and parking would be visible in the middle area, and the proposed multi-use sports fields would be terraced into the slope along the southern side. A new loop road would serve these proposed recreation facilities.

The Interior of the Oak-Covered Ridge Area of the NCP

The surrounding oak trees and tall scrub vegetation are visual resources as seen from within the oak-covered ridge. This existing vegetation also screens much of the views to the rest of the park; however, because of the elevated position of the ridge, quality views of the surrounding park as well as the distant hills can be seen through gaps in the vegetation.

Photograph 4.1-12. The existing view from the oak-covered ridge toward the north. The surrounding hills north of Nipomo are visible in the distance.

From certain locations on the ridge, the proposed recreational development would be visible to the south. Through gaps in vegetation, the community center, gymnasium, pool, tennis courts, equestrian staging area, equestrian staging, parking lots, playground, restrooms, and parking would be visible in the middle area, and the proposed multi-use sports fields would be seen further to the south.

The Community Gardens Area of the NCP North of the Oak-Covered Ridge

Little development exists in the existing community gardens area north of Camino Caballo. Trails and passive recreation are the main uses of the area. The project would introduce new visual elements in this area, such as a new interpretative center building and an amphitheater. Just south of Camino Caballo, a proposed play structure and lawn area would be seen. The new trail would also be visible around the perimeter of the park.

Photograph 4.1-13. The existing view looking southeast from Osage Street. The Nipomo Native Garden is visible in the foreground and the oak-covered ridge can be seen in the background.

4.1.5 Project-specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The project site is considered sensitive in terms of community aesthetic character. The NCP is surrounded on all sides by neighborhoods and/or public roadways, including Pomeroy Road, West Tefft Street, Osage Street, Tejas Place, and Camino Caballo. In addition, much of the public viewing exposure to the NCP is from within the boundaries of the park itself. Because of its location on West Tefft Street, which serves as a main east-west thoroughfare for the area, and its proximity to residential neighborhoods on all sides, the NCP serves an important role in defining the visual identity of Nipomo.

The analysis considers the existing development as part of the visual baseline. This includes the existing uses of the park, neighborhoods and natural areas surrounding the project, as well as other areas of the community that define the overall character of Nipomo. The visual quality of the community has as much to do with the built environment as with the natural setting. Patterns of development, architecture, scale, massing, and vegetation combine to define how the community is perceived by the public, including residents and visitors.

In determining levels of impact, this study also compares the project to the specific visual resource goals of the County. As a result of the valued small-town rural setting, combined with an awareness of scenic quality as reflected in County planning policy, it is anticipated that community and viewer sensitivity to visual changes on this prominent park site will be moderately high.

Specific architectural styles of structural project elements have not yet been determined at this stage in the Master Plan process. The specific appearance and architectural styles of project features would be developed based partly on recommendations of this study and input from the community. As a result the appearance of the specific project elements shown in the photo-simulations are reasonable representations of the types of recreational features defined in the Master Plan.

For the purpose of this analysis, assumptions are made regarding the physical characteristics of the proposed project features. Preliminary concepts of the community center and the multi-use sports fields have been designed and are included in the study (refer to Figures 2-7 and 4.1-4). All other proposed features are analyzed considering typical examples of those elements as they would likely be implemented in this setting. In addition, since the specific appearance of many of the project features would be based on subsequent decisions, the aesthetics section uses a "reasonable worst-case scenario" to assess potential impacts regarding the appearance of the project.

4.1.5.1 Effect on Scenic View

An important public scenic view within the NCP is the oak-covered ridge extending through the northern part of the park, which contributes the rural character of the undeveloped areas within NCP. The ridge can be seen from many viewpoints within the park, as well as from the surrounding neighborhoods, which helps establish a natural scenic backdrop for much of the area. As seen from most of the surrounding community, the project would have little or no effect on views of the ridge from surrounding streets or neighborhoods. Trail improvements on the ridge itself would cause minimal disturbance, and would not be easily visible from the surrounding area due to trail width and surrounding vegetation. The quality of views to the ridge would remain intact and the ridge would continue to provide a visual backdrop for the community.

As seen from certain areas near the center of the park, views to the ridge would be partially blocked. The proposed community center, gymnasium, and other structures in this area would partially screen views to the north and of the ridge. Proposed landscaping, such as parking lot trees, would also filter surrounding views. Because of the proximity of the community center and gymnasium buildings to the existing park road, views to the oak-covered ridge to the northwest would be substantially blocked, resulting in an adverse effect on the scenic vista. Although other proposed elements, such as parking lot trees, would partially filter views, the community center and gymnasium buildings would cause the greatest degree of view blockage.

The hills north and east of Nipomo are also important vistas. Views of these distant hills are limited, but can be seen from certain locations within the NCP and the surrounding area. From viewpoints within the NCP itself, the project would have little to no effect on views to the distant hills. Most of the existing viewpoints from within the NCP to the surrounding hills are located at the upper elevations of the oak-covered ridge and the trails along the southern perimeter of the park. The largest proposed elements, the community center and gymnasium, would be below these ridgetop viewpoints and would be oriented below the viewshed of the distant hills.

The elevated viewing position of the Tejas Place neighborhood provides somewhat increased views to the north and east, although much of these public views are screened by existing houses and landscaping. The new light poles proposed for the multi-use sports fields would become part of the view to the north and northeast, and from certain locations could be visible directly in front of the distant hills. Where visible, the institutional appearance of the poles and light arrays would somewhat degrade the quality of the views to the hills. Although visible, the poles and lights would occupy a very small percentage of the overall viewshed. As a result, the light poles would have only a minor effect on views to the distant hills as seen from the surrounding neighborhoods.

AES Impact 1 **The location and size of the community center and gymnasium would block views of the oak-covered ridge as seen from the main existing park road, resulting in a direct long-term impact to the scenic vista within the park.**

AES/mm-1 *Prior to approval of the final design and development plan, site plans and architectural plans shall be submitted showing the community center and gymnasium a minimum distance of 150 feet from the existing park road.*

Residual Impact

Implementation of this measure would require some adjustment to the proposed parking area in the vicinity of these structures to maintain close parking and access to these facilities, incorporate mitigation related to public safety and crime prevention, and the potential addition of a transit stop; however, the proposed development footprint would remain the same. While views within the park would be modified by the proposed development, implementation of this mitigation measure would require that proposed structures are located to maintain scenic views of the oak-covered ridge, as seen from the main park road. Residual impacts would be *less than significant* (Class II).

4.1.5.2 Effect on Visual Character and Quality, Visual Compatibility

the NCP occupies one of the more visible locations in the community. The proximity to primary roadways and surrounding neighborhoods greatly increases the potential number of viewers of the proposed project improvements. Because of this large number of viewers and highly visible location, the appearance of the project would have an influence on the visual character of the community. Future development of the site has the potential to substantially alter the existing visual character. The potential effects the project may have on the visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings are discussed below according to the primary project features proposed.

As mentioned previously, *preliminary concept images* of the community center/gymnasium, and a preliminary grading plan for the multi-use sports field and stormwater basins have been provided (refer to Figure 2-7 and 4.1-4). Other specific details and architectural styles regarding the proposed project elements have not yet been determined. The images shown below are provided only as examples of the categories of recreational elements proposed by the project. *The images are shown to give a sense of the potential visual character of the various recreational facilities, and are not intended to convey a specific design or type.*

<u>Community Center/Gymnasium</u>

A 36,000-square foot community center/gymnasium is proposed near the center of the park. The conceptual image of the facility shows a 35-foot tall structure occupying a space approximately 250 feet long by 230 feet wide (refer to Figure 2-7). No specific architectural style has been identified at this time, although the conceptual image illustrates one building with a parapet hipped-roof, and one building with a shallow barrel vaulted roof. Exterior materials and colors are not specifically defined.

The community center/gymnasium would not be visible from locations outside of the NCP itself. However, because of its size, the proposed community center/gymnasium would be the dominant visual element at the park's core and would greatly define the visual character within the park.

The preliminary design of the community center/gymnasium shows generally monolithic structures with little exterior articulation, which would increase the perceived scale of the buildings. If urban or modern-style architecture were used, these dominant buildings would likely not be consistent with the rural aesthetic goals of the community. Exterior details, materials, and color schemes could either support or detract from the desired visual character of the park. As a result, the proposed community center/ gymnasium would have the potential to result in substantial adverse impacts to the visual character of the park.

Community Swimming Pool

An approximately 8,400-square foot swimming pool and deck would be located in the vicinity of the community center/gymnasium. The pool would likely include associated site features such as benches and/or chairs, safety devices, and signage. Required security fencing may be one of the more noticeable elements of the pool facility. The type of fencing selected would greatly affect the visual character of the site. Galvanized chain-link fencing, for example, may introduce an urban, industrial look compared to a more aesthetically treated material. The community pool would have an adverse effect on the visual character if it created an intensely urban appearance. Institutional looking support buildings and structures, extensive use of galvanized chain-link fencing, and minimal use of landscaping would result in a utilitarian appearance, inconsistent with the stated rural character goals for the park.

Figure 4.1-2. Examples of Typical Community Pools

Skate Park

The project includes a 10,000-square foot skate park near West Tefft Street. Skate parks can vary greatly in appearance, layout, and form. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the skate park would be primarily a hard surface such as concrete, with ramps, rails, bowls, and other features. Associated amenities may include benches and viewing areas. Perimeter security fencing would also likely be required. The skate park on West Tefft Street would have an adverse effect on the visual character if it created an intensely urban appearance. Institutional looking support buildings and structures, extensive use of galvanized chain-link fencing, and minimal use of landscaping would result in a utilitarian appearance, inconsistent with the stated rural character goals for the park.

Figure 4.1-3. Examples Showing the General Visual Character of Skate Parks

Multi-use Sports Fields

The Master Plan includes an additional 10 acres of lighted multi-use sports fields, located toward the southern-central portion of the park. The sports fields themselves would be on a single terrace level, with an irrigated turf surface. Preliminary designs indicate that substantial landform alteration would occur in order to accommodate these level playing fields on the existing sloping terrain (refer to Figure 4.1-4). From many viewpoints the multi-use sports fields would be most noticeable by their associated cut and fill slopes, which would be as much as 25 feet in height.

The generally sandy soil of the area would require somewhat shallow slope-angles, which would reduce the engineered appearance of the earthwork. The preliminary plan also shows contour-type grading which would help the slopes look like natural landforms. In spite of these factors, without appropriate vegetative erosion control measures, the constructed slopes may have increased noticeability due to scarring and exposed earth, which would affect the visual character of the southern section of the park.

A specific lighting plan has not been developed for the sports fields at this time. However, it is presumed that several light poles would be required around the perimeter of the sports fields in order to provide adequate and safe field illumination. Although the final lighting design would depend on numerous factors specific to the site, for comparison purposes it can be noted that similar recreation facilities can be seen with as many as eight to 10 poles with heights of 60 feet or more. The visibility of these light poles would unavoidably contribute to the site's visual alteration from open space to an active recreational facility, both during the day and nighttime hours.

Expanded Community Library Building

The existing community library building located on West Tefft Street is approximately 7,100 square feet in size. The Master Plan proposes to expand the library by adding another 4,000 square feet of space. The existing library building is single-story, with a stucco and shingle exterior. The roof form is hipped with gable-type dormer windows. It is expected that the expanded portion of the library would match the architecture of the existing library. If not designed to be compatible with the existing building, the library facility could lack visual coherence and reduce the visual quality of the area.

Figure 4.1-4. Conceptual Grading Plan for the Multi-Use Sports Fields and Stormwater Basins

Photograph 4.1-14. Existing view of the Nipomo Community Library from West Tefft Street.

Expanded Restrooms/Maintenance Buildings

New and/or expanded restrooms and maintenance buildings would be included in the park. The existing restrooms and maintenance buildings are rectangular structures with wood or stucco siding and concrete block. The roofs are gable style with shingles. The design of the new restrooms and maintenance structures would be important contributors to the visual character of the park. Overly institutional looking restrooms and maintenance buildings would result in a utilitarian appearance, inconsistent with the stated rural character goals for the park.

Figure 4.1-5. Examples of Typical Community Park Restrooms

Increased Parking

Because of the increased intensity of park usage, the amount of required vehicle parking area would more than double. The largest new parking lots would be near the middle portion of the park, between the proposed community center and the multi-use sports fields. The majority of the parking areas would be paved, with trees scattered throughout the lots. The most visible aspect of the parking lots would likely be the expanses of paved area and the vehicles

themselves, both parked and in motion. Additional features would likely include public safety lighting. By their nature, paved parking lots filled with vehicles can be associated with urban or suburban visual environments.

Figure 4.1-6. Examples Showing the Visual Character of Typical Parking Lots

Additional Roads

Internal roadways would connect the new park elements to each other and to the existing facilities. The new roads would be paved and are not expected to include curbs or gutters unless required for accessibility or drainage management. The new access roads would connect to the existing internal road system and would likely be similar in width. New entry road connections are proposed at Pomeroy Road and at West Tefft Street. The Master Plan layout shows the entry roads having median islands and pay stations. Paved roadways and vehicles serving the proposed recreational elements near the middle and western portions of the NCP would contribute to the reduction in rural character, in currently less-developed areas.

Figure 4.1-7. Examples of Different Types of Park Roads

New Amphitheater / Gazebo

A new amphitheater is proposed near the Nipomo Native Garden area, and a new gazebo/stage would be located south of the existing lighted baseball field. The appearance of these features could vary greatly and no specific designs have been identified. Each of these features could include a vertical structure associated with a stage as well as an area for a

potential audience. The design of any new gazebo and amphitheater structures would be important contributors to the visual character of the park. Inappropriate forms, materials, and colors would be inconsistent with the stated rural character goals for the park.

Figure 4.1-8. Examples of the Typical Appearance of Park Amphitheaters

Interpretive Center

The Master Plan includes a proposed interpretive center with parking near the Nipomo Native Garden area. The appearance of the interpretive center has not been defined and interpretive centers designs often respond to specific site conditions and associated resources. As with the other proposed buildings, the ultimate design of the interpretive center would have a direct influence on the visual character of the park. The interpretive center would also be seen from Osage Road and possibly from Camino Caballo. Urban or modern style architecture would likely not be consistent with the rural aesthetic goals of the community. Exterior details, materials, and color schemes could either support or detract from the desired visual character of the park. As a result, the proposed interpretive center would have the potential to result in substantial adverse impacts to the visual character of the park.

Figure 4.1-9. Examples of Two Different Styles of Interpretive Centers

Basketball and Handball Courts

The project includes 10,000 square feet of new basketball courts and 4,000 square feet of handball courts. These recreational features would be characterized to a great extent by their hard court playing surfaces. Vertical elements associated with the basketball courts would be the poles and backboards, and the handball courts would include vertical concrete court-walls on one, three, or four sides. Security needs may require perimeter fencing for the basketball and handball courts. The type of fencing selected would greatly affect the visual character of the site. Galvanized chain-link fencing for example may introduce an urban, industrial look compared to a more aesthetically treated fencing material.

Figure 4.1-10. Examples of a Typical Basketball Court (Left) and Handball Court (Right)

Additional Playgrounds

Eight thousand square feet of new playground area would be added to the park. Playgrounds can have a wide variety of appearances. It is assumed that the playgrounds would include one or more play structures, a ground plane of rubberized surface, wood chips, or turf, and benches or other seating. One of the most noticeable characteristics of the playground would be the colors of the new structures. New playground equipment is seen in hues ranging from earth tones to bright primary colors.

Figure 4.1-11. Examples of Different Looks of Playground Equipment

Expanded Dog Parks

An additional 19,000 square feet of off-leash dog park is proposed near the northern entry of the park. Typically, dog parks are characterized by perimeter and cross-fencing, seating, and sometimes an information kiosk. The type of fencing used would affect the visual character of the site.

Figure 4.1-12. Examples of Different Styles of Dog Parks

Horseshoe Pits

New horseshoe pits would be included with implementation of the Master Plan. Because of their relatively small size and general lack of vertical elements, horseshoe pits are often not easily noticeable in the landscape. If safety fencing is required, the fencing may be the most easily visible aspect of the horseshoe pit facility. As with the other fencing proposed throughout the project, the style and material could have an influence on the visual setting.

Figure 4.1-13. Examples Showing the General Visual Character of Horseshoe Pits

Expanded Tennis Courts

Two new tennis courts would be located in the vicinity of the proposed community center. The tennis courts would likely include perimeter fencing, which could be one of its more noticeable elements. Other features associated with the tennis courts may include benches, signage, and an informational kiosk. The type of fencing selected would greatly affect the visual character of the site. Untreated galvanized chain-link fencing may introduce an urban, industrial look compared to a more aesthetically treated material.

Figure 4.1-14. Examples of Two Types of Tennis Courts

Additional Trails/ Walkways

A substantial amount of new trails and walkways are proposed. A multi-use trail would generally parallel Pomeroy Road along the northern side of the park, and along the southern perimeter south of the proposed sports fields. Some of these trails would be partly paved, with adjacent unpaved horse trails. An attached sidewalk-type path would be constructed along Osage Street, at the western edge of the park. The most noticeable aspects of the trails and walkways may be the paved surfaces themselves and any required grading and/or vegetation removal. If grading is required in order to construct the trails and walkways, without appropriate vegetative erosion control measures, the constructed slopes may have increased noticeability due to scarring and exposed earth, which would affect the visual character of the vicinity.

Figure 4.1-15. Examples of Typical Park Trails
The trail shown on the right includes a paved and non-paved section.

Additional Open Play Area

In addition to the new sports fields, approximately 4 acres of irrigated turf would be installed for open play area. This turf area would be most noticeable by its brighter green lawn, possibly contrasting with the seasonally golden adjacent natural slopes. The minimal landform alterations associated with the open play areas would help these areas retain a more natural look.

Photograph 4.1-15. View of the existing open play area within the park.

Stormwater Basins

Between the central parking area and the multi-use sports fields to the south, 108,000 square feet of stormwater basins are proposed. The preliminary grading plans show contour-graded basins. If maintenance or engineering needs require the basins to be rectilinear and look like utilitarian facilities, they could affect the natural appearance of the park. Associated security fencing, if required could also influence the visual character of the setting.

Figure 4.1-16. Examples of Different Types of Stormwater Basins

Equestrian Staging Area

An equestrian staging area is proposed along the western side of the community center area. Although no specific design details are identified at this time, the equestrian area would likely be most recognizable by the pull-through parking area and the potential numbers of horse trailers and associated vehicles.

Figure 4.1-17. Examples of the Typical Visual Character of Equestrian Staging Areas

AES Impact 2 **Without definitive design concepts for the elements proposed in the Master Plan, the potential exists for the buildings, support structures, fencing, signage, landscaping, site amenities and miscellaneous features to markedly contrast with the surrounding environment due to inappropriate scale, form, location, materials, colors, and other design factors, resulting in a direct long-term impact to the visual character of the site and surroundings.**

AES/mm-2 *Prior to implementation of the Master Plan, comprehensive design guidelines shall be developed for the NCP. The design guidelines shall be developed in conjunction with community input and shall support the stated goals that park amenities be aesthetically consistent with the rural regional character of the area. For park improvements located along West Tefft Street, the NCP design guidelines shall be compatible with the West Tefft Corridor Design Plan. The design guidelines shall specifically describe architectural styles and forms, types, layouts, materials, colors, and other relevant details relating to all proposed park elements. The design guidelines shall be based in part on the following goals:*

a. The guidelines shall establish a consistent design theme for the NCP, addressing the proposed elements as well as existing features which may need replaced or refurbished in the future.

b. In keeping with the rural aesthetic goals of the community, the design guidelines shall strive for an honest use of materials rather than faux or artificial applications.

c. Site design and layout of structures and recreational elements shall be designed to accommodate substantial landscaping for the purpose of reducing the visual dominance of the built elements and blending with the natural setting.

d. *Site grading shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible. The location, size, and orientation of structures, recreational features, parking areas, paths, and walkways shall be laid-out to minimize the need for earthwork.*

e. *Buildings and other structures shall use stepped foundations and/or partially buried walls where possible to minimize the need for grading.*

f. *All visible earthwork shall utilize contour grading and slope rounding to achieve a natural appearance.*

g. *The use of visible retaining walls shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible. Where retaining walls are required, their visibility shall be reduced through the use of materials, color, and planting. Retaining walls may be appropriate in certain circumstances in order to protect existing mature trees.*

h. *Paved areas, including parking lots, recreation surfaces, and pedestrian areas shall strive for surface materials and colorings which blend with the natural ground plane to the greatest extent practical considering their intended function.*

i. *The visual prominence of all buildings and structures shall be lessened through the use of architectural form, style, external materials, colors and other appropriate measures.*

j. *All signage shall have a consistent graphic design theme. Thematic variations would be appropriate considering the desired hierarchy of information to be conveyed, such as informational, directional, safety, etc.*

k. *Lighting of signs shall be kept to the minimum required by safety and functional necessity. If lighting of signs is required, the signs shall not be internally illuminated.*

l. *Visibility of proposed and existing wireless communication facilities and equipment shall be reduced by coloring all visible components to blend with the surroundings and by screen planting.*

m. *All proposed overhead utilities shall be placed underground to the greatest extent feasible. Where undergrounding is not feasible, their noticeability shall be minimized by placement in low visibility areas as much as possible. Required overhead utility poles shall be wood or wood-colored metal.*

n. *Existing overhead utilities shall be placed underground as future funding allows. A systematic strategy shall be developed for future utility undergrounding based on aesthetic priorities,*

opportunities created due to other construction work, maintenance benefits, and funding availability.

o. *Lighting within the NCP shall be based on the lowest level required by safety and functional needs. Light poles and fixtures shall be consistent with the park's established design theme. Where appropriate, low-height bollard style lighting should be used. Motion detectors should be utilized instead of continuous illumination for security lighting where appropriate and feasible.*

p. *All site amenities and furnishings such as benches, tables, shade structures, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, bollards and road delineators shall be consistent with the park's established design theme.*

q. *Noticeability of required security fencing as well as general functional-area fencing shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible through placement and the use of materials, color, and screen planting as appropriate. Standard un-coated galvanized chain-link fencing shall not be used. Razor-wire and barbed-wire shall not be used. Fencing and railing related to accessibility and safety shall adhere to Americans with Disabilities Act and other legally required ordinances.*

r. *Landscaping and other planting shall be used generously throughout the NCP to reduce overall visibility and noticeability of structures, parking lots and parked vehicles, paved surfaces, and to visually blend the built components of the NCP with the natural setting.*

s. *Landscaping shall primarily use native plant material.*

t. *Oak tree planting areas as described in the Master Plan shall be planted as part of the first phase of new park improvements to the greatest extent possible.*

Residual Impacts

With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts due to the project's contrast with the surrounding environment due to visual dominance of built structures related to inappropriate scale, form, location, materials, colors, and other design factors would be considered *less than significant* (Class II).

AES Impact 3 **The monolithic form, architectural style, exterior materials, and colors of the community center and gymnasium would be visually imposing on the site and inconsistent with the rural character goals of the community, resulting in a direct long-term impact to the visual character of the site and surroundings.**

AES/mm-3 *Prior to approval of the final design and development plan for the community center and gymnasium, architectural plans of the community center and gymnasium shall be submitted showing the following:*

a. All facades should emphasize three-dimensional articulation to provide vertical, horizontal, and depth relief.

b. The architectural style shall be consistent with the Design Guidelines described in mitigation measure AES/mm-2.

c. Roofs should be varied and lessen the buildings' apparent height and mass.

d. Roof materials and colors shall complement the building's architectural style.

e. Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened to not be visible from public areas at the ground level and areas at higher elevations.

f. Building colors and materials shall be visually compatible with the area.

AES/mm-4 *Prior to approval of the final design and development plan for the community center and gymnasium, landscape plans shall be submitted for review and approval. The plan shall be developed and signed by a licensed landscape architect and shall include the following:*

a. Screen planting along the north, south and east sides of the community center and gymnasium buildings.

b. Screen planting shall reduce the visual scale of the buildings and visually blend the buildings with the natural setting.

c. Planting shall visually screen a minimum of 50% of the community center and gymnasium buildings within seven years after construction.

Residual Impacts

With implementation of identified mitigation measures impacts to the visual character of the site and surroundings caused by the appearance and visibility of the community center and gymnasium buildings would be considered *less than significant* (Class II).

AES Impact 4 **Mature trees are primary contributors to the view quality and character of the park. Removal of mature trees in order to construct the elements of the Master Plan would have the potential to be inconsistent with the rural character goals of the community, resulting in a direct long-term impact to the visual character of the site and surroundings.**

AES/mm-5 *Mature trees shall be saved to the greatest extent possible. Tree protection measures shall be implemented which include at a minimum the following:*

a. All mature trees in the vicinity of development shall be identified on preliminary site plans and final design plans.

b. A tree preservation plan shall be prepared to be used as guidance throughout the life of the project.

c. Project elements shall be sited to avoid existing trees to the greatest extent feasible.

d. Earthwork shall be minimized in the vicinity of existing trees to the greatest extent feasible.

e. Tree wells and slope-warping shall be used where appropriate to avoid impacts to root systems.

Residual Impacts

With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts to the visual character of the site and surroundings caused by the loss of mature trees would be considered *less than significant* (Class II).

4.1.5.3 Effects of Light and Glare

The multi-use sports fields would include field lighting, generally between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. For the purposes of analysis, it is assumed that the lighting would be elevated on poles, and that the design would be subject to public safety standards for recreational uses. At night, the sports field lighting could be the most noticeable element of the project for the surrounding community. The neighborhood south of the NCP along Tejas Place would have the greatest visibility of the sports field lighting.

Lighting would also likely be required elsewhere as part of the NCP improvements. Safety regulations and guidelines require lighting for parking areas, pedestrian uses, and buildings. Security lighting may be necessary at the community pool, skate park, tennis and basketball courts, and other areas. The proposed lighting has the potential for glare caused by direct visibility of the light sources, light spill-over into areas other than the intended sports field area, and for general atmospheric light pollution. Inappropriate lighting design, including light placement and height, luminaire type, housing, reflectors, lenses and shields could drastically affect the amount of impact within the NCP and to the surrounding community.

AES Impact 5 **Nighttime visibility of sports field lighting glare and light trespass would result in a direct long-term impact to the nighttime views in the area.**

AES/mm-6 *Prior to approval of the final design and development plan for the multi-use sports field lighting, a comprehensive multi-use sports field lighting plan shall be submitted for review and approval. The multi-use sports field lighting plan shall be based on a photometric study prepared by a qualified engineer who is an active member of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. The multi-use sports field lighting plan shall be prepared*

using guidance and best practices endorsed by the International Dark Sky Association. The multi-use sports field lighting plan shall include the following in conjunction with other measures as determined by the illumination engineer:

a. The photometric study shall investigate different configurations of pole heights, pole spacing, and other variables which would result in the least amount of light visibility for the neighborhood south of the park.

b. The point source of all sports field lighting shall be completely shielded from off-site views.

c. Light trespass from sports field lighting shall be minimized by directing light downward and utilizing full cut-off fixtures or shields.

d. Lumination from lights shall be the lowest level allowed by public safety standards.

e. Any required lighting poles and related fixtures shall have a non-reflective finish.

f. The lighting plan shall consider effects on wildlife in the surrounding area.

AES Impact 6 **Apart from the multi-use sports field lighting, visibility of lighting throughout the NCP would affect nighttime views resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-7 *Prior to implementation of the Master Plan, lighting plans shall be submitted for review and approval consistent with the following:*

a. The point source of all recreational and exterior lighting shall be shielded from off-site views.

b. All required security lights shall utilize motion detector activation where feasible.

c. Light trespass from recreational and exterior lights shall be minimized by directing light downward and utilizing full cut-off fixtures or shields.

Residual Impacts

With implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts due to night lighting would be reduced to *less than significant* (Class II); however, the light and glare would still be visible from within the park and adjacent residential areas.

4.1.5.4 Effect on Unique Geological or Physical Features

The topography of the NCP is considered a visual resource. The existing landform offers visual interest as seen from both internal and external viewing locations, and provides viewing

opportunities from the elevated areas and visual enclosure at the lower elevations. The project would alter the topography within the park, mostly in the central and southern portions, near the multi-use sports fields, stormwater basins, and community center/gymnasium areas. The sports fields would require the creation of a large cut slope into the existing landform along the southern and southeastern part of the fields. Creating a large flat plane on the existing slope would be an obvious alteration of the natural landform. The preliminary grading plan for the multi-use sports fields show rounded slopes and contour grading both above and below the sports field, which would help the facility fit the look of the natural terrain. The retention basins also include natural looking forms and side slopes. In spite of the contour grading, without appropriate vegetative erosion control measures, the new slopes may erode, increasing their noticeability due to scarring and exposed earth.

Although the landform of the south-central portion of the NCP would be substantially altered, the topography of the majority of the NCP would not be affected. The wooded ridge through the northern area, and the remainder of the existing improved area would remain intact. In general, the existing topography somewhat limits views from one area of the NCP to another. As a result the proposed grading for the multi-use sports fields would not be readily seen from many parts of the NCP to the north and east.

AES Impact 7 **Surface erosion and exposed earth would increase noticeability of earthwork and landform alteration resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-8 *Prior to approval of the final design and development plan, an erosion control and slope revegetation plan shall be submitted for review and approval consistent with the following:*

a. At a minimum, vegetative erosion control shall be applied to all areas disturbed by construction.

b. The outer fringe areas of the multi-use sports fields cut slopes shall be revegetated with dune chaparral to blend with the adjacent natural landcover.

c. After plant establishment and/or establishment of erosion control, no or little supplemental irrigation shall be applied to the multi-use sports fields cut and fill slopes.

d. Vegetation on the fringe slopes surrounding the multi-use sports fields and the stormwater basins shall not be mowed other than to comply with County Fire/California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) safety requirements.

Residual Impacts

Proposed grading activities would change the existing topography of the NCP; however, with implementation of this mitigation measure, impacts due to alterations to the physical features of the site would be considered *less than significant* (Class II).

4.1.6 Cumulative Impacts

The discussion of cumulative impacts relates to the potential for the project to contribute to an aggregate change in visual quality from public viewing areas both within and surrounding the park, taking into consideration existing as well as proposed development. Nipomo has undergone a certain amount of visual change within the last several years due to new and reconstructed residential and commercial development. These changes have resulted in a moderately increased built-character throughout the community and along West Tefft Street. The Master Plan would result in several visual changes as seen from the surrounding community. The proposed community pool/skate park along West Tefft Street would represent the most noticeable change. Without the application of appropriate design principles, these improvements would be in conflict with community goals. However with implementation of the measures outlined in this section, the proposed park features along West Tefft Street would be consistent with the emerging aesthetic of the area and would likely appear as an appropriate use for the site. The other park features visible from the surrounding area such as paths, the interpretive center, and playground would also look like suitable park elements, with incorporation of mitigation measures.

Little new development has occurred within the NCP itself over the last several years, and the visual conditions internal to the NCP and as seen from areas surrounding the NCP are substantially the same as they have been for years. Substantial visual alterations would occur to the central and southern portions of the park. The most intense amount of development is proposed for these areas, including the community center/gymnasium, tennis courts, basketball courts, multi-use sports fields, and the greatest amount of parking. The potential exists for all of these buildings, courts, fields, parking lots and pedestrian areas to collectively visually dominate the NCP and adversely affect the existing rural character. A visual change is inherent with the introduction of these recreational uses into this mostly undeveloped section of the park. It is expected that most viewers will consider additional recreational uses to be a visually appropriate and acceptable condition in this existing park setting if the proposed elements are consistent with the community aesthetic values in terms of rural character and open space. Implementation of the mitigation measures listed in this section would minimize the visual presence of built structures, courts, paving, earthwork, fields, and lighting, and would emphasize the more natural character of the NCP and the region.

AES Impact 8 **The potential exists that the collective visibility of all of the proposed project elements would substantially contrast with the surrounding environment due to inappropriate scale, form, location, materials, colors, and other design factors, resulting in a direct long-term cumulative impact to the visual environment.**

Implement AES/mm-1 through AES/mm-8.

Residual Impacts

With implementation of these mitigation measures, cumulative impacts to the visual environment would be considered *less than significant* (Class II).

Figure 4.1-18. Key Viewing Area 1 – from near the Interior Road looking Northwest

Figure 4.1-19. Key Viewing Area 2 – from near the Interior Road looking Southwest

Figure 4.1-20. Key Viewing Area 3 – from West Tefft Street looking Northwest

Figure 4.1-21. Key Viewing Area 4 – from Park Interior looking Southeast

Figure 4.1-22. Key Viewing Area 5 – from the Southern Perimeter of the NCP looking North

Figure 4.1-23. Key Viewing Area 6 – from Pomeroy Road looking South