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## **5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE**

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This section describes the existing visual character and aesthetic resources in the Planning Area and evaluates the potential visual impacts implementing the General Plan. The impact analysis focuses on changes in the existing visual character and the potential effects of added lighting and sources of glare. It evaluates the effect of existing City regulations and proposed General Plan policies intended to reduce or avoid these impacts. The analysis is based on the existing visual character of the Planning Area; a review of the Project description (Section 2.0 of this Draft EIR); City regulations; and the proposed General Plan policies related to aesthetics, light, and glare.

### 5.1.1 EXISTING SETTING

#### VISUAL CHARACTER

The visual character of a landscape is determined by how the form, line, color, and texture of the components of an area create patterns of scale, diversity, and continuity. When changes create a disruption in these patterns, they may detract from visual character.

The Planning Area is set in the Sacramento Valley and contains mostly flat land with no significant land forms, offering a wide view of the surrounding region. The visual character of the Planning Area generally consists of suburban development, including single and multifamily homes set along wide meandering streets lined with sidewalks, commercial and office uses set in large retail and business centers, and smaller strip malls, parks, and public spaces, as well as roadways and other infrastructure. There are also scattered vacant parcels and open agricultural land. The western and central portions of the Planning Area are more urbanized. The eastern portions and the areas south and west of the City boundaries predominantly contain rural residential uses surrounded by agricultural land and natural grasslands, with riparian habitat areas to the southeast along the Cosumnes River. State Route (SR) 99 bisects the City, extending north to south and providing access to the primary commercial areas along Bond Road/Laguna Boulevard and Elk Grove Boulevard. Interstate 5 (I-5) also runs in a north-south direction along the City's western boundary.

#### Land Types

The City has a combination of rural and developed land. Each land type has a visual character and contains potential scenic resources, discussed below.

#### Agricultural Lands

The Planning Area contains a variety of agricultural uses, including row crops, field crops, orchards, vineyards, and livestock. These open landscapes provide a visual resource that is of high aesthetic quality and characteristic of Elk Grove's agricultural heritage. Much of the agricultural land is in the northeastern, southern, and southwestern parts of the Planning Area. Further description of the agricultural resources in the Planning Area can be found in Section 5.2, Agricultural Resources.

#### Rural Development Lands

Rural development lands are primarily located in the eastern section of the Planning Area and contain low-density residential (one- and two-story) units, annual grasslands, and agricultural fields.

## **5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE**

---

### Developed Lands

The Planning Area has a variety of buildings, farms, structures, and other built environment features that contribute to the character of the area. Within this built environment is one property listed in the National Register of Historic Places (the Erhardt House/Jungkeit Dairy in the East Franklin neighborhood) and one site listed in the California Register of Historic Resources (the first County branch library in California in Old Town Elk Grove), as well various structures in Old Town which contribute to Elk Grove Historic District in Old Town. Another five sites are listed as Properties of Historic Interest by the State. Additional sites around the City have been identified for further evaluation for possible listing on a local list of historic properties pursuant to Chapter 7 of the Elk Grove Municipal Code). Section 5.5, Cultural Resources, provides a more detailed description of the Planning Area's historic resources.

### **Areas of Visual Identity**

The Planning Area contains areas with distinct identities, including the communities of Sheldon, Franklin, and Old Town Elk Grove.

#### Sheldon

The community of Sheldon is typified by agricultural and rural residential areas with commercial and residential developments interspersed, but mostly located along Grant Line Road and Pleasant Grove School Road. Many buildings in this area exhibit rural and historic architecture and were either built in the late 1800s to early 1900s or in the architectural style of this period. Large agricultural fields, very low density or rural residential development, and natural landscapes contribute to the visual character of the Sheldon area.

#### Franklin

Franklin is located around the intersection of Franklin Boulevard and Bilby Road. It was originally a township founded in 1856, and grew around the Franklin House, a stagecoach stop for those traveling between Sacramento and Stockton. Much of the original agricultural land is still in use and surrounds commercial and light industrial development. Franklin Elementary School is in the western portion of the developed area, with Franklin Cemetery to the east. Commercial buildings in the area exhibit historical architectural traits, and are mostly clustered along Franklin Boulevard south of Bilby Road. Low-density housing is located to the north, between Bilby Road and Kenneth Way. This area has a mixture of older and newer housing with many trees.

#### Old Town Elk Grove

Old Town is the historic center of the City. It is located along Elk Grove Boulevard, between Elk Grove Florin Road and Waterman Road, and features several historic buildings that are still in use. To preserve the historic and visual character of Old Town, the area was placed into a Special Planning Area (SPA) in August 2005 (last amended August 2014). The Old Town SPA, which is part of the City's Zoning regulations (EGMC Title 23), provides design standards and guidelines for development and redevelopment of the area. The historic nature of Old Town is discussed further in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources.

The Old Town area is mostly commercial, with some residences and a library. The architecture is a mixture of historic and historically inspired, interspersed with more contemporary commercial buildings. The area contains street-oriented storefronts with parking either in the front or rear, trees and landscaping, and some single-family residences.

### SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources are defined as significant visual features that contribute to the overall visual character of the area. They can be land form elements, such as hillsides or valleys; land cover components, such as rivers, streams, and forests; or areas that are unique and valuable to the community, such as parks and preserves.

#### **Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge**

The Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is located southwest of the City, approximately 2.5 miles from the Planning Area boundary. It straddles I-5 and extends to the south for 14 miles from the Town of Freeport west of Franklin Boulevard. The Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge contains 18,212 acres of natural habitat and agricultural land. The refuge supports migratory birds, a great blue heron rookery, a warm water fishery, and several local endangered, threatened, and special-status species.

#### **Cosumnes River Preserve**

The Cosumnes River Preserve is a 50,000-acre preserve along the Cosumnes River, south of the Planning Area. While not located in the Planning Area itself, it is visible from the southern portion and accessible to the community. It includes a riparian corridor along the Cosumnes River, floodplain, wetlands, and vernal pool grasslands. The preserve contains over 11 miles of hiking trails and provides valuable wildlife habitat. In addition, it contains ranches and farmlands that sustain native plant and wildlife species.

#### **Parks and Open Space**

The Planning Area contains numerous parks and open space areas that contribute to its visual character. These areas are operated and maintained primarily by the CCSD and provide recreation, conservation, water quality, and visual benefits. The largest park is Elk Grove Regional Park, a 127-acre open space area in central Elk Grove. It contains a variety of amenities, including an aquatic center, youth center, natural areas, sports fields, a picnic area, and a lake with two islands. A community icon, the park's open space and natural and man-made features are valuable to the City's sense of community.

#### **Lakes, Rivers, and Creeks**

Numerous rivers and creeks are in or near the Planning Area, such as the Sacramento River to the west, the Cosumnes River to the south, and Deer Creek, Franklin Creek, and Laguna Creek, which all cross the Planning Area. These streams and rivers support riparian habitats that contribute to the natural scenic views of the area. Laguna Creek runs through Elk Grove, provides aesthetic and recreational benefits, and is accessed through existing bicycle and pedestrian trails. Laguna Lake and other man-made lakes are located in neighborhoods in the Laguna Creek section of the City, west of SR 99.

### SCENIC VISTAS AND CORRIDORS

Scenic vistas and corridors are designated by local, regional, or state jurisdictions to identify and preserve areas of significant aesthetic value. These designated areas generally have development and design requirements pertaining to the preservation of views, minimization of visual impact, and visual integration into the overall landscape.

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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### Vistas

Areas may be designated as a scenic vista by jurisdictions in local and regional plans. There are currently no officially designated scenic vistas in the Planning Area.

### Corridors

Scenic corridors are designated under the California Scenic Highway Program to preserve the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to and visible from highways. There are currently no designated scenic corridors within or visible from the Planning Area. However, a portion of SR 160, 1 mile west of the current City limits, is an officially designated scenic corridor.

There are three sections of classified landscaped freeway in the Planning Area: one along SR 99 and two along I-5. This classification, which is separate from the scenic corridor designation, identifies sections of freeway with plantings that meet the criteria of the State's Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations, Sections 2500–2513. The landscaping assists in the control of outdoor advertising displays.

### LIGHT AND GLARE

Light and glare may be caused by street and parking lot lighting, building or landscape lighting, illuminated signs, recreational facilities, and to some extent interior lighting of residential and nonresidential buildings. Materials such as glass, metal, and polished surfaces can contribute to glare. Excessive light and glare can interfere with the scenic quality of an area and contribute to light pollution. In the Planning Area, light and glare are concentrated in the western and central portions where commercial and more densely developed residential areas are located.

### 5.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### STATE

##### Caltrans Scenic Highway Program

The Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 to protect and enhance the natural beauty of California highways and corridors. A scenic highway may be any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that has views of exceptional scenic quality. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) designates a highway as eligible for scenic highway status by evaluating the amount of natural landscape visible from the highway and how much development intrudes on the view. Once highways are designated as eligible by Caltrans, the local governing body may apply for scenic highway approval and adopt a Corridor Protection Program, following which the highway may be officially designated a Scenic Highway.

#### LOCAL

##### City of Elk Grove Zoning Code

The Elk Grove Zoning Code (Municipal Code Title 23) provides development standards that address building mass, setbacks, landscaping, lighting, and signage to achieve an aesthetically pleasing appearance. Chapter 23.56, Lighting, addresses lighting specifically, which would reduce the potential for local light and glare, as well as contribution to skyglow. Section 23.56.030 contains requirements for shielding of fixtures and levels of illumination, as well as

restrictions on fixture heights and hours of illumination for multifamily and nonresidential uses. Municipal Code Section 23.56.040 prohibits certain types of lighting, such as neon tubing or band lighting along building structures, searchlights, illumination of entire buildings, roof-mounted lights (except for security purposes with motion detection), and any light that interferes with a traffic signal or other necessary safety or emergency light.

### **City of Elk Grove Design Guidelines**

In 2003, the City Council adopted revisions to the Municipal Code establishing a Design Review process for new development and redevelopment of properties. This requirement is currently enumerated in Municipal Code Section 23.16.080, Design Review, and has been updated several times, as recently as 2017. Adoption of the Design Review process was accompanied by adoption of the corresponding Elk Grove Design Guidelines (City of Elk Grove 2003), which were amended as recently as 2015. Section 23.16.080 establishes an expanded design review process for all development Citywide requiring additional site and design consideration beyond conformance with minimum standards of the Zoning Code. The Design Guidelines include design provisions for site planning, architecture, lighting, and landscaping, as well as provisions regarding the preservation of natural features and compatibility with surrounding property. The City strongly encourages project design that incorporates existing natural features of project areas, including but not limited to trees/tree clusters, topography, and creeks. The guidelines encourage the use of landscaping to reduce potential impacts of lighting from parking areas on both the project area and on adjacent vacant land. In addition, the guidelines specify that perimeter landscaping be designed to maximize screening and buffering between adjacent uses. In addition to these Citywide guidelines, supplemental guidelines have been established for the Laguna Ridge and Southeast Policy Areas.

### **5.1.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

#### STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The impact analysis provided below is based on the following CEQA Guidelines Appendix G thresholds of significance. A project is considered to have a significant effect on the environment if it will:

- 1) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- 2) Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- 3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- 4) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

#### METHODOLOGY

The following evaluation of the proposed Project's potential aesthetic, light, and glare impacts is based on a review of relevant planning documents, including the City's current General Plan, Design Guidelines, and Zoning Code; review of aerial and street view photographs of the

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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Planning Area; and review of available information regarding designated scenic resources and highways in the Planning Area.

It is important to note that aesthetics is an abstract issue; one person may consider a particular feature to be a scenic resource, and another person might disagree. Similarly, what one person may feel is a significant adverse impact on scenic resources may be an improvement in visual character to another person. Due to the inherently subjective nature of this type of analysis, this section assumes that any permanent substantial change in the existing visual character of an area is considered a significant adverse impact.

### General Plan Policies and Standards

The proposed Project contains the following policies and standards for managing future development in the City to protect visual resources.

**Policy LU-1-5:** To support intensification of identified growth areas, restrict new development on properties in rural and transitional areas.

**Policy LU-1-6:** Support the development of neighborhood-serving commercial uses adjacent to residential areas and that provide quality, convenient, and community-serving retail choices in a manner that does not impact neighborhood character.

**Policy LU-2-4:** Require new infill development projects to be compatible with the character of surrounding areas and neighborhoods, support increased transit use, promote pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and increase housing diversity.

**Policy LU-5-2:** Provide and implement regulations that encourage high-quality signage, ensure that businesses and organizations can effectively communicate through sign displays, promote wayfinding, achieve visually vibrant streetscapes, and control excessive visual clutter.

**Policy LU-5-3:** Reduce the unsightly appearance of overhead and aboveground utilities by requiring the undergrounding of appropriate services within the urban areas of the City.

**Standard LU-5-3.a:** New utility facilities should be located underground to the extent possible. Facilities to be placed underground should include electrical transformers (where consistent with the guidelines of the electrical utility), water backflow preventers, and similar items.

**Standard LU-5-3.b:** Require that existing overhead utility facilities be undergrounded as a condition of project approval. This shall include electrical service lines under 69kV. Electrical service lines of 69 kV and higher are encouraged to be undergrounded.

**Policy LU-5-4:** Require high standards of architectural and site design, and apply strong design controls for all development projects, both public and private, for the enhancement and development of community character and for the proper transition between areas with different types of land uses. Design standards shall address new construction and the reuse and remodeling of existing buildings.

**Standard LU-5-4.a:** Nonglare glass shall be used in all nonresidential buildings to minimize and reduce impacts from glare. Buildings that are allowed to use semi-reflective glass must be oriented so that the reflection of sunlight is minimized. This requirement shall be included in subsequent development applications.

**Policy LU-5-6:** Improve the visual appearance of business areas and districts by applying high standards for architectural design, landscaping, and signs for new development and the reuse or remodeling of existing buildings.

**Policy LU-6-1:** Maintain and improve the aesthetic quality and architectural diversity of the Old Town historical district.

**Policy NR-1-8:** Encourage development clustering where it would facilitate on-site protection of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, stream corridors, scenic areas, or other appropriate features such as active agricultural uses and historic or cultural resources under the following conditions and requirements. Except as otherwise provided, clustering shall not be allowed in the Sheldon Rural Area.

- Urban infrastructure capacity is available for urban use. If clustering is allowed in the Rural Area, those properties shall be exempt from providing urban water and sewer connections in accordance with the policies of the Sheldon/Rural Area Community Plan (see Chapter 9).
- On-site resource protection is appropriate and consistent with other General Plan policies.
- The architecture and scale of development are appropriate for and consistent with the intended character of the area.
- Development rights for the open space area are permanently dedicated and appropriate long-term management is provided for by a public agency or another appropriate entity.

**Policy NR-2-3:** Ensure that trees that function as an important part of the City's or a neighborhood's aesthetic character or as natural habitat on public and private land are retained or replaced to the extent possible during the development of new structures, roadways (public and private, including roadway widening), parks, drainage channels, and other uses and structures.

### PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Scenic Vistas and Highways (Standards of Significance 1 and 2)

**Impact 5.1.1** There are no designated scenic vistas or highways within view of the Planning Area. There would be **no impact**.

No scenic vistas or designated scenic highways are within or visible from the Planning Area (Caltrans 2011). Therefore, there is **no impact**.

#### Mitigation Measures

None required.

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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### Degradation in Existing Visual Character (Standard of Significance 3)

**Impact 5.1.2** Implementation of the General Plan will encourage new development and redevelopment activities that could degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact. The Planning Area contains numerous areas with important visual character, including agricultural and rural areas; the communities of Sheldon, Franklin, and Old Town; various parks and open spaces, and waterways including lakes, rivers and creeks, and surrounding habitat, including the nearby scenic resource areas of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and Cosumnes River Preserve. Implementation of the General Plan would change the visual character of the Planning Area through intensification of urban uses within the existing City limits and introduction of urban uses within the Planning Area.

Within the existing City limits, the central and western areas are predominately urban in character with some vacant or underutilized areas planned for development. Examples of these vacant or underutilized areas include, but are not limited to, the undeveloped areas of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan, Southeast Policy Area, and the Sheldon Farms property at Sheldon Road and Bruceville Road. The northeastern area of the City is characterized by the Sheldon/Rural Area and is predominately developed with agricultural and rural residential uses on a minimum lot size of two acres. Development under the proposed Project would continue this use pattern and the current character of area within the existing City limits would not be substantially changed by subsequent development.

Land use designation changes are not proposed for the communities of Sheldon, Franklin, and Old Town, but buildout of the Planning Area as envisioned in the proposed Project would result in new development in currently undeveloped and rural areas and an increase in density in urbanized areas through infill development on currently vacant parcels. Such development would convert the visual character of these areas from agricultural fields, natural habitat, and vacant parcels to an urban/suburban developed character. Views of these undeveloped areas would be replaced by views of houses, office and commercial buildings, light industrial complexes, public facilities, and associated improvements including roads, parking lots, fencing, utilities, and ornamental landscaping.

The southern and eastern portions of the Planning Area, which includes the Study Areas, are predominately large lots and are rural/agricultural in nature. Implementation of the General Plan would result in the conversion of many of these rural areas into suburban and urban development. Over time, implementation of the General Plan would change the visual character of the area into an urban landscape from a rural landscape of relatively flat agricultural areas interspersed with native trees and drainage channels.

### Existing Regulations and Standards and Proposed General Plan Policies That Provide Mitigation

Development within the City is subject to discretionary Design Review pursuant to Municipal Code Section 23.16.080 (Design Review). All new development in the Planning Area would be required to comply with the City's Design Guidelines, which address site planning, architecture, lighting, landscaping, and preservation of natural features. In addition, new development in the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan (LRSP) area and the Southeast Policy area would be required to comply with the City's supplemental design guidelines developed specifically for those areas. These guidelines are intended to support development with visual character that is consistent with existing surrounding development and with the City's long-term vision for project design.

Proposed policies from the General Plan, identified below, are intended to protect the natural features and transition land uses with appropriate density and intensity from rural areas to urbanized areas and provide for the orderly development of the area.

Land Use Goal LU-3 (Expansion with Purpose) and corresponding policies, provide a process for future development. Included in these policies is LU-3-1 (and subsequent discussion), which established organizing principles for orderly development of the Study Areas. Policy LU-3-11 establishes land use programs for each of the four Study Areas, which guide the balance between land development and conservation in each Study Area.

Proposed goals and policies, including but not limited to Goal LU-5 (Consistent, High Quality Urban Design) and Policies LU-5-1 through LU-5-12 would ensure the compatibility of adjacent land uses, protection of residential neighborhoods from incompatible activities, and buffering of incompatible uses to retain the existing community character. Further, the proposed Project establishes land use development standards for all land use designations, including standards relative to allowed density and intensity, which would limit the maximum allowed development within a particular designation.

In addition, the proposed Project includes numerous policies to both protect the existing visual character of the Planning Area and to ensure that new development is well designed and cohesive with the surrounding area. For example, Policies LU-1-5, NR-1-8, and NR-2-3 discourage new development in rural and transitional areas and encourage development clustering where possible to protect scenic resources, including trees. Policy LU-6-1 would protect the unique aesthetic quality and architecture found in the Old Town area. In addition, the East, South, and West Study Areas are proposed to have agricultural buffers to provide a visual separation between future growth areas and the active agricultural uses outside the Planning Area (see proposed General Plan Figures 4-6, 4-7, and 4-8). Additional policies in the Natural Resources section (e.g., NR-1-4 and NR-1-8) require the protection of stream corridors, wetland features, native trees, and other natural resources.

### Conclusion

Compliance with the City's Design Guidelines, supplemental guidelines, and proposed General Plan policies would guide future projects to provide a quality visual character of future development. However, buildout of the Planning Area as proposed would still cause conversion from the current rural/natural character in the Study Areas to a more urbanized character. This conversion would be substantial and permanent and would be a significant impact. There are no feasible mitigation measures beyond those policies and standards included in the proposed Project that would further lessen these impacts or reduce them to less than significant. Therefore, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

### Mitigation Measures

No additional feasible mitigation available beyond compliance with the City's Design Guidelines, supplemental guidelines, and proposed General Plan policies.

### **Light and Glare (Standard of Significance 4)**

**Impact 5.1.3** Implementation of the General Plan would create new sources of daytime glare, and would change nighttime lighting and illumination levels associated with new and redevelopment activities in the Planning Area, which would contribute to skyglow. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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Implementation of the General Plan would introduce new sources of daytime glare and substantially change nighttime lighting and illumination levels in the Planning Area. Lighting nuisances typically are categorized by the following:

- 1) Glare – Intense light that shines directly, or is reflected from a surface into a person’s eyes;
- 2) “Skyglow”/Nighttime Illumination – Artificial lighting from urbanized sources that alters the rural landscape in sufficient quantity to cause lighting of the nighttime sky and reduction of visibility of stars and other astronomical features; and
- 3) “Spillover” Lighting – Artificial lighting that spills over onto adjacent properties, which could interrupt sleeping patterns or cause other nuisances to neighboring residents.

The main sources of daytime glare in the existing City limits portion of the Planning Area are from sunlight reflecting from structures with reflective surfaces such as windows. The proposed General Plan would provide for various densities of commercial, office, recreation and other public development containing structures and other potential sources of glare. Building materials (i.e., reflective glass and polished surfaces) are the most substantial sources of glare. The amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight, which is more acute at sunrise and sunset because the angle of the sun is lower during these times. Implementation of the Project would increase the amount of daytime glare in existing developed areas through additional development. It would add new sources of daytime glare in new development areas (the Study Areas) that currently have few sources of glare due to lack of existing structures.

A source of glare during the nighttime hours is artificial light. The sources of new and increased nighttime lighting and illumination include, but are not limited to, new residential developments, lighting from nonresidential uses, lights associated with vehicular travel (i.e., car headlights), street lighting, parking lot lights, and security related lighting for nonresidential uses. Increased nighttime lighting and illumination could result in adverse effects to adjacent land uses through the “spilling over” of light into these areas and “sky glow” conditions.

Development would also introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and illumination into the undeveloped or underutilized portions of the Planning Area. Additional nighttime lighting associated with future development in the Planning Area, particularly in the Study Areas where there is little nighttime lighting, would also contribute to skyglow conditions, in which artificial lights produce a diffuse glow over cities and towns that can be seen from large distances. For example, additional skyglow could be visible to residents in existing rural areas east of SR 99 with unobstructed views of the Planning Area (i.e., areas that currently appear “dark” to those observers would no longer appear dark). Skyglow effects may also be subjectively perceived as more prominent in communities such as Galt to the south because the source of nighttime lighting would be closer to the community. Increased skyglow resulting from new sources of nighttime lighting in the Planning Area could further diminish visibility of stars and other astronomical features within the Planning Area as well as in the region. Thus, the effects of skyglow could extend beyond the Planning Area, affecting rural areas and other jurisdictions.

### Existing Regulations and Standards and Proposed General Plan Policies That Provide Mitigation

Daytime and nighttime glare can be reduced or eliminated by using appropriate building materials and architectural coatings, roof overhangs, and proper structural design. Municipal Code Chapter 23.56 addresses standards for lighting as part of new development, including requirements that lighting is constructed with shielding to reduce glare so that the light source is

not visible from within any adjoining residential dwelling. This chapter also establishes required levels of illumination for parking lots, driveways, pedestrian walkways, and other areas of new development, and requires limitations on light trespass onto abutting property. Further, the City's Design Guidelines require that exterior building and site lighting be designed so that light is not directed off site and the light source is shielded downward from direct off-site viewing.

Proposed Land Use Policy LU-5-4 and Standard LU-5-4.a requires that nonglare glass be used in all nonresidential buildings to reduce impacts from glare. Standard LU-5-4.a also requires that buildings that are allowed to use semi-reflective glass must be oriented so that the reflection of sunlight is minimized.

### Conclusion

Implementation of provisions in the Municipal Code and proposed General Plan standards would reduce localized effects of light and glare, such as spillover light, associated with development of individual projects within the Planning Area. No additional mitigation would be required for this effect.

However, while the Municipal Code and proposed General Plan standards would reduce light trespass and pollution of the night sky, the addition of over 48,000 new dwelling units and areas of nonresidential development and associated infrastructure that would occur Citywide, with most of the new development occurring in the West and South Study Areas where there is currently no lighting, would create substantial new sources of light throughout the Planning Area. These new light sources would increase the skyglow effect within the City and increase the area of skyglow effects outside of the Planning Area. There are no feasible mitigation measures that would further lessen these impacts or reduce them to less than significant Citywide. Therefore, the Project's contribution of light and glare from future development throughout the City and its effects on skyglow would be **significant and unavoidable**.

### Mitigation Measures

No additional feasible mitigation available beyond compliance with the City's Design Guidelines, supplemental guidelines, and proposed General Plan policies.

## 5.1.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### CUMULATIVE SETTING

The cumulative setting for aesthetics, light, and glare impacts is Sacramento County, including Elk Grove, Sacramento, Rancho Cordova, and Folsom, and all existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development projects within these jurisdictions. This includes development in the City of Elk Grove as well as the general plans of each jurisdiction and other large regional projects such as Folsom Ranch. The Capital SouthEast Connector project is a planned 35-mile parkway that would span from I-5, south of Elk Grove, to Highway 50 in El Dorado County.

Sacramento County includes several cities and unincorporated communities containing urban and suburban development with an array of residential, commercial, industrial, and civic land uses surrounded by open space and agricultural land. The Planning Area is situated in southern Sacramento County. While the western and central portions of the Planning Area are generally developed with urban uses, the eastern and southern portions, which include the proposed Study Areas, are primarily undeveloped and characterized by agricultural land and rural residential uses.

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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The Planning Area contains several planned and approved development projects, including the LRSP, Sterling Meadows, Elk Grove Promenade, the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan, and the City's proposed Multi-Sport Park Complex in the Study Area south of Grant Line Road. The LRSP has been approved and is in the process of being developed. A 36-acre portion of the Elk Grove Promenade will be developed with the Wilton Rancheria Casino, a 12-story resort and casino with 300 rooms and 30,000 square feet of event space. Other projects, including the City's Multi-Sport Park Complex, are in various stages of approval. Most of the necessary infrastructure, such as lighting, roadways, and traffic signals, needed to accommodate those developments has already been constructed. These projects would add residential and commercial development to the area, changing the visual character and creating new sources of light and glare.

The impact analysis presented below focuses on the Project's contribution to cumulative visual changes in the cumulative setting.

### CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Because there would be no impacts associated with scenic vistas or state scenic highways, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative impact; therefore, no further evaluation is required.

### Cumulative Visual Resource Impacts (Standard of Significance 3)

**Impact 5.1.4** Implementation of the proposed Project, in addition to other reasonably foreseeable projects in the region, would introduce new development into undeveloped agricultural and rural areas that would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to impacts on visual character.

Continued urbanization of the region in accordance with approved plans, together with the proposed development projects described above, would convert agricultural and open space land to urban uses with residential and nonresidential buildings and associated roadways and other infrastructure. Although individual development projects would be responsible for incorporating mitigation to minimize their visual impacts, the net result would be a general conversion of areas with an open, rural character to a more urban and developed character. The change in character associated with this development would be a significant cumulative impact.

The proposed Project would be a continuation of the overall urbanization of the City and would extend the City's developed area along the urban edge. While it is the City's intention to develop these areas, development under the proposed Project, in combination with other development in the region, would permanently alter the character of lands with rural and agricultural visual character to urban developed uses. Therefore, the Project's contribution to the change in character is **cumulatively considerable** and **significant and unavoidable**.

### Mitigation Measures

Compliance with the City's Design Guidelines, supplemental guidelines, and proposed General Plan policies would guide future projects to provide a quality visual character of future development. However, even with implementation of these guidelines and policies, future development would substantially change the visual character of the Planning Area and the Project's contribution to the urbanization of the region. No further mitigation is available to reduce the Project's contribution to the regional change in visual character.

### Cumulative Light and Glare Impacts (Standard of Significance 4)

**Impact 5.1.5** Implementation of the proposed Project, in addition to other reasonably foreseeable projects in the region, would introduce new development into undeveloped agricultural and rural areas, increasing nighttime lighting and daytime glare and contributing to regional skyglow. This is a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

Continued urbanization of the region in accordance with applicable land use plans, together with the proposed development projects described above, would introduce sources of light and glare to areas that currently contain few light sources. Development of the Capital SouthEast Connector project, as well as development in Rancho Cordova, the Delta Shores area of the City of Sacramento, and Folsom Ranch, would add substantial sources of light and glare. Overall, this development would increase skyglow and other nighttime illumination within the region into areas that currently experience little to no skyglow. The change in amount of light and glare associated with this development would be a significant cumulative impact.

While future development projects in the City would be required to comply with the design guidelines and with Municipal Code Chapter 23.56 for lighting standards and General Plan Standard LU5-4. a, which would reduce light and glare impacts, the adverse effects of adding new light and glare sources to areas that currently have little to no on-site lighting would substantially contribute to the cumulative impact. These impacts cannot be mitigated to less than significant, and this impact would be **cumulatively considerable** and **significant and unavoidable**.

#### Mitigation Measures

All new development in the Planning Area would be required to comply with existing code requirements regulating lighting and glare and proposed General Plan Standard LU-5-4.a would further reduce the potential for glare. While implementation of existing codes and the proposed standard would likely reduce impacts of individual development projects to less than significant, the effect of light and glare from new development Citywide would substantially increase. No further mitigation is available to reduce the Project's contribution to increased light and glare in the region.

## 5.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT, AND GLARE

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### REFERENCES

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