

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section provides a description of existing visual conditions, meaning the physical features that make up the visible landscape, near the New Zoo Project site and an assessment of changes to those conditions that would occur from Project implementation. The effects of the Project on the visual environment are generally defined in terms of the Project's physical characteristics and potential visibility, the extent to which the Project's presence would change the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, and the expected level of sensitivity that the viewing public may have where the Project would alter existing views. The "Analysis Methodology" discussion below provides further detail on the approach used in this evaluation.

A comment in response to the notice of preparation regarding aesthetics was received from an individual stressing consideration for both animals and visitors and how that is reflected in the design renderings. This issue is addressed in the impact analysis below.

3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL

No federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to aesthetics, light, and glare are applicable to the Project.

STATE

California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq) was created by the Legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. There are no designated scenic highways in the City (Caltrans 2023).

LOCAL

City of Elk Grove General Plan

The *City of Elk Grove General Plan* contains the following policies and actions related to aesthetics that apply to the Project. These policies are contained in Chapter 4, "Urban and Rural Development" (City of Elk Grove 2021).

- ▶ **Policy LU-5-1:** Ensure that new development reflects the City's desire to create a high-quality, attractive, functional, and efficient built environment.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-2:** Provide and implement regulations that encourage high-quality signage, ensure that businesses and organizations can effectively communicate through sign displays, promote wayfinding, achieve visually vibrant streetscapes, and control excessive visual clutter.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-3:** Reduce the unsightly appearance of overhead and aboveground utilities by requiring the undergrounding of appropriate services within the urban areas of the City.
 - **Standard LU-5-3a:** New utility facilities should be located underground to the extent possible. Facilities to be placed underground should include electrical transformers (where consistent with the guidelines of the electrical utility), water backflow preventers, and similar items.

- **Standard LU-5-3.b:** Require that existing overhead utility facilities be undergrounded as a condition of project approval. This shall include electrical service lines under 69kV. Electrical service lines of 69kV and higher are encouraged to be undergrounded.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-4:** Require high standards of architectural and site design, and apply strong design controls for all development projects, both public and private, for the enhancement and development of community character and for the proper transition between areas with different types of land uses. Design standards shall address new construction and the reuse and remodeling of existing buildings.
 - **Standard LU-5-4.a:** Nonglare glass shall be used in all nonresidential buildings to minimize and reduce impacts from glare. Buildings that are allowed to use semi-reflective glass must be oriented so that the reflection of sunlight is minimized. This requirement shall be included in subsequent development applications.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-5:** Improve the visual appearance of business areas and districts by applying high standards for architectural design, landscaping, and signs for new development and the reuse or remodeling of existing buildings.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-6:** When resources are available, seek to enliven the public right-of-way with attractive landscaping, public art, lighting, civic landmarks, sidewalk cafés, gateways, water features, interpretive/wayfinding signage, farmers markets, festivals, outdoor entertainment, pocket parks, street furniture, plazas, squares, or other amenities in spaces for public use.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-7:** Encourage incorporation of publicly accessible spaces, such as plazas or squares, into new commercial and mixed-use developments.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-8:** Require developers to provide pedestrian amenities, such as trees, lighting, recycling and refuse containers, seating, awnings, and/or art, in pedestrian areas along project frontages. Where appropriate, install pedestrian amenities in public rights-of-way.
- ▶ **Policy LU-5-9:** Emphasize placemaking design principles in new development projects.
 - **Standard LU-5-9a:** Prioritize the pedestrian by implementing the following measures:
 - Minimize parking areas and curb cuts along commercial street frontages.
 - Encourage a vertical and horizontal mix of land uses.
 - Provide urban plazas and gathering spaces in commercial and multifamily development.
 - Provide pedestrian amenities such as lighting, landscaping, and benches.
- ▶ **Policy LU-6-9:** Support potential changes to the South Pointe Policy Area that incorporate retail, office, and light industrial/flex land uses along Kammerer Road.
- ▶ **Policy NR-1-9:** Encourage development clustering where it would facilitate on-site protection of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, stream corridors, scenic areas, or other appropriate features such as active agricultural uses and historic or cultural resources under the following conditions and requirements. Except as otherwise provided, clustering shall not be allowed in the Sheldon Rural Area.
 - Urban infrastructure capacity is available for urban use. If clustering is allowed in the Rural Area, those properties shall be exempt from providing urban water and sewer connections in accordance with the policies of the Sheldon/Rural Area Community Plan (see Chapter 9).
 - On-site resource protection is appropriate and consistent with other General Plan policies.
 - The architecture and scale of development are appropriate for and consistent with the intended character of the area.
 - Development rights for the open space area are permanently dedicated and appropriate long-term management is provided for by a public agency or another appropriate entity.
 - The *City of Elk Grove General Plan* does not contain any policies related to shadow effects.

City of Elk Grove Municipal Code

The Elk Grove Municipal Code (EGMC) provides regulations imposed by the City on development and business activities in the City. Title 23 of the Municipal Code (the Zoning Code) contains development standards and permit requirements that address building mass and setbacks (Chapter 23.29), landscaping (Chapter 23.54), lighting (Chapter 23.56), and signage (Chapter 23.62).

Chapter 23.54: Landscaping

The Municipal Code Title 23 requires landscaping to be provided for all development types in setbacks, unused areas, and parking areas. Minimum landscape area requirements are established by zoning district. Specific standards are provided for parking lot landscaping and shade requirements and for overall landscape design.

Chapter 23.56: Lighting

This chapter addresses multifamily and nonresidential outdoor lighting standards. Full shielding is required for outdoor lighting to be constructed. Where the light source from an outdoor light fixture is visible beyond the property line, shielding is required to reduce glare so that the light source is not visible from within any residential dwelling unit.

Section 23.56.030 specifically provides standards for the level of illumination and requires preparation of a point-by-point photometric calculation listing the number, type, height, and level of illumination of all outdoor lighting fixtures in conjunction with the development permit application and before issuance of a building permit or site improvement plans to ensure compliance with the provisions of this chapter. The maximum height of freestanding outdoor light fixtures for development abutting residential, agricultural-residential, and agricultural property is limited to 20 feet. Otherwise, the maximum height for freestanding outdoor light fixtures is 30 feet.

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

Chapter 23.62: Signs on Private Property

Section 23.62.130 addresses permitted signs by type and development characteristics. Signs are regulated by sign and development type and/or zoning district. EGMC Section 23.62.070 addresses permits, as well as entitlements required for signs. A sign permit is required for all permanent signs (attached to a building or freestanding) before their erection, relocation, alteration, or replacement. Under EGMC Section 23.62.100, certain types of signs are prohibited, including animated, moving, flashing, blinking (intermittent light), fluctuating, reflecting, revolving, or other, similar signs; pole signs; electronic reader board signs other than time/temperature signs; and roof signs erected and constructed on or over the roofline of a building and supported by the roof structure. Exceptions are possible in some cases.

City of Elk Grove Design Guidelines

In 2003, the City Council adopted amendments to the City's Municipal Code, establishing a design review process for new development and redevelopment of properties. This process is enumerated in Municipal Code Section 23.16.080, Design Review, and has been updated as recently as 2022. Adoption of the design review process was accompanied by adoption of the corresponding Elk Grove Citywide Design Guidelines (City of Elk Grove 2022). Section 23.16.080 establishes an expanded design review process for all development Citywide, requiring additional site and design consideration beyond conformance with minimum standards of the Zoning Code.

The Design Guidelines include design provisions for site planning, architecture, lighting, and landscaping, as well as provisions regarding the preservation of natural features. They encourage the use of landscaping to reduce potential impacts of lighting from parking areas on both the project area and adjacent vacant land. In addition, the guidelines specify that perimeter landscaping must be designed to maximize screening and buffering between adjacent uses. Supplemental guidelines have been established for the Laguna Ridge area, and other guidelines or protocols have been established for the LEA Community Plan Area.

Chapter 5.1 of the Design Guidelines addresses site planning for nonresidential development. These site planning guidelines are based on the following design concepts (City of Elk Grove 2022):

- ▶ Encourage development that is sustainable, functional and attractive.
- ▶ Ensure that developments address all improvements such as streetscape, public realm, high quality architecture, and appropriate to the scale, scope and location of the project.
- ▶ Ensure that new development creates a sense of place by enhancing the community character and providing economic vitality of the community.
- ▶ Ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.
- ▶ Promote context sensitive theming of projects while allowing for incorporation of corporate architecture to blend with the project theme.
- ▶ Design projects to be appropriate to both pedestrian and vehicular use.
- ▶ Provide design flexibility for mixed-use development that ensures compatibility with the existing and new development.

Chapter 5.2 of the Design Guidelines addresses architecture for nonresidential development. These architecture guidelines are based on the following design concepts (City of Elk Grove 2022):

- ▶ Promote high quality building designs that are visually welcoming.
- ▶ Is constructed of durable and high-quality materials that is attractive and will contribute to the longevity of the buildings.
- ▶ Ensure building design achieves human scale and interest.
- ▶ Ensure the design of proposed buildings or structures is sensitive to the neighborhood character with regard to scale, architectural style, use of materials and bulk.

The Livable Employment Area (LEA) Community Plan Area includes its own form-based code that provides design guidelines and standards for all forms of development including zoning requirements and site planning consistent with the City's General Plan.

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

REGIONAL SETTING

Visual quality is defined as the overall visual impression or attractiveness of an area as determined by the landscape characteristics, including landforms, rock forms, water features, and vegetation patterns. The attributes of line, form, and color combine in various ways to create landscape characteristics whose variety, vividness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony, and pattern contribute to the overall visual quality of an area.

Sacramento County lies near the center of California's Central Valley, at the southern end of the Sacramento Valley. Views in the region are generally characterized by broad, sweeping panoramas of flat agricultural lands and open space dotted with trees, divided by numerous rivers and creeks, and populated with scattered towns and cities. To the east, the Sierra Nevada and their foothills form a background, and the Coast Range provides a backdrop on the western horizon.

Elk Grove is a suburban city in the Sacramento Valley containing mostly flat land with no significant landforms, offering a wide view of the surrounding region. The visual character of the City generally consists of suburban development, including single- and multi-family residences set along wide meandering streets lined with sidewalks, commercial and office uses set in large retail and business centers, and smaller strip malls, parks, and public spaces, as well as roadways and other infrastructure. There are also scattered vacant parcels and open agricultural land. The western and central

portions of the City are more urbanized. The eastern portions and the areas south and west of the City boundaries predominantly contain rural residential uses surrounded by agricultural land and natural grasslands, with riparian habitat areas to the southeast along the Cosumnes River. State Route (SR) 99 bisects the City, extending north to south and providing access to the primary commercial areas along Bond Road/Laguna Boulevard and Elk Grove Boulevard. Interstate 5 (I-5) also runs in a north–south direction along the City’s western boundary. Elk Grove’s riparian corridors bring natural areas into urbanized neighborhoods (City of Elk Grove 2018:5.1-1).

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Project site is a component in a larger landscape that also encompasses single-family residential uses, agricultural fields, and Kammerer Road. The proposed New Zoo site would be located in the southcentral portion of the City, which consists entirely of open space containing native grasslands (Figure 3.1-1). The Project site is bordered by Kammerer Road to the south, Lotz Parkway to the east, the Shed C Channel, a manmade canal, directly north, and fallow fields to the west.

The Project vicinity has a low-density suburban and agricultural character, given the presence of scattered low-rise residential development and wide expanses of agricultural fields. Land uses surrounding the proposed Project site include agricultural uses to the west and south, single-family residential to the east along Lots Parkway, and vacant land to the north that is currently under construction. The site is relatively flat and consists entirely of irrigated pasturelands, ranging in elevation from 35 to 40 feet above mean sea level. The Project site is currently and has historically been used for cattle grazing. Ongoing development in the Project vicinity is converting the existing agricultural and rural visual character to urban development. As a result, the Project area is planned to be built out as an urban area.

PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE PROJECT SITE

Public views of the Project site are minimal and largely consist of motorists along Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway. However, because motorists would be passing the Project site at relatively fast speeds, the duration and frequency of exposure from motorists to the Project site would be low. Motorists traveling along Overture Way, Encore Way, and Classical Way would have a direct view of the Project site. However future planned development of residential, commercial, and office uses in the Project area would obscure views of the Project site, with the exception of views of the Project frontage from Kammerer Road. Additionally, the Project site is not visible from SR-99, the nearest major highway, as existing development east of the Project site along SR-99 blocks views.



Source: Ascent Environmental in 2023.

Looking north along Lotz Parkway.



Source: Ascent Environmental in 2023.

Looking south along Lotz Parkway.

Figure 3.1-1 **Representative Aesthetic Photographs**

SCENIC VISTAS AND CORRIDORS

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

Vistas

Areas may be designated as a scenic vista by jurisdictions in local and regional plans. There are currently no officially designated scenic vistas in Elk Grove (City of Elk Grove 2018).

Corridors

Scenic corridors are designated under the California Scenic Highway Program to preserve the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to and visible from highways. There are currently no designated scenic corridors within or visible from Elk Grove. However, a portion of SR 160, 1 mile west of the current City limits, is an officially designated scenic corridor (City of Elk Grove 2018). No officially designated scenic corridors are visible from the Project site (Caltrans 2023).

LIGHT AND GLARE CONDITIONS

Views of the night sky can be an important part of the natural environment, particularly in communities surrounded by extensive open space. Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass, skyglow, and over-lighting. The terms "glare" and "skyglow" are used in this analysis to describe the visual effects of lighting. Glare is direct exposure to bright lights. Light that is either emitted directly upward by luminaires or reflected from the ground is scattered by dust and gas molecules in the atmosphere, producing a luminous background known as skyglow.

Natural and artificial light reflect off various surfaces and can create localized occurrences of daytime and nighttime glare. Buildings and structures made with glass, metal, and polished exterior roofing materials exist throughout Elk Grove. Within the City limits, light and glare are concentrated in the western and central portions where commercial and more densely developed residential areas are located, further north of the Project site. Light and glare adjacent to the Project site occurs from passing motorists along Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway and from nearby residents and street lighting located east of Lotz Parkway. There are currently no sources of light and glare on the Project site.

SHADOWS

The evaluation of shading and shadows in this EIR is limited to daytime shadows cast by objects blocking sunlight. The angle of the sun, and hence the character of shadows, varies depending on the time of year and the time of day; however, in the Northern Hemisphere, the sun always arcs across the southern portion of the sky. During the winter, the sun is lower in the southern sky, casting longer shadows compared to other times of year. During the summer months, the sun is higher in the southern sky, resulting in shorter shadows. During the summer, the sun can be almost directly overhead at midday, resulting in almost no shadow being cast. During all seasons, as the sun rises in the east in the morning, shadows are cast to the west; at mid-day, the sun is at its highest point and shadows are their shortest and cast to the north; and as the sun sets in the west in the afternoon/evening, shadows are cast to the east. Because of the climate in the region, midday and afternoon shade in summer can be beneficial. In the winter, however, access to sunlight can be beneficial, especially for solar (photovoltaic) energy systems. Existing residences adjacent to the Project site (east of Lotz Parkway) have solar energy systems on their roofs. Solar power generation hours vary based on the season (angle of the sun) with the peak energy generation occurring between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (California Independent System Operator 2020). Minimal energy is generated by rooftop photovoltaic solar systems after 4:00 p.m. because of the sun's angle in the sky, resulting in reduced solar irradiance (National Renewable Energy Laboratory 2020).

3.1.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

METHODOLOGY

This analysis of aesthetics is qualitative. It evaluates changes to the existing visual character of public views of the Project site described in Section 3.1.2, "Environmental Setting," related to Project construction activities and development and operation of the site. It involved review of visual simulations of the proposed zoo, proposed massing of other Project buildings, and proposed building design. It also involved an evaluation of the Project's consistency with the City of Elk Grove General Plan, the Design Guidelines, and the Zoning Code standards identified in Section 3.1.1, "Regulatory Setting," which are intended to address visual quality and design compatibility with the surrounding area and City. This information, in combination with the thresholds below, was used to determine whether implementing the Project may create adverse visual effects.

Visual Simulations

The Project site is currently undeveloped and consists of irrigated pasturelands (Figure 3.1-1). Therefore, Project construction and establishment of the New Zoo would result in a noticeable change in the visual character of the Project area through building massing and height.

Construction Activities

As described in Chapter 2, "Project Description," construction activities on the Project site would be staged in four phases, although the bulk of construction would occur during Phase 1 over a period of approximately 36 months. Construction activities on the Project site would include construction equipment staging, site preparation, excavation, grading, and building construction that would be publicly visible from Lotz Parkway and Kammerer Road. Construction equipment and materials would be temporarily staged on-site during each phase of site development. All staging and construction areas would be fenced for security and safety reasons. On-site Project construction activities would result in temporary but substantial alteration of the visual character of Project area.

Developed Conditions

The proposed Project would include developed conditions on the Project site with building heights ranging between 10 and 20 feet. Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-6 are simulations which provide a range of vision of the New Zoo from public views along Lotz Parkway as well as birds eye views along Kammerer Road, further illustrating the visual change from Phase 1 to full buildout of the Project. These visual simulations are used to determine if the Project would have a significant visual effect.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

An impact on aesthetics, light, and glare would be significant if implementation of the Project would:

- ▶ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- ▶ damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- ▶ substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings and/or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing site design and architecture; or
- ▶ create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.



Source: shr Studios and Mangolin Creative.

Figure 3.1-2 Ground Level Elevation From Lotz Parkway Looking West



North Birdseye Phase 1

North Birdseye Full Build

17010101.16 GRX 024

Source: shr Studios and Mangolin Creative.

Figure 3.1-3 North Birdseye



North View Phase 1

North View Full Build

17010101.16 GRX 025

Source: shr Studios and Mangolin Creative.

Figure 3.1-4 North View



South View Phase 1

South View Full Build

17010101.16 GRX 026

Source: shr Studios and Mangolin Creative.

Figure 3.1-5 South Birdseye View



South View Phase 1

South View Full Build

17010101.16 GRX 027

Source: shr Studios and Mangolin Creative.

Figure 3.1-6 South View

ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

Scenic Vista

A scenic vista is a view of an area that has remarkable scenery or a natural or cultural resource that is indigenous to the area. The Project site is located in a predominately rural agricultural setting and does not contain remarkable scenery or views of natural areas that would be considered a scenic vista. It consists of agricultural uses; however, the area is identified for development in the General Plan. Areas may be designated as a scenic vista by jurisdictions in local and regional plans. There are currently no officially designated scenic vistas in the City of Elk Grove (City of Elk Grove 2018: 5.1-4). Because there would be no impact on designated scenic vistas, this topic is not discussed further.

State Scenic Highway

State Route 160, the State-designated scenic highway located closest to the Project site, traverses the top of levees along the Sacramento River from the Contra Costa County line to the southern city limit of the City of Sacramento. At the point where it is closest to the Project site, it is located approximately 1 mile west of the current Elk Grove City limits, approximately 7.5 miles west of the Project site (Caltrans 2023). Therefore, the Project would have no impact on scenic resources in a designated scenic highway. This topic is not addressed further in this Draft EIR.

Construction Lighting

Construction would occur during daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Saturday, pursuant to EGMC Section 6.32.100(E). As a result, no nighttime lighting for construction would occur. This topic is not addressed further in this Draft EIR.

Shadow Impacts

As described below in Impact 3.1-1, Project buildings would range from 10 to 20 feet in height and would not be tall enough or located within close enough proximity to create significant shadow impacts on residences east of the site that could inhibit solar (photovoltaic) energy systems. The nearest residences from the Project site are located approximately 150 feet east of Lotz Parkway. Although buildings would be permitted to be as tall as 60 feet, pursuant to the Zoological Park SPA, only the maintenance shops located in the northeast corner of the Project site would potentially be built as tall as 60 feet. The maintenance shops would be located adjacent to a bioretention pond to the east and more than 250 feet to the nearest of residences to the north. As a result, there would be no shadow impacts to nearby residences.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.1-1: Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character

Project implementation would introduce structures that, because of their massing and height, would alter the current visual character of the Project area. Specifically, the Project would alter the existing low-density rural and agricultural character of the landscape to one that is more densely developed. However, the Project would complement planned urban development of the area, be predominantly screened from view with appropriate landscaping, would adhere to the City's adopted design guidelines, including those of the proposed Zoological Park Special Planning Area (SPA). As a result, the Project would be largely compatible with the visual quality and character of the surrounding area. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Construction

Construction staging, the use of heavy equipment, and ground-clearing activities associated with construction activities would temporarily degrade the visual character of the Project site. Construction of Phase 1, which would include constructing the bulk of the New Zoo, would occur for a period of approximately 36 months. During this time, construction of the New Zoo could be visible to travelers along Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway, as well as local

roadways adjacent to Lotz Parkway, including Bilby Road, Overture Way, Encore Way, and Classical Way. Construction of future phases would be blocked from public views by the proposed fencing and landscaping as part of the New Zoo.

During the construction period, various types of construction equipment (e.g., backhoes, excavator, forklifts, graders, and pavers) would be present on-site. The equipment in use would vary depending on the location and Project component being constructed. The initial phases of construction would include site grading and excavation, utility trenching, and building foundation pouring. However, construction activities would become more perceptible as the construction advances. During the building construction phase, construction activities would occur above ground level and may impede long-distance views. However, the use of construction equipment would be temporary, and the equipment would consistently move throughout the later phases of the 65-acre Project site. Therefore, no one off-site area would be exposed to views of construction equipment for an extended period.

Construction activities would also include off-site improvements associated with the construction of employee parking, utilities, and roadway improvements to support the Project. These construction activities would result in short-term partial roadway lane closures and the use of backhoes, haul trucks, and other construction equipment. Roadway lanes are anticipated to be reopened at the end of each construction day, and construction equipment and materials are not expected to be stored in the roadway. Construction disturbance would be localized and would move as portions of these linear improvements are completed. The proposed employee parking lot has been previously disturbed and graded. Construction disturbance on the site would consist of final grading and paving, minimally disrupting public view.

Construction activities would be visible temporarily at various locations throughout the 65-acre site, but they would not permanently degrade existing visual characteristics. Additionally, construction activities are already occurring in the Project area north of the site in the Southeast Policy Area. Construction activities for the New Zoo would appear similar to existing construction nearby and would therefore not result in a new visual feature in the Project area. Therefore, Project construction would not diminish the natural rural condition of long-distance views in the area. Project construction would not constitute a substantial adverse effect on the existing visual character of the Project site. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Operation

The Project would include various aboveground structures as part of the proposed facilities and animal exhibits. Prominent aboveground structures would include the main entry complex, restaurants and food pavilions, the animal care center, multiple play areas, the overnight "tent camp," a modular administrative office complex, and a support services complex, including the giraffe care quarters, as illustrated in Section 2, "Project Description," Figures 2-4 through 2-8. Proposed buildings would range in height from 10 to 20 feet tall, and several would include solar panels on their roof. Animal exhibits would be clustered throughout the Project site and may include care quarters and habitat structures.

Although the proposed architectural design and neutral color pallet of the New Zoo would soften its appearance, the buildings' mass and height would alter the visual character of the Project area as viewed along Lotz Parkway and Kammerer Road, including a few buildings which are partially visible above the perimeter fencing (Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-6). Exhibits that may be visible from off-site public viewpoints include the giraffe care quarters, the lion Kopje, a staff-only warehouse, and partial elements from the California Zone. The proposed New Zoo would also alter visual character at night through the illumination of various buildings, pathways, and along the Green Corridor (Figure 2-11). The reader is referred to the discussion of Impact 3.1-3 for further analysis of nighttime illumination.

Upon buildout (completion of all phases), the Project site would include additional buildings that would range in height. Building massing and height would appear as a substantial alteration to the existing visual character of the Project area (Figure 3.1-1), however fencing and mature vegetation along the perimeter of the New Zoo would reduce visual impacts. Project landscaping would assist in softening the appearance of the Project site, including vegetative screening planted along the roadway frontage, as shown in Figure 3.1-2 that illustrates six years of vegetation growth. As a result, visual changes from Phase 1 to full buildout from public viewpoints are minimal.

The general height of the proposed buildings and animal enclosures would range from 10 to 20 feet and would not surpass the height of other existing taller buildings in the city. Although buildings would be permitted to be as tall as 60

feet, pursuant to the Zoological Park SPA, this height is consistent with the existing zoning in the Project vicinity and would not result in additional visual impacts. Landscaping would be designed and maintained for partial screening of vehicles and buildings. Landscaping would consist of a collection of trees and shrubs, designed such that the denser plantings between the sidewalk and the fence would provide the predominate screening of the Project site (see Figure 2-14 in Section 2, "Project Description"). Additional screening materials would include a combination of plant materials, earthen berms, solid masonry walls, raised planters, or other, similar screening devices. Street trees would be planted along the outer perimeter parallel to the sidewalk to provide shading and soften views of the Project site. Furthermore, pursuant to Zoological Park SPA, the Project would include perimeter fencing at a minimum of 8 feet tall. Fencing around the site would be required to be of a high-quality aesthetic along all public street frontages to provide for further screening of the site. Furthermore, the surrounding LEA Community Area is planned for urban development which would result in the New Zoo blending into the urban environment and maintaining a cohesive visual character throughout the area.

Pursuant to the design guidelines included in the Zoological Park SPA, proposed Project buildings would incorporate materials and colors that complement each other and are reflective of the use, functionality, and character of the existing surroundings. The overall architectural design of the New Zoo would incorporate the use of neutral tones in varying shades and material types used to break up the massing of large building façades. Buildings and cafes would consist of light to medium earth tones, including brighter and more prominent colors for accent walls to attract visitors to their destinations. Buildings proposed under Phase 1 would include window styles and shades and exterior finishes to provide visual interest and avoid a monotone appearance of the building façade. Buildings proposed under Phases 2–4 would be required to use neutral tones and materials consistent with those used in Phase 1, pursuant to the Zoological Park SPA. The New Zoo would be in operation after the completion of Phase 1, and operation of Phases 2-4 would not significantly change the visual character of the site.

The Project would require signage to direct visitors to and throughout the site. Signage would include various forms of arrival, entry, and building signage, which would be subject to the provisions of EGMC Chapters 23.61 and 23.62 and the Zoological Park SPA. All signage would be consistent with the character, quality, branding, and architectural theme of the Project as required by the Zoological Park SPA. Signage may include both fixed and digital signage. The main entry signage would be secured on the roof of the entrance building..

Portions of the Project site would be visible from Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway, but for the most part, because of the intervening landscaping and topography, development on the site would not be visible from most vantage points farther away. Because of the proposed surrounding landscaping and limited stature of Project structures, none of the Project components would be considered prominent features in the local landscape. Given that the tallest proposed building, the giraffe care quarters, would be constructed no higher than 20 feet, the Project would result in minimal shadow effects., Building heights are allowed up to 60 feet pursuant to Zoological Park SPA. However, 60-foot buildings would not be permitted within 250 feet of the centerline of Lotz Parkway and would thus not result in shadow effects to the residents east of Lotz Parkway. The proposed development of the maintenance shops could be as high as 60 feet, however, would be located adjacent to fallow fields to the north and a bioretention pond to the east, away from any nearby residences. As a result, there would be no additional visual impacts.

The proposed design of the New Zoo would include buildings not taller than 20 feet in height, neutral muted tones, natural materials, and thoughtful architectural design that would help it blend in with the surrounding environment. Proposed fencing and landscaping would further screen the New Zoo from area roadways and other public viewpoints. In addition, the Project would be subject to design guidelines contained in the Zoological Park SPA and EGMC. Therefore, the Project would be largely compatible with the visual quality and character of the surrounding area and would not represent a substantial adverse change from the current condition of long-distance views of and through the area. Furthermore, although the Project area is generally vacant, the Kammerer Road corridor is planned for development as part of the LEA Community Plan Area. Therefore, operation of the Project would be similar in character to the surrounding area and would not substantially alter the visual quality and character of the site. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Impact 3.1-2: Consistency with Regulations Governing Site Design and Architecture

Project site design and architectural character are regulated by the City through compliance with General Plan policies; compliance with Zoning Code Chapters 23.29, 23.54, 23.56, and 23.62; and application of the Design Guidelines. The Project would not conflict with City design policies and guidelines that are associated with site design and architecture. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Site design and architectural character are regulated by the City through compliance with General Plan policies; compliance with Zoning Code Chapters 23.29, 23.54, 23.56, and 23.62; and application of the Design Guidelines.

As identified below, the Project would be consistent with the following City design policies and guidelines, which are associated with visual character:

- ▶ High-quality, attractive, functional, and efficient development and signage (General Plan Policies LU-5-1, LU-5-2, and LU-5-4; Standard LU-5-4a; Policies LU-5-5, LU-5-6, LU-5-7, LU-5-8, and LU-5-9; Standard LU-5-9[a]; Zoning Code Chapters 23.29, 23.54, 23.56, and 23.62; Design Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 63, and 65 of Chapter 5A; and Design Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, and 27 of Chapter 5B)

The Project site design would cluster the largest buildings and associated massing along the southern and western boundary to provide a transition of building intensity from the existing residential and commercial uses in the surrounding area (Figures 2-4 and 2-8). This cluster would include the 20-foot-tall giraffe care quarters, the tallest proposed building, which would be sited along the western boundary of the site, set back behind the proposed service road and away from public roads and nearby residences, located north of the site. Future development on the site from maintenance shop buildings could be as tall as 60 feet, which is permitted by the Zoological Park SPA. However, the Project would be compatible with Zoning Code Chapter 23.29, and not exceed the 60-foot building height maximum.

The site plan illustrates a centralized open space and gathering feature with pedestrian paths that connect to planning areas throughout various corners of the site (Figure 2-4). Perimeter and building landscaping would provide visual transition and soften the appearance of the proposed New Zoo. Parking lots are proposed to be landscaped to minimize the extent of paved areas. The Project's signage program would be consistent with City policy provisions and guidelines and would not expand the extent of perimeter Project site signage beyond existing conditions.

As described in Chapter 2, "Project Description," Phase 1 of the Project includes architectural details for the proposed New Zoo. The overall architectural design of the zoo incorporates the use of neutral tones in varying shades and material types. Buildings alter window styles and shades and exterior finishes to provide visual interest and avoid a monotone appearance. The buildings would range in height from 10 to 20 feet tall and would include the same neutral tones and materials. Although the rest of the proposed buildings under Phases 2 through 4 have not been fully designed, they would be required to use neutral tones similar to and materials consistent with those used in Phase 1.

- ▶ Integration of new development with surrounding areas (General Plan Policy LU-5-4; Standard LU-5-4a; Zoning Code Chapters 23.29 and 23.54; Design Guidelines 3 and 6 of Chapter 5A; Design Guidelines 6, 7, and 8 of Chapter 5B)

The Project site design would cluster the largest buildings and associated massing along the southern and western boundary to provide a transition of building intensity from the existing residential commercial uses in the surrounding area (Figures 2-4, 2-8, 3.1-2 through 3.1-6). This cluster would include the 20-foot-tall giraffe care quarters, the tallest proposed building, which would be sited along the western boundary of the site, set back behind the proposed service road and away from public roads and nearby residences, located north of the site. Perimeter and building landscaping would provide visual transition and soften the appearance of the proposed New Zoo. Future development on the site from maintenance shop buildings could be as tall as 60 feet, which is permitted by the Zoological Park SPA. However, the maintenance shops would be located adjacent to fallow fields to the north and a bioretention pond to the east, away from nearby residences, resulting in no additional visual impacts.

The Project also includes a wall, landscaping, and surface parking at the southern portion of the site to soften the visual character of the Project and partially screen the Project from passing motorists and nearby residential uses (Figure 2-3).

- ▶ Conceal utilities (General Plan Policy LU-5-3, Standard LU-5-3a, and Design Guidelines 36 of Chapter 5A) As identified in Chapter 2, "Project Description," the Project infrastructure improvements would be placed underground, consistent with City policy provisions.

Although the Project is atypical from other commercial and residential uses that City design provisions address, as shown in the analysis above, the Project would not conflict with City design policies and guidelines that are associated with visual character. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Impact 3.1-3: Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare That Would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views

The Project would not include new materials or surfaces that would create substantial new sources of glare. However, the Project would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting, including interior building lighting and exterior lighting needed for the safety and visibility of the Project site as well as zoo events. The Project would be subject to lighting requirements in the EGMC and Zoological Park SPA to minimize light spillover on adjacent properties. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Lighting

At buildout, the Project would include new lighting within and around the site. On-site buildings may have exterior lighting for nighttime safety. Safety lighting would include exterior building and gateway illumination, safety lighting along pedestrian pathways, quad and promenade lighting, and lighting throughout on-site parking areas. In addition, exterior lighting would be included around the Project site. The camp areas, such as the overnight tent lawn for Phase 1 and tent camp area for future phases, would require nighttime lighting. The nighttime safari along the Green Corridor route in the northwestern portion of the site would require lighting for the safari experience (Figure 2-11). Additionally, Figure 3.1-7 illustrates the nighttime lighting glow plan resulting from the New Zoo. Therefore, lighting within and surrounding the Project site has the potential to spill over onto adjacent properties, specifically residential land uses east of the site across Lotz Parkway.

Exterior lighting for the Project would be subject to the Zoological Park SPA. Pursuant to Zoological Park SPA design guidelines, exterior lighting would be integrated with the overall architectural character of the development, and the scale and location would be appropriate to the area to be illuminated, including walkways, building entries, and parking areas, and sign lighting at night would be directed to the sign to avoid glare and harshness. Adjustable luminaires will be mounted in trees that would provide a downward moonlighting effect along main pathways, and LED nodes will be integrated into railings on stairs resulting in minimal glow, as detailed in the Lighting Design Concept Book. Moreover, automatic timing devices would be required for all outdoor lighting fixtures, further reducing nighttime lighting. In addition, pursuant to EGMC Section 23.56.030, all outdoor lighting would be fully shielded to reduce light spillage onto adjacent properties. Finally, the Project would comply with the most current California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24 of the CCR) at the time of construction, which requires the use of light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures with lighting controls. These features would avoid significant potential spillover light onto adjacent properties.

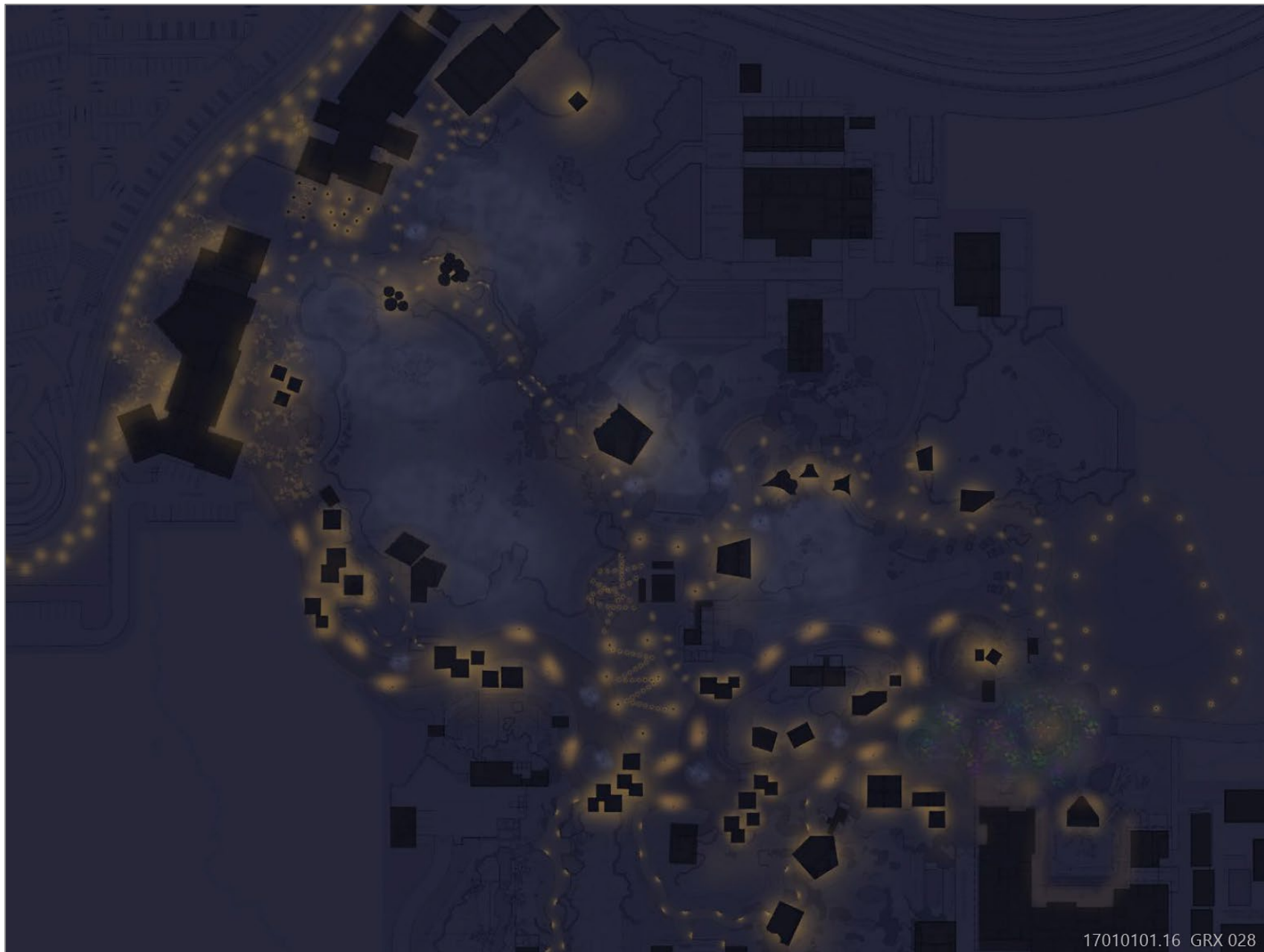


Figure 3.1-7 Exterior Site FOH Lighting Glow Plan

Project design features would further reduce lighting spillover. The Project would include only the minimum amount of outdoor wayfinding and security lighting necessary to maintain safety and comfort. Landscaping and trees around the periphery of the Project site would be maintained and enhanced to provide screening and minimize spillover effects on adjacent properties. Buildings would be as tall as 20 feet, although heights are allowed up to 60 feet pursuant to Zoological Park SPA. The limited building height would require less lighting and allow for additional landscaped screening. Future development on the site from maintenance shop buildings could be as tall as 60 feet; however, the maintenance shops would be located adjacent to fallow fields to the north and a bioretention pond to the east, away from nearby residences, resulting in no additional lighting or glare impacts.

In summary, exterior lighting at the Project site may be visible from adjacent properties; however, Project lighting would be designed to avoid significant spillover offsite. Because of the limited height and massing of the proposed buildings and the suburban nature of the surrounding environment, the proposed lighting would not represent a substantial increase in existing lighting. In addition, Project lighting would require the use of shielded and cutoff-type light fixtures that would minimize light spillage and skyglow in accordance with City and Zoological Park SPA. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Glare

Construction

During construction, glare would be introduced to the Project site as a result of increased vehicular presence at the site (e.g., from windshields of vehicles and construction equipment). These sources of glare would be limited to the ground level. In addition, the use of construction vehicles and equipment would be temporary, and the vehicles would be consistently moving throughout the 65-acre Project site, off-site employee parking area, and linearly for off-site improvements. Therefore, no one area would be exposed to glare for an extended period. Glare from project construction would be minor and would not adversely affect daytime views of the area. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Operation

The New Zoo would include multiple structures throughout the Project site that would conform to the design guidelines in the City's General Plan, City's Design Guidelines, and Zoological Park SPA, as described above. The proposed structures would include the use of textured, nonreflective surfaces, nonreflective (not mirrored) glass, and downward-directed, shielded lighting to minimize glare and prevent spillover effects onto adjacent properties and roadways. Parked vehicles in the proposed parking area located in the southern portion of the Project site would be partially visible from off-site locations and may produce additional glare from reflecting windshields. However, proposed landscape improvements would reduce glare from parked vehicles by providing shade and blocking views. Furthermore, on-site employee vehicles located on the lot immediately north of the administration modular hub would reflect minimal amounts of sunlight because of the lot's limited size and the surrounding landscaping, introducing marginal sources of spillover glare to adjacent viewers. Therefore, glare from Project operation would be minor and would not adversely affect daytime views of the area. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Summary

The Project would include the use of nonreflective surfaces and directional lighting with shielded and cutoff-type light fixtures that would minimize light spillage and skyglow. As a result, glare and off-site light spillage would be prevented such that the Project would not represent a substantial source of light and glare. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

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