4.1 AESTHETICS

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing visual character and quality of the project site and vicinity, identifies the site’s visibility from existing public viewpoints, and discusses existing light and glare conditions at the site and in the surrounding area.

Visual Character and Quality of the Project Site and Surrounding Area

The project site is a previously cleared, graded, and disturbed undeveloped property, with a soil stockpile along most of its eastern boundary. It is vegetated with a mix of coyote brush scrub, grasses, and forbs. The site photographs taken from the viewpoints shown in Figure 4.1-1 and depicted in Figure 4.1-2 illustrate the prevailing visual appearance of the project site. Approximately the eastern third of the site is covered by a dirt stockpile with partially vegetated surfaces. In the lower-lying northwest central third of the site coyote brush is present (Figure 4.1-2, View 2C). The site itself does not include significant visual resources.

The project site occupies 6.0 acres within the City’s General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan (General Plan) designated Central Hollister Residential Development Area. It is situated near the south side of the transportation corridor containing the Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) and the U.S. 101 Highway (U.S. 101), and to the southeast of the Los Carneros Road overpass that spans this transportation corridor. The area immediately north and northwest of the site (referred to as the Willow Springs North property), is vacant but has been used to stockpile fill dirt intended for use in the project. Its visual character is similar to that of the project site.

To the south of the site is the existing Willow Springs I residential development and open space area. Willow Springs I covers 16.01 acres between the project site and Hollister Avenue. It includes 235 residential units in 25 multi-family residential buildings of two-story heights and a 2.37-acre, oval-shaped, passive open space area. The buildings exhibit earth-toned plaster siding with wood trim, pitched asphalt single roofs, along with wood patio fencing and railing. The undeveloped open space area (also referred to as Lot 20) is vegetated with non-native grasses and sparse coyote brush. It is surrounded by a walking/jogging path and split-rail wood fencing. Along its southwestern side, Willow Springs I includes a naturally vegetated 7.25-acre wetland area.

The eastern boundary of the project site is bordered by the Aero Camino industrial area, which is comprised of large industrial structures, parking areas, and outdoor industrial storage, with sporadic landscaping along the common property line with the proposed project site.

Project Vicinity Terrain Conditions and General Site Visibility

The project site’s terrain has a prevailing underlying natural slope that trends southerly to southeasterly away from the railroad right-of-way and the Los Carneros overpass embankment toward Hollister Avenue at a gradient of less than one percent.

The surface terrain of the site’s immediate vicinity originally consisted of a broad, gently sloping drainage divide between the southeasterly-trending courses of Los Carneros Creek (to the east) and Tecolotito Creek (to the west). The range in elevation of the terrain on the site once approached 12 feet (as interpreted from 10-foot contours derived by multiplex methods from 1947 aerial photography as shown on the 1950 Goleta, California, USGS 7.5 minute...
Proposed extension of Camino Vista Rd.

Photo Locations and View-Blocking Features in the Immediate Project Vicinity

Legend
- Willow Springs Project Site
- View Locations associated with Figures 4.1-2 thru 4.1-6
- View Blocking Features
  - Raised Freeway/Los Carneros Rd. Embankments
  - Trees/Shrubs in Freeway Right-of-way
  - Stormwater retention basin
  - Phase I Willow Springs Residential Development/Landscaping
  - Aero Camino Industrial Buildings
  - Existing Stockpiles

Aerial Source: Google Earth, 2009.

Project Site

Legend
- 101 Frwy. On-Ramp
- 101 Frwy. Off-Ramp
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Willow Springs Project Site
- View Locations associated with Figures 4.1-2 thru 4.1-6
- View Blocking Features
  - Raised Freeway/Los Carneros Rd. Embankments
  - Trees/Shrubs in Freeway Right-of-way
  - Stormwater retention basin
  - Phase I Willow Springs Residential Development/Landscaping
  - Aero Camino Industrial Buildings
  - Existing Stockpiles

Aerial Source: Google Earth, 2009.
On-Site Visual Conditions

View 2A - The panoramic photographic view depicted was taken from the southeast corner of the project site and it ranges from northerly to westerly. The eastern boundary line with the adjacent Aero Camino industrial area is visible to the right in the view and the northern extent of the existing Phase I Willow Springs residential development is visible to the left. The surface terrain of the site is characterized by low-growing grassland, including flowering black mustard. Sparsely vegetated slopes of the dirt stockpile that occupies much of the eastern part of the site are also visible. Trees near the center of the view grow along the border of the existing Open Space, Lot 20.

View 2B - The panoramic photographic view depicted was taken from the top of the dirt stockpile and it ranges from northeasterly to northwesterly. The industrial land uses located along Aero Camino are visible to the right and the Los Carneros Road freeway and railroad overpass to the left.

View 2C - The panoramic photographic view depicted was taken from the northerly end of the on-site stockpile, and it ranges from northerly to southwesterly. The center of the view focuses on the Los Carneros Road railroad overpass and the southbound freeway on-ramp from the overpass. The eucalyptus windrow to the right of the on-ramp occurs within the freeway right-of-way. The silt fences mark the base of the on-site dirt stockpile. The slightly elevated view shows the coyote brush concentration on the north central portion of the site.
topographic map). Current elevations derived from an engineered topographic map of the site (MAC Design Associates, June 21, 2010) indicates that site elevation now ranges from a low of approximately 20 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the southwest corner of the project site to a high of approximately 36.38 feet in elevation along the northern perimeter of the site.

Elevations within the City of Goleta (City) typically descend, although gradually in places, from interior foothill locations toward the shoreline from north to south directions. In easterly and westerly directions along the UPRR tracks immediately north of the project site, and along Los Carneros Road and Los Carneros Way near the project site or along Hollister Avenue to the south, changes in elevation are generally so slight as to seldom offer elevated viewing locations with correspondingly enhanced visibility. Views from north-south trending roads that gradually climb in elevation north of the freeway, (e.g., Los Carneros Road and La Patera Lane) are typically “channeled” or restricted by road-side features and have limited overlooking southerly views that may include the project site.

Given the gradual elevation changes within the central area of the City and the location of project site relative to prominent public thoroughfares, the extent of the public viewed containing the project site is limited. The public viewed containing the project site is confined generally within the area broadly bounded to the north and south by Cathedral Oaks Road and Hollister Avenue, respectively, to the east by Aero Camino, and to the west by Los Carneros Road. As described further below, views within this area are further limited by the site’s location between the UPRR and Highway 101 rights-of-way to the north (portions of which contain stands of eucalyptus trees and tall shrubs), industrial and commercial buildings with sporadic landscaping to the east, and the Willow Springs I development and mature natural vegetation in the wetland area that extends to Hollister Avenue to the south.

On the generally level terrain of the project site’s immediate surroundings, features of the built environment (e.g., buildings, walls and landscaping) have typically resulted in physical barriers of sufficient heights to block views of the site from most nearby public streets.

The City is divided into eight “Community Subareas” each defining a distinct community character and boundary within which residents of common interests may reside, or which provide a particular resource for the residents of the City at large. The project site in relation to the City’s subareas is shown in Exhibit 4.1-1. The project site is situated immediately south of, and central to, the length of the Central Resource Area of the City north of the 101 Freeway that consists of the Bishop Ranch, Los Carneros Lake, and surrounding woodlands area. The Central Resource Area generally includes open land with natural resources, essential to the overall quality of life in Goleta. At a distance of 0.55 miles and greater to the northeast, the western side of the northeast residential area is the closest of the City’s established residential subareas to the project site (the existing Willow Springs I multi-family residential area notwithstanding). The woodlands surrounding Lake Los Carneros block potential views of the project site from the residential area. The northwest residential area, located north of the freeway and west of Glen Annie Road is situated approximately a mile west of the project site. Site views are not available from within the northwest residential area. The southwest residential area that lies southwest of Phelps Road and Mesa Road is approximately 1.0 mile and more from the project site. Intervening development on level terrain as well as a distance from the site effectively eliminate project site views from the southwest residential area. In middle-distance to distant viewpoints from within higher-elevated private locations in the northwest and northeast residential areas of the City, expansive views overlooking the lower-elevated coastal plain are intermittently available.
Existing Views from Locations North, Northeast, and Northwest of the Project Site

Views from US-101

US-101 is a Local Scenic Corridor through the entire length of the City.¹ For much of the length of Highway 101 in the project area, including the portion immediately north of the project site, scenic view opportunities from the freeway, as identified in the City’s General Plan, are ones directed northerly toward the prominently higher elevations of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills. The level nature of the coastal plain traversed by the east-west trending freeway, the slightly elevated roadbed of the railroad tracks, and the height of the descending southbound freeway on-ramp from the Los Carneros Road overpass, and the presence of mature landscaping in the freeway right-of-way north of the site, restrict scenic view opportunities in southerly directions toward the project site. However, the project site is visible in southeasterly views from the southbound Highway 101 on-ramp as shown in Figure 4.1-3, View 3A. The view from the highest-elevated segment of this on-ramp offer the most inclusive view of the project site and its adjacent features available from a public viewing location within the City.

¹ City of Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan, Chapter 6, Visual and Historic Resources Element, Page 6-6.
Existing Views From the Los Carneros Road Overpass and U.S. 101 Southbound On-Ramp

View 3A - The southerly panoramic view overlooking the coastal plain is taken from the top of the southbound on-ramp to the 101 freeway from the Los Carneros Road. The view ranges from east-southeast to south. The proposed project site is centered in front of the industrial buildings (visible along the eastern boundary of the site) and the Phase I Willow Springs residential development (visible from the center to the right in the photograph).

View 3B - A southerly panoramic view from the top of the Los Carneros Road freeway overpass. This view is illustrative of the view of south bound traffic entering the city.
Site Views from Passenger Trains along the Union Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way

The 100-foot wide UPRR right-of-way abuts the entire length of the Willow Springs North property that lies north of and adjacent to the project site. The engineered track bed is typically 6 to 7 feet higher than the adjacent terrain. The railroad tracks run down the center of the right-of-way along a smooth engineered grade that reaches 42-feet above msl near the Los Carneros underpass. The upper tier of passenger train car windows are raised approximately 8 feet higher than the adjacent elevation. From these windows, views of the project site are available for a view gap of 1,350 feet between the Los Carneros Road overpass and industrial land uses that border the eastern boundary of the site. Some trains travel past the site at high rates of speed and others may slow to a stop on an existing railroad siding immediately west the project site. The trains that stop may either be doing so on approach to the Amtrak station at La Patera (0.6 mile east of the site) or they stop immediately west of the Los Carneros Overpass to reverse direction to back up toward the station. Trains traveling past the site at 55 miles per hour would have opportunities to see the project site for approximately 15 seconds.

Views from the Los Carneros Road Overpass

The Los Carneros Road overpass is identified as having scenic views in all directions (360 degrees) including coastal views and is identified as an important “gateway” to the community. The crest of the Los Carneros Road overpass above the freeway and railroad tracks constitutes one of the most scenic vista points in the central portion of the City. The Los Carneros Road’s southern approach to the railroad and freeway overpass rises 42 feet in elevation from approximately 29 feet above msl at the Calle Koral intersection to 71 feet 4 inches above msl atop the bridge span. That is the highest-elevated public street location in the local vicinity from which public views of the project site and its surroundings are available. Panoramic vistas that take in a sweeping breadth of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills can be seen in northerly-directed views, and equally expansive vistas overlooking the lower man-made and natural horizon features of the coastal plain are visible in southerly views from atop the overpass. The project site is located in the southeasterly view from this viewpoint.

From the southbound lanes of the overpass southeasterly-directed views overlook the project site from a distance of approximately 900 feet (Figure 4.1-3, View 3B). The southbound pedestrian sidewalk, bicycle lane, and road lanes generally have the most expansive distant southerly, coastal-directed viewing opportunities. The design of the overpass is such that crosswalk connected sidewalks are limited to the western (southbound) side of the road. Because of the width of the overpass and the lower viewing angles needed to see the closer, lower-elevated project site in southeasterly-oriented foreground views, visibility of the site may be intermittently impeded by guardrails and un-mowed roadside vegetation. These views are available for a length of approximately 550-feet as the overpass crosses both the freeway and railroad right-of-ways. At a motor vehicle speed of 35 miles per hour, these coastal plain views would be available for approximately 9 to 10 seconds. The overpass sidewalks and Class II bicycle lanes that would afford these views to south bound pedestrians and cyclists for longer durations as they would cross the overpass at slower speeds. In the middle distance views just beyond the vacant project site are the Willow Springs I residential development bordering the site to the south and the Aero Camino industrial buildings bordering the site to the east. Santa

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2 City of Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan, Chapter 6, Visual and Historic Resources Element, Figure 6-1.
Barbara Municipal Airport and its associated aviation-related buildings and control tower and businesses, located approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the project site are visible just beyond the Willow Springs I and Aero Camino Industrial structures. Distant views consist of UCSB and intervening landscaping trees to the south and the Hope Ranch and intervening tree line landscaping to the east and the Goleta Slough between. Further, between these distant features, elevations dip providing a view of the Pacific Ocean in the Santa Barbara Channel on the horizon.

**Views from Cathedral Oaks Road**

Cathedral Oaks Road is designated a Local Scenic Corridor. Residential development and landscaping along the southern side of Cathedral Oaks Road and the woodlands around Los Carneros Lake to the west of La Patera Lane, block potential views of the project site from this area. East of Los Carneros Road, roadside terrain and eucalyptus windrows rise to block views of the coastal plain and the project site from Cathedral Oaks Road. The intermittent south-directed views of the coastal plain (and toward the project site) that are available from this road are fleeting when viewed from a moving vehicle and generally encompass coastal plain terrain east or west of the project site.

**Views from North/South Roads**

Los Carneros Road and La Patera Lane gradually climb in elevation north of the freeway. Los Carneros Road is designated a Local Scenic Corridor for the north stretch between US-101 and Cathedral Oaks Road. Orientations of Los Carneros Road and La Patera Lane are north-south trending and northbound views towards the mountains and southbound views of the coastal plain are typically “channeled” or restricted by raised road-side structures and landscaping. From elevated roadway locations along Los Carneros Road near Cathedral Oaks Road (from elevations of 80-feet to 95-feet above msl) coastal-directed views may overlook areas east or west of the Los Carneros overpass vicinity from distances of approximately 0.60-0.75 miles, but the site is hidden from view by the raised overpass and its freeway on- and off-ramps. Tall tree windrows within the freeway’s southern right-of-way also block views of the site and vicinity.

**Views from Los Carneros Lake**

The Lake Los Carneros Natural and Historic Preserve is situated north of the project site, east of the Los Carneros Road overpass. Elevations within the Preserve range from less than 30 feet (at the southeast corner) to over 80 feet (in the north-central portion). The highest elevations in the Preserve (slightly higher than 80 feet) are situated approximately 0.65 mile from the project site. However, the dense eucalyptus woodlands that surround the lake block recognizable views of the project site.

**Views from Locations South and Southwest of the Project Site**

The closest public viewing corridor affording scenic northerly views of the Santa Ynez Mountains that would overlook the project site is Hollister Avenue. Hollister Avenue is designated a Local Scenic Corridor. However, the project site is situated approximately 1,070 feet north of Hollister Avenue and the existing Willow Springs I development and its adjacent 7.25-acre naturally vegetated drainage retention basin block potential visibility of the site from

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3 City of Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan, Chapter 6, Visual and Historic Resources Element, Page 6-6.
4 Ibid.
this location (Figure 4.1-4, View A). The General Plan also identifies Los Carneros Way and Los Carneros Road as providing scenic northerly views of the Santa Ynez Mountains from the vicinity of the Calle Koral intersection. The view illustrated in Figure 4.1-4, View B is a northeasterly-oriented view toward the project site and the Santa Ynez Mountains beyond from Los Carneros Road in a northbound direction south of this intersection. From this view, the westerly extent of the existing Willow Springs I development blocks potential views of the project site. As motorists, bicyclists, and/or pedestrians travel closer to the intersection of Calle Koral (on Los Carneros Road), the mound of dirt stockpiled north of Calle Koral (on a portion of the vacant Willow Springs North property) blocks views of the project site.

A view from the existing paved terminus of Camino Vista Road near Willow Springs I is shown in Figure 4.1-5, View A. This area is not used as a popular scenic viewing area, is not part of an existing through roadway accessible to the public, nor is it identified as a scenic vantage point in the General Plan.

From some locations within Willow Springs I, northerly-oriented private views of the Santa Ynez Mountains are available. Two examples of these views are provided in Figure 4.1-5, Views B and C.

**Views from Locations East of the Site**

The industrial and commercial development along Aero Camino immediately east of the site is characterized by large footprint buildings with intervening outdoor storage yards and/or parking lots that may allow westerly glimpses of the project site, as well as the existing Willow Springs I residential development. The view shown in Figure 4.1-6, View A illustrates the visibility of the existing residential structure in the Willow Springs I residential development as seen through a covered loading dock between buildings. The view shown in Figure 4.1-6, View B shows the southern end of the project site and the slope of its dirt stockpile surrounded by silt fences juxtaposed with the adjacent existing development in the Willow Springs I, as seen from the parking lot of an adjacent industrial property.

**Existing Light and Glare Conditions**

There are currently no sources of illumination on the project site. The closest sources of existing illumination are those associated with Willow Springs I immediately adjacent to the southern and southwestern sides of the site and those of the industrial and commercial properties that abut the eastern property line.

**Regulatory Framework**

**Federal**

There are no Federal regulations applicable to this aesthetics analysis.

**State**

State regulations applicable to this aesthetics analysis are limited to CEQA and CEQA Guidelines. CEQA is Section 21000 et. seq. of the California Public Resources Code, Division 5.
View 4A - This north-northerly view is taken from the eastbound lanes of Hollister Avenue and directed towards the project site. The Willow Springs I residential development and vegetation in the adjacent wetland and stormwater retention area block views of the project site.

View 4B - In this northeasterly view from the Los Carneros Road and Calle Koral intersection, the project site abuts the northern extent of the existing Willow Springs I residential development at the far right in the photograph. Just to the left of center is a soil stockpile that, if removed, would increase visibility of the proposed structures.
View 5A - The northeasterly view depicted is taken from near the existing paved end of Camino Vista Road that abuts the existing Phase I Willow Springs residential development.

View 5B - The northeasterly view depicted is from an interior parking area near the northern edge of the Willow Springs I residential development. Presently, private views of the distant Santa Ynez Mountains are available between existing buildings and landscaping.

View 5C - The view depicted is a northerly to southeasterly panoramic view from a parking area within Willow Springs I looking across the interior Open Space parcel. To the east and south (right) in the view, existing development can be seen on the other side of the open space. To the north (left) in the view the distant Santa Ynez Mountains can be seen. The proposed Phase II residential expansion of Willow Springs would result in a continuation of residential structures from right to left along the opposite side of the interior Open Space parcel.
View 6A - The westerly view depicted illustrates the visibility of an existing residential structure within Willow Springs I, as seen through a covered loading dock between buildings along the western side of Aero Camino.

View 6B - The southerly view depicted illustrates the juxtaposition of the Willow Springs I development, Aero Camino industrial area, and the southeast corner of the project site.
Environmental Quality, which considers aesthetics part of the environment to be protected under the Code. Guidelines for assessing aesthetics are include in Section 15000 et. seq. of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act.

**Local**

**General Plan Policy**

Chapter 6.0, Visual and Historic Resources of the City’s General Plan provides objectives and policies that address the issues involving the identification and protection of scenic resources. The guiding objective for the City’s policies on scenic views as stated in the General Plan is, “To identify, preserve and enhance Goleta’s scenic resources and to protect views or vistas to these resources from public and private areas.” In support of its stated objective the City identifies the following scenic resources that its policies are designed to protect and preserve (Policy VH-1):

a. The open waters of the Pacific Ocean/Santa Barbara Channel, with the Channel Islands visible in the distance.

b. The City’s Pacific shoreline, including beaches, dunes, lagoons, coastal bluffs, and open coastal mesas.

c. Goleta and Devereaux Sloughs.

d. Creeks and the vegetation associated with their riparian corridors.

e. Agricultural areas, including orchards, lands in vegetable or other crop production and fallow agricultural lands.

f. Lake Los Carneros and the surrounding woodlands.

g. Prominent natural landforms, including, but not limited to, the foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains.

The General Plan also identifies scenic corridors, public lands with view opportunities, and specific scenic viewpoint locations along these scenic corridors and lands with public view opportunities (City of Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan, Figure 6-1, Scenic and Visual Resources, October 2006). Scenic corridors and lands with public view opportunities in the project vicinity include the 101 Freeway, portions of Los Carneros Road, La Patera Lane, Cathedral Oaks Road, the Los Carneros Lake Natural and Historic Preserve north of the freeway, and Hollister Road south of the freeway.

**4.1.2 Thresholds of Significance**

The City’s Environmental Thresholds Guidelines Manual refers to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. Based on Appendix G, the project would result in a potentially significant visual impact if it would:

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;

b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;

c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or

d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
4.1 AESTHETICS

4.1.3 Project Impacts

As described in greater detail in Section 2.0 Project Description, the project includes 100 residential units in ten two-story multi-family residential structures. It would be located adjacent to and have the same architectural features as Willow Springs I. Five residential buildings would be located along the south side of the proposed Camino Vista Road extension and four two-story residential structures and a single-story multi-purpose building would be developed in the southern, interior portion of the site. Other features of the project include interior driveways, parking areas, and landscaping. See Section 2.0 for further description of these features as well as typical architectural elevations of the proposed residential structures.

Impacts to On-Site Visual Resources

As described above, the project site does not include significant visual resources. It consists largely of graded surfaces that are lacking in discernable relief and its natural vegetation is limited to coyote brush present in a lower-lying north central portion of the site (see Section 4.3 Biological Resources). The project site does not contain either permanent or temporary man-made structures or landscaping possessive of significant positive aesthetic qualities.

In some cases, undeveloped land may contribute to a sense of “visual open space” within a community. However, given the project site’s geographic situation, which is generally concealed from view from most directions, and its low visual quality, the site does not provide a visual open space resource. Therefore, development of the project site would not result in significant impacts on on-site visual resources.

Impacts on Visual Character and Quality

As illustrated by the project’s Site Plan, Landscaping Plan, and representative architectural elevations (provided in Section 2.0 Project Description), the project would introduce buildings with heights and architectural elevations that are essentially the same as the buildings within Willow Springs I. The density of residential units is also similar to Willow Springs I, given taking into account the centrally located open space Lot 20 between Phase I and II of the overall Willow Springs residential development. The project landscaping palette of trees and shrubs would closely resemble the palette used in Willow Springs I; although, the Landscaping Plan indicates that the project’s visible trees and shrubs are intended to be denser, especially along the eastern property line where evergreen trees will be incorporated to accomplish more effective screening of the industrial area to the east. Overall, the project would have a visual appearance nearly identical to that of the completed Willow Springs I.

The residential structures would be placed on fill and up gradient of Willow Springs I, and therefore would stand at higher elevations. However, the difference in elevations is not large enough to cause the new structures to appear to have a substantially greater height or structural massing as compared to the existing residential structures within Willow Springs I.

The project site is located adjacent to the Aero Camino industrial area. The site plan includes a vine-covered wall along this boundary. Three of the interior residential buildings would have a 90-foot setback from this wall. A surface drainage swale and parking areas would be located within this setback. Willow Piitosporum, California Sycamore, and Island Oak trees would

6 Addresses Thresholds "a", "c"
7 Addresses Thresholds "a", "c", "d"
provide visual landscape screening along most of the eastern boundary of the proposed project site opposite the four buildings. The northern-most residential building along the eastern site boundary, which fronts on Camino Vista Road, has a setback of approximately 30 feet from the eastern boundary wall. Trees within the 30-foot setback would provide visual screening of this building along its eastern side.

The project would generate point sources of light adjacent to the ten proposed residential structures, and along internal streets, walkways, and parking areas. The project’s preliminary Lighting Plan indicates that all project exterior lighting would be hooded and directed to prevent light from spilling offsite and into the sky (i.e. “dark sky lighting”). Tree and shrub landscaping bordering the edges of the project’s buildings and lining access roads, as well as the sides of all the interior streets, sidewalks, and parking areas would also reduce the potential for spillover lighting and glare effects from windows and noise attenuation features, such as plexi-glass, or equivalent solid material, on the outdoor north-facing balconies as required by Mitigation Measure N2-1 provided in Section 4.10 Noise.

The project site is bordered to the north by vacant land. The project’s visible frontage from the Los Carneros Road overpass and US-101 on-ramp would be landscaped with a variety of street fronting trees that would partially screen visibility of visible light sources emanating from the project’s windows. To the east, the site is bordered by industrial land uses that would generally not be sensitive to incidental light sources that may become visible such as those associated with upper floor windows. The site is bordered to the south by the open space lot and residential structures within Willow Springs I. As similar lighting is provided within Willow Springs I, the project’s lighting is not expected to generate significant spillover effects on the existing residences to the south.

Although the project is expected to be generally compatible with the visual character and quality of the surrounding area, the project would include various specific elements (such as mechanical equipment, utilities, and trash enclosures, nighttime lighting, and plexi-glass or other solid material for noise mitigation, etc.) that could degrade the visual quality of the project if not properly concealed or screened from view. In addition, if the site’s landscaping is not successfully established (e.g. plantings are not appropriate for high saline soils) and maintained, it could detract from the visual quality of the development. The potential for “unsightly inadequate installation (including plant sizes/tree placement) and maintenance of the landscape plan to partially screen, failure to break-up the massing of planned development, and lack of blending of the development into the surrounding area, as well as the potential for inadequate screening of mechanical equipment, utilities, and trash enclosures would conditions including these, would degrade the existing visual quality of the site, and These impacts are considered a potentially significant (Impact AES 1).

Impacts on Scenic Views

The Los Carneros Road overpass, Los Carneros Road near the intersection with Calle Koral, and Hollister Avenue have been identified in the General Plan as having scenic views worthy of protection. These views include either the Santa Ynez Mountains, the coastal plain and shoreline features, or some degree of both. As described above, visibility of the project site is considerably constrained by the presence of adjacent structures and landscaping, distances from viewing locations, and natural and man-made topography. Nevertheless, the project site is

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8 Addresses Thresholds "a", "b".
visible in some views that are considered scenic in the City’s General Plan. The following assesses the impact of the introduction of project features that would be visible in these views.

**Southeasterly Site Views from the Los Carneros Overpass and Associated Freeway On-ramp**
As described above, the project site is visible in southeasterly views from the top of the Los Carneros Road overpass and from the upper portion of the southbound 101 freeway on-ramp. These views offer southbound travelers expansive scenic panoramic vistas of the coastal plain.

As illustrated in **Figure 4.1-7**, the addition of two-story pitched roof residential structures with mean roof ridge beam heights of 28 feet above finished floor elevations from 23 feet to 35 feet would introduce buildings with peak elevations from 51 to 63.25 feet above msl. These structures would be located at a distance of about 900 feet from the top of the southbound freeway on-ramp. The project would occur up-gradient of the Willow Springs I development and be placed on several feet of fill, so structures would be slightly more prominent than the existing Willow Springs I structures in views from this location. The structures would block views of the existing Aero Camino industrial area and the north boundary of Willow Springs I. However, the development would not extend into the skyline or obstruct views of the coastline. It would not obstruct more distant horizon views of man-made features (such as the Santa Barbara Airport control tower) or natural features (such as the Goleta Slough) on the coastal plain or distant views of the Santa Barbara Channel. Therefore, the project’s impact on existing scenic views from the Los Carneos Road overpass and the Highway 101 freeway on-ramp would be less than significant.

**Site Views from Passenger Trains Bypassing the Project Site**
In southerly and southeasterly views from trains that travel along the UPRR tracks north of the site, train passengers overlook the vacant Willow Springs North property, the project site, Willow Springs I, and the industrial area immediately east of the project site and can intermittently see the air traffic control tower on the low-lying terrain of the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport.

The combination of residential structures and intervening landscaping would constitute a visual barrier to southerly-directed coastal plain views from passenger trains. A portion of existing open space flat land would be replaced by a middle distance view of a row of residential structures. The development would mostly block existing views of Willow Springs I development and the adjacent industrial areas to the east of the project site. The project’s landscape and structural design may be considered an aesthetically more pleasing view than the industrial areas to the east and would not block significant distant scenic views from the train. The project’s impacts to scenic views from passenger trains is considered less than significant, as the project would not intrude on public views of scenic resources intended for protection pursuant General Plan Policy VH 1.1.

**Northerly Site Views from Los Carneros Road, Calle Koral and Camino Vista Road**
The project would not interfere with scenic views of the Santa Ynez Mountains in northerly views from Los Carneros Road at the northbound approach to the Calle Koral intersection, as the existing Willow Springs I residential development would conceal most of the project’s structures from view. A minor portion of the roof-line of one of the structures would be visible as shown in **Figure 4.1-8**; however, these structures would not add an anomalous element and
View 7A - Existing view from the Los Carneros Road overpass.

View 7B - View with outline of proposed project structures.
View 8A - The proposed project would not be visible in this view, with the exception of the roof of one of the project’s buildings.
would not block distant views of the foothills to the north. Also, the existing stockpile referenced above, which provides an open space visual quality to the foreground view, would block the western facade of the development. However, the stockpile is considered a temporary use, and its anticipated removal could result in the exposure of the project’s “built environment” compromising the open space foreground visual quality of this northeasterly view. Although removal of this particular stockpile is not a part of the project, mitigation is recommended to increase the landscaping along the north parkway of Calle Koral to soften the visual appearance of the project buildings and maintain a similar blocking effect of the stockpile to mitigate for future conditions. Under existing conditions, the project's impact to scenic mountain views, and foreground open space appearance, from this public viewpoint location is considered to be less than significant.

The northeasterly course of Camino Vista Road past the western-most extent of the existing Willow Springs I residential development currently offers northerly views of the Santa Ynez Mountains (as shown in Figure 4.1-5, View A). From this view, the project would appear as an extension, of equivalent design, of the Willow Springs I development that currently borders the eastern side of the completed portion of Camino Vista Road. A northeasterly portion of existing views of Santa Ynez Mountains from this roadway would be blocked as a result of the added structures. However, this portion of the roadway is currently a “dead-end” and the view is essentially limited to the residents of Willow Springs I entering the existing community. This area is not used as a popular scenic viewing area, is not part of an existing through roadway accessible to the public, nor is it identified as a scenic vantage point in the General Plan. A photographic simulation of the proposed structures' outlines as they would appear in a view from the existing paved terminus of Camino Vista Road looking north is shown in Figure 4.1-9. Expansive views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and foothills would continue to be available on the northern (mountain) side of the proposed new roadway connection for future travel between the existing Willow Springs Phase I on the west and Aero Camino on the east. As stated previously, there are no existing public views available from the Camino Vista Road extension, as it has not yet been constructed and this area is not otherwise currently available to the public. As such, the proposed project’s impact to views of the scenic Santa Ynez Mountains from the existing terminus of Camino Vista Road would be less than significant.

**Northerly Site Views from Hollister Avenue**

Hollister Avenue affords northerly scenic views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. As described above, the project site would be situated approximately 1,070 feet north of Hollister Avenue. Because of the distance from the roadway and the lack of site visibility due to the intervening Willow Springs I structures, southern perimeter wall, wetland vegetation, and surrounding landscape, the project would not interfere with views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Therefore, the project would have **no impact** on scenic mountain views from Hollister Avenue.

**Effects on Private Views**

Existing private views toward the Santa Ynez Mountains from within the Willow Springs I area (such as the view shown in Figure 4.1-5, View B) may be impacted by development of the project. Due to the configuration of Willow Springs I and the spacing and clustering of residential buildings and landscaping within the development, unimpeded northerly views of the mountains are rare, and where glimpses of the mountains can be seen, the views are not expansive in east and west directions. The best views of the mountains occur from along the northern edges of Willow Springs I. From an interior northwestern parking area within Willow Springs I northeasterly views of the mountains are possible, and the structures and landscaping
View 9A - Northerly view from existing Camino Vista Road terminus at west boundary shows view obstruction by proposed structures and depicts compatible architectural features with Willow Springs I. This is not currently a through road. As such, its current use is effectively limited to existing residents of Willow Springs I and their guests.
4.1 AESTHETICS

of the project would interfere with existing private views of the mountains (Figure 4.1-5, View B). Throughout the middle boundary area between the Willow Springs I and the project, northerly views from Willow Springs I are filtered by landscaping and natural vegetation in and surrounding the central open space parcel (Figure 4.1-5, View C). While private views of the mountains from selected areas within Willow Springs I areas may be impacted, the impacts are considered less than significant as the residents of Willow Springs I would still have views of the mountains from the common open space areas.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

Significant cumulative visual resource impacts resulting from the project in combination with other projects in the area are not expected. As provided in Section 3.0 Related Projects, there are numerous pending development projects citywide that would contribute to the urbanization of the City. These areas have been predominantly identified in the General Plan as appropriate areas for growth. In the more immediate vicinity (i.e. 0.5 mile), nearby pending developments include the Village at Los Carneros, located immediately north the Los Carneros Road Overpass (increasing the number of residential units to 428 is currently under consideration), the 6,046 square-foot Sturgeon commercial building north of U.S. Highway 101, and the 80,989 square-foot Marriott Residence Inn located southeast of the project site.

The Village at Los Carneros, Marriott Residence Inn, and Sturgeon building would continue the trend toward development of remaining vacant parcels in the project area. These developments will be visible from public viewing places, including surrounding public roadways. When considered cumulatively, these projects will visually continue the “filling in” of undeveloped land and reduce views of undeveloped open space in the central portion of the City. These projects, when considered cumulatively, would also similarly generate aesthetic impacts could combine with the effects of the project which could cause cumulative degradation of the existing visual quality of the area and surroundings, if architectural treatments, mechanical equipment, utility infrastructure, nightlighting, trash enclosures, and landscaping are not properly addressed. This impact is considered potentially significant (Impact AES 2).

4.1.5 Mitigation Measures

Visual Character and Quality (Impact AES 1 and AES 2)

AES 1-1  The permittee shall receive Preliminary and Final approval from the Design Review Board (DRB). The DRB shall specifically consider compatibility with the area and surroundings, architectural treatments, placement of mechanical equipment and utility infrastructure, colors, materials, finish floor elevations, nightlighting, trash enclosures, and landscape palette during review of all project plans, including the lighting, utility, landscape, and building plans.

Plan Requirements and Timing: In consultation with Planning and Environmental Services Department, the DRB shall ensure the plans are consistent with the plans approved by the Planning Commission and/or City Council. The review shall include site plan, floor plans, elevations, grading plan, landscape plan, and lighting plan consistent with the DRB submittal requirements. Particular attention shall be paid to compatibility with the area and surroundings, architectural treatments, mechanical equipment, utility infrastructure, nightlighting, trash enclosures, and landscape palette. Additional materials shall be provided as required by the DRB to complete their review. All
project plans as determined necessary by the City, including the grading and utility plans, shall be submitted to the DRB for Preliminary and Final review and approval shall be granted prior to issuance of any LUP for grading. All project plans as determined necessary by the City, including building, lighting and landscape plans, shall be submitted to the DRB for Preliminary and Final review and approval prior to issuance of any LUP for construction.

**Monitoring:** City staff shall verify compliance at time of DRB review, prior to issuance of any LUP for grading and any LUP for construction, during field inspection, and prior to any occupancy clearance final inspection.

AES 1-2

The overall and specific height of structural development shown on final plans shall not exceed the mean height and peak height shown on approved project exhibit maps (Elevations Sheets). Finished grade shall be consistent with the approved final grading plan. Building heights limitations shown on any approved final project issued-LUP plan sets shall be adhered to during construction.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** During the framing state of construction and prior to commencement of roofing, the permittee shall submit written verification from a licensed surveyor demonstrating that the overall structural height above sea level and mean height and peak height from finished floor conform to those assumptions shown on approved final project issued-LUP plan sets (grading sheet for identification of finished floor elevation, elevation sheets for mean and peak height elevations in order to determine overall height above sea level).

**Monitoring:** City staff shall verify compliance prior to issuance of any LUP for grading and any LUP for construction, during field inspection, and prior to commencement of roofing.

AES 1-3

The permittee shall submit a composite utility plan for City staff and DRB Preliminary/Final review. All external/roof mounted mechanical equipment (including HVAC condensers, switch boxes, etc.) shall be included on all building plans and shall be designed to be integrated into the structure and/or screened in their entirety from public view.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** Detailed plans showing all external/roof mounted mechanical equipment shall be submitted for review and approval by City staff and the DRB prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** Prior to any occupancy clearance final inspection, City staff shall verify installation of all external/roof mounted mechanical equipment per the approved final project plans.

AES 1-4

All new utility service connections and above-ground mounted equipment such as backflow devices, etc., shall be shall be screened from public view and/or painted 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. Whenever possible, utility transformers shall be placed in underground vaults, unless otherwise approved by the City, and then must be...
completely screened from view. All gas and electrical meters shall be concealed and/or painted to match the building. All gas, electrical, backflow prevention devices and communications equipment shall be completely concealed in an enclosed portion of the building, on top of the building, or within a screened utility area. All transformers and vaults that must be located within the right-of-way shall be installed below grade unless otherwise approved by the City, and then must be completely screened from view.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The plans submitted for City staff and DRB Preliminary/Final review shall identify the type, location, size, and number of utility connections and above-ground mounted equipment as well as how such equipment would be screened from public view and the color(s) that it would be painted so as to blend in with the project and surrounding area.

**Monitoring:** Prior to any occupancy clearance final inspection, City staff shall verify that all above-ground utility connections and equipment is installed, screened, and painted per the approved final project plans.

**AES 1-5**

All utility distribution lines within the project site shall be undergrounded.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** This requirement shall be incorporated into the project plans and the plans shall be submitted for review with this requirement measure and approved by City staff prior to issuance approval of any Land Use Permit for grading and/or prior to clearance for map recordation, whichever occurs first.

**Monitoring:** City of Goleta staff shall review the final project development plan and all subsequent plans submitted for issuance approval of any Land Use Permit for grading, any Land Use Permit for construction, building, or grading permit(s) to verify compliance. City staff shall verify utility installation per the approved final project plans prior to any occupancy clearance final inspection for the project.

**AES 1-6**

Any exterior night lighting installed on the project site shall be of low intensity, low glare design, and shall be hooded to direct light downward onto the subject parcel and prevent spill-over onto adjacent parcels and shall otherwise meet dark night sky requirements. Exterior lighting fixtures shall be kept to the minimum number and intensity needed to ensure public safety. These lights shall be dimmed after 11 p.m. to the maximum extent practical without compromising public safety. Upward directed exterior lighting is prohibited. All exterior lighting fixtures shall be appropriate for the architectural style of the structure and surrounding area. The final lighting plan shall be amended to include identification of all types, sizes, and intensities of wall mounted building lights and landscape accent lighting. “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 shall be submitted for review and approved by the DRB and City staff prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** Prior to any occupancy clearance—final inspection, City staff shall inspect to ensure that exterior lighting fixtures have been installed consistent with approved final project plans.

AES 1-7

The use of plexi-glass, or similar noise attenuation features along the north-facing development facade, as required by Mitigation Measure N.2-1, shall not cause glare effects so as to impair the visibility of vehicle travel on nearby Highway 101 or other roadways, or otherwise create unsightly conditions.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The locations, types, and manufacture specifications of plexi-glass or other potentially glare-causing features shall be provided to the Planning and Environmental Services Department for approval for use. Specifications provided shall describe all non-reflective qualities, coatings or other glass treatment information that demonstrate glare reduction qualities for outside facing portions. The specifications shall be shown on all project architectural plans and shall be submitted for review and approved by City staff and the DRB prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** Prior to any occupancy clearance—final inspection, City staff shall site inspect to ensure installation according to approved final project plans.

AES 1-8

Trash/recycling enclosure(s) shall be provided.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The enclosure shall be compatible with the architectural design of the project, shall be of adequate size for trash and recycling containers (at least 50 SF), and shall be accessible by residents and for removal. The trash/recycling area shall be enclosed with a solid wall of sufficient height to screen the area, shall include a solid gate and a roof, and shall be maintained in good repair in perpetuity. The enclosure(s) shall be shown on all project plans as determined necessary by City staff and shall be submitted for review and approved by City staff and the DRB prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** Prior to any occupancy clearance—final inspection, City staff shall site inspect to ensure installation according to approved final project plans.

AES 1-9

Project landscaping shall consist of approximately seventy-five percent (75%) drought-tolerant native and/or Mediterranean type plant coverage, which adequately complements the project design and integrate the site with surrounding land uses. Project landscaping shall provide partial screening of the site parking areas and structures. Landscaping shall also consist of plant species that are known to thrive in the site’s specific soil characteristics (e.g., highly saline), based on soil testing that evaluates soil characteristics to appropriate depths.

Invasive plant species shall not be used for project landscaping. Excluded species shall include, but not be limited to, those listed as problematic and/or...
invasive by the California Native Plant Society, the California Invasive Plant Council, or which are listed as ‘noxious weeds’ by the State of California or the U.S. Federal Government and/or otherwise determined to be problematic and/or invasive by the City’s Planning and Environmental Services Department. Boston ivy (Parthenocissus tricuspidata), Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica), and rockrose (Cistis ladanifer) shall be among those species excluded from use in landscaping.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The final landscape plan shall identify the following:

- type of irrigation;
- all existing and new trees, shrubs, and groundcovers by species;
- size of all plantings;
- map showing areas of high saline constrained soils; and,
- location of all plantings.

The final landscape plan shall be reviewed and approved by the DRB and City staff prior to any LUP issuance for construction. All for landscaping in or near the open space area, shall be subject to County of Santa Barbara Fire Department approval shall also be required prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

The final landscape plan shall also be reviewed and approved by a City of Goleta approved qualified biologist or restoration ecologist prior to any LUP issuance for construction to exclude all potentially invasive species. The approved plant palette shall be adhered to throughout the life of the project.

**Monitoring:** Prior to occupancy clearance final inspection, City staff in consultation with an approved biologist shall site inspect to ensure that landscaping has been installed consistent with the approved final landscape plan.

**AES 1-10**

The permittee shall enter into an agreement to install required common area and private landscaping and water-conserving irrigation systems as provided in the final landscape plan, as well as maintain required landscaping and water-conserving irrigation systems for the life of the project.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The applicant-permittee shall execute a signed landscape installation and maintenance agreement approved by the City Attorney’s Office, including at least a 5-year maintenance period, prior to any LUP issuance for construction. Performance securities for installation and maintenance shall be reviewed and approved by City staff prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** Prior to occupancy clearance final inspection, City staff shall site inspect to ensure installation according to the approved final landscape plan. City staff shall check maintenance periodically as needed. Release of any performance security requires appropriate documentation and City staff signature as set forth in the agreement.
AES 1-11 No signs of any type are approved with this action unless otherwise specified herein. All signs require a separate sign permit and Design Review Board (DRB) approval and shall comply with the City of Goleta sign regulations.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** Future signage shall comply with the requirements of Article I, Chapter 35 of the Goleta Municipal Code, as may be amended or any superseding sign regulations, prior to issuance of any Sign Certificate of Conformance or its functional equivalent.

**Monitoring:** City staff shall verify compliance with this requirement.

AES 1-12 The permittee applicant shall enter into a maintenance agreement to promptly remove any graffiti at the project site.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The permittee applicant shall execute a sign maintenance agreement approved by the City Attorney’s Office, including at least a 5-year maintenance period, prior to any LUP issuance for construction.

**Monitoring:** City staff shall verify compliance with this requirement.

**Recommended Mitigation Measure**

AES 1-13 The permittee shall provide landscaping along the north parkway of Calle Koral to partially screen foreground views of the structures proposed as part of the project. Such landscaping shall be included in the Final Landscape Plan and shall be consistent with the specifications outlined in Mitigation Measure AES 1-9, above, and shall be subject to the agreement specified in Mitigation Measure AES 1-10, above. In addition to the specifications of AES 1-9, the landscaping for this particular area shall be of relatively low profile such that it does not intrude into the skyline above the existing Willow Springs I structures or Willow Springs II structures, and shall avoid potentially interfering with direct views of the distant Santa Ynez Mountains from Los Carneros Road.

**Plan Requirements and Timing:** The final landscape plan shall identify the following:

a) type of irrigation;
b) all existing and new trees, shrubs, and groundcovers by species;
c) size of all plantings;
d) map showing areas of high saline constrained soils; and
e) location of all plantings.

The final landscape plan shall be reviewed and approved by the DRB, City staff (and for landscaping in or near the open space area, County of Santa Barbara Fire Department approval shall also be required) prior to any LUP issuance for construction.
Monitoring: Prior to occupancy clearance final inspection, City staff shall site inspect to ensure that landscaping has been installed consistent with the final landscape plan.

4.1.6 Residual Impacts

The above mitigation measures would reduce project-specific and cumulatively significant visual impacts to less than significant (Class II).