

## **7.7 VISUAL RESOURCES**

This chapter focuses on the impacts to visual resources associated with the implementation of the alternatives carried forward for review under the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In general, most actions that would result in visual impacts are outside the USACE's statutory authority and responsibility under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The primary responsibility of evaluating and regulating visual resources impacts resides with the County of Orange and the affected cities. As part of the NEPA review, the USACE is analyzing impacts on the environment associated with projects that receive authorizations under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

### **7.7.1 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

For the purpose of this analysis, an alternative is considered to have a significant visual resources impact if any of the following occurs:

- The project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- The project would result in substantial landform alteration that would adversely affect the visual quality of the area.
- The project would create light, glare, or illumination beyond the physical limits of the project site, which would adversely affect views in the area.

The aesthetic impacts of a project include both the objective visual resource change created by the project and the subjective viewer response to that change. Distance from a project site, frequency of view, length of view, viewer activity, viewer perception, and viewing conditions contribute to the assessment of an aesthetic impact. The physical limits and changes of the views and the quantity of the viewers are objective.

Viewer perception is subjective. The perception of different viewer groups to the visual environment and its elements varies based on viewer activity and awareness. Activities such as commuting in heavy traffic can distract an observer from many aspects of the visual environment. Conversely, pleasure driving or relaxing in a scenic environment can encourage an observer to look at the view more closely and at greater length, thereby increasing the observer's attention to detail. Sensitivity is also determined by how much the viewer has at stake in the viewshed. Typically, people who own property in an area would be more sensitive to change than those just passing through an area.

### **7.7.2 SAMP PROPOSED PERMITTING PROCEDURES**

As discussed previously, the proposed RGP and LOP procedures have been developed for future participants and current participants in the SAMP. The future participants have not yet defined projects for permitting by the RGP or LOP procedures. For projects proposed by future participants that would be eligible for authorization by the maintenance RGP, visual resource impacts would be minimal. Such activities would be associated with small maintenance projects, resulting in temporary impacts to a small area located in a mostly degraded landscape. New permanent impacts of any type are not expected. For projects eligible for authorization by the LOP procedures, not enough is known about the project size and location or potential impacts to analyze potential visual resource impacts at this time. Such projects eligible for authorization by the LOP procedures will be subject to future NEPA review before a final permit decision can be made.

Current participants have defined their proposed project and have undergone extensive pre-application coordination with the USACE and other federal and state agencies. These projects, the SMWD Proposed Project, RMV Proposed Project, and other alternatives that may have significant effects on the environment are as noted in Chapter 6.0. Therefore, the authorization pursuant to the proposed permitting procedures may also have an effect on the environment per the thresholds of significance. These potential effects and minimization/mitigation measures applicable to these potential effects are further discussed below.

### **7.7.3 SMWD PROPOSED PROJECT**

#### **7.7.3.1 Impacts**

The SMWD Proposed Project includes ongoing maintenance and operation of existing SMWD facilities and related infrastructure, as well as future proposed facilities, including the proposed Upper Chiquita Reservoir. The operation and maintenance activities would not result in any land use compatibility impacts. The SMWD, as a special district, would serve as the lead agency for its proposed project and would complete its own CEQA environmental analysis for the proposed Upper Chiquita seasonal storage reservoir. The following analysis is based upon the USACE's evaluation of potential environmental effects associated with the construction and operation of the proposed reservoir.

The proposed Upper Chiquita Reservoir site is not located in an area considered to be a scenic vista or near a state or locally designated scenic highway. Implementation of the proposed reservoir would alter the appearance of the site by developing a vacant area with a reservoir facility, ancillary structures, and an access roadway. Although the project has the potential to degrade the existing natural, undisturbed visual character of the site, limited views of the site would only be visible to passing motorists along Oso Parkway and from the SR-241 southbound off-ramp. Residential uses within the Las Flores community located to the west would be visually separated from the Upper Chiquita Reservoir site by intervening topography. No significant impacts are anticipated.

#### **7.7.3.2 Mitigation Program**

No visual resources mitigation is expected to be required.

#### **7.7.3.3 Level of Significance After Mitigation**

No significant visual impacts associated with the Upper Chiquita reservoir are anticipated.

### **7.7.4 ALTERNATIVE B-10 MODIFIED**

#### **7.7.4.1 Impacts**

##### ***Impact***

**7.7.4-1:** *Grading activities would significantly alter the existing visual characteristics and topography of the site.*

#### **Landform Alteration**

Short-term impacts would fall within several categories of visual change. Mass grading would affect existing topography, vegetation cover, and vistas. Throughout much of the grading, large construction vehicles would be visible from adjacent (and some distant) vantage points. Barren

slopes and new development in various stages of construction would be visible intermittently throughout the implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified.

Implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified would alter the visual characteristics of the RMV Planning Area. Implementation would require approximately 288,461,000 cubic yards (cy) of cut and fill (153,235,000 cy of mass grading and 135,226,000 cy of remedial grading) including cuts to ridgelines and fills in valleys.

Landscaping would involve the replanting of slopes in order to reduce the aesthetic impacts associated with grading, to the extent possible given fuel modification and habitat preservation goals.

**Impact**

**7.7.4-2:** *The visual character of the RMV Planning Area visible from several viewpoints will be significantly altered through implementation of the Alternative B-10 Modified project.*

**Surrounding Views**

A photographic aesthetic impact analysis was conducted from key vantage points within and outside the RMV Planning Area. A Viewshed Analysis Key Map is provided as Figure 7.7-1. The limits of the proposed grading are delineated in the photographs and, therefore, represent a worst-case depiction of the area of disturbance associated with Alternative B-10 Modified.

The following describes the existing views and anticipated impacts associated with the implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified.

**View 1a: West of the RMV Planning Area on Ortega Highway in the City of San Juan Capistrano**

Figure 7.7-2 depicts Ortega Highway, west of the RMV Planning Area looking east.

**Effect:** As depicted in View 1a, the RMV Planning Area is not visible from this vantage point. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur. It should be noted that Ortega Highway is planned for widening to a four-lane road in this location, and landscaped as a landscape corridor as part of a future Caltrans road improvement project. These improvements are not a part of Alternative B-10 Modified or any other RMV Planning Area alternative.

**View 1b: West of the RMV Planning Area on Ortega Highway in the City of San Juan Capistrano**

This view is looking east near the RMV Planning Area boundary on Ortega Highway (Figure 7.7-2).

**Effect:** The southernmost portion of Planning Area 2 would be visible in the background. Planning Area 2 is located north of Ortega Highway, east of Antonio Parkway, south of Oso Parkway and Tesoro High School, and west of Cañada Gobernadora in Chiquita Canyon. Of the 1,631-acre planning area, 1,025 acres is proposed for development; 606 acres would be in open space. Approximately 37,300,000 cy of cut and fill (18,650,000 cy of mass

grading and 18,650,000 cy of remedial grading) would be required. From this distance (over 1.5 miles), the change in topography and land use from open space to residential development would not result in significant aesthetic impacts because of limited visibility.

**View 2: *Intersection of Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway***

Figure 7.7-3 shows the proposed development area in Planning Area 1, looking west and northwest, at the southeast corner of the existing intersection of Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway. The Planned Community of Ladera Ranch is in the background.

**Effect:** Planning Area 1 is an 810-acre site proposed for a mix of residential, urban activity center uses, and open space uses. Of the 810 acres, approximately 540 acres is proposed for development; 270 acres would be in open space. Approximately 14,250,000 cy of cut and fill (4,500,000 cy of mass grading and 9,750,000 cy of remedial grading) would be required.

From this vantage point, residential development in Planning Area 1 would be visible between La Pata Avenue and Ortega Highway. Urban activity center uses are proposed in Planning Area 1 on three of the four quadrants of the intersection of Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway/La Pata Avenue. Proposed residential development on the hillside below Ladera Ranch would also be visible from this vantage point. Although the southeast quadrant is partially developed with polo fields and the southwest quadrant contains nursery facilities, the change in character of the site from this public view and the introduction of night lighting is considered a significant impact because of the extent of the change.

**View 3: *Covenant Hills Development in Ladera Ranch, Unincorporated Orange County***

Figure 7.7-4 depicts the project site looking southeasterly towards Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3 from the paved community trail along the southerly edge of Ladera Ranch.

**Effect:** As depicted in photograph, proposed development in Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3 would be visible from this vantage point. With respect to Planning Area 1, senior housing would be visible in the foreground; residential and urban activity center uses, which include retail, business, and residential uses, would be visible in the background. In the middle/right portion of the photograph, urban activity center uses are proposed on the northeast, northwest, and southwest quadrants of the intersection of Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway; residential development is proposed in the southeast quadrant of the intersection. Proposed Cow Camp Road would be visible, east of Antonio Parkway, as well as with the vehicular bridge crossing of Cañada Gobernadora Creek. The residential community of Covenant Hills, in the southernmost portion of Ladera Ranch, is under construction and is visible from this vantage point (see development area in far left portion of photograph). Proposed development in Planning Area 1 would be considered a continuation of existing residential development both constructed and under

construction in Ladera Ranch. However, the visibility of land uses and alterations in the landform are considered significant.

Urban activity center uses in Planning Area 2 would be visible from this vantage point. The southerly portion of the proposed development in Planning Area 3 would be visible from this vantage point. The proposed development area is approximately two miles from the vantage point. Based on the distance from this vantage point, no significant aesthetic impacts are anticipated.

**View 4: Ortega Highway, East of Antonio Parkway**

Figure 7.7-5 depicts the RMV Planning Area looking north from Ortega Highway east of Antonio Parkway.

**Effect:** Proposed residential development in Planning Area 1 northeast of the intersection of Antonio Parkway at proposed Cow Camp Road would be visible from this vantage point. Cow Camp Road, as it travels in an easterly direction, from its intersection at Antonio Parkway and enters Planning Area 2, as well as the proposed bridge crossing over Chiquita Creek would be visible from this vantage point.

Proposed residential development in the southern portion of Planning Area 2 would also be visible from this vantage point. The middle development area of Planning Area 2 would be partially visible from this location. Based on the thresholds of significance set forth in this EIS, the change in views from this public vantage point, as well as the change in landform and introduction of nighttime lighting, is considered a significant impact.

**View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park**

Figure 7.7-6 depicts Planning Areas 2, 3, and 5 looking southwest from the West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park.

**Effect:** Proposed residential and urban activity center development, the latter of which also permits residential uses, in Planning Area 2 would be visible from the trail in Caspers Regional Park. As conceptually depicted, the proposed large lot, low-density and conventional residential development in Planning Area 3 would be visible in the foreground from this vantage point. A small portion of the proposed residential development area in Planning Area 5 would also be visible from this vantage point. Existing residential development in Coto de Caza is also visible from this location. Due to the proximity of change in visual character that would occur in Planning Area 3 near this existing County park trail, implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified would result in significant aesthetic impacts.

**View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park**

Figure 7.7-7 depicts views of Planning Areas 2 and 3 from the West Ridge Trail that traverses the most westerly ridgeline in Caspers Wilderness Park. At points along the 2.2-mile trail, hikers and bicycle riders would have views into the RMV Planning Area.

**Effect:** Proposed Planning Area 3 residential development would be visible in the foreground from this vantage point. Proposed Planning Area 2 development, the Chiquita Canyon arterial road alignment, and the bridge crossing Cañada Gobernadora Creek (from Planning Area 2 into Planning Area 3) would also be visible in the background from this public vantage point. Changes to the topography and character from this vantage point would result in significant aesthetic impacts.

**View 7: Ortega Highway at Verdugo Canyon**

Figure 7.7-8 depicts a portion of Planning Area 4 looking southwest from Ortega Highway at Verdugo Canyon.

**Effect:** As conceptually depicted, the proposed residential development in Planning Area 4 would be visible to the Ortega Highway commuter traffic and the local traffic as it exits Verdugo Canyon. The foreground views of proposed development may be partially obscured by proposed landscaping (e.g., trees and walls) associated with residences in the planning area. Although implementation of residential development in this location would result in a change in land use, the proposed development area has been subject to disturbance and development. Therefore, implementation of residential development is not considered to result in a substantial degradation of the visual quality of the area of site and, therefore, is not considered a significant impact.

**View 8: Ortega Highway at Cristianitos Road**

Figure 7.7-9 shows Planning Areas 2 and 3 looking north from Ortega Highway.

**Effect:** Much of the residential development proposed in Planning Areas 2 and 3 would be visible from this vantage point. The foreground views would continue to be dominated by the floodplain of San Juan Creek. Future residences in Planning Area 3 may obscure the proposed alignment of Cow Camp Road; the bridge crossing from Planning Area 3 to Planning Area 2 would be visible. Implementation of residential development in this location would result in a change in land use from open space, orchards, and existing ranch uses. Although portions of the site visible from Ortega Highway are disturbed from industrial lease operations and agricultural activities, the change in character of the area is considered a significant aesthetic impact.

**View 9: North of Ortega Highway at San Juan Creek**

Figure 7.7-10 is a view of Planning Area 5 looking south from the northern bank of San Juan Creek.

**Effect:** Proposed residential development of the northern portion of Planning Area 5 would be visible from this vantage point. The foreground San Juan Creek floodplain, lower elevation hills, and background higher-elevation ridges would continue to be visible. The change in the topographical character and change of land use of the planning area visible from this public roadway is considered a significant impact.

**View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy**

Figure 7.7-11 depicts Planning Areas 3 through 8, as well as the proposed alignment of Cristianitos Road looking north and east from the Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy.

**Effect:** Planning Area 3 is proposed for residential and urban activity center uses. Planning Areas 4, 7, and 6 are proposed exclusively for residential development. Planning Area 8 is proposed for residential and business park uses. The change in land use from open space to urban land uses, as well as changes to the topographical character of the area, would result in significant aesthetic impacts from this vantage point.

**View 11: End of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road in the City of San Clemente**

Figure 7.7-12 depicts Planning Area 8 from the existing terminus of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road in the Planned Community of Talega, looking northeasterly. Avenida Pico would enter Planning Area 8 in this location.

**Effect:** The proposed extension of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road would cross Cristianitos Creek via a bridge crossing and enter the southern development area of proposed Planning Area 8. The Talega Apartment Community is visible on the northern side of Avenida Pico. Residents of this apartment complex will be able to view residential and business park uses in the southern developed portion of Planning Area 8. The Northrop Grumman site is visible from this vantage point and would be demolished to facilitate development in Planning Area 8. Although the proposed land uses are consistent and compatible with existing land uses in Talega, the extensive grading (approximately 48,141,000 cy of cut and fill) necessary to implement proposed land uses would result in changes to the visual character of the area that are considered significant.

**View 12: Near I-5 at Cristianitos Road**

Figure 7.7-13 depicts Planning Area 8 looking northeast from the I-5 off-ramp area for Cristianitos Road in the City San Clemente.

**Effect:** The proposed southern development of Planning Area 8 would be visible in the distant view (approximately 3.8 miles). MCB Camp Pendleton and the existing San Diego Gas & Electric electrical tower easement lines are visible in the foreground. The existing Northrop Grumman facilities would be demolished to allow for the implementation of residential development. Extensive grading would be required. Although the proposed development is not proximate to the vantage point, the view of Planning Area 8 is not obscured. The change in topographical character and visibility of development are considered significant aesthetic impacts.

**Impact**

**7.7.4-3:** *Foreground, middleground, and background ridgelines located in landscape zones would be significantly impacted by project grading to allow for the implementation of proposed land uses.*

## **Ridgeline Modifications**

Figure 7.7-14 identifies ridgelines that would be impacted by development of Alternative B-10 Modified. Ridgelines significantly impacted by grading activities associated with development (landform alteration) are listed below by planning area:

**Planning Area 1:** The westerly foreground ridgeline (under 600 feet), identified in the *City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan*, would be impacted by proposed grading. Please note that this ridgeline is identified on the city's General Plan but is located outside of the city's boundaries. The ridgeline would be visible from the following vantage points:

- View 2: Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway
- View 3: Covenant Hills in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County

**Planning Area 2:** The southern portion of the westerly Planning Area 2 foreground ridgeline (under 600 feet) would be impacted by proposed grading which is anticipated to be visible from the following vantage points:

- View 1b: Easterly from Ortega Highway prior to the entrance to the RMV Planning Area in the City of San Juan Capistrano
- View 3: Covenant Hills Development in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County
- View 4: North from Ortega Highway
- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park

The easterly Planning Area 2 foreground ridgeline would be preserved and result in no grading impacts.

**Planning Area 3:** Proposed grading would impact two central Planning Area 3 ridgelines. These ridgelines are classified as middleground ridgelines (600 to 1,000 feet) in the northern portion of Planning Area 3 and foreground ridgelines (under 600 feet) in the mid-southern portion of Planning Area 3. These two ridgelines are anticipated to be visible from the following vantage points:

- View 3: Covenant Hills in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County
- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 8: Northwest from Ortega Highway
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy



**Planning Area 5:** The northern portion of the background ridgeline (over 1,000 feet) at the western edge of Planning Area 5 would be impacted by proposed grading which is anticipated to be visible from the following vantage points:

- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 9: Ortega Highway at San Juan Creek
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

**Planning Area 7:** Two eastern middleground ridgelines (between 600 and 1,000 feet) would be impacted by proposed grading which is anticipated to be visible from the following vantage point:

- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

**Planning Area 8:** Two eastern middleground ridgelines (between 600 and 1,000 feet) would be impacted by proposed grading which is anticipated to be visible from the following vantage points:

- View 11: End of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road in the City of San Clemente
- View 12: Near I-5 at Cristianitos Road
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

**Impact**

**7.7.4-4:** *Views from some recreational area vantage points within wilderness parks would be significantly impacted by project grading and associated development activities. Changes in the character would be significant.*

**Wilderness Parks**

Aesthetic impacts associated with proposed grading and associated development are anticipated to be visible from, but not limited to, the following vantage points:

- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park

It should be noted that the Cleveland National Forest is not considered to be affected because there are no publicly accessible roads or trails within the forest proximate to the RMV Planning Area.

**Impact**

**7.7.4-5:** *Alternative B-10 Modified would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and the potential for glare. The change in character of the RMV Planning Area through the introduction of land uses requiring night lighting and the potential for the use of building materials resulting in glare is considered significant.*

## **Night Lighting and Glare**

Development and construction of Alternative B-10 Modified would introduce new sources of nighttime light into the area. New light sources are anticipated to occur from the illumination of on-site structures such as commercial buildings and recreational uses (i.e., signage, interior and exterior lighting), residences (i.e., interior and exterior lighting), and street and vehicle lights. The most prominent light source is expected to originate from the proposed sports park in Planning Area 3. The goal of lighting a sports facility is to provide an appropriately illuminated environment for players and spectators for nighttime activities. Light “spills” when it shines beyond the sports facility and illuminates an unintended area. The amount of light spill, measured in foot-candles, is a function of distance and intensity of the light source.

To determine if light and glare that would occur with implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified would result in a significant impact, some basic information regarding light and glare is provided.

### **Light Scales**

Illuminance is the amount of total light received from a source by a unit of surface area. Illumination is measured in foot-candles of light. One candlepower is approximately equal to the light emitted from one candle, and a foot-candle is the amount of light produced by this candle on one-square-foot of a spherical surface one foot from the light source. Illuminance values for natural outdoor light levels are listed in Table 7.7-1. This table is provided for informational purposes to provide the reader with the range of illuminance associated with natural and man-made light sources.

**TABLE 7.7-1  
SCENE ILLUMINATION UNDER VARIOUS OUTDOORS CONDITIONS**

<b>Lighting Conditions</b>	<b>Scene Illuminance (Foot-candles)</b>
Direct Sunlight	10,000
Full Daylight	1,000
Overcast Day	100
Very Dark Day	10
Twilight	1
Deep Twilight	0.1
Full Moon	0.01
Quarter Moon	0.001
Starlight	0.0001
Overcast Starlight	0.00001
Source: User's Manual, Tetronix Digital Photometer.	

As a part of Alternative B-10 Modified, land uses will introduce night lighting associated with outdoor structure lighting, street fixtures, recreational facilities, signage, etc. Although these light sources are not expected to extend beyond the physical limits of the RMV Planning Area, they have the potential and spillage to create night glow in an area that has very limited night light sources. This change is considered a significant impact.

Glare is defined as the sensation produced when brightness of an object is greater than the brightness to which the eyes are adapted. Glare, a function of candlepower, may be caused directly by a lamp or indirectly from the reflection of surrounding surfaces within the field of view.

The presence of glare is frequently a subjective issue. In such cases, the magnitude of glare may prove of less importance than its very presence. When glare is excessive, it can cause discomfort, reduction of visibility, and even momentary loss of vision. This EIS has been prepared to address potential impacts at a programmatic-level of analysis; no site-specific development is proposed at this time within the RMV Planning Area. Although the intent of the applicant would be to site structures in a manner that would preclude glare impacts that could affect the safety of motorists, the potential for glare impacts is considered a significant impact.

#### **7.7.4.2 Mitigation Program**

In conjunction with the approval of the GPA/ZC project, the County of Orange adopted a mitigation program to reduce visual resource impacts associated with Alternative B-10 Modified. These measures are listed below to provide the reader context of the mitigation program, although these measures would be implemented as part of the development project and would be the responsibility of the County of Orange for monitoring. No additional mitigation is required for Alternative B-10 Modified as part of the SAMP.

#### **Project Design Features**

- PDF4.10-1     Approximately two-thirds of the project site shall be retained in open space.
- PDF4.10-2     A 1,000-foot-wide buffer shall be provided between Coto de Caza and the project site.
- PDF 4.10-3     Within Planning Area 4 and along the easterly development edge of Planning Area 3 adjacent to Caspers Wilderness Park, the exterior lighting shall be designed and located to confine direct rays to the premises. In addition, parking lots and lighting within Planning Area 4 and along the easterly development edge of Planning Area 3 shall be designed and constructed in a manner that minimizes the diffusion of refractive light into surrounding neighborhoods and/or into the night sky.
- PDF 4.10-4     Within Planning Area 4 and along the easterly development edge of Planning Area 3 adjacent to Caspers Wilderness Park, the applicant shall demonstrate that the exterior walls, and particularly the roofing materials, of residences and businesses visible from Caspers Regional Park are compatible with the natural surroundings.

#### **Standard Conditions and Regulations**

Many standard conditions and regulations are enacted at subsequent levels of approval. The following are the County of Orange Standard Conditions that would apply to Alternative B-10 Modified. These are listed because they would be applicable at subsequent levels of approvals (i.e., grading permits and tract maps). The number of the standard condition is listed in parentheses at the end of each condition.

- SC4.10-1     The applicant shall install landscaping, equip for irrigation, and improvements on lots in accordance with an approved plan as stated below:
  - A. Detailed Plan – Prior to the issuance of any building permit(s), the applicant shall submit a detailed landscape plan showing the detailed irrigation and landscaping design to the Manager, Subdivision and Grading for approval, in

consultation with the Manager HBP/Program Management. Detailed plans shall show the detailed irrigation and landscaping design and shall take into account the previously approved landscape plan for the Ranch Plan project, the County Standard Plans for landscape areas, adopted plant palette guides, applicable scenic and specific plan requirements, Water Conservation Measures contained in Board Resolution 90-487 (Water Conservation Measures), and Board Resolution 90-1341 (Water Conservation Implementation Plan).

- B. Installation Certification – Prior to the issuance of final certificates of use and occupancy and the release of financial security, if any, guaranteeing the landscape improvements, said improvements shall be installed and shall be certified by a licensed landscape architect or licensed landscape contractor, as having been installed in accordance with the approved detailed plans. The applicant shall furnish said certification, including an irrigation management report for each landscape irrigation system, and any other required implementation report determined applicable, to the Manager, Construction, and the Manager, Building Inspection Services, prior to the issuance of any certificates of use and occupancy. (County of Orange Standard Conditions of Approval, LA01b)

SC4.14-2

- A. Prior to the issuance of precise grading permits, the applicant shall prepare a detailed landscape plan for privately maintained common areas which shall be reviewed and approved by the Manager, Subdivision and Grading. The plan shall be certified by a licensed landscape architect or a licensed landscape contractor, as required, as taking into account the approved preliminary landscape plan (if any), County Standard Plans for landscape areas, adopted plant palette guides, applicable scenic and specific plan requirements, Water Conservation Measures contained in Board Resolution 90-487 (Water Conservation Measures), and Board Resolution 90-1341 (Water Conservation Implementation Plan).
- B. Prior to the issuance of certificates of use and occupancy, applicant shall install said landscaping and irrigation system and shall have a licensed landscape architect or licensed landscape contractor, certify that it was installed in accordance with the approved plan.
- C. Prior to the issuance of any certificates of use and occupancy, the applicant shall furnish said installation certification, including an irrigation management report for each landscape irrigation system, and any other implementation report determined applicable, to the Manager, Building Inspection Services. (County of Orange Standard Conditions of Approval, LA02b)

SC4.10-3

Prior to issuance of any building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that all exterior lighting has been designed and located so that all direct rays are confined to the property in a manner meeting the approval of the Manager, Building Permit. (County of Orange Standard Conditions of Approval, LG01)

## **Mitigation Measures**

### **Night Lighting**

Please also refer to Section 7.1, Non-Aquatic Biological Resources, which addresses night lighting related to wildlife movement corridors.

- MM 4.10-1 All lighting along the perimeter of natural areas, particularly street lights, shall be downcast luminaries and shall be shielded and oriented in a manner that will prevent spillage or glare into the remaining natural and open space areas. Final lighting orientation and design shall be to the satisfaction of the County of Orange, Manager, Building Permits. Prior to final inspection or issuance of a certificate of occupancy, where applicable, the Manager, Building Permit, shall cause to be performed a photometric field inspection of the approved lighting system for the project. The inspection shall verify the proper construction and installation of materials within the approved plan, determine the actual light patterns and values through light meter testing and observation, and determine the extent of any errant lighting. Deviations and/or violations shall be corrected prior to the final clearance for the project.

#### **7.7.4.3 Level Of Significance After Mitigation**

Alternative B-10 Modified involves altering the existing natural visual characteristics of the RMV Planning Area through the grading and construction of residential, urban activity center, commercial, business park, and recreational uses. The alternative incorporates design features and would implement County of Orange standard conditions and requirements and mitigation measures that would apply at the time of subsequent approvals, for the purpose of reducing visual disruption associated with this change in uses. However, to the extent that the open space appearance of the predominantly undeveloped portion of the RMV Planning Area would be irreversibly lost, this significant impact is unavoidable. Also, implementation of Alternative B-10 Modified would result in significant lighting impacts. After mitigation, there would also be incremental increases in light levels that are considered significant and unavoidable.

#### **7.7.5 ALTERNATIVE B-12**

##### **7.7.5.1 Impacts**

###### ***Impact***

- 7.7.5-1:** *Grading activities would significantly alter the existing visual characteristics and topography of the site.*

#### **Landform Alteration**

As with Alternative B-10 Modified, Alternative B-12 would result in landform alterations. Mass grading would affect existing topography, vegetation cover, and vistas. Throughout much of the grading, large construction vehicles would be visible from adjacent (and some distant) vantage points. Barren slopes and new development in various stages of construction would be visible intermittently throughout the implementation of Alternative B-12.

Implementation of Alternative B-12 would alter the visual characteristics of the RMV Planning Area. It is anticipated that Alternative B-12 would require less cut and fill grading when compared to Alternative B-10 Modified because less land would be developed. Alternative B-12

assumes development on 5,873 acres with 16,942 acres in open space. Less grading would occur in Planning Areas 2, 4, and 8. With the exception of additional orchards in Planning Areas 6 and 7 and the relocation of the Rancho Mission Viejo headquarters to Planning Area 7, no development would occur within these two planning areas. Planning Area 9 has been eliminated.

Landscaping would involve the replanting of slopes in order to reduce the aesthetic impacts associated with grading, to the extent possible given fuel modification and habitat preservation goals.

**Impact**

**7.7.5-2:** *The visual character of the RMV Planning Area visible from several viewpoints will be significantly altered through implementation of the Alternative B-12 project.*

**Surrounding Views**

The following identifies the views locations and whether development associated with Alternative B-12 would be considered a significant impact.

**View 1a:** *West of the RMV Planning Area on Ortega Highway in the City of San Juan Capistrano (Figure 7.7-2)*

**Effect:** Not visible; no significant impacts.

**View 1b:** *West of the RMV Planning Area on Ortega Highway in the City of San Juan Capistrano (Figure 7.7-2)*

**Effect:** Southernmost portion of Planning Area 2 would be visible in the background; not a significant impact because of limited visibility.

**View 2:** *Intersection of Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway (Figure 7.7-3)*

**Effect:** Development in the 566-acre Planning Area 1 would be visible. The change in character of the site from this public view and the introduction of night lighting is considered a significant impact because of the extent of the change.

**View 3:** *Covenant Hills Development in Ladera Ranch, Unincorporated Orange County (Figure 7.7-4)*

**Effect:** Proposed development in Planning Areas 1, 2, and 3 would be visible from this vantage point. The visibility of land uses and alterations in the landform associated with Planning Area 1 are considered significant. Because of the distance from this vantage point (approximately two miles), no significant aesthetic impacts associated with Planning Areas 2 and 3 are anticipated.

**View 4:** *Ortega Highway, East of Antonio Parkway (Figure 7.7-5)*

**Effect:** Proposed development in Planning Area 1 northeast of the intersection of Antonio Parkway at proposed Cow Camp Road would be visible from this vantage point. Proposed development in the southern portion of Planning Area 2 would also be visible from this vantage point. The change

in views from this public vantage point, as well as the change in landform and introduction of nighttime lighting, is considered a significant impact.

**View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park (Figure 7.7-6)**

**Effect:** Proposed development in Planning Area 2 is not expected to be visible from the trail in Caspers Regional Park. Development in Planning Area 3 would be visible in the foreground from this vantage point. A small portion of the proposed development area in Planning Area 5 would also be visible from this vantage point. Existing residential development in Coto de Caza is also visible from this location. Implementation of Alternative B-12 would result in significant aesthetic impacts.

**View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park (Figure 7.7-7)**

**Effect:** Proposed Planning Area 3 development would be visible in the foreground from this vantage point. Planning Area 2 development, the Chiquita Canyon arterial road alignment, and the bridge crossing Cañada Gobernadora Creek (from Planning Area 2 into Planning Area 3) would also be visible in the background from this public vantage point. Changes to the topography and character from this vantage point would result in significant aesthetic impacts.

**View 7: Ortega Highway at Verdugo Canyon (Figure 7.7-8)**

**Effect:** From this location, proposed development in Planning Area 4 would be visible to the Ortega Highway commuter traffic and the local traffic as it exits Verdugo Canyon. Although implementation development in this location would result in a change in land use, the proposed development area has been subject to disturbance and development. This would not be considered a significant impact.

**View 8: Ortega Highway at Cristianitos Road (Figure 7.7-9)**

**Effect:** Much of the development proposed in Planning Areas 2 and 3 would be visible from this vantage point. The foreground views would continue to be dominated by the floodplain of San Juan Creek. Implementation of development in this location would result in a change in land use from open space, orchards, and existing ranch uses. Although portions of the site visible from Ortega Highway are disturbed, the change in character of the area is considered a significant aesthetic impact.

**View 9: North of Ortega Highway at San Juan Creek (Figure 7.7-10)**

**Effect:** Proposed development of the northern portion of Planning Area 5 would be visible from this vantage point. The change in the topographical character and change of land use of the planning area visible from this public roadway is considered a significant impact.

**View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy (Figure 7.7-11)**

**Effect:** Planning Areas 3, 4, and 8. As opposed to residential development in Planning Areas 6 and 7 associated with the B-10 Modified Alternative, the B-12 Alternative would limit uses in Planning Areas 6 and 7 to orchards and the relocated Rancho Mission Viejo headquarters facility. Although less area would be disturbed (when compared to Alternative B-10 Modified), the change in land use from open space to urban land uses, as well as changes to the topographical character of the area, would result in significant aesthetic impacts from this vantage point.

**View 11: End of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road in the City of San Clemente (Figure 7.7-12)**

**Effect:** The proposed extension of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road would cross Cristianitos Creek via a bridge crossing and enter the southern portion of Planning Area 8. Depending on the siting of future development in Planning Area 8, existing apartment residences in Talega may be able to view proposed development in the planning area. The Northrop Grumman site is visible from this vantage point and would be demolished. The expected extensive grading needed to develop Planning Area 8 would result in changes to the visual character of the area that are considered significant.

**View 12: Near I-5 at Cristianitos Road (Figure 7.7-13)**

**Effect:** Planning Area 8 would be visible in the distant view (approximately 3.8 miles). Depending on where future development is sited will determine whether these uses would be visible from this viewpoint. The change in topographical character and visibility of development are considered significant aesthetic impacts.

**Impact**

**7.7.5-3:** *Foreground, middleground, and background ridgelines located in landscape zones would be significantly impacted by project grading to allow for the implementation of proposed land uses.*

**Ridgeline Modifications**

Ridgelines expected to be significantly impacted by grading activities associated with development (landform alteration) of Alternative B-12 are listed below by planning area:

**Planning Area 1**

- View 2: Ortega Highway at Antonio Parkway
- View 3: Covenant Hills in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County

**Planning Area 2**

- View 1b: Easterly from Ortega Highway prior to the entrance to the RMV Planning Area in the City of San Juan Capistrano



- View 3: Covenant Hills Development in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County
- View 4: North from Ortega Highway
- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park

### **Planning Area 3**

- View 3: Convenant Hills in Ladera Ranch, unincorporated Orange County
- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 8: Northwest from Ortega Highway
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

### **Planning Area 5**

- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 9: Ortega Highway at San Juan Creek
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

### **Planning Area 8**

- View 11: End of Avenida Pico/Cristianitos Road in the City of San Clemente
- View 12: Near I-5 at Cristianitos Road
- View 10: Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

### **Impact**

**7.7.5-4:** *Views from some recreational area vantage points within wilderness parks would be significantly impacted by project grading and associated development activities. Changes in the character would be significant.*

### **Wilderness Parks**

Aesthetic impacts associated with proposed grading and associated development are anticipated to be visible from, but not limited to, the following vantage points:

- View 5: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park
- View 6: West Ridge Trail in Caspers Wilderness Park

Cleveland National Forest is not considered to be affected because there are no publicly accessible roads or trails within the forest proximate to the RMV Planning Area.

**Impact**

**7.7.5.-5:** *Alternative B-12 would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and the potential for glare. The change in character of the RMV Planning Area through the introduction of land uses requiring night lighting and the potential for the use of building materials resulting in glare is considered significant.*

**Night Lighting and Glare**

Development and construction of Alternative B-12 would introduce new sources of nighttime light into the area. New light sources are anticipated to occur from the illumination of on-site structures such as commercial buildings and recreational uses (i.e., signage, interior and exterior lighting), residences (i.e., interior and exterior lighting), and street and vehicle lights.

As a part of Alternative B-12, land uses will introduce night lighting associated with outdoor structure lighting, street fixtures, recreational facilities, signage, etc. Although these light sources are not expected to extend beyond the physical limits of the RMV Planning Area, they have the potential and spillage to create night glow in an area that has very limited night light sources. This change is considered a significant impact. Although the intent of the applicant would be to site structures in a manner that would preclude glare impacts that could affect the safety of motorists, the potential for glare impacts is considered a significant impact.

**7.7.5.2 Mitigation Program**

The mitigation program set forth for Alternative B-10 Modified would also be applicable to Alternative B-12.

**7.7.5.3 Level Of Significance After Mitigation**

Alternative B-12 involves altering the existing natural visual characteristics of the RMV Planning Area through the grading and construction of residential, urban activity center, commercial, business park, and recreational uses. The alternative incorporates design features and would implement County of Orange standard conditions and requirements and mitigation measures that would apply at the time of subsequent approvals, for the purpose of reducing visual disruption associated with this change in uses. However, to the extent that the open space appearance of the predominantly undeveloped portion of the RMV Planning Area would be irreversibly lost, this significant impact is unavoidable. Also, implementation of Alternative B-12 would result in significant lighting impacts. After mitigation, there would also be incremental increases in light levels that are considered significant and unavoidable.

**7.7.6 ALTERNATIVE A-4**

**7.7.6.1 Impacts**

**Impact**

**7.7.6-1:** *Grading activities would significantly alter the existing visual characteristics and topography of the site.*

**Impact**

**7.7.6-2:** *The visual character of the RMV Planning Area visible from several viewpoints will be significantly altered through implementation of the Alternative A-4 project.*

**Impact**

**7.7.6-3:** *Foreground, middleground, and background ridgelines located in landscape zones would be significantly impacted by project grading to allow for the implementation of proposed land uses.*

**Impact**

**7.7.6-4:** *Views from some recreational area vantage points within wilderness parks would be significantly impacted by project grading and associated development activities. Changes in the character would be significant.*

**Impact**

**7.7.6-5:** *Alternative A-4 would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and the potential for glare. The change in character of the RMV Planning Area through the introduction of land uses requiring night lighting and the potential for the use of building materials resulting in glare is considered significant.*

Impacts associated with Alternative A-4 would be the same as the impacts that would occur with Alternative B-10 Modified because the land area proposed for development is the same with both alternatives.

**7.7.6.2 Mitigation Program**

The mitigation program set forth for Alternative B-10 Modified would also be applicable to Alternative A-4.

**7.7.6.3 Level Of Significance After Mitigation**

The level of significance after mitigation would be the same for Alternative A-4 as Alternative B-10 Modified. To the extent that the open space appearance of the predominantly undeveloped portion of the RMV Planning Area would be irreversibly lost, this significant impact is unavoidable. Alternative A-4 would result in significant lighting impacts. After mitigation, there would also be incremental increases in light levels that are considered significant and unavoidable.

**7.7.7 ALTERNATIVE A-5**

**7.7.7.1 Impacts**

**Impact**

**7.7.7-1:** *Grading activities would significantly alter the existing visual characteristics and topography of the site.*

**Impact**

**7.7.7-2:** *The visual character of the RMV Planning Area visible from several viewpoints will be significantly altered through implementation of the Alternative A-5 project.*

**Impact**

**7.7.7-3:** *Foreground, middleground, and background ridgelines located in landscape zones would be significantly impacted by project grading to allow for the implementation of proposed land uses.*

**Impact**

**7.7.7-4:** *Views from some recreational area vantage points within wilderness parks may be significantly impacted by project grading and associated development activities. Changes in the character would be significant.*

**Impact**

**7.7.7-5:** *Alternative A-5 would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting and the potential for glare. The change in character of the RMV Planning Area through the introduction of land uses requiring night lighting and the potential for the use of building materials resulting in glare is considered significant.*

Impacts associated with Alternative A-5 are expected to be less than would be associated with Alternatives B-10 Modified, B-12, or A-4 because less development would be implemented and less area would be disturbed. Alternative A-5 assumes up to 3,000 estate lots within a development footprint of up to 8,000 acres with 14,815 acres in open space. This alternative also assumes that a portion of the undevelopable portion of each residential lot would extend into open space areas and that other avoidance areas such as in Planning Area 3 would be included within the development envelope as community open space amenity areas. However, because it is unknown where individual estate lots would be sited within the development footprint, the exact locations where development would be visible cannot be determined at a programmatic-level of analysis. Although this alternative would be expected to result in a reduction in the severity of the visual impacts when compared to the other alternatives, implementation of Alternative A-5 within the RMV Planning Area is expected to require grading, be visible from existing viewpoints, may be visible from wilderness parks, and would introduce nighttime lighting. These changes in the character of the RMV Planning Area are considered significant visual impacts of Alternative A-5.

**7.7.7.2 Mitigation Program**

The mitigation program set forth for Alternative B-10 Modified would also be applicable to Alternative A-5.

**7.7.7.3 Level Of Significance After Mitigation**

Although the significance of the change would be less for Alternative A-5 when compared to the other alternatives, to the extent that the open space appearance of the predominantly undeveloped portion of the RMV Planning Area would be irreversibly lost, this significant impact is unavoidable. Alternative A-5 would result in significant lighting impacts. After mitigation, there would also be incremental increases in light levels that are considered significant and unavoidable.