A. AESTHETIC RESOURCES

This section describes the aesthetic resources found within the project study area, based on field inspections conducted onsite and from public viewsheds. The EIR analysis evaluates the aesthetic impacts of the project components and recommends mitigation measures.

1. Existing Conditions

a. Project Setting

The proposed project site is located on 1,910 acres of rolling to moderately steep hillsides that comprise the southern slopes of Picacho Peak and Newsome Ridge as they rise up from the Los Berros and Adobe Canyons. The project area is geographically situated between the Arroyo Grande valley to the north and the coastal terrace of the Nipomo mesa to the southwest. The landscape of the region is typified by rolling hills with steep-sided drainages flattening out as they meet the coastal terraces and valleys. The project site itself ranges in elevation from approximately 250 to over 1,000 feet above sea level. The highest elevation of proposed development disturbance is 900 feet above sea level. The Pacific Ocean can be seen in the distance from the western and upper portions of the project site.

The natural vegetation patterns of the area are dominated by oak woodland and oak savanna, with riparian plant communities present in drainages. Agricultural development over the years has resulted in conversion of much of the lower elevation land to vineyards and orchards. Typical of much of the region, the undeveloped portions of the proposed project site supports grassland, with oak woodland found on the northern and eastern slopes. The natural drainage swales in the area support healthy stands of sycamore, willow, and other riparian vegetation. Rock outcroppings are visible at a few locations on the hillsides.

The most visible land use of the region outside of city limits and community centers has historically been agriculture, primarily cattle grazing and crop production. Ranch houses and farm-support buildings can be seen throughout the region. Within the past ten to fifteen years, residential development has increased substantially in the area, with a tendency toward large-size residential structures visible on the surrounding hillsides, such as the Temettate Ridge to the south.

b. Project Visibility

The greatest amount of visual exposure to the site is from Highway 101. The extent of visibility varies; however, at least some portion of the site can be seen along an approximately four mile segment of northbound Highway 101 and from a 0.8 mile section of southbound Highway 101. In the northbound direction, the longer range views to the site include other development such as greenhouses along the highway and residences on the hills east of Nipomo. From closer vantage points along the northbound lanes, views to the site are more rural with less intervening development. Southbound, the undulating topography along the highway corridor allows less visibility of the overall project site. Some portions of the site are visible such as the northwest corner nearest the highway, and where low spots between hills provide views to the project's interior. Views from the southbound lanes are fewer and generally of shorter duration than those

from northbound; however, where visible from the southbound lanes, the project site has a greater tendency to silhouette against the horizon.

As seen from the Highway 101 corridor, the project site makes up a portion of the last remaining visible open space east of the highway between Arroyo Grande and Nipomo. Although the Laetitia Winery can be seen in the mid-ground, the upper slopes of the project site are part of a natural scenic backdrop that continues from the Temettate Ridge in the south to the Arroyo Grande city limits to the north. Picacho Peak and Newsom Ridge to the northeast provide the primary visual backdrop as seen from Highway 101 and local roads, and the topography within the site makes up most of the intermediate ridgelines. From some viewing locations these intermediate ridgelines and hills within the site also define the horizon line.

The project site is generally bounded on the south by Los Berros Creek. Upper Los Berros Road parallels the creek, and where topography and vegetation allow, provides direct foreground views of the project site. Upper Los Berros Road is proposed as the primary access to the site, and would offer the only public visibility to the proposed Ranch Headquarters. ~~and Equestrian Center.~~ Existing development along Upper Los Berros Road is sparse and portions of the roadway are narrow and unpaved.

The project site is also visible from areas to the south such as Dana Foothill Road, and to a lesser degree from Sheehy Road and northbound North Thompson Road. Other than from the northernmost segment of Dana Foothill Road, views to the site from these roadways are generally limited due to intervening landform, development, and vegetation.

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's General Plan and the San Luis Obispo County Land Use Ordinance (LUO), in addition to the review of findings made in this document per CEQA Guidelines.

a. California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

The significance of potential aesthetic resources impacts are based on thresholds identified within Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to the Guidelines, aesthetic impacts would be considered significant if the proposed project would:

a. **Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.** A substantial adverse impact to a scenic vista would occur if the proposed project would significantly degrade the scenic landscape as viewed from public roads, particular county or state-designated scenic roadways, or from other public areas. The degree of potential impact on scenic vistas varies with factors such as viewing distance, duration, viewer sensitivity, and the visual context of the surrounding area.

   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 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.

County planning documents and regulations do not by themselves set a specific threshold regarding the degradation of a scenic vista or hillside resources. However review of applicable planning document language indicates that among other features, views of hillsides and slope-faces are considered a visual resource as well as hilltop ridgelines.

b. **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.** This CEQA threshold does not apply because the project is not within the view corridor of any officially designated state scenic highway.

c. **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.** Project related actions would be considered to have a significant impact on the visual character of the site 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. 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. 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.

d. **Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.** The project would result in a significant impact if it subjected viewers from public roads or adjacent residences 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 of lighting, source of illumination, and fixture types combined with viewer locations, adjacent reflective elements, and atmospheric conditions can affect the degree of change to nighttime views. The degree of impact caused by night lighting would consider the type of lighting proposed by the project along with the lighting reasonably expected to be generated by the future residential and commercial occupants.

b. County of San Luis Obispo Initial Study Checklist

According to the County Initial Study Checklist, aesthetic impacts would be considered significant if the project would:

a. Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view?
b. Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view?
c. Change the visual character of an area?
d. Create glare or night lighting which may affect surrounding areas?
e. Impact unique geological or physical features?

c. San Luis Obispo General Plan Agriculture and Open Space Element

The western and northern portions of the project site are located within a designated Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) for scenic qualities per the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, Agriculture and Open Space Element, Open Space Resources map. The project site area is located within SRA S47, "Newsom Ridge" (refer to Figure V.A.-1 for the SRA boundary in relation to the project site).

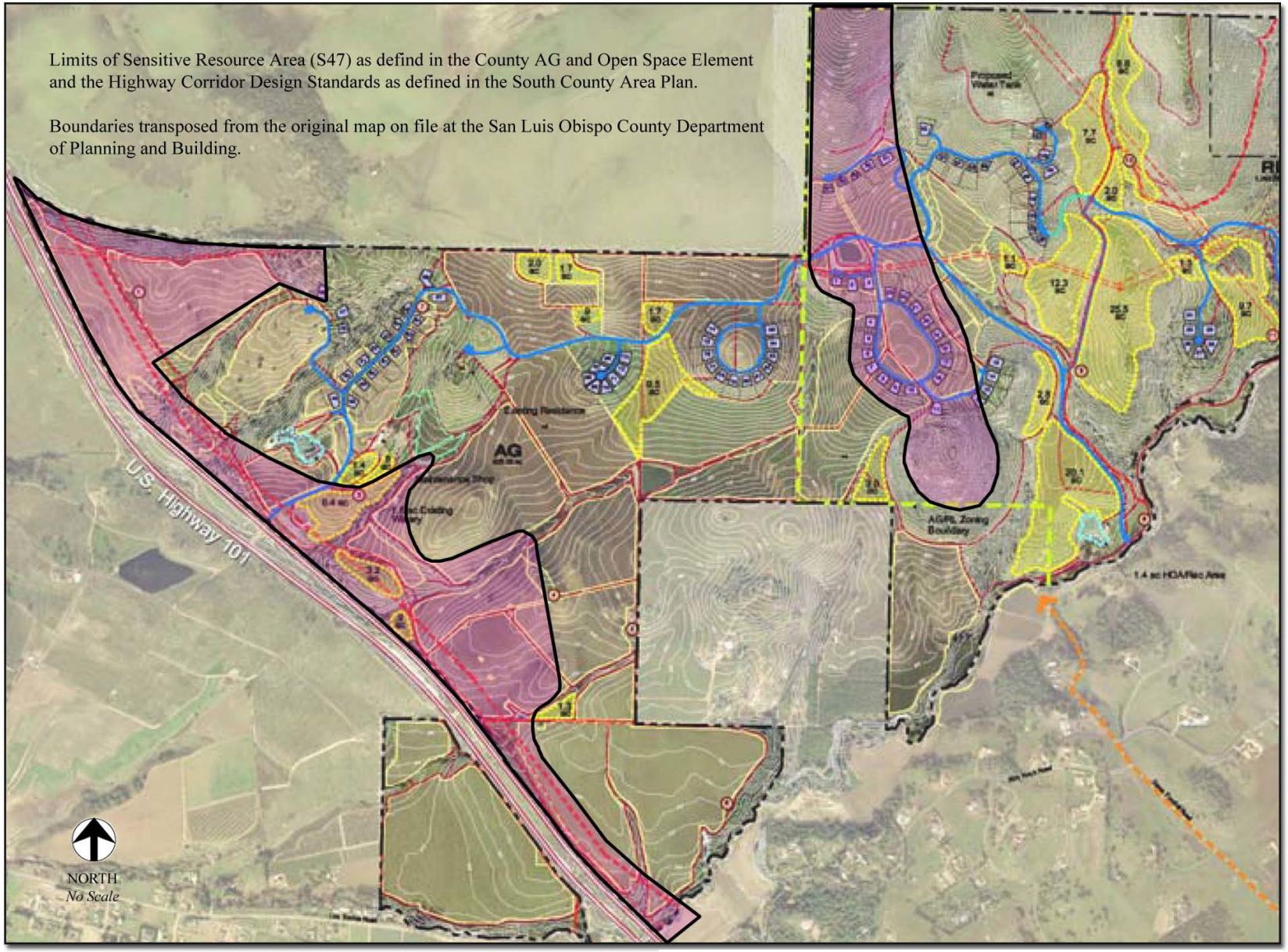
Open Space Goal (OSG1) *Identify and Protect Open Space*, states as an objective to "Identify, protect, sustain, and where necessary restore and reclaim areas with (scenic) characteristics."

Open Space Goal (OSG3) *Prevent Urban Sprawl*, says the following:

a. Prevent urban sprawl by maintaining a well-defined boundary between urban/village boundaries and surrounding rural areas.
b. Maintain permanent separations between communities in order to retain the rural character of the county.
c. Protect rural and open space lands from inappropriate conversion to suburban and urban uses by establishing criteria to determine if a proposed conversion should be approved.

Open Space Policy (OSP25) *Scenic Corridors*, states that Highway 101 is eligible for further study regarding Scenic Corridor designation, based on preliminary assessment of its visual quality. This policy proposes the protection of scenic vistas and states the following regarding the development of lands within scenic corridors:

a. Locate structures, roads, and grading on portions of a site that minimize visual impact.
b. Locate structures below prominent ridgelines and hilltops so they are not silhouetted against the sky.
c. Use natural landforms and vegetation to screen development. Where that cannot be done, it is preferred to screen development with native vegetation that is compatible with the scenic resource being protected and does not obstruct public vistas.
d. Design structures with colors that are taken from the natural landscape.
e. Minimize the visibility of utilities from public view corridors and place them underground where feasible.



Source: RRM Design Group (Base map).

Pink shaded area represents Sensitive Resource Area 47 and Highway 101 Corridor Design Standards boundaries

Sensitive Resource Area and Highway Corridor Design Boundary Map
FIGURE V.A.-1

Agricultural Policy (AGP30b.1) states that along scenic corridors, the preferred locations of structures, access roads and grading will minimize visibility from the scenic corridor and be compatible with agricultural operations.

Agricultural Policy (AGP30b.3) says that development should use natural landforms and vegetation to screen development whenever possible.

Agricultural Policy (AGP30b.4) states that in prominent locations, to encourage structures that blend with the natural landscape or are traditional for agriculture.

d. San Luis Obispo County General Plan Land Use Ordinance

The LUO defines the purpose of the SRA such that proposed uses be designed with consideration of the identified resources, and the need for their protection. It further states that the environmental determination is to evaluate the potential effect of the proposed project upon the particular features of the site or vicinity that are identified by the Land Use Element as the reason for the sensitive resource designation.

e. San Luis Obispo County Real Property Division Ordinance Design Criteria

The Real Property Division Ordinance Design Criteria Section 21.03.010 (c)(8) states: Proposed building sites shall be in locations that are least visible from public roads and shall not be located on ridgetops such that future structures will silhouette against the skyline as viewed from public roads, unless an adjustment is approved pursuant to Section 21.03.020 of this title.

f. San Luis Obispo County General Plan Land Use Element - South County Area Plan

Chapter 4 of the South County Area Plan defines as a primary planning goal that development patterns support a clear distinction between urban and rural development, and the preservation of separate, identifiable communities. Chapter 4 also mentions that the large agricultural areas between Santa Maria, Nipomo and Arroyo Grande reflect a rural character that the community values.

The western and northern portions of the project are subject to the Highway Corridor Design Standards as defined in the South County Area Plan. The limits of the Highway Corridor Design Standards coincide in part with the limits of the SRA S47 defined in the Agriculture and Open Space Element (refer to Figure V.A.-1). The purpose of the Highway Corridor Design Standards is to provide public views of:

- Scenic vistas and backdrops containing varied topography including ridgelines and rock features,
- Significant stands of trees and wildflowers; and
- Natural landmarks, historic buildings, and pastoral settings.

These Highway Corridor Design Standards include the following applicable requirements:

> **2d. Ridgetop Development**. Structures within the corridor boundaries shall be located so they are not silhouetted against the sky.
>
> **2g. Building Height and Color**. Maximum building height is 25 feet above natural grade. Building color other than trim shall be similar to surrounding colors and no brighter than six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale on file in the Department of Planning and Building.
>
> **2h. Landscaping**. A landscaping plan per the LUO is required that will insure at least 50 percent screening of structures at plant maturity.
>
> **5. Residential Land Divisions - Cluster Development Encouraged.** States as a guideline to "Retain land in open space in new land divisions that will preserve existing views of land subject to the Highway 101 Corridor Design Standards."

The Highway Corridor Design Standards were developed in anticipation of rural level development. Based on review of the standards and consultation with County long-range planning staff (Jamie Lopes, 2008), the general standards are intended to be applied to ministerial projects (i.e., building permit issued for single-family dwelling). Further review and analysis is required for projects requiring a discretionary permit, such as subdivisions. Based on the size, density, and location of proposed development, the project appears inconsistent with the intent of the Highway Corridor Design Standards to preserve the existing rural landscape as seen from the highway, and implementation of the standard guidelines would not sufficiently mitigate potential visual impacts.

g. The San Luis Obispo County Design Guidelines

This document prepared by the San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building consists of "design objectives, guidelines and examples that will help retain and enhance the unique character of the unincorporated communities and rural areas of San Luis Obispo County." The following design objectives apply to the project site:

> **RU-1.** New residential subdivisions should locate building envelopes where the visibility of new buildings from public roadways and adjoining properties will be minimized.
>
> **RC-7a.** Where possible, large cuts and graded pads should be avoided with foundations being stepped to minimize the alteration of natural contours.
>
> **RC-7b**. Building masses should generally follow contours. On sloping sites, buildings should have multiple levels.
>
> **RC-7e.** Artificial slopes that are visible to the public should match the natural contours in the immediate vicinity.

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 of San Luis Obispo. County of San Luis Obispo planning documents do not contain specific criteria for determining thresholds of significance regarding aesthetic resources. However, in comparing the project to the above CEQA Guideline 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 described in the section above provide a basis for determining levels of potential impact as well as an indication of aesthetic values and sensitivity to visual change.

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 above.

4. Impact Assessment and Methodology

Several components were included in the assessment methodology used to determine project visibility, quantify visual change, and identify and assess of project impacts. Following are the key elements utilized in establishing the visual impact assessment for the project.

a. Reference Pylons

Locations of proposed lots, maximum building envelopes, roadways and other project features were identified in the field based on site plan information provided by the applicant. Portable reference pylons were positioned at the center of each of the proposed building envelopes, as well as at critical roadway locations and structures. These pylon flags were used as a visual reference for establishing structure heights and locations and for determining overall project visibility.

Each pylon was equipped with a three-foot square reference flag affixed at a point 35 feet above existing grade, as well as a flag at 25 feet above ground. The 25 foot flag height represented the maximum building height allowed by Highway Corridor Design Standards defined in the County Ag and Open Space Element and LUO (refer to Figure V.A.-1 for a map of the Highway Corridor Design Standards boundary within which the 25-foot height limit applies). The 35 foot flag height was based on the maximum building height allowed within the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories defined in the County Ag and Open Space Element and the LUO. The 35-foot building height limit applies to the majority of the project site, which includes all areas outside of the Highway Corridor Design Standards boundary. The potential effects of the proposed wastewater recycling facility building and ponds were assessed using plans and elevations provided by the project applicant.

The reference flags were then observed from all potential viewing locations on Highway 101, Upper Los Berros Road, Dana Foothill Road, Sheehy Road, North Thompson Road, and all other public roadways in the area. As a result of these field studies, representative viewpoints were determined for further analysis. Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) were selected that would best illustrate the visual changes proposed by the project as experienced by the community and its visitors (refer to Figure V.A.-2 for KVA locations). The KVAs were specifically chosen based on County planning policy, anticipated viewer sensitivity, view access, and viewing duration. Photographs were taken from the KVAs using a Canon EOS body with a 50 mm lens for the photos used in the presented simulations, and 200mm lens for any zoomed in shots, and photo-simulations were prepared illustrating the likely appearance of the project as proposed.

b. Assumptions Regarding Project Appearance

Each of the proposed residential parcels would be designed and developed individually by subsequent lot owners, therefore this visual resources section uses a "reasonable worst-case scenario" to assess potential impacts regarding the appearance of the residences and the developed lots. In conducting this analysis, the following assumptions were made:

1) Building Location within Each Residential Lot

The applicant is proposing specific building limit lines within each residential lot. It is reasonable to assume that the desire to maximize outward views would result in structure placement on the highest elevation possible within the buildable confines of each lot. The result may contribute to an increased visibility of structures as seen from off-site locations.

2) Residential Building Heights

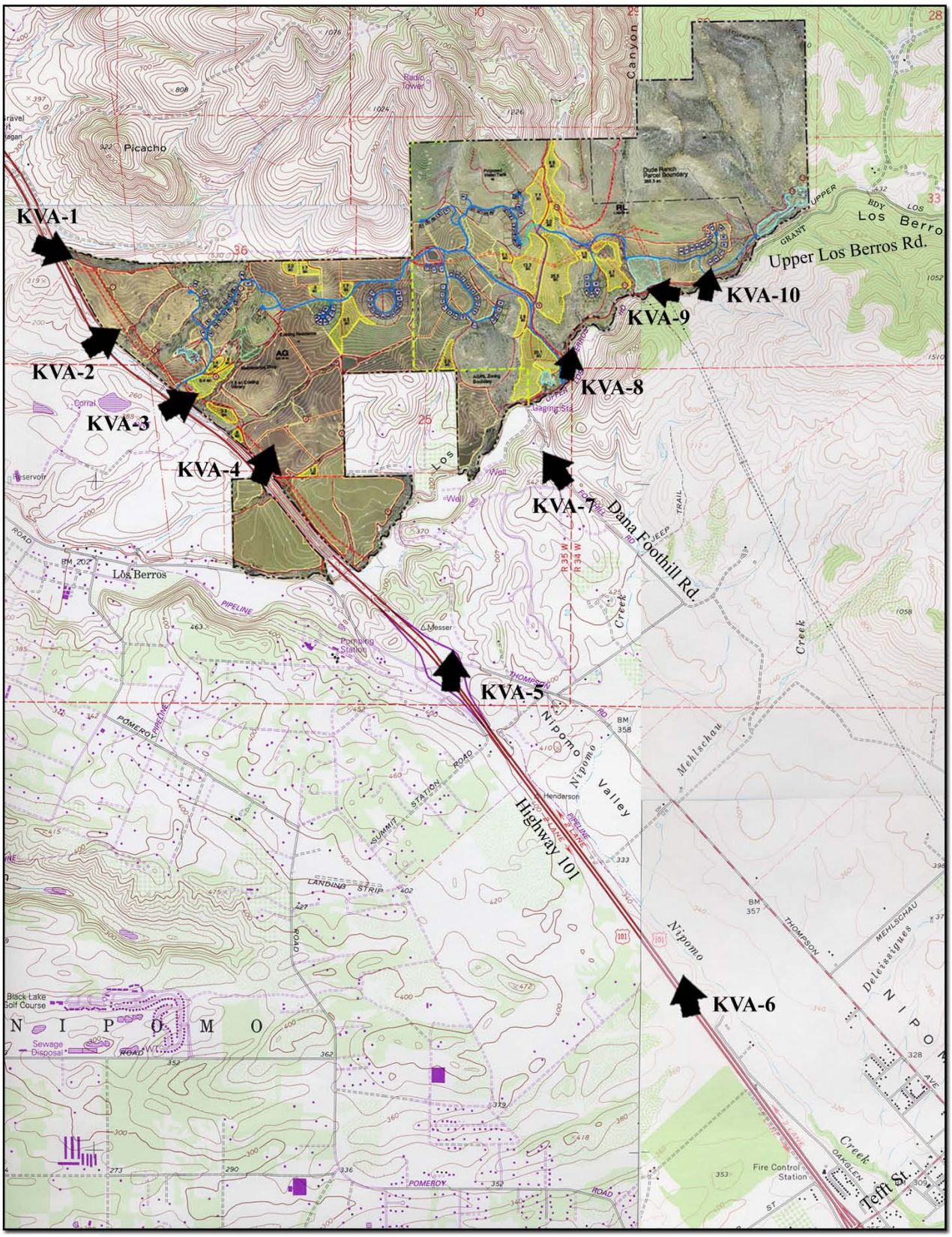
The desire to raise the upper floors to gain a better view would put the roofs at the maximum allowable height above average natural grade. The result would be to increase exposure of the structure to view. This study assumes that each residence will comply with the maximum height restriction defined in the LUO. As a result, all residential structures within the limits of the Highway Corridor Design Standard boundaries would be 25 feet in height, and all other residences would be 35 feet in height. Specific residential lots subject to the Highway Corridor Design Standards are shown in Figure V.A.-1 and are listed as follows:

- Phase One - Lots 1 through 12 and Lots 16 through 23;
- Phase Two- Lot 46; and,
- Phase Three - Lots 87 through 91.

Determination of building heights are defined in LUO Section 22.04.122 as: "the vertical distance from the highest point of the structure to the average of the highest and lowest points where the vertical plane of the exterior walls would touch the natural grade level of the site."

3) Residential Building Size

It is likely, based on recent development trends and houses built on similar scale agricultural cluster subdivisions, that individual homeowners would desire larger houses, in the 3,000 to 6,000-square foot range. These larger units would be potentially more visible.



Source: USGS quadrangle and RRM Design Group composite..

NORTH
Not to Scale

Location and direction of Key Viewing Area (KVA) and corresponding photo-simulation

Key Viewing Area Location Map
FIGURE V.A.-2

4) Residential Building Character

Residential units designed for individual owners have the potential for using materials and forms that are highly visible (i.e., large reflective glass panes, bright color exteriors and expressive, non-compatible shapes).

5) Landscaping

Although residential landscaping is expected on the majority of residential lots, it is reasonable to assume that individual homeowners are not likely to place trees and other large plants such that quality views would be blocked. Additionally, large scale vegetation, such as trees, is not likely to prosper in ridgeline rocky soils. As a result, minimal large-scale landscaping would be placed along the outward facing, most visible sides of residential structures.

c. Photo-Simulations

Photographic images and simulations are a valuable tool for understanding and disclosing the estimated visual effect of the proposed project. It is important to note however that photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity and sensitivity to detail as the human eye. As a result, photo-simulations tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

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. No specific architectural styles are proposed for the residential development. The specific types of residential units shown in the photo-simulations are not proposed by the applicant. The residential structure images are representative only and are based on the appearance of existing homes in the area. They are a representation of the maximum height allowed for each lot, and depict a reasonable building scale and form. The photo-simulations show the development at a time period approximately five to ten years after construction (refer to Figures V.A.-3 through V.A.-32).

5. Project-specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a. Project-wide

1) Earthwork

Because of the undulating to steep topography of the site, in order to create suitable building pads and road cross-sections, the project would result in substantial amounts of grading and earthwork. Due to the extensive visual exposure the site has to the surrounding public roads and other areas, much of this earthwork would be visible. The visual contrast of disturbed earth combined with the angular appearance of engineered cut and fill slopes would be potentially seen from great distances. This degree of visibility would increase noticeability of the project as a whole and would contribute to an alteration of existing rural character. Through successful vegetative erosion control, visibility of the earthwork would be reduced. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-3 through V.A.-32).

AES Impact 1 **Earthwork required for the development of building pads, roads, and utilities would be visible throughout the project and would adversely affect rural visual character resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-1 At the time of application for construction permits for individual residential lots, the applicant for each individual lot shall submit grading plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. Project CC&Rs shall state that county review of grading plans is required. Site grading on all residential lots shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Stepped foundations and other methods shall be used to minimize visible grading and reduce hillside scarring. Structure floor elevations shall generally follow the natural landform. Unavoidable grading shall be contour-graded where possible to avoid engineered, angular landforms. Slope-rounding shall be used where grading meets the natural topography and where slope grades change. Graded slopes shall not exceed of 2:1 (horiz:vert) to allow for successful revegetation.

AES/mm-2 At the time of application for construction or grading permits, the applicant shall show on the project plans, the border of cut slopes and fills rounded off to a minimum radius of five feet. For any visible cuts from public roads, sufficient topsoil shall be stockpiled and reapplied or re-keyed over these visible cut areas to provide at least eight inches of topsoil for the reestablishment of vegetation. As soon as the grading work has been completed and prior to final inspection, the cut and fill slopes shall be reestablished with non-invasive, fast growing vegetation.

AES/mm-3 Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall provide long-term erosion control plans for all disturbed areas. Erosion control shall include a vegetative component. Prior to recordation, the applicant shall provide independent third-party verification to the County Department of Planning and Building that the vegetative erosion control has been successfully established.

AES/mm-4 At the time of application for construction permits for individual residential lots, the applicant for each individual lot shall submit long-term erosion control plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. Plans shall include, but not be limited to, the use of revegetation efforts to restore disturbed cut and fill slopes visible from public roadways. Project CC&Rs shall state that county review of erosion control plans is required.

Residual Impact With implementation of these mitigations, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the visual contrast of earthwork would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II*.

2) Residential Structures

The project would be visible from many viewpoints in the surrounding area and from important public roadways. The majority of the residences would be visible from at least one of the many viewpoints the project site affords. In spite of the visibility reduction measures identified in this section, most of the residential structures would remain within public view. As a result, structures with highly reflective or light colors and building forms that contrast with the natural landform would draw attention to the built character of the project as a whole and would adversely affect the existing rural character of the setting. Residential buildings that blend with the overall landscape setting in terms of form and color and would lessen the adverse effect on the visual environment. Landscape screening placed on the most visible sides of the residences would further reduce impacts.

These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-3 through V.A.-32).

AES Impact 2 **Reflective colors and contrasting forms of the residences, accessory buildings, walls and fences would increase project noticeability and adversely affect rural visual character resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-5 At the time of application for construction permits on individual residential lots, each individual lot applicant shall submit architectural elevations of all proposed structures, walls, and fences to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. Project CC&Rs for residences shall state that county review of elevations and related plans is required and shall outline the parameters specified below. Review shall include any proposed retaining walls and fences. The elevations shall show forms, dimensions, exterior finish materials and colors, as follows:

a. Roofs shall be articulated and follow the general shapes of the hills and avoid flat planes which project against the background in long straight lines or acute angles which may be considered intrusive to the existing natural character of the hills and vegetation.
b. Building, retaining wall, and fence colors shall be similar to surrounding natural colors and no brighter than six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Chart.
c. Structure exterior wall colors, retaining wall and fence colors shall be limited to muted earth tones. White or off-white colors shall be prohibited.
d. Roof colors shall be limited to deep earth tones, deep muted greens, browns, and grays and no brighter than six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale Chart. Shiny metal roofs, bright orange red or blue colors shall be prohibited.
e. Retaining walls shall include landscaping to reduce visibility.

AES/mm-6 At the time of application for construction permits for individual residential lots, the applicant for each individual lot shall submit landscape screening plans to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. Project CC&Rs for residences shall state that county review of such plans is required and shall outline the parameters specified below.

a. Screen planting shall be included along the western and southern sides of all residential structures.
b. Evergreen trees and large shrubs shall be used that are compatible with the surrounding vineyards. South side plantings may include some deciduous trees where it is shown that solar benefits would exist and where the visual screening function would not be reduced.
c. The landscape plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect and shall provide a minimum 50 percent visual screening of the residential structure as viewed from the west and south within a period of 7 years of approval of the construction permit.
d. Plant types shall be carefully selected to perform well in the existing soil conditions.
e. All plants within the screen planting area shall be maintained and kept in a healthy condition. Plants that die shall be replaced. Replacement planting shall be based on an evaluation of the cause of the original plant's death and the appropriate horticultural adjustment to ensure future plant success.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the visual contrast and noticeability of the residential structures would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II*.

3) Night Lighting

The project would create a new source of night lighting visible from the Highway 101 corridor, Upper Los Berros Road, Dana Foothill Road, and residences in the area. The elevated locations of the lots and internal roadways relative to most viewpoints would position the lights onto the hillside backdrops for the affected viewers. Thirty-three elevated post lights are proposed along roadways throughout the project. Visibility of lighting would increase noticeability of the development and would be the primary indicator of the project's existence at night. As a result of this increased project visibility and disruption of the existing darkened hillside backdrop, long-term visual impacts would occur. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

AES Impact 3 **Visibility of light sources and glow from the hillside residences and roadways would degrade nighttime view quality and adversely affect rural visual character resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-7 Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall ~~modify the~~submit a final lighting plan that is consistent with the following measures ~~as follows~~:

a. Post lighting shall only be used at the ranch headquarters ~~and the equestrian facility~~, and shall be fully shielded from public roadways.
b. All lighting required along roadways shall be shielded bollard lighting maximum four feet tall and only used to delineate intersections and critical driving decision points.
c. Lighting shall be the minimum required by county ordinance for a private residential development.
d. Lighting shall not shine light or glare upwards.

AES/mm-8 At the time of application submittal for construction permits on individual residential lots, each individual lot applicant shall submit an exterior lighting plan to the County Department of Planning and Building for review and approval. Project CC&Rs for residences shall state that county review of the lighting plans is required and shall outline the parameters specified below.

a. The point-source of all exterior lighting shall be shielded from all views outside of the individual lot.
b. Lighting shall not shine light or glare upwards.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the visibility of nighttime lighting associated with the roadways and residences would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II*.

4) Significant and Unavoidable Changes to Visual Character

During the preparation of the aesthetics resource analysis for the EIR, several components of the proposed project were determined to be highly visible as seen from the Highway 101 travel corridor. Implementation of these project elements would result in significant changes to the existing rural character, and would increase the overall noticeability of the project as a whole. Project elements and associated earthwork include: Residential Sub-clusters C and E; Main Road 2; Roads A, B, E, and F; and, the water tank. Please refer to the appropriate section below for a detailed description of specific impacts.

AES Impact 4 **Visibility of development and associated earthwork related to Main Road 2, residential development of Sub-cluster E (Lots 87 through 105), Roads A, B, E, and F, residential development on Lot 46, the water storage tank, associated cut slope and access road, would adversely affect the rural visual character and increase noticeability of the project as seen from Highway 101 resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-9 Upon submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall submit revised plans showing the realignment of Main Road 2 in the vicinity of Sub-cluster E to a location below the relocated residential lots of Sub-cluster E, below the 660-foot elevation line.

Secondary Impact Realignment of Main Road 2 would result in the additional removal of approximately ten acres of vineyards to accommodate the access road and residential parcels, resulting in significant secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

AES/mm-10 Upon submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall realign Road A to a location below the lots of Sub-cluster A.

Secondary Impact Realignment of Road A would result in the removal of an additional approximately one acre of vineyards to accommodate the access road, resulting in significant secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

AES/mm-11 Upon submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall provide plans showing the following modifications regarding the water storage tank facility:

a. The water storage tank shall be placed below ground.
b. The grading plan shall be modified such that no horizontal bench for the tank site, service, or parking is visible from Highway 101.
c. The access road to the water tank shall be realigned to approach the tank site from the eastern side of the ridge, and shall not be visible from Highway 101.

AES/mm-12 Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall modify Sub-cluster C as follows:

a. Lot 46 shall be eliminated.

AES/mm-13 Upon application submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall realign Road B to a location below the relocated lots of Sub-cluster D.

Secondary Impact Relocation of Road B would locate future residences closer to existing and proposed vineyards, resulting in significant and adverse secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

AES/mm-14 Upon application submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall modify Sub-cluster E as follows:

a. All lots within Sub-cluster E (Lots 87 through 105) shall be relocated below the 660 foot elevation contour.
b. All building envelopes shall be relocated to the lowest elevation possible within each lot.

Secondary Impact Relocation of Lots 87 through 105 would result in the removal of approximately four acres of additional vineyards to accommodate the access road and residential parcels, and would reduce buffers between residential development and agricultural production areas, resulting in significant and adverse secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

AES/mm-15 Upon application submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall realign Roads E and F and any access drives to locations below the residential lots they serve. No earthwork associated with these roads shall extend above the 660-foot elevation contour.

Secondary Impact Relocation of Road E would result in a further reduction in buffer distance between the residential and agricultural land uses, resulting in significant and adverse secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

Residual Impact Implementation of these mitigation measures, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this analysis, would reduce significant aesthetics impacts to less than significant. Mitigation measures listed above include recommendations to modify the proposed project design, including relocation of lots and the associated access road Main Road 2. The County cannot require conditions of approval to modify the proposed tentative map, including elimination or relocation of lots and associated access roads; therefore, this impact would be considered *significant and unavoidable, Class I.*

b. Phase One

1) Residential Development

(a) Lot development

Residential Sub-cluster A

Lots 1 through 12 and 16 through 23 of Sub-cluster A are located with the SRA. Residential development on these lots is subject to the Highway Corridor Design Standards including the following provisions:

a. **Ridgetop Development**. Structures within the corridor boundaries shall be located so they are not silhouetted against the sky.

b. **Building Height and Color**. Maximum building height is 25 feet above natural grade. Building color other than trim shall be similar to surrounding colors and no brighter than six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale on file in the Department of Planning and Building.

c. **Landscaping**. A landscaping plan per the Land Use Ordinance is required that will insure at least 50 percent screening of structures at plant maturity.

Even with these design requirements as well as the other measures identified in this section, the majority of these lots would remain visible from numerous points along Highway 101 (refer to Figures V.A.-16 and V.A.-22). Sub-cluster A occupies a prominent intermediate slope and ridge as seen from the Highway 101 corridor. From the highway, views of Sub-cluster A range from as far as four miles away to closer viewpoints adjacent to the project site. The proposed placement of the building envelopes at the upper portions of these lots increases this visibility and causes the project to have a greater visual presence in the landscape. The visibility of the residences and associated development within Sub-cluster A would contribute to a degradation of rural visual character as seen from the Highway 101 corridor. Development on Sub-cluster A would be inconsistent with the Highway Corridor Design Standards guideline to retain land in open space in new land divisions that will preserve existing views. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-17 and V.A.-23).

AES Impact 5 **Visibility of the residential development of Sub-cluster A (Lots 1 through 23) would adversely affect the rural visual character of the area and would be in conflict with SRA goals and the Highway 101 Corridor Design Standards, resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-16 Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall modify Sub-cluster A as follows:

a. Lots 11 and 12 shall be relocated across from Lots 13 and 14, along Road K.
b. All building envelopes for Lots 1 through 23 shall be relocated to the lowest elevation possible within each lot.

AES/mm-17 At the time of application submittal for construction permits on individual residential lots, plans shall show that all accessory structures shall be located with the building envelope for each lot.

Secondary Impact Relocation of proposed envelopes for Lots 1 through 23 would place residential structures in closer proximity to productive vineyard areas, and would further reduce the buffer between the residential and agricultural land uses by approximately 150 feet, resulting in significant secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use and land use conflicts due to inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to

accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

Residual Impact Mitigation measures include recommendations to modify the proposed project design, including relocation of Lots 11 and 12. Implementation of these measures would mitigate potentially significant adverse visual impacts; however, the County cannot include design changes to a tentative map as conditions of approval. Therefore, this impact is considered *significant and unavoidable, Class I.*

Residential Sub-cluster B

The development of Sub-cluster B would add noticeable suburban type elements to the existing Upper Los Berros Road setting (refer to Figures V.A.-25, V.A.-28, and V.A.-31). Lots 27, 28 and 29 would silhouette above the primary ridgeline as seen from westbound viewpoints. Residential construction on Lots 27 through 29 may result in the removal of existing mature oak trees, which would further expose the structures' visibility along the hilltop. Lots 41, 42 and 43 would profile against the sky as seen from Upper Los Berros Road primarily in the eastbound direction. Lots 36, 37, 38 and 39 would likely require substantial grading to accommodate level building pads on their sloping topography. This visibility of Sub-cluster B, increased by silhouetting structures and hillside grading would substantially alter the existing natural and rural character of Upper Los Berros Road and would have an adverse effect on visual quality. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-26, V.A.-29, and V.A.-32).

AES Impact 6 **Visibility of the residential development of Sub-cluster B (Lots 24 through 43) would adversely affect the natural and rural visual character of the Upper Los Berros Road corridor resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-18 Upon submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall modify Sub-cluster B as follows:

a. Lots 27, 28, and 29 shall be relocated north of Lot 24, west of Road J.
b. Building envelopes within Lots 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, and 43 shall be relocated immediately adjacent to Road I.
c. Site grading on Lots 36, 37, 38, and 39 shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Stepped foundations and other methods shall be used to minimize visible grading and reduce hillside scarring. Structure floor elevations shall generally follow the natural landform. Unavoidable grading shall be contour-graded where possible to avoid engineered, angular landforms.
d. Native trees and shrubs shall be planted and maintained along the north side of Upper Los Berros Road to screen views of the residences. The screen planting shall run along the entire project frontage from the

~~equestrian facility~~existing secondary access road to a point east of Lot 40. The planting shall be designed to look like naturally occurring vegetation to the greatest extent possible. Gaps in the screen planting may occur in order to achieve a natural appearance; however, the gaps shall not be greater than 30 feet in length and shall not occur at intervals closer than 200 feet. Tree species shall include primarily coast live oak. A minimum of 70 percent of the total screen tree planting shall be planted from 48-inch box containers. The remaining 30 percent of the screen planting shall be from one-gallon containers.

Residual Impact Implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this analysis, would minimize impacts due to the visibility of the residences of Sub-cluster B (Lots 24 through 43); however, the County cannot include design changes to a tentative map as conditions of approval. Therefore, this impact would be considered *significant and unavoidable, Class I.*

(b) Roads

Main Road 2

The two primary roadways through the project would be constructed during the first phase of the project. Of these, "Main Road 2" would be the most visible from Highway 101 and other public areas due to its location at the higher elevations on the hillside, particularly where it provides access to Lots 87 through 105 of Sub-cluster E (refer to Figures V.A.-16 and V.A.-19). The generally steep topography along the portions of Main Road 2 alignment would necessitate excavation slopes of up to 40 feet in height visible from Highway 101. A 60-foot tall cut slope is proposed for Main Road 2 near the intersection of Road L; however, this cut is not expected to be visible from public roadways due to intervening topography. Mitigation measures are recommended to relocate Lots 87 through 105 to a lower elevation. In coordination with this mitigation, the realignment of Main Road 2 in the area of Sub-cluster E to a location lower on the hillside would substantially reduce visible hillside scarring and adverse visual impacts (V.A.-17 and V.A.-20). Please refer to AES Impact 4 and mitigation measure AES/mm-9.

Road A

Phase 1 includes the construction of roads A, G, I, J, K, L, and M. Of these roads, Road A provides access to Sub-cluster A (Lots 1 through 10 and 16 through 23) and is located within the designated SRA and the Highway 101 Design Corridor limits. As mentioned previously, Sub-cluster A is proposed on a highly visible intermediate ridgeline that contributes to the rural character of the area (refer to Figures V.A.-16 and V.A.-22). Mitigation measures are recommended to move the building envelopes of Sub-cluster A to the lowest point on each lot. In coordination with this mitigation, realignment of Road A to a location below the lots would make Road A less visible in the landscape, and would allow access to the lots from the downhill side, eliminating the need for long driveways traversing the hillside from Road A to each residential structure. The result would be a more visually intact hillside profile and reduced intrusion into the SRA and existing rural character (refer to Figures V.A.-17 and V.A.-23). Please refer to AES Impact 4 and mitigation measure AES/mm-10.

(c) Water Infrastructure

The project proposes an above ground water tank 18 feet tall and 40 feet in diameter to be built as part of the first phase of construction. The tank would be located on the hill at the 870 foot elevation above and to the east of Sub-cluster E (Lots 87 to 105). The elevated location of the water tank allows it to be seen from several vantage points along Highway 101 (refer to Figures V.A.-16 and V.A.-19). Because of the tank's location near the ridgeline, it may silhouette against the sky as seen from a portion of the highway. A 30-foot tall cut slope is proposed behind the water tank in order to create a level building pad. A paved access road up the western hillside would service the water tank facility from Road F. The elevation of the tank near the hilltop, its geometric form, the associated cut slope, and the access road combine for a highly noticeable project element as seen from Highway 101. The visibility of the water tank would draw attention to the project and would contribute to a loss of visual quality in the area. Mitigation measures elsewhere in this section require the relocation of Road F and the residential lots it serves (refer to Figures V.A.-17 and V.A.-20). With Road F relocated, an access road up the side of the hill to the water tank would still be necessary. Please refer to AES Impact 4 and mitigation measure AES/mm-11.

2) Ranch Headquarters

The ranch headquarters includes a private recreation facility, community center, homeowner's association building, mail station, pools, a tennis court, parking and related features. The ranch headquarters would serve as the primary entrance to the project and would contain the entry gates and guard station. The ranch headquarters proposes to retain the large trees on site as well as two of the existing wooden barn structures.

The ranch headquarters site occupies a relatively flat area at the base of a small ridge (refer to Figure V.A.-33 for a photo of the site). The ranch headquarters would only be visible from Upper Los Berros Road and because of the road curvature, would only be seen from within the immediate vicinity. The ranch-style architecture and materials of the development are appropriate responses to the rural creek setting. Retention of the large trees and existing older buildings would help the headquarters somewhat integrate with the Upper Los Berros Road corridor. The proposed ranch headquarters is expected to be perceived as an attractive, well-designed development. Still, substantial visual changes would occur to the project site with construction of the proposed elements. Although the ranch vernacular would be employed, the site would appear neither as a ranch nor rural. The entry feature gate and guard station, recreation activities, mail station, maintained landscaping, vehicles, site users and other elements would be obvious visual clues that the site is part of an up-scale development of some sort. Because of this inherent loss of rural character and gentrification of the project site along this wooded creek corridor, a degree of visual impact would occur. By providing a partial screen planting of native plants along the ranch headquarters/Upper Los Berros Road frontage, the development would be somewhat less noticeable, and the suburban visual components would be less obvious.

AES Impact 7 **The inherent loss of rural character caused by changing the existing working ranch into an architecturally designed recreation facility ranch headquarters would result in less than significant adverse impacts.**

AES/mm-19 Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall modify the ranch headquarters landscape plan to show:

a. Native trees and shrubs shall be planted and maintained along the north side of Upper Los Berros Road to screen views of the ranch headquarters. The screen planting shall run along the project frontage from the east end of the existing barn nearest the road to remain in place, to a point approximately 200 feet east of the proposed main entry road. The planting shall be designed to look like naturally occurring vegetation. Gaps in the screen planting may occur in order to achieve a natural appearance; however, the gaps shall not be greater than 20 feet in length and shall not occur at intervals closer than 100 feet. Tree species shall include primarily coast live oak and shall be planted from minimum 48-inch box containers.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, residual impacts due to the visibility of the ranch headquarters would be considered *less than significant, Class III.*

~~3) Equestrian Facility~~

~~The equestrian facility would include an arena, covered exercise ring, facilities buildings, paddocks and stalls, a tack room, parking, and other amenities. A paved access road would connect the equestrian facility to Upper Los Berros Road. The site for the equestrian facility is sloping, with an approximately 60 foot rise in elevation from Upper Los Berros Road to the northern perimeter of the site (refer to Figure V.A. 34 for a photo of the site). As a result, the facility includes retaining walls and sloped viewing areas to help make the elevation transition. Substantial grading would also be required to create level arenas, building pads and parking areas.~~

~~The architectural style of the equestrian facility would be similar to that proposed for the ranch headquarters, and would be generally appropriate for the setting. The designed use and activities associated with the facility would somewhat support the agricultural-based character of the area. Visual changes are inherent with the conversion from crops and open space to a built recreational facility. The scale of the equestrian facility and the expected intensity of use would affect the more natural visual component of the Upper Los Berros Road corridor. The 38-foot tall roof covering the exercise ring would exceed the maximum height allowable by the LUO and would appear unnecessarily tall as seen from the adjacent public roadway.~~

~~Because of this inherent change of character and the scale of the project along the creek corridor, visual impacts would occur. By reducing the height of the exercise ring cover, and by providing a screen of native plants along the equestrian facility Upper Los Berros Road frontage, the facility would be somewhat less noticeable and visually imposing to the roadway viewers.~~

~~**AES Impact 8**~~ ~~**The inherent loss of rural character caused by changing the existing fields into a recreation facility would result in less than significant adverse impacts.**~~

~~AES/mm-20~~ ~~Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall modify the equestrian facility layout and landscape plans as follows:~~

~~a. The height of the roof covering the exercise ring shall be reduced to a maximum of 30 feet.~~
~~b. Native trees and shrubs shall be planted and maintained along the north side of Upper Los Berros Road to screen views of the equestrian facility. The screen planting shall run along the entire frontage of the equestrian facility. The planting shall be designed to look like naturally occurring vegetation. Gaps in the screen planting may occur in order to achieve a natural appearance; however, the gaps shall not be greater than 20 feet in length and shall not occur at intervals closer than 100 feet. Tree species shall include primarily Coast live oak and shall be planted from minimum 48-inch box containers.~~

~~*Residual Impact*~~ ~~With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the visibility of the equestrian facility would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II.*~~

c. Phase Two

1) Residential Development

(d) Lot development

Residential Sub-cluster C

The development of Sub-cluster C (Lots 46 through 65) would add suburban type visual elements to the existing Highway 101 setting. As seen from northbound Highway 101 this subcluster would be visible in the general context of the existing winery and tasting room (refer to Figures V.A.-4, V.A.-7, and V.A.-13). Topography and existing vegetation in and around Sub-cluster C cause most of these units to be less distinguishable in the landscape. In addition, recommended mitigation, which requires screen planting on each lot, would further reduce the visibility of many of these residences. As seen from southbound Highway 101, Lot 46 would be quite visible and would silhouette above the primary ridgeline in the mid-ground. Lot 46 is within the SRA and the Highway Corridor Design standards boundary. Elimination or relocation of Lot 46 would reduce visual impacts for the southbound highway user and would bring Sub-cluster C closer to conformance with County visual policy. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-5, V.A.-8, and V.A.-14). Please refer to AES Impact 4 and AES/mm-12.

Residential Sub-cluster D

Lots 74 through 85 are located on a knoll that is highly visible from both the northbound and southbound lanes of Highway 101 (refer to Figures V.A.-10, V.A.-13, and V.A.-16). As seen from the northbound direction these lots occupy an intermediate ridge in the overall landscape. The proposed placement of the building envelopes at the upper portions of these lots increases this visibility and causes the project to have a greater visual presence in the landscape. From the southbound viewing direction of Highway 101, residences on Lots 74 through 85 would be directly visible in the mid-ground and would silhouette above the horizon to the southeast. This silhouetting and visibility would substantially degrade the existing visual quality, reduce rural character, and be inconsistent with County visual policy and goals.

Lots 66 through 73 would be seen from the southbound Highway 101 lanes, and where visible would contribute the overall character change introduced by the project (refer to Figures V.A.-13 and V.A.-16). These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-11, V.A.-14, and V.A.-17).

AES Impact 8~~9~~ **Visibility and silhouetting of Lots 66 through 85 would adversely affect visual quality and character of the Highway 101 corridor resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-20~~21~~ Upon application submittal of subdivision improvement plans, the applicant shall modify Lots 66 through 85 of Sub-cluster D as follows:

a. All structures shall be a maximum 25 feet in height as measured by County ordinance.
b. All building envelopes within Lots 66 through 85 shall be relocated to the lowest elevation possible within each lot.

Secondary Impact Relocation of building envelopes for Lots 66 through 69 would result in direct and adverse impacts to a significant archaeological site. As discussed in Section V.E. (Archaeological Resources), elimination of Lots 68 and 69 is recommended to avoid this impact. Implementation of this measure would avoid potentially significant and adverse project-specific and secondary impacts resulting from the proposed project and the mitigation measure identified above. However, the County cannot include design changes to a tentative map as conditions of approval; therefore, the secondary impact would contribute to the previously identified significant and unavoidable impact to archaeological resources.

Secondary Impact Relocation of building envelopes for Lots 67 through 70 and 74 through 85 would locate future residences immediately adjacent to existing and proposed vineyards, resulting in significant and adverse secondary impacts to agricultural resources. As discussed in Section V.B. (Agricultural Resources), significant and adverse impacts to agricultural resources would occur as a result of this project, including conversion of Farmland

to a non-agricultural use and inadequate buffers between residential and agricultural land uses. Implementation of this mitigation measure would contribute to this significant adverse impact. The applicant proposes to plant undeveloped areas with vineyards and orchard crops to replace vineyards removed to accommodate the project; however, no mitigation measures, aside from substantial revision of the project are available to fully mitigate the impacts to agricultural resources.

AES/mm-21~~2~~ At the time of application submittal for construction permits on individual residential lots, plans shall show that all accessory structures shall be located with the building envelope.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the silhouetting and general visibility of the residences on Lots 74 through 85 of Sub-cluster D would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II.*

(e) Roads

Road B

Roads B, C, D, N, and P would be constructed during Phase Two. Of these roads, Road B provides access to residential Lots 74 through 85 within Sub-cluster D. Lots 74 through 85 are proposed on a highly visible intermediate ridgeline that contributes to the rural definition of the area as seen from north and southbound Highway 101 (refer to Figures V.A.-10, V.A.-13, and V.A.-16). Mitigation measures are recommended to move the building envelopes of Lots 74 through 85 to the lowest point on each lot. In coordination with this measure, realignment of Road B to a location below the lots would make Road B less visible in the landscape, and would allow access to the lots from the downhill side, eliminating the need for long driveways traversing the hillside from Road B to each residential structure. The result would be a more visually intact hillside profile and reduced impact on the existing rural character (refer to Figures V.A.-11, V.A.-14, and V.A.-17). Please refer to AES Impact 4, and mitigation measure AES/mm-13.

d. Phase Three

1) Residential Development

(f) Lot development

Residential Sub-cluster E

Lots 87 through 91 of Sub-cluster E are within the SRA. Residential development on these lots is subject to the Highway Corridor Design Standards including the following provisions:

Ridgetop Development. Structures within the corridor boundaries shall be located so they are not silhouetted against the sky.

Building Height and Color. Maximum building height is 25 feet above natural grade. Building color other than trim shall be similar to surrounding colors and no brighter than

six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale on file in the Department of Planning and Building.

Landscaping. A landscaping plan per the Land Use Ordinance is required that will insure at least 50 percent screening of structures at plant maturity.

Of all the development proposed with this project, Sub-cluster E occupies the highest elevation on the hillsides, and as a result is the most visible from a distance. Lots 99, 100, and 101 are near the top of the primary ridgeline, and residential development on Lot 101 would silhouette above the horizon as seen from the Highway (refer to Figures V.A.-10, V.A.-13, V.A.-16, and V.A.-19). The unavoidable visibility of Sub-cluster E on this primary hillside backdrop would greatly contribute to a redefinition of landscape character along the highway corridor. Because of their high visibility, the development of these lots would draw attention and would substantially increase overall awareness of the project for the casual observer. Landscape screening and architectural design measures would not sufficiently disguise the existence of these upper elevation lots nor reduce this noticeability issue. These potential impacts would be considered significant, but would be minimized or avoided through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (refer to Figures V.A.-11, V.A.-14, V.A.-17, and V.A.-20). Please refer to AES Impact 4, and mitigation measure AES/mm-14.

(g) Roads

Roads E and F

Phase 3 would include the construction of roads E and F as well as the access drive to Lot 92. Road E is within the SRA. The construction of Road E would require a cut slope 40 feet in height. Road F would require excavation slopes as tall as 35 feet. The slopes for Roads E and F would be highly visible and would greatly contribute to a reduction in visual quality of the hillside and visual backdrop for the Highway 101 corridor (refer to Figures V.A.-10, V.A.-13, V.A.-16, and V.A.-19). Mitigation measures are recommended to relocate Lots 87 through 105. In coordination with this measure, realignment of Roads E and F to locations below the lots would make the roads less visible in the landscape, and would allow access to the lots from the downhill side, eliminating the need for long driveways traversing the hillside to each residential structure. The result would be less visual intrusion onto the hillside backdrop as well as the SRA (refer to Figures V.A.-11, V.A.-14, V.A.-17, and V.A.-20). Please refer to AES Impact 4, and mitigation measure AES/mm-15.

e. Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Although the ponds associated with the wastewater treatment facilities would not be noticeable from public roadways, a portion of the proposed building would be visible from a section of Highway 101 (refer to Figure V.A.-10). When seen in conjunction with the other visible elements of the project, the wastewater recycling facility building would contribute to an increase in the developed visual character of the area. In coordination with the other required mitigation measures, using darkened earth tones and material finishes for the building exterior and landscape screening would make the wastewater recycling facility less noticeable in the landscape. The result would be a more visually intact agricultural setting and reduced impact on the existing rural character (refer to Figure V.A.-11).

AES Impact 9~~10~~ **Reflective roofing materials and colors of the wastewater recycling facility building, would increase project noticeability and adversely affect rural visual character resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-22~~3~~ Prior to issuance of a construction permit for the wastewater treatment facility, the applicant shall provide wastewater recycling facility building plans showing:

a. Roof and exterior wall colors shall be limited to deep earth tones, browns, and grays and no brighter than six in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale Chart. Shiny metal ~~roofs~~, bright orange red or blue roofs shall be prohibited.

AES/mm-23~~4~~ Prior to issuance of a construction permit for the wastewater treatment facility, the applicant shall provide wastewater recycling facility building landscape plans showing:

a. Screen planting shall be included along the western and southern sides of the wastewater recycling building.
b. The landscape plan shall provide 100 percent visual screening of the wastewater recycling building structure as viewed from the west and south within a period of seven years of approval of the construction permit.
c. All plants within the screen planting area shall be maintained and kept in a healthy condition. Plants that die shall be replaced. Replacement planting shall be based on an evaluation of the cause of the original plant's death and the appropriate horticultural adjustment to ensure future plant success.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in conjunction with the other measures recommended in this study, impacts due to the visual contrast and noticeability of the wastewater recycling building would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II.*

f. Future Development

1) Dude Ranch

The area proposed for the dude ranch currently appears as natural and natural landscape along Los Berros Creek and the lower portions of slopes riding to the north (refer to Figure V.A.-35 for a photo of the site). The area is well vegetated with native oak woodland and riparian plant communities. A few scattered residences are in the area, although they are mostly set back from the roadway or partially hidden by existing vegetation. Views to the proposed dude ranch site are generally limited to Upper Los Berros Road and the immediate vicinity.

Only a detailed review of the future site development plans will determine the specific visual effects of the proposal. However, based on knowledge of the site and surroundings, certain planning and design criteria can be identified. For example, the natural visual character of the

Upper Los Berros Road corridor must be maintained. The dude ranch would be one of ~~four~~ three developed areas built by the project along Upper Los Berros Road, including the ranch headquarters, ~~the equestrian facility,~~ and the residential area Sub-cluster B (Lots 24 through 43). The extent and type of visual presence the dude ranch conveys would have a substantial effect on the cumulative impression of the project. If the dude ranch is visible and perceived as yet another upscale faux-ranch project element strung out along Upper Los Berros Road, the existing rural and natural character would be significantly compromised. To minimize this potential visual impact, the visibility of the dude ranch should be minimized or eliminated through generous setbacks from Upper Los Berros Road, site design, structure scale, form, color and materials, retention of existing vegetation, screen planting, placement and alignment of access roads and entry points and other creative measures.

AES Impact 10~~7~~ **Visibility of the built components of the dude ranch, in combination with the other project elements would cause the Upper Los Berros Road corridor to appear substantially more developed and would adversely affect the rural visual character resulting in a direct long-term impact.**

AES/mm-24~~5~~ Upon application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the dude ranch, the applicant shall provide development plans and reports that meet the following standards:

a. Visibility of the built portion of the dude ranch from Upper Los Berros Road shall be ~~eliminated~~ avoided or minimized to the greatest extent ~~possible~~feasible through setbacks from Upper Los Berros Road, site design and retention of existing vegetation. The development shall not rely solely on architectural design and/or new landscaping to reduce visibility.
b. Access roads and entry points to the dude ranch shall be designed and aligned to reduce their visibility from Upper Los Berros Road including required grading, and minimize views to the interior developed portion of the dude ranch.
c. A visual impact report shall be prepared for the dude ranch that assesses the project's adherence to the above standards, identifies potential impacts, and develops appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Residual Impact With implementation of this mitigation, in combination with mitigation measures identified in the subsequent visual analysis of the CUP, impacts due to the visibility of the dude ranch would be considered *less than significant with mitigation, Class II*.

6. Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative section addresses visual quality in two ways: 1) the combined effect of each of the visible project features when seen together as a single project; and 2) how this project may

contribute to a change in visual quality when viewed along with other existing and reasonable future development in the viewshed area.

a. Views from Highway 101

The Highway 101 corridor through southern San Luis Obispo County has undergone visual changes within the last several years with new residential and commercial development. These changes have resulted in an increased built-character through the corridor. The visibility of this project would contribute greatly to an emerging perception that the Highway 101 corridor is undergoing a visual change from rural to urban development. Visibility of the anticipated large-scale homes would create a continuation of the hillside development visible on the Temettate Ridge to the south. This project would further blur the visual distinction between communities and would degrade the unique rural character valued in county planning policy. As development proposals continue to be advanced between Arroyo Grande and Nipomo, the visual benefits of the remaining open space and agricultural land increase in terms of preserving county scenic goals.

The current proposal generally places the residential lots on top of intermediate knolls and landforms, and at the upper elevations of critical viewshed backdrops. In order to improve outward views from the lots as well as residential marketability, the rural visual character of the Highway 101 corridor and the community would be sacrificed. Although the project is being promoted as an attempt to "protect the rural character," the visual effect would be quite the opposite. The casual observer traveling the Highway 101 corridor would see several dozen large-scale residences and a multitude of related site improvements scattered throughout the hills that were once strictly open space and agriculture. Proposed pole-type street lights and residential lighting would continue this rural character degradation into the nighttime hours.

Regardless of the mitigation measures recommended in this study, including proposed lot reconfiguration recommendations, the project would remain recognizable as a "large residence" hillside development as seen from Highway 101 (refer to Figures V.A.-3 through V.A.-20).

Newly planted landscaping was observed adjacent to Highway 101 along a portion of the project frontage. The planting included mostly non-native species that may eventually reduce potentially objectionable views to the project site from that one location. The purpose of this planting was not identified, however if it applies, the value of pre-project screen planting should consider the following: 1) The impermanence of landscape planting and the potential for plant mortality, alteration or removal, and 2) County Open Space Policy 25 that states if screen planting must be used, it should be "native vegetation that is compatible with the scenic resource being protected and does not obstruct public vistas." The existing new planting along Highway 101 frontage would at maturity obstruct quality public views of the hillside backdrop and the SRA to the east.

b. Views from Upper Los Berros Road

Views of the project from Upper Los Berros Road would be more isolated and from closer range than those from Highway 101. The viewer along Upper Los Berros Road would not perceive the full extent of the residential sub-clusters throughout the project, but would see a series of exclusive recreation-oriented centers along an otherwise small-scale country back road. The

architecture, activities, entry gates, signage, and other amenities would by design convey the impression of wealth, which in turn would cause a fundamental shift in the visual perception of the corridor. A large number of the potential viewers along Upper Los Berros Road would be residents of the development and are expected have a low degree of sensitivity regarding alteration of the existing visual setting. The remainder of Upper Los Berros Road users would likely notice a substantial change in visual character, regardless of the project's ranch-style architecture. Some degree of rural character loss would occur even with project design efforts and implementation of measures recommended in this study (refer to Figures V.A.-21 through V.A.-35).

This section identifies a range of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures addressing the aesthetic effects of the project. Because of the large scale of the project site, particularly as seen from Highway 101, much of the public perception would be based on the combined visibility of the project as a whole. Because of the viewing distances involved from much of the highway corridor, the value of any single recommended mitigation would be most realized when seen in conjunction with implementation of all the other mitigation measures. For example, under most circumstances, a mitigation measure to limit the height of any one single residence may not provide great aesthetic benefit. However when applied to an entire group of residences, the benefits are apparent and visual impacts reduced. Because of the expanse of project elements over a wide extent of the viewshed, the noticeability of both individual and combined project elements would define the extent of visual impact. As a result, the cumulative benefit of all of the individual mitigation measures is critical.

AES Impact 11~~8~~ **The visibility of individual project elements in the context of emerging development along the Highway 101 corridor would result in direct and indirect long term adverse cumulative impacts.**

AES/mm-25~~6~~ Prior to approval of the subdivision improvement plan, the applicant shall modify the project to comply with all adopted mitigation measures.

Residual Impact Mitigation measures specific to the proposed project include recommendations to modify the proposed project design, including relocation of lots, relocation of building envelopes, and relocation of main and minor internal access roads. Implementation of these measures would mitigate the proposed project's significant contribution to cumulative impacts to less than significant; however, the County cannot include design changes to a tentative map as conditions of approval. Therefore, this cumulative impact would be considered *significant and unavoidable, Class I.*

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KVA-1: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.6 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-3

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-1: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.6 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-4

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KVA-1: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.6 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-5

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KVA-2: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.3 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-6

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-2: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.3 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-7

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KVA-2: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.3 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-8

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KVA-3: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.2 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-9

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-3: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.2 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-10

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KVA-3: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Southbound Approximately 0.2 Miles North of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-11

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KVA-4: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately 0.6 Miles South of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-12

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-4: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately 0.6 Miles South of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-13

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KVA-4: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately 0.6 Miles South of the Winery Entrance
FIGURE V.A.-14

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KVA-5: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Northbound at Los Berros Road Undercrossing
FIGURE V.A.-15

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-5: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound at Los Berros Road Undercrossing
FIGURE V.A.-16

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KVA-5: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound at Los Berros Road Undercrossing
FIGURE V.A.-17

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KVA-6: Existing View
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately One Mile North of Tefft Street Overcrossing
FIGURE V.A.-18

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-6: View of Proposed Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately One Mile North of Tefft Street Overcrossing
FIGURE V.A.-19

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KVA-6: View of Mitigated Project
View from Highway 101 Northbound Approximately One Mile North of Tefft Street Overcrossing
FIGURE V.A.-20

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KVA-7: Existing View
View from Dana Foothill Road Northbound
FIGURE V.A.-21

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KVA-7: View of Proposed Project
View from Dana Foothill Road Northbound
FIGURE V.A.-22

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KVA-7: View of Mitigated Project
View from Dana Foothill Road Northbound
FIGURE V.A.-23

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KVA-8: Existing View
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.3 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-24

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-8: View of Proposed Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.3 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-25

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KVA-8: View of Mitigated Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.3 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-26

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KVA-9: Existing View
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.8 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking West
FIGURE V.A.-27

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Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-9: View of Proposed Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.8 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking West
FIGURE V.A.-28

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KVA-9: View of Mitigated Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 0.8 miles East of Dana Foothill Road Looking West
FIGURE V.A.-29

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KVA-10: Existing View
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 1 Mile East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-30

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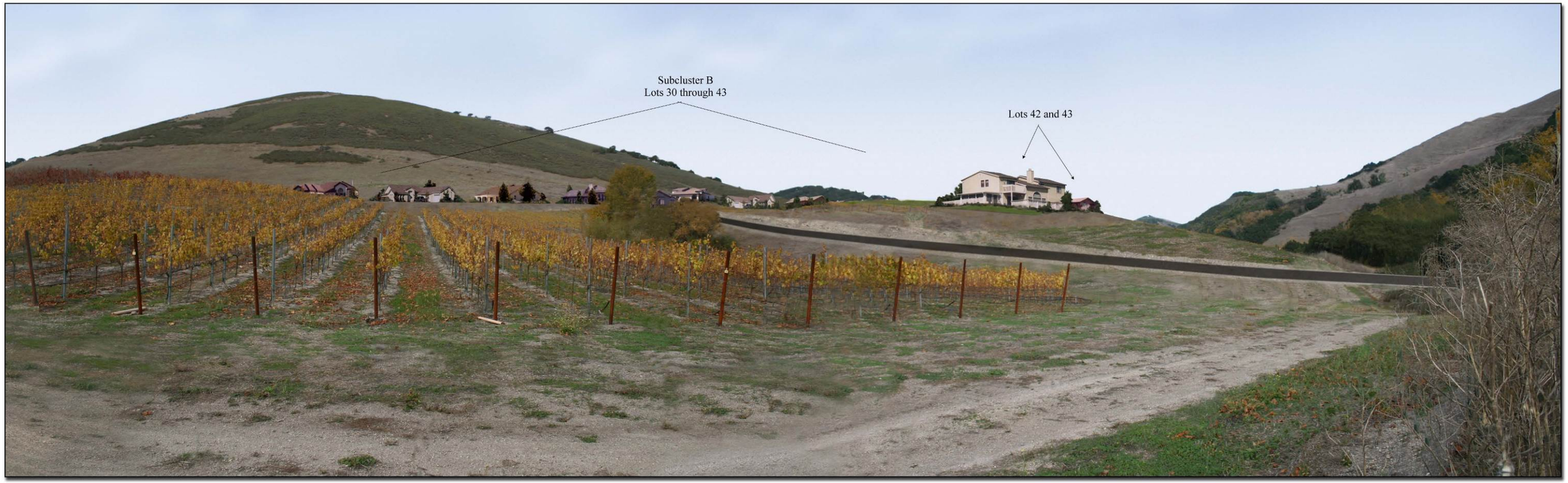

Note: Photographs do not represent the same level of visual acuity as the human eye and as a result tend to understate the anticipated perception of impacts.

KVA-10: View of Proposed Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 1 Mile East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-31

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KVA-10: View of Mitigated Project
View from Upper Los Berros Road Approximately 1 Mile East of Dana Foothill Road Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-32

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Ranch Headquarters Project Site
View from Upper Los Berros Looking Northwest
FIGURE V.A.-33

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~~Equestrian Center Project Site~~
View from Upper Los Berros Looking Northeast
FIGURE V.A.-34

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Dude Ranch Future Project Site
View from Upper Los Berros Looking East
FIGURE V.A.-35

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