

## 4.1 AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES

This section evaluates the Project's potential impacts to aesthetic and visual resources within and adjacent to the Project site. Figure 4.1-1 shows the locations from and directions in which all subsequent photos shown in this section were taken.

### 4.1.1 Setting

**a. Visual Character and Scenic Resources.** The Project site is a 17.36 gross acre area of undeveloped land surrounded by a mixture of vacant lots, multi-family residences, and industrial buildings in the City of Goleta. This site is bounded to the north by the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks and the southbound U.S. 101 on-ramp from S. Los Carneros Road; to the east by one- and two-story white industrial buildings with surface parking lots; to the south by vacant lots across Calle Koral and by two-story residences painted in earth tones at the Willow Springs Apartments south of Camino Vista; and to the west, beyond S. Los Carneros Road, by vacant land currently under construction for 460 residential units.

Figure 4.1-1 shows the locations of representative photos of the Project site, and Figures 4.1-2a and 4.1-2b present these photos, which show the primary visual features on the Project site and in its surroundings. Native shrubs and ruderal vegetation predominate on-site. Providing a visual contrast with this landscape are temporary storage containers for construction debris and a staging area for construction and site maintenance located at the northwestern part of the Project site. The interior of the Project site is partially enclosed by a chain-link fence. A stand of eucalyptus trees is visible adjacent to the Project site to the north, between the UPRR tracks and U.S. 101. Looking northward from the site, the S. Los Carneros Road overpass of the UPRR right-of-way (ROW) and U.S. 101 are visible adjacent to the northwest corner of the site. Approximately 0.45 miles to the southeast, the air traffic control tower at Santa Barbara Airport is partially visible from the Project site. In addition, the landmark 170-foot-tall Storke Tower is visible 1.5 miles to the south on the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) campus (UC Santa Barbara, 2010).

The topography of the Project site is relatively flat to gently sloping with the exception of the moderately steep slopes that define the boundary of stockpile soils along the perimeter of the archaeological area and the eastern, western, northern, and southwestern property lines. Topography within the archaeological area is characterized by a modest ridge that trends generally northwest to southeast between 25 and 36 feet above sea level (ASL). Soil stockpiling has resulted in elevating surrounding topography to over 43 ASL. As a result, the central portion of the site forms a ridge that has the highest elevations on the property. Another defining topographic feature is the grade differential between S. Los Carneros Road and the Project site. This roadway is level with the southwest corner of the Project site but rises to approximately 30 feet above the Project site on an earthen berm to the north, as it approaches an overpass of the UPRR ROW and the U.S. 101.

The Project site is mainly covered by low-growing ruderal vegetation and offers views of open space. Consequently, it offers largely unobstructed views to the north of agricultural lands and foothills along Cathedral Oaks Road and the Santa Ynez Mountains in the background. Pursuant to Policy VH 1.1 in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan, the City has designated the foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains as scenic resources. From S. Los Carneros Road the only view obstruction of these scenic resources across the Project site to the north and northeast is a cluster of eucalyptus trees along the UPRR ROW beyond the northern boundary of the site, as shown in Photo 1 in Figure 4.1-



2a. From Camino Vista, the S. Los Carneros Road overpass is visible looking across the Project site. In addition, the mainline of UPRR and U.S. 101 are visible across the Project site from S. Los Carneros Road. Southward views from the Project site are completely obstructed by buildings and landscaped grounds on the Willow Springs Apartments site across Camino Vista, and by trees and shrubs to the southwest. Consequently, the Project site does not offer views to the south of the Goleta coastline and Pacific Ocean, both of which are designated scenic resources. The Project site is not designated as a scenic resource. However, it does provide views of open space from surrounding areas.

**b. Scenic Corridors.** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) designates highways throughout California as scenic highways. For a highway to be declared as scenic, the government with jurisdiction over the abutting land must adopt a “scenic corridor protection program” that limits development, outdoor advertising, and earthmoving around the highway. U.S. 101 is eligible for state designation as a scenic highway in the City and throughout Santa Barbara County. Additionally, the City’s Visual and Historic Resources Element lists the following roadways near the Project site as local scenic corridors, which pass through, or provide visual access to, areas of high scenic value:

- *U.S. 101*
- *Los Carneros Road (between Cathedral Oaks and U.S. 101), including the Los Carneros U.S. 101 overpass*
- *Hollister Avenue*

Although the Project site itself does not contain any designated scenic corridors, it is located in the vicinity of the U.S. 101, Los Carneros Road, and Hollister Avenue scenic corridors. The centerline of U.S. 101 is approximately 300 feet north of the Project site, while Los Carneros Road is adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Hollister Avenue is located approximately 1,000 feet to the south of the Project site.

Views from Los Carneros Road Overpass of U.S. 101. As shown in Figure 4.1-3, scenic views in all directions from the Los Carneros Road overpass of U.S. 101 and scenic views in the northern direction from the Los Carneros/ Calle Koral intersection are protected pursuant to Policy VH 2.2 and Figure 6-1 in the Goleta General Plan as scenic view corridors. The Los Carneros Road overpass also is identified in the Goleta General Plan as an important “gateway” to the community, and is the highest-elevated public street location in the vicinity of the Project site. Northward views from the overpass, facing away from the Project site, include the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains, which are designated scenic resources. Eastward views of the Project site are available to drivers traveling northbound on S. Los Carneros Road as they approach and turn onto the southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101; these views are partially screened by eucalyptus trees and other vegetation along the UPRR ROW to the south of the on-ramp.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-2b, on the southward descent from the crest of the overpass, the Project site is briefly visible to drivers and pedestrians above the guard-rail on the eastern side of Los Carneros Road. Southward views from the overpass over the Project site also include the UCSB campus on a mesa above the Goleta Slough, including Storke Tower, and a strip of the Pacific Ocean beyond Goleta Beach. From the north side of the crest of the Los Carneros overpass, the Project site is not visible.

Views from the U.S. 101 Mainline. The Goleta General Plan lists U.S. 101 as a local scenic corridor throughout Goleta. In the vicinity of the Project site, the elevated southbound on/off-ramps at



Heritage Ridge Residential Project EIR  
Section 4.1 Aesthetics/Visual Resources



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Locations and Directions of Aesthetics Photos

Figure 4.1-1  
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**Photo 1:** Northward view from Camino Vista across center of project site.



**Photo 2:** Northwest view from Camino Vista toward S. Los Carneros Road overpass of Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Existing Site Conditions

Figure 4.1-2a

City of Goleta





**Photo 3:** Eastward view from S. Los Carneros Road of storage containers on project site and Willow Springs Apartments across Camino Vista.



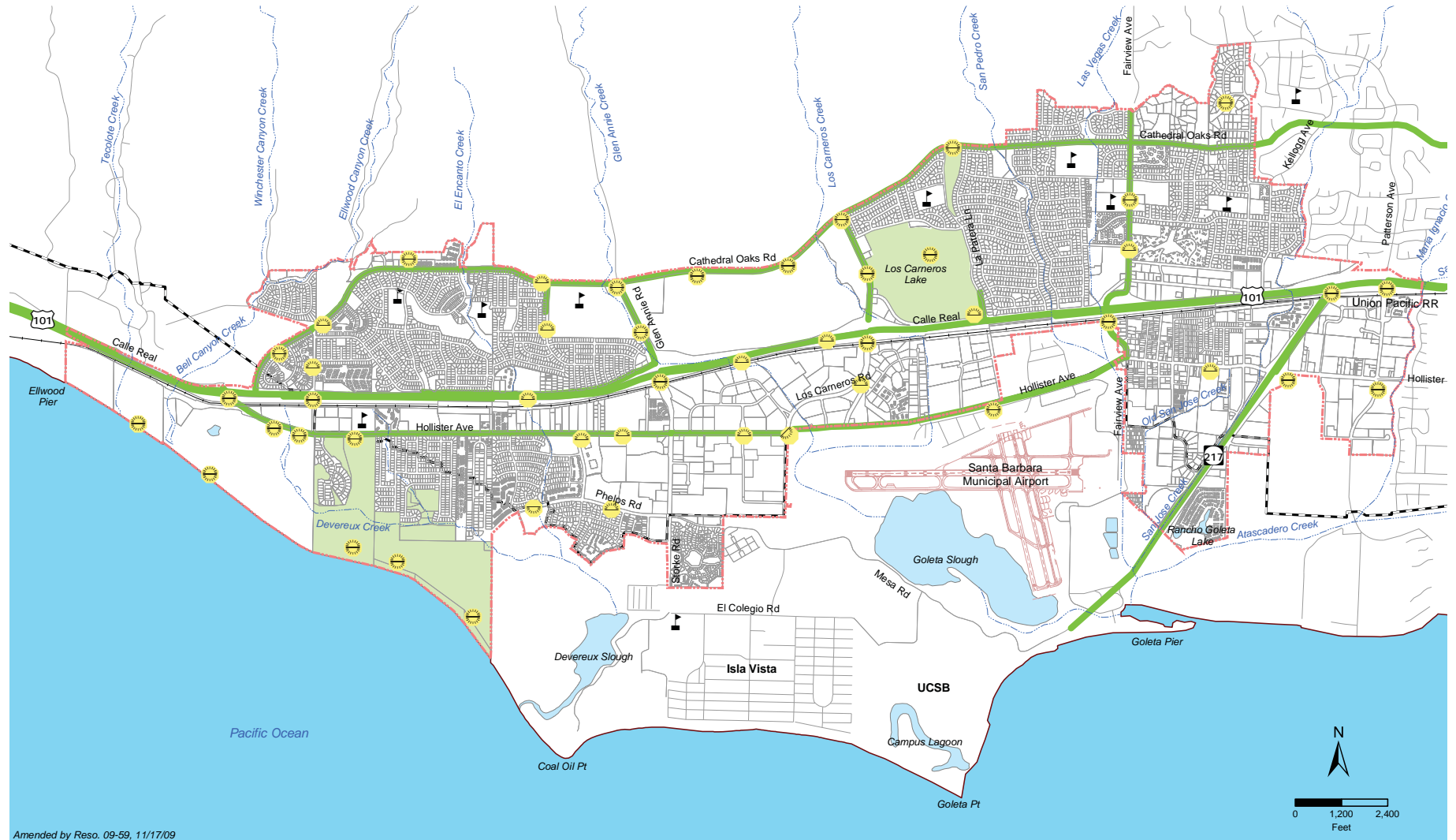
**Photo 4:** Southward view from S. Los Carneros Road of coyote brush/saltbush scrub vegetation on western portion of project site and Storke Tower on UCSB campus in background.

Existing Site Conditions

Figure 4.1-2b



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Amended by Reso. 09-59, 11/17/09

- |                                      |                                     |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Legend</b>                        | <b>Scenic Views to be Protected</b> | <b>Other Features</b> |
| Public Lands with View Opportunities | <b>View Orientation</b>             | Goleta City Boundary  |
| <b>Scenic Corridor</b>               | Views to one Direction              | Coastal Zone          |
| Local Scenic Corridor                | Views to all Directions             | Schools               |
|                                      |                                     | Creeks                |

Source: City of Goleta General Plan, 2009.

Scenic and Visual Resources in the City of Goleta

Figure 4.1-3  
 City of Goleta

the freeway's interchange with Los Carneros Road and trees lining the UPRR ROW completely obstruct southward views of the Project site. For drivers entering the U.S. 101 mainline via the southbound on-ramp from Los Carneros Road, the Project site is briefly visible to the south.

Views from Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Right-of-Way (ROW). Although not a designated scenic corridor in the General Plan, the 100-foot wide UPRR ROW abuts the Project site's northern property line. The Project site is part of the view available to train passengers traveling through Goleta. The engineered track sits atop a rock bed ballast, which is set back approximately 50 feet from the northern property line. The UPRR track currently ranges from approximately four to ten feet higher than the ground surface at the northern edge of the Project site. As shown in Figure 4.1-2a, the Project site is generally open to view from the UPRR ROW, although shrub vegetation partially obstructs views of the ground surface. Because the upper tier of passenger train car windows is approximately 8 feet higher than the ballast and approximately 10 to 11 feet above the adjacent ground surface elevation of the ROW, passengers currently have brief, unobstructed views of the Project site. Further views of the coastal plain beyond the Project site are obstructed by the Willow Springs Apartments to the south.

Views from S. Los Carneros Road. As discussed above, the Goleta General Plan designates northward views from the Los Carneros/Calle Koral intersection as scenic. Over the western edge of the Project site, this intersection provides scenic views of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains, which are only partially obstructed by scrub vegetation and trees in the UPRR ROW and on the west side of S. Los Carneros Road. These views are brief from the perspective of moving vehicles on S. Los Carneros Road.

Views from Other Public Roads. The Project site is fully visible from several other nearby public roads that are not designated scenic corridors. Calle Koral and Camino Vista provide direct views of the Project site, as does Aero Camino at its intersection with Camino Vista. Hollister Avenue, located approximately 1,000 feet south of the Project site, is designated in the Goleta General Plan as a "local scenic corridor" and provides a scenic northward view of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The Project site is minimally visible from Hollister Avenue, a scenic view corridor, due to intervening vegetation and residential, commercial, and business park development.

Private Views. The Project site is visible to varying degrees from adjacent commercial and industrial developments along Aero Camino and from residential developments along Camino Vista. Because of the open, undeveloped character of the Project site, views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills from these areas are not obstructed across the site.

**c. Existing Light and Glare Conditions.** Although the Project site is undeveloped and lacks on-site sources of illumination, it receives indirect lighting from off-site sources at neighboring commercial and industrial buildings, residential development, and adjacent roadways. Sources of illumination at the commercial and industrial areas, and residential development include light fixtures on the exterior of buildings and lighting emanating from windows. In addition, the Project site receives lighting from nearby street lamps along the adjacent roadways. Other sources of light and glare include headlights from passing vehicles on S. Los Carneros Road, Calle Koral, Camino Vista, and the southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101, and from cars entering and exiting parking lots at neighboring commercial and industrial businesses.

**d. Regulatory Setting.** The City of Goleta adopted numerous regulations pertaining to the aesthetics of development and the preservation of scenic resources in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan. Policies that are relevant to the Project include:



- *Policy VH 1.1: Scenic Resources*
- *Policy VH 1.2: Scenic Resources Map*
- *Policy VH 1.4: Protection of Mountain and Foothill Views*
- *Policy VH 1.5: Protection of Open Space Views*
- *Policy VH 1.6: Preservation of Natural Landforms*
- *Policy VH 1.8: Private Views*
- *Policy VH 2.1: Designated Scenic Corridors*
- *Policy VH 2.2: Preservation of Scenic Corridors*
- *Policy VH 2.3: Development Projects Along Scenic Corridors*
- *Policy VH 2.4: Public Improvements*
- *Policy VH 3.1: Community Design Character*
- *Policy VH 3.2: Neighborhood Identity*
- *Policy VH 4.4: Multifamily Residential Areas*
- *Policy VH 4.9: Landscape Design*
- *Policy VH 4.10: Streetscape and Frontage Design*
- *Policy VH 4.12: Lighting*

#### 4.1.2 Impact Analysis

**a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds.** Assessing aesthetic impacts of the Project is inherently subjective. Viewers react to viewsheds and aesthetic conditions differently based on personal and cultural perspectives. This section evaluates the existing visual resources against the proposed development, analyzing the nature of the anticipated change and its compatibility with the visual character of the area.

The City's *Environmental Thresholds Guidelines Manual* refers to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. Pursuant to Appendix G, potentially significant impacts would occur if development of the Project site would:

1. *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;*
2. *Substantially damages scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;*
3. *Substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; and/or*
4. *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.*

#### **b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures.**

**Impact AES-1** The Project would convert an open and undeveloped property into a multi-family housing complex with two- and three-story buildings. Due to the three-story height of proposed buildings on the western portion of the Project site, the Project would significantly obstruct views of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains from S. Los Carneros Road at Calle Koral looking northward, which is a City-designated view corridor. Therefore, impacts to this scenic view corridor would be Class I, *significant and unavoidable [Threshold 1]*.





The Project would convert a vacant 17.36 gross acre site into a multi-family housing complex. Three two-story apartment buildings with a peak height of 27 feet would be located in the northern portion of the site. Five three-story apartment buildings with a peak height of 35 feet would be located in the southwest and eastern portions of the site. As discussed in Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, the latter height is consistent with height limits as measured pursuant to the City's Inland Zoning Ordinance.

Construction on the Project site would affect two designated Los Carneros Road scenic view corridors. Figure 4.1-4 maps the locations of photo simulations from Los Carneros Road, with respect to the Project site. Figures 4.1-5, 4.1-6, and 4.1-7 present photo simulations for the Project, respectively, at the scenic northward view from S. Los Carneros Road near Calle Koral, the scenic southward view from the S. Los Carneros Road overpass of U.S. 101, and a similar scenic southward view from S. Los Carneros Road just south of the overpass. These figures compare three scenarios at each viewpoint: existing conditions, proposed conditions without landscaping, and proposed conditions with five years of growth in landscaping. As shown in Figure 4.1-5, S. Los Carneros Road near Calle Koral currently affords a view of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains, scenic resources that are partially obstructed by scrub vegetation and trees in the UPRR ROW and on the west side of S. Los Carneros Road. The two-story buildings in the northern portion of the site would barely rise above the existing horizon from this perspective, minimally obstructing northward scenic views of the foothills and mountains. However, the three-story buildings in the southwest portion of the site would rise to a level just below the ridgeline of the Santa Ynez Mountains, obstructing public scenic views of the bulk of mountains to the northeast from the perspective of northbound motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists on S. Los Carneros Road approaching Calle Koral Road. Therefore, the Project would have a significant impact on the scenic view corridor from S. Los Carneros Road at Calle Koral looking northward to the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains.

Views from the Los Carneros Road overpass to the south and southeast are designated view corridors. The open waters of the Pacific Ocean and Goleta's shoreline/beaches are designated scenic resources. As shown in Figures 4.1-6 and 4.1-7, the southerly descent from the crest of the S. Los Carneros Road overpass currently provides scenic views over the Project site toward the Pacific Ocean beyond Goleta Beach. Although the ocean is not visible in these figures' photographs of current conditions, a slice of the Pacific Ocean is visible in the distance on relatively clear days. The proposed conditions on Figure 4.1-6 show the view with the completed roadway project on S. Los Carneros Road, showing the 10-foot fence on the road's eastern edge. Both Figures 4.1-6 and 4.1-7 demonstrate that the proposed buildings on-site would rise nearly to the level of the horizon, but would not obstruct scenic views of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact on views from the vantage point of the Los Carneros Road overpass view corridor.

As discussed in Section 4.1.1, *Setting*, the Project site is not visible from the U.S. 101 mainline, which the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan lists as a scenic view corridor. The site is briefly visible from the southbound on-ramp from Los Carneros Road to U.S. 101. However, the site is almost 90 degrees out of the line of sight of drivers on the freeway ramp and partially obscured by trees along the UPRR ROW. Furthermore, the Project would not alter scenic views of the dramatic topography of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the northeast of the on-ramp, which are the primary scenic resource viewable from U.S. 101 in the vicinity of the Project site. Thus, any changes to views from this perspective would not be substantially evident and impacts to scenic views from the U.S. 101 would be less than significant.





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Locations and Directions of Photo Simulations

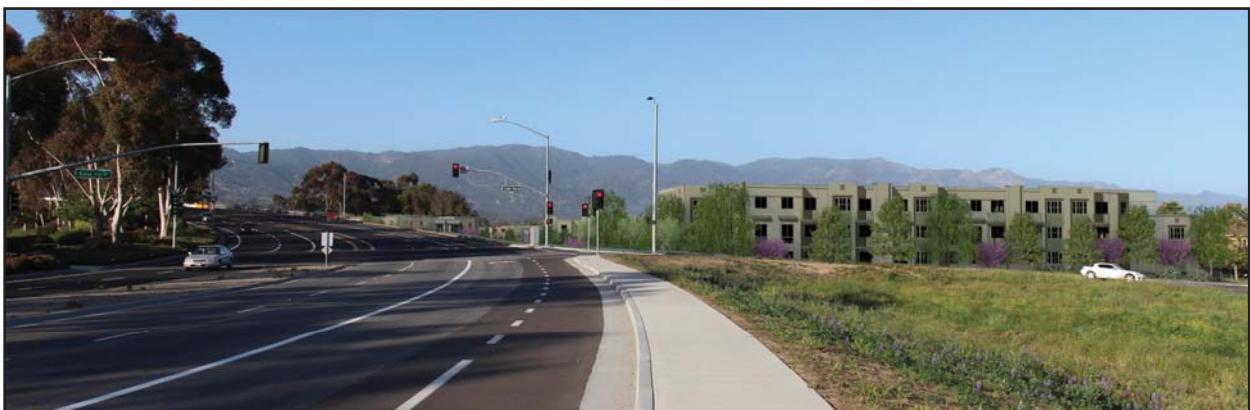
Figure 4.1-4  
 City of Goleta



Current Conditions



Proposed Conditions Without Landscaping



Proposed Conditions with 5-year Growth of Landscaping

Existing and Simulated Views  
from S. Los Carneros Road  
Looking North Toward Project Site

Source: *interacta inc.*, 2014

Figure 4.1-5

*City of Goleta*



Current Conditions Without Simulated Road Construction



Proposed Conditions Without Landscaping



Proposed Conditions with 5-year Growth of Landscaping

Existing and Simulated Views  
from S. Los Carneros Road  
Looking Southeast Toward Project Site

Source: *interacta inc.*, 2014

Figure 4.1-6

*City of Goleta*



Current Conditions



Proposed Conditions Without Landscaping



Proposed Conditions with 5-year Growth of Landscaping

Existing and Simulated Views from S. Los Carneros Road  
Looking Southeast Toward Project Site

Figure 4.1-7

Currently, Hollister Avenue offers a designated view corridor of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north. From the perspective of motorists driving on Hollister Avenue, the Project site is barely visible due to intervening buildings and landscaping at residential, commercial, and business park properties. With a maximum height of 35 feet, the proposed buildings would not obstruct or otherwise affect existing views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills from Hollister Avenue. Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact on scenic views from Hollister Avenue.

The Project would also alter public views of the site from Camino Vista, Calle Koral, and Aero Camino. Currently, the Project site affords partial northward views of the Santa Ynez Mountains, atop existing hills on-site, from the perspectives of Calle Koral and Camino Vista. The photo simulations in Figure 4.1-4 show that the proposed buildings would largely obstruct these northward views of the mountains. Because Aero Camino only offers limited mountainous views to the north and not across the Project site, the Project would not affect views from the local roadway. Although the Project would obstruct views from Camino Vista and Calle Koral, the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan does not recognize these roadways as scenic view corridors. Therefore, changes to views from these local roadways would be less than significant impacts.

While the UPRR ROW is not a City-designated view corridor, it provides brief, unobstructed views across the Project site to the south. A total of nine passenger trains pass the Project site daily on Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner route (Amtrak, 2015). Because the Willow Springs Apartments to the south of the Project site currently obstruct further views of the coastal plain, the Project would not block any existing scenic vistas from the UPRR ROW. Therefore, the Project would not impair any existing scenic views from the railroad tracks.

The Project could potentially affect private views of the Santa Ynez Mountains, from the Willow Springs II multi-family residences to the south of the site. Currently, north-facing windows on the Willow Springs Apartments site south of Camino Vista offer expansive views of the mountains through the Project site. The proposed two- and three-story buildings and landscaping would almost entirely block these northward views. Policy VH 1.8 of the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan requires development to be considerate of private views. Nevertheless, the City has not designated the view of the mountains from a private property as scenic, and the obstruction of private views from one private property does not constitute a significant impact pursuant to CEQA, which is primarily concerned with public views.

Because the Project would substantially obstruct scenic views of the Santa Ynez Mountains from S. Los Carneros Road, overall impacts to scenic corridors would be significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** Given the proposed location of three-story residential buildings in the southwest portion of the Project site, mitigation is not available to reduce the obstruction of scenic views of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains from the vantage point on S. Los Carneros Road near Calle Koral. These buildings would unavoidably obstruct scenic views. Project Alternative 4, as described in Section 6.0, *Alternatives*, would reduce the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with obstructing scenic views of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains.

**Residual Impact.** Impacts would be significant and unavoidable because no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the obstruction of scenic views from S. Los Carneros Road.



**Impact AES-2** The Project would not impact scenic resources identified in the City's Visual and Historic Resources Element, including the Santa Ynez Mountains, coastal mesas, bluffs, and the Pacific Ocean. Impacts to these scenic resources would be Class III, *less than significant [Threshold 2]*.

The Project would be located on a vacant property in Goleta's coastal plain near U.S. 101, between the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north and the coastline to the south. The Project site does not include scenic resources identified in Policy VH 1.1 of the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan, including the open waters of the Pacific Ocean, the shoreline, Goleta and Devereux Sloughs, creeks and riparian vegetation, agricultural areas, Lake Los Carneros and surrounding woodlands, and prominent landforms. Impacts to designated views corridors that contain these scenic resources are discussed above under Impact AES-1. Impacts to natural landforms, such as mature trees and rock outcroppings, are discussed below in Impact AES-3. Because implementation of the Project would not impact scenic resources identified in the Goleta General Plan, impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation is not required because impacts would be less than significant.

**Residual Impact.** Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

**Impact AES-3** Construction of the proposed multi-family housing development would involve removal of native shrub vegetation on most of the site. However, no trees currently exist on-site and Project landscaping would include planting native trees on-site. Therefore, impacts to scenic natural landforms would be Class III, *less than significant [Threshold 2]*.

The Project would not substantially affect scenic natural landforms, as identified in Policy VH 1.6 in the Goleta General Plan. No mature trees occur on-site, and the stand of eucalyptus trees that overlooks the Project site from the north side of the UPRR tracks would remain in place. No drainage courses, prominent slopes, or bluffs occur on-site. Native shrubs and ruderal vegetation predominate on-site, as shown in the site photographs in Figure 4.1-2b, and have low to moderate scenic value from public viewpoints on surrounding roadways. The clearing of existing vegetation to make way for the proposed apartments and park would represent a minor loss of natural landforms. However, the loss of native shrub vegetation would be offset by the planting of several tree species native to California: *Cercis occidentalis* (western redbud), *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey cypress), *Lyonothamnus floribundus* ssp. *asplenifolius* (fernleaf Catalina ironwood), *Platanus racemosa* (California sycamore), *Quercus agrifolia* (coast live oak), and *Quercus tomentella* (island live oak). As specimens of taller tree species such as Monterey cypress, California sycamore, and the oaks mature after construction of the Project, they would become scenic resources on-site. Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact on scenic natural landforms.

**Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation is not required as impacts would be less than significant.

**Residual Impact.** Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.



**Impact AES-4 The Project would permanently alter the Project site, replacing open and undeveloped land with a residential complex. The massing and architectural style of the proposed buildings would not be compatible with that of adjacent multi-family residential development, although landscaping would incrementally reduce this contrast. Impacts to the visual character of the site and surroundings would be Class II, significant but mitigable [Threshold 3].**

The Project would alter the site's visual character from open and undeveloped to high-density residential. The proposed development would have a building footprint of 3.1 acres, occupying approximately 17 percent of the 17.36-gross acre parcel. The five proposed three-story buildings would have a peak height of 35 feet and would be clustered in the southwest and eastern portions of the site. The three two-story buildings would be located in the north-central portion of the site, with a peak height of 27 feet. These proposed buildings would reduce the openness of the site and the depth of views across the site from surrounding roadways. A 2.0-acre park would retain open space in the south-central portion of the site, with an activity trail, benches, barbecue area, picnic tables, bicycle parking, level turf play area, and native landscaping. In total, the 7.2 acres of common open space would represent 42 percent of the site.

Although the Project would alter the site's existing visual character by introducing a complex of two- and three-story apartment buildings with associated on-site parking, the proposed development intensity and height of buildings would be compatible with adjacent residential development at the Willow Springs Apartments. The combined Willow Springs I and II developments, which together comprise the Willow Springs Apartments, have a building footprint of 181,533 square feet, or 17.9 percent of their collective lot area (Goleta, Willow Springs II Final EIR, 2012). Common open space at these developments also totals 40.6 percent of their lot area. Similarly, the Project would have a building footprint of approximately 17 percent of the entire Heritage Ridge site and common open space covering 42 percent of the site. While the Willow Springs II development has a density of 18.22 dwelling units per acre, the Project would have a higher density of 25.2 units per acre. The proposed two- and three-story buildings, with peak heights of 27 feet and 35 feet, also would be comparable to the two-story buildings at Willow Springs Apartments that have a peak height of 28 feet, 3 inches. In addition, the proposed layout of apartment buildings surrounding a central open space area would mirror the arrangement of the neighboring apartment complex at Willow Springs II around a central open space.

Nevertheless, the massing and architectural style of the proposed apartment buildings would substantially differ from adjacent development. As shown in the simulations of the Project in Figures 4.1-5 through 4.1-7, the buildings would have a somewhat severe, rectangular appearance unlike the appearance of the units at the Willow Springs Apartments to the south. Relative to the individual buildings at the Willow Springs Apartments, the proposed buildings would have a larger size and a simpler rectangular form. Furthermore, the proposed flat roofs would contrast in shape and form with the pitched asphalt shingle roofs of the Willow Springs Apartments to the south. The Willow Springs I and II developments have a more residential appearance, while the design of Heritage Ridge units would have a visual character closer to that of an office or institutional building. However, the exterior materials and finish of the proposed apartment buildings would match those of the neighboring apartments. The proposed buildings would have stucco exteriors painted in two earth tones, wood rails, metal awnings, vinyl windows, and flat roofs. Similarly, the Willow Springs Apartments have plaster walls painted in earth tones, wood trim, and vinyl clad windows.





As demonstrated by the photo simulations (Figures 4.1-5, 4.1-6, and 4.1-7), the maturation of proposed landscaping over five years of growth would incrementally reduce the Project's visual incompatibility with surrounding urban development. Although the Project would introduce approximately 6.0 acres of impervious surface to the 17.36-gross acre Project site (34.6 percent of the site), the maturing landscaping would gradually soften the lines of the proposed buildings and obscure surface parking areas from offsite viewpoints. The proposed landscape design is intended to blend with the existing Willow Springs Apartments by using a similar plant palette and two-rail fence along Camino Vista.

Grading activities would reduce the grade differential from existing stockpile soils on the Project site. As described in Section 4.1.1, *Setting*, moderately steep slopes from stockpile soils occur along the perimeter of the archaeological area and the eastern, western, northern, and southwestern property lines. Existing elevations range from about 25 to 43 feet ASL. The Project would level out existing slopes outside the archaeological area for the construction of individual building pads, driveways. Finished grades would range from approximately 18 to 38 feet ASL. Although grading activities would change the existing grade differential, this topography is artificial and results from stockpiling of soils from previous construction activity in the area. Therefore, the proposed topographic changes would not adversely affect the site's visual quality.

Utility infrastructure including electrical distribution lines, fiber optic lines, cable television lines, phone lines, gas lines, water lines, and sewer lines would be installed underground and would not affect the visual character of the site. However, components such as backflow preventers, transformers, water meter assemblies, gas meters, power meters, and cable TV pedestals would be installed aboveground. Mechanical equipment would be ground-mounted on concrete pads adjacent to the residential structures and would be screened with landscaping.

Based on the above analysis, the massing and architectural style of the proposed apartments would not be compatible in terms of visual character with surrounding development. Therefore, impacts to visual character and compatibility with existing land uses would be potentially significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation measures AES-4(a) and AES-4(b) would be required to reduce potentially significant impacts from the Project's massing, height, and architectural style to ensure a visually integrated development consistent with adjacent development.

**AES-4(a) Architectural Review.** The applicant must submit revised plans to the City of Goleta Design Review Board for review before applying for building permits. Plans must address compatibility of massing, heights and consistency with neighborhood character.

**Plan Requirements and Timing.** Before applying for building permits, the applicant must apply for design approval from the Design Review Board and submit plans wherein the massing, height, and architectural style of apartment buildings are consistent with neighborhood buildings and do not detract from existing neighborhood characteristics.

Pursuant to GMC § 2.08.150, the Design Review Board must determine whether the proposed buildings, structures, landscaping, and signs are appropriate and of good design in relation to other buildings, structures, landscaping and signs, on-site or in the immediately affected area. Plans



also must specifically be evaluated for consistency with adopted regulations pertaining to the aesthetics of development in the Visual and Historic Resources Element of the Goleta General Plan.

**Monitoring.** The Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, must conduct a final review of final plans, before the City issues grading permits. In the event that final plans are not in substantial conformance with the approved plans, the Planning and Environmental Review Director may refer the matter back to the full Design Review Board for a final determination.

**AES-4(b) Height Limitations.** Finished floor elevations of each lot must be consistent with the finished floor elevation shown on the Preliminary Grading and Drainage Plan dated September 2014, based on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (USC&GS) Datum elevation 8.92' or equivalent. In addition, maximum building heights must not exceed 35 feet in height, and height must be measured from the established finished floor elevation as described above. The applicant must ensure that the Project complies with the grading limitations and height limitations as established with the approved entitlement plans.

**Plan Requirements and Timing.** At the time of grading plan review, the applicant must submit verification from a licensed surveyor/civil engineer demonstrating that the finished floor heights will be at the elevations shown on the entitlement plans. If a different datum is used, then the applicant must submit documentation demonstrating that the finished floor elevations are at equivalent heights.

**Monitoring.** The Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, must verify compliance before the City issues grading permits.

**Residual Impact.** Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated to ensure that the proposed buildings have compatible massing, architectural style, and height with adjacent development. In addition, the following Conditions of Approval are recommended regarding visual character related to utility infrastructure, trash/recycling enclosures, landscaping, graffiti, and trash generated by construction activities. With implementation of these conditions, the proposed structures and landscaping on the Project site would be more visually integrated and compatible with surrounding business park development.

- **Composite Utility Plan.** *The applicant must submit a composite utility plan to be approved by the Director of Planning and Environmental Review, or designee. All external/roof mounted mechanical equipment (including HVAC condensers, switch boxes, etc.) must be included on all building plans and designing this equipment to be integrated into the structure and/or screened in its entirety from public view.*
- **Screening of Utility Connections.** *All new utility service connections and above-ground mounted equipment such as backflow devices, etc. must be screened from public view and/or painting in a soft earth-tone color(s) (red is prohibited) so as to blend in with the Project. Screening may include a combination of landscaping*



and/or fencing/walls. Utility transformers must be placed in underground vaults where they are completely screened from view, unless otherwise approved by the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee. All gas and electrical meters and/or painting meters must be concealed to match the building. All gas, electrical, backflow prevention devices and communications equipment must be concealed in an enclosed portion of the building, on top of the building, or within a screened utility area. All transformers and vaults must be installed within the right-of-way below grade unless otherwise approved by the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, and then completely screening them from view.

- **Design of Trash/Recycling Enclosure.** The applicant must provide trash/recycling enclosures that are compatible with the architectural design of the Project, of adequate size for trash and recycling containers (at least 50 square feet), and accessible by residents and for removal. The trash/recycling areas must be enclosed with a solid wall of sufficient height to screen the area, with a solid gate and a roof, to be maintained in good repair in perpetuity and must be included on final Project plans and before the City issues a Land Use Permit for construction.
- **Landscaping.** Approximately 75 percent of landscaping on the Project site must consist of drought-tolerant native and/or Mediterranean type plants which adequately complement the Project design and integrate the site with surrounding land uses. Landscaping must be used to partially screen on-site parking areas and structures. Plant materials must be compatible with the Goleta climate pursuant to Sunset Western Garden Book's Zone 24 published by Sunset Books, Inc., Revised and Updated 2012 edition.
- **Landscape Installation and Maintenance Agreement.** The applicant must enter into a maintenance agreement, in a form approved by the City Attorney, with the applicant to maintain required landscaping and water-conserving irrigation systems on private property for an appropriate time period set by the City.
- **Graffiti Removal.** The applicant must promptly remove any graffiti at the Project site. The applicant must execute a maintenance agreement approved as to form by the City Attorney, including at least a 5-year maintenance period.
- **Trash Control.** The applicant must prevent construction and/or employee trash from blowing offsite by providing covered receptacles on-site before commencement of any grading or construction activities; picking up waste weekly or more frequently as directed by the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee; and designating and providing the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, the name and phone number of a contact person(s) to monitor construction trash/waste and organize a clean-up crew. Additional covered receptacles must be provided as determined necessary by the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee.

**Impact AES-5 The Project would introduce on-site sources of lighting and glare to an open, undeveloped parcel that currently has none. Impacts would be Class II, significant but mitigable [Threshold 4].**

The proposed multi-family housing complex would introduce various sources of lighting and glare to the site. As stated in the Exterior Lighting Concepts for Heritage Ridge all lighting would consist of light-



emitting diodes (LEDs), unless LEDs are not available for any proposed applications. Pole-mounted light fixtures would be installed in proposed parking areas and the on-site neighborhood park; it is anticipated that these fixtures would be 12 to 14 feet in height. Bollard lighting fixtures about 42 inches in height would be installed on walkways, pathways, and other areas of pedestrian traffic. The light in bollards would be aimed downward and outward and colored to match surrounding benches and railings. On carports, trash enclosures, mailbox kiosks, and directory signs, downlighting would be added for security and usability. These lights would be hidden to the extent possible by the structures themselves. On the proposed buildings, a small number of decorative lights would be installed primarily for aesthetic purposes and would not cast substantial light; in addition, every building entrance would have structurally hidden light fixtures (either downlighting or full cut-off-style wall mounted fixtures) for security. Headlights on cars entering and leaving the Project site and parking on-site would produce glare. The Santa Barbara Airport is 0.5 miles from the project site and would not be affected by the proposed low intensity residential lighting.

Although a proposed masonry wall of approximately eight feet in height along the northern and western site boundaries would reduce the perception of light and glare effects on motorists traveling on U.S. 101 and S. Los Carneros Road, the new sources of illumination could have adverse effects on the City's night sky unless properly shielded. Therefore, lighting impacts would be significant but mitigable.

**Mitigation Measures.** The following measure is required to address potential light and glare impacts.

**AES-5 Lighting Specifications.** Any exterior lighting installed on the Project site must be of low intensity, low glare design, and must be hooded to direct light downward onto the Project site and prevent spill-over onto adjacent parcels and must otherwise meet dark night sky requirements. Exterior lighting fixtures must be kept to the minimum number and intensity needed to ensure public safety. These lights must be dimmed after 11 p.m. to the maximum extent practical without compromising public safety as determined by the Planning and Environmental Review Director or designee. Upward directed exterior lighting is prohibited. Lighting fixtures must be appropriate for the architectural style of the structure and surrounding area. The final lighting plan must be amended to include identification of all types, sizes, and intensities of wall-mounted building lights and landscape accent lighting, and a photometric map must be provided. "Moonlighting" type fixtures that illuminate entire tree canopies should also be avoided.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The locations of all exterior lighting fixtures, complete cut-sheets of all exterior lighting fixtures, and a photometric plan prepared by a registered professional engineer showing the extent of all light and glare emitted by all exterior lighting fixtures must be reviewed and approved by Design Review Board before the City issues a building permit for construction.

**Monitoring:** Before the City issues a certificate of occupancy, the Planning and Environmental Review Director, or designee, must inspect exterior



lighting features to ensure that they have been installed consistent with approved plans.

**Residual Impact.** By minimizing the number of lighting fixtures and intensity of lighting on the Project site, shielding lights to reduce glare, dimming during nighttime hours, and ensuring the compatibility of lighting with on-site and surrounding architecture, the implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-5 would reduce impacts to less than significant and there would be no residual impacts.

**c. Cumulative Impacts.** Cumulative development in the City of Goleta and the Goleta vicinity (Highway 154 to Gaviota) would add 1,511 residential units and more than 1.8 million square feet of commercial/retail space (refer to Tables 3-1 and 3-2 in Section 3.0, *Related Projects*) in and around Goleta. Additional development would be located on infill sites throughout the community, as well as large tracts of undeveloped open spaces along the area's urban perimeters. Although much of the new development would generally be of a type and intensity similar to existing urban uses, a perceptible transformation of the community through increased urbanization would be apparent. In particular, the intensity of land use would increase in the vicinity of the Project site. Projects in the vicinity of the site that are either under construction or recently completed include the 118-room Marriott Residence Inn at 6300 Hollister Avenue, the various developments under construction at the Cabrillo Business Park, the 138-room Hilton Garden Inn at 6878 Hollister Avenue, the 465 unit Villages at Los Carneros, and the recently completed Hollister Village Project at the northwest corner of Hollister and S. Glen Annie Road.

However, the cumulative aesthetic impact from the project would be less than significant given the existing built-up environment around the site. The Project would result in a visual extension of existing residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. The areas in which cumulative development would occur have been predominantly identified in the General Plan as appropriate areas for growth. Therefore, cumulative development would not pose a significant change to the overall visual character of the City. Although the Project would have a significant but mitigable project-level impact on visual character, it would not have a considerable contribution to significant cumulative impacts.

Cumulative development on vacant and underutilized land in the Goleta area also could obstruct scenic views from U.S. 101, State Route 217, and public viewing areas within the City. However, implementation of policies to protect scenic views in the City's Visual and Historic Resources Element would reduce cumulative impacts to scenic corridors and key viewpoints to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, even though the Project would have a significant and unavoidable project-level impact on scenic northward views of the foothills and Santa Ynez Mountains, it would not have a significant contribution to cumulative impacts.

Furthermore, the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts related to the visual character of the site and the introduction of new sources of light and glare would not be cumulatively significant, as the infill Project's design and height would be compatible with surrounding development. Offsite spillover of lighting would be minimized with implementation of the lighting specifications in Mitigation Measure AES-5. Cumulative aesthetic impacts would be less than significant.



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