

## **4.1 AESTHETICS**

This chapter describes the existing aesthetic character of the Southeast Greenway Area and evaluates the potential environmental consequences of future development that could occur by adopting and implementing the proposed project. A summary of the relevant regulatory setting and existing conditions is followed by a discussion of the proposed project and cumulative impacts.

### **4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

#### **4.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

##### **State Regulations**

###### *California Building Code*

The California Building Code has been codified in the California Code of Regulations as Title 24, Part 2. Title 24 is administered by the California Building Standards Commission and is updated every three years. The most current version went into effect in January 2017. The purpose of the California Building Code is to establish minimum standards to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, and general stability by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, outdoor lighting standards, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of all building and structures within its jurisdiction.

###### *California Building Code: CALGreen*

California Green Building Standards Code of the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11, known as CALGreen, establishes building standards aimed at enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts that have a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices. Specifically, Section 5.106.8, Light Pollution Reduction, establishes Backlight, Uplight, and Glare ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for nonresidential development.

##### **Local Regulations**

###### *General Plan 2035*

The Urban Design (UD) element of the General Plan 2035 includes the following goals and policies specific to aesthetics and applicable to the proposed project:

- **Goal UD-A-1:** Preserve and enhance Santa Rosa’s scenic character, including its natural waterways, hillsides, and distinctive districts.
  - **Policy UD-A-1:** Maintain view corridors to natural ridgelines and landmarks, such as Taylor Mountain and Bennett Mountain.

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- **Policy UD-A-2:** Strengthen and emphasize community focal points, visual landmarks, and features that contribute to the identity of Santa Rosa using design concepts and standards implemented through the Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, Preservation District Plans, Scenic Roads policies, the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

*Examples of landmarks and community focal points are Old Courthouse Square, De Turk Round Barn, Railroad Square water tower, St. Rose School, Hotel La Rose, Santa Rosa Creek, Luther Burbank Home and Gardens, and views to the hills.*

- **Policy UD-A-4:** In new developments, minimize overall grading by limiting site grading to the minimum necessary for driveways, parking areas, and understructure areas.
- **Policy UD-A-5:** Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects to improve visual quality and the city.
- **Policy UD-A-7:** Continue the city’s program of utility undergrounding.
- **Policy UD-A-8:** Maintain hillsides in the city as scenic backdrop to urban development.
- **Policy UD-A-10:** Relate landscape design to the natural setting. Require that graded areas within new development be revegetated.
- **Policy UD-A-11:** Require structures within new developments to step with the slope of the site. Absorb site topography through use of split-level designs.
- **Policy UD-A-12:** Promote green building design and low impact development projects.
- **Goal UD-F:** Maintain and enhance the diverse character of Santa Rosa’s neighborhoods. Promote the creation of neighborhoods – not subdivisions – in areas of new development.
  - **Policy UD-F-2:** Protect natural topographic features such as hillsides, ridgelines and mature trees and stands of trees. Minimize grading of natural contours in new development.
  - **Policy UD-F-4:** Provide visual interest in building, site, and landscape design that avoids the sense of a monotonous tract development.

### *Santa Rosa City Code*

#### Title 13, Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places

Title 13 of the SRCC includes regulations that govern street encroachments, utilities, parks, and setback lines. Chapter 13-12, Underground Utilities, includes regulations related to aesthetics which prohibit the above-ground suspension of any wires or any pole designed to carry telephone, telegraph, or electric conduit. Chapter 13-28, Setback Lines, includes development standards related to aesthetics which authorize the City Council to determine the minimum setback distance of the street line for the erection of buildings or structures along any portion of any street in the city.

#### Title 18, Buildings and Construction

As described under State Regulations, the California Building Code (Title 24, Part 2) and CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11), both include outdoor lighting standards to regulate light pollution. The City of Santa Rosa has

adopted all sections of the California Building Code Title 24, Part 2, in Chapter 18-16, California Building Code, and Chapter 18-42, Citation of California Green Building Standards Code, of the SRCC.

### Title 20, Zoning

The SRCC Zoning Code implements the goals and polices of the General Plan 2035 by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the city. The following provisions of the Zoning Code help minimize the visual impacts of new development projects in Santa Rosa.

#### Chapter 20-30, Standards for all Development and Land Uses

This chapter of the Zoning Code sets forth standards to address the details of site planning and project design to ensure that all development within Santa Rosa creates an environment of desirable character, is compatible with existing and future development, and protects the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties consistent with the General Plan 2035. SRCC Section 20-30.040, Creekside Development, requires minimum setbacks for new structures located near waterways in order to provide reasonable protection of riparian habitat and the public. SRCC Section 20-30.080, Outdoor Lighting, establishes maximum height standards for outdoor lighting on private property and requires the use of energy-efficient fixtures. In addition, new development is required to shield and direct lighting fixtures downward and away from adjoining properties to reduce spill-over lighting and light pollution.

#### Section 20-52.030, Design Review

This section of the Zoning Code establishes procedures for the City's review of the design aspects of proposed development in compliance with the adopted *Santa Rosa Design Guidelines* (Design Guidelines). Proposed development requiring a building permit and/or resulting in exterior physical changes to existing structures are subject to the City's design review process.<sup>1</sup> The design review authority charged with reviewing proposed development projects varies depending on the scale of the project. Projects that involve minor improvements such as a new door or window are reviewed by the Director of Planning and Economic Development. Development projects with up to 10,000 square feet of total floor area that are not located within a historic district are reviewed by the Zoning Administrator. Development projects with 10,000 square feet or more of total floor area that are not located within a historic district or projects with 5,000 square feet or more that are located within a historic district are reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB).<sup>2</sup> The designated design review authority reviews project features such as building design, landscaping, site planning, and signage. The criteria for design review are as follows:

1. The design and layout of the proposed development is of superior quality, and is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable Zoning Code standards and requirements, the City's Design Guidelines, architectural criteria for special areas, and other applicable City requirements (e.g., City policy statements and development plans);

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<sup>1</sup> Santa Rosa City Code, Title 20, Zoning, Division 5, Land Use and Development Permit Procedures, Chapter 20-52, Permit Review Procedures, Section 20-52.030, Design Review.

<sup>2</sup> Santa Rosa City Code, Title 20, Zoning, Division 5, Land Use and Development Permit Procedures, Chapter 20-52, Permit Review Procedures, Section 20-52.030, Design Review, Table 5-2, Design Review Authority and Notice Requirements.

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2. The design is appropriate for the use and location of the proposed development and achieves the goals, review criteria, and findings for approval as set forth in the framework of Design Review (Design Guidelines, Introduction, subsection C);
3. The design and layout of the proposed development will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments;
4. The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood;
5. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, visiting public, and its neighbors through the appropriate use of materials, texture, and color, and would remain aesthetically appealing and be appropriately maintained;
6. The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; and
7. The project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### *Design Guidelines*

The Design Guidelines, adopted in 2002, implement the design objectives of the Urban Design Element of the General Plan 2035 and serve as the primary authority for design issues when used in conjunction with applicable City regulations. The Design Guidelines are organized into four sections: Neighborhood Design; Core Area; Residential, Commercial and Industrial beyond the Core Area; and Special Design Considerations. Each section includes goals and guidelines that provide direction to designers as well as establish criteria that City staff, boards and commissions, and City Council use to evaluate project proposals.

### *Citywide Creek Master Plan*

The Citywide Creek Master Plan (CCMP), adopted in 2007 and updated in 2013, provides guidelines for the care, management, restoration, and enhancement of the network of creeks and waterways that flow through Santa Rosa, which affects the visual setting. The CCMP is organized into six chapters: Introduction; Goals, Objectives, and Policies; Plan Concepts; Watershed-Specific Recommendations; Implementation Strategy; and References. Each chapter provides guidelines to aid the City's decision-making when planning creek enhancement and restoration activities, coordinating and expanding creekside trail systems, making broader land use planning decisions concerning creeks, and in the development approval process for projects proposed adjacent to waterways.

## **4.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **Visual Character**

The City of Santa Rosa is a visually and culturally rich community situated in central Sonoma County on the Santa Rosa Plain. The downtown area serves as the city's primary activity node, and is comprised of mixed office and retail uses. Local attractions such as the Old Courthouse, Santa Rosa Plaza, an indoor mall, Railroad Square, a retail and hotel hub, are located within the downtown area. Surrounding the downtown area are several historic districts, which contain structures that lend a sense of historic

character to the city. The city's residential neighborhoods are diverse, ranging from the traditional grid street patterns and moderately high densities, to low density hillside neighborhoods.

The types of land use changes that may have the potential to impact the visual setting in Santa Rosa can include development types that are in conflict with City regulations and adopted Design Guidelines. Under the proposed project, changes to the development potential would only occur within the Southeast Greenway Area. Accordingly, the following description will focus on where changes to the existing visual resources could occur due to potential future development from implementation of the proposed project.

### *Visual Features of the Southeast Greenway Area*

The Southeast Greenway Area is comprised of 57 acres of land located in southeast Santa Rosa and follows a 1.9-mile linear path from the Farmers Lane/State Route 12 (SR 12) intersection to Spring Lake Regional Park. As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the Southeast Greenway Area is divided into three large subareas. A description of the visual setting for each of these subareas is provided below.

#### West Subarea

The 18.3-acre West Subarea follows a linear path from Farmers Lane to Wanda Way. See Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3, Project Description, for an aerial view of this subarea. The West Subarea is primarily composed of grassland, Matanzas Creek, swales, potential wetlands, and remnant orchards. The overall elevation of the subarea ranges from 220 feet above mean sea level (amsl) on the western edge to 350 feet amsl along the eastern border. The surrounding area is largely built-up with mature trees ranging in height from 5- to 60-feet tall and other urban landscaping features (shrubs, fencing, etc.) and includes a range of 1- to 3-story retail, office, multi-family residential development, and Montgomery High School to the north. The project site continues to the east, retail, senior housing, and Matanzas Creek are located to the south, and the Farmers Lane/SR 12 intersection bounds the Subarea to the west.<sup>3</sup>

#### Central Subarea

The 22.6-acre Central Subarea follows a linear path from Wanda Way and Camden Court to Summerfield Road. See Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, Project Description, for an aerial view of this subarea. The Central Subarea is primarily composed of undeveloped land with native and non-native trees along the perimeter and remnant walnut orchard on the eastern portion of the subarea. Sierra Park Creek and Spring Creek, tributaries of Matanzas Creek, flow through this subarea. Informal paths along Sierra Park Creek connect Hoen Avenue to Mayette Avenue. There are a few trees located along it and potential swales/wetlands in the area between Yulupa Avenue and Sierra Park Creek. There is dense vegetation, including trees and bushes near Summerfield Road where Spring Creek traverses the Central Subarea. The Central Subarea is relatively flat with a slight elevated area comprised of earthen fill between Janet Way and Yulupa Avenue. Surrounding land uses include a range of 1- to 3-story single- and multi-family residential and retail to the north and south, religious institutional/school facilities directly to the north, and the continuation of the

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<sup>3</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 13 to 26.

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project site to the east and west.<sup>4</sup> Like the West Subarea described above, the surrounding area is largely built-up with mature trees ranging in height from 5- to 60-feet tall and other urban landscaping features (shrubs, fencing, etc.)

### East Subarea

The 16.3-acre East Subarea follows a linear path from Summerfield Road to Spring Lake Regional Park. See Figure 3-5 in Chapter 3, Project Description, for an aerial view of this subarea. The East Subarea is primarily composed of grassland and rocky outcroppings, oak woodlands, potential wetlands, and a small remnant walnut orchard. This subarea does not have any creeks. The overall elevation of the subarea climbs from 220 feet amsl on the western edge to 350 feet amsl along the eastern border. Surrounding land uses include a range of 1- to 3-story single- and multi-family residential to the north and south, Spring Lake Regional Park to the east, and the continuation of the project site to the west.<sup>5</sup> Like the other subareas described above, the surrounding area is largely built-up with mature trees ranging in height from 5- to 60-feet tall and other urban landscaping features (shrubs, fencing, etc.).

### *Scenic Corridors and Vistas*

Scenic corridors are considered an enclosed area of landscape, viewed as a single entity that includes the total field of vision visible from a specific point, or series of points along a linear transportation route. Public view corridors are areas in which short-range, medium-range and long-range views are available from publicly accessible viewpoints, such as from city streets. However, scenic vistas are generally interpreted as long-range views of a specific scenic feature (e.g., open space lands, mountain ridges, bay, or ocean views).

The city is bounded by the foothills of the Sonoma Mountains to the east and Laguna de Santa Rosa to the west. Long-range views to the Sonoma Mountains are predominantly visible from locations in the flatland areas of the city. The General Plan 2035 designates several scenic entries and corridors throughout the city; however, none are located within or visible from the project site.<sup>6</sup> While the City has not officially designated any scenic vistas, the General Plan 2035 includes policies that enforce the protection of views of natural hillsides and natural ridgelines such as Taylor Mountain and Bennet Mountain.<sup>7</sup> Given the undeveloped nature and generally flat topography of the project site, long-range views of the surrounding foothills can be seen intermittently through existing development surrounding the project site.

### *Scenic Roads*

A scenic road is defined as a highway, road, drive, or street that provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made scenic resources, in addition to its transportation function. Scenic roads direct views to areas of exceptional beauty, natural resources or landmarks, or historic or cultural interest. The aesthetic values of scenic routes can be protected and enhanced by regulations governing the

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<sup>4</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 27 to 38.

<sup>5</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 39 to 48.

<sup>6</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, Element 3, Urban Design, page 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, Element 3, Urban Design, Figure 3-1, page 3-9

development of property and the placement of outdoor advertising. The General Plan 2035 designates several Santa Rosa roadways as scenic roads throughout the city; however, none are located within or visible from the project site.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the segment of SR 12 within the city is not designated as a scenic highway by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program.<sup>9</sup>

### *Light and Glare*

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass or spill to adjacent sensitive receptors (e.g., residential development), sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky are an important part of the natural environment. Excessive light and glare can be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species. Light pollution in most of the city is minimal, and is restricted primarily to street lighting along major arterial streets, United States Highway 101, SR 12, and to night-time illumination of commercial buildings, shopping centers, and industrial buildings. Light spillage from residential areas, particularly older neighborhoods, is mostly well screened by trees.

### **Existing Viewsheds**

Viewsheds refer to the visual qualities of a geographical area that are defined by the horizon, topography, and other natural features that give an area its visual boundary and context, or by development that has become a prominent visual component of the area. Public views are those which can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks, and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of persons than private views. Private views are those views that can be seen from vantage points located on private property. Private views are not necessarily considered to be impacted when interrupted by land uses on adjacent properties. Accordingly, this chapter is focused on the potential new development that could occur on the project site that would be visible from public viewing points and could result in a potentially significant aesthetic impact under CEQA.

The proposed project includes the potential for the development of future buildings associated with commercial, residential, and school facilities in the West Subarea west of Franquette Avenue and east of the Farmers Lane/SR 12 intersection, and the Central Subarea west of Yulupa and east of Janet Way. The existing publically accessible viewshed in these two areas are sidewalks and roadways including SR 12, Hoen Avenue Frontage Road, Vallejo Street, Yulupa Avenue, and Janet Way. Views from these locations in proximity to the project site include existing development and associated landscaping in the near-field viewshed and the surrounding natural hillsides and natural ridgelines in the far-field viewshed. It is also important to note, that as described above, the publically accessible areas surrounding the project site are not recognized by the City or the State as scenic viewing locations; a scenic viewing location is a distinct location where people gather with a reasonable expectation to have a view of a scenic resource.

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<sup>8</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, Element 5, Transportation, page 5-8.

<sup>9</sup> California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Sonoma County, [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/), accessed on June 20, 2017.

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### 4.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. Expose people on- or off-site to substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

### 4.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

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<b>AES-1</b>	<b>Implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.</b>
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As described above, public views of scenic corridors are considered those views as seen along a linear transportation route and public views of scenic vistas are views of specific scenic features. Scenic vistas are generally interpreted as long-range views, while scenic corridors are comprised of short-, middle-, and long-range views. As stated above, the General Plan 2035 designates several scenic entries and corridors throughout the city; however, none are located within or visible from the project site. The General Plan 2035 includes policies that enforce the protection of views of natural hillsides and natural ridgelines; therefore, for the purposes of this analysis long-range views of Taylor Mountain, Bennet Mountain, and the Sonoma Mountains to the south or the project site, as well as the foothills to the north, east, and west are considered scenic vistas.

Implementation and adoption of the proposed project would result in new development potential of up to 47.2 acres of park and recreational uses including open space, 244 multi-family housing units, and 12,000 square feet of commercial space on the project site; 47.2 acres would be dedicated to park and recreational uses. For the purposes of this evaluation, it is assumed that the only two areas where potential future development resulting in a structure that could obstruct a view would be in the areas designated for housing, commercial and school facilities as shown on Figure 3-9 in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR. The remainder of the project site would provide a continuous linear mix of park and opens space uses that would be generally undeveloped. As described above, the project site is comprised of undeveloped parcels surrounded by existing development and mature trees of various heights ranging from 1- to 3-stories and 5- to 60-feet in height, respectively.

As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the height limits for potential future development under the proposed project would be limited to the height restrictions in the Zoning Code as follows:

- **Open Space Recreation (OSR) district.** The maximum height for allowable residential uses in the OSR district is 35 feet; non-residential structures may be greater height if authorized by a Conditional Use Permit per Zoning Code Section 20-26-040.

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- **Commercial General (CG) district.** The maximum height allowed in the CG district is 55 feet as noted in Zoning Code Section 20-23-040.
- **Neighborhood Commercial (CN) district.** The maximum height allowed in the CG district is 45 feet as noted in Zoning Code Section 20-23-040.
- **Multi-Family Residential (R-3-18) district.** The maximum height allowed in the R-3-18 district is 45 feet as noted in Zoning Code Section 20-22-050.

Given that the proposed project could result in potential future buildings that would be limited to 2- to 5-stories (35 to 55 feet) in height, implementation of the proposed project could block far-field views of Taylor Mountain, Bennet Mountain, the Sonoma Mountains and surrounding foothills from various publically accessible views surrounding the project site. However, as described in Section 4.1.1.2, Existing Conditions, because the topography in the Southeast Greenway Area is generally flat, the views from street-level public viewing to the scenic vistas are intermittently obstructed by existing conditions surrounding the project areas with potential height increases site such as buildings, structures, and mature trees. Additionally, the publically accessible areas surrounding the project site are not recognized by the City or the State as scenic viewing locations; that is, a distinct location where people gather with a reasonable expectation to have a view of a scenic resource. Therefore, future development under the proposed project would not further block or obstruct public views of scenic vistas from street-level public viewing. Similar views would continue to be visible along the project site.

As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project includes Land Use and Livability goals and policies that once implemented would further the protection of scenic resources in the Southeast Greenway Area. Land Use and Livability Policy LUL-OO-2, would require the City to work to create a Southeast Greenway gateway on the western edge of the Southeast Greenway Area that offers a prominently visible entrance to park and recreational uses including open space and increases visitor awareness of the amenity. This would provide more publically accessible views of the surrounding natural hillsides and ridgelines. Land Use and Livability Policy LUL-PP-3, would require the design of all structures, utilities and access roads in the Southeast Greenway to maximize public safety, attractiveness, and compatibility with other uses in the Greenway and surrounding neighborhood. In addition, future development under the proposed project would be required to comply with the General Plan 2035 Urban Design policies (listed above), which seek to preserve existing views within Santa Rosa. The proposed project would also be required to comply with SRCC Section 20-52.030, which requires projects to undergo the City's design review process. Consistency with these regulations would further ensure that future development under the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact to scenic vistas.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**AES-2                      Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.**

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As described above, a scenic road is defined as a highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made scenic

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resources. The General Plan 2035 designates several Santa Rosa roadways as scenic roads throughout the City; however, none are located within or visible from the project site. In addition, the segment of SR 12 within the City of Santa Rosa is not designated as a scenic highway per Caltrans standards. Accordingly, *no impact* with respect to scenic resources within a State scenic highway would occur.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** No impact.

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### AES-3                      Implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

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Future development allowed under the proposed project would represent a change to the existing visual character of the project site from undeveloped parcels to a continuous linear mix of park and recreational uses, multi-family housing, and commercial development. As described above in impact discussion AES-1, potential future multi-family housing, commercial, and school facilities development would be concentrated on parcels located in the West Subarea and Central Subarea of the project site that are adjacent to similar uses. Potential future buildings' form and massing would represent a substantial change to the existing visual character of the project site, but would generally be consistent with the overall urban character of the surrounding area. In addition, implementation of the proposed project would introduce park and recreational uses with native plantings and areas restored to their natural habitat, interspersed with picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens, educational/recreational spaces that can be used by neighboring schools, and a strategically located place for community gatherings.

While implementation of the proposed project would result in a change to the existing visual character of the site itself, potential future development would be limited to a small area of the site. The remainder of the project site would provide a variety of publically accessible park and recreational amenities, similar to the existing open areas. In addition, implementation of the proposed project would result in the restoration of designated areas where Matanzas Creek, Sierra Park Creek, and Spring Creek traverse the project site consistent with the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

As described in under impact discussion AES-1, the proposed project includes Land Use and Livability Policy LUL-PP-3 that would require new structures within the Southeast Greenway Area to be designed to maximize attractiveness and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, future development under the proposed project would be required to comply with the General Plan 2035 Urban Design policies (listed above) which seek to preserve Santa Rosa's visual quality and require superior site and architectural design of new development projects. The proposed project would also be required to comply with the City's development standards per SRCC Chapter 20.30 and undergo the design review process per SRCC Section 20-52.030. Consistency with these regulations would ensure that future development under the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual quality of the site or its surroundings and associated impacts would be *less than significant*.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**AES-4                    Implementation of the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

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Nighttime illumination and glare impacts are the effect of a project’s exterior lighting upon adjoining uses and areas. Light and glare impacts are determined through a comparison of the existing light sources with the proposed lighting plan or policies.

As described above, the Southeast Greenway Area is undeveloped, and as such, the site does not currently contain existing sources of nighttime illumination. However, onsite light and glare is caused by surrounding sources of nighttime illumination which include street and parking area lights, and exterior lighting on existing residential, public/institutional, and commercial buildings.

With potential future development of the proposed project, sources of light could be introduced with new buildings and along the park and open areas. Exterior lighting provided on and around the future development would be required to comply with City standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to reduce light pollution and glare per SRCC Chapter 18-16, Chapter 18-42, and Section 20-30.080, which establish maximum height standards for outdoor lighting on private property and require new development to shield and direct lighting fixtures downward and away from adjoining properties to reduce spill-over lighting and light pollution. In addition, the proposed project would also be required to undergo the design review process per SRCC Section 20-52.030. Consistency with these regulations would ensure that future development under the proposed project would not create substantial light and glare such that could degrade daytime or nighttime views in the area and impacts would be *less than significant*.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

#### 4.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

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**AES-5                    Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in less-than-significant cumulative impacts with respect to aesthetics.**

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The methodology used for cumulative impact analysis is described in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis, of this Draft EIR. The cumulative impact for aesthetics includes potential future development under the proposed project combined with effects of development on lands within the Planning Area and adjacent to the Southeast Greenway Area. A cumulative impact would be considered significant if, taken together with past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects in the identified area, it would result in a substantial adverse effect on a designated scenic vista or if it would result in a substantial degradation of the visual quality or character in the vicinity of the project site.

As described above, the SRCC requires projects to undergo the City’s design review process to ensure that project features such as building design, landscaping, site planning, and signage, are consistent with the City’s adopted plans, regulations, and design aesthetics. Moreover, similar to the proposed project, other projects within the Planning Area would be required to be in conformance with General Plan Policies

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(listed above), which require development to be compatible with the character of their surroundings. The uniform application of these regulations, goals, and policies would ensure that all development within the Planning Area is compatible with its surroundings upon approval. Additionally, the design review requirement as well as subsequent CEQA review of projects subject to CEQA would give the City the opportunity to evaluate projects' potential impacts on scenic resources prior to approval. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would have a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact with respect to visual character and scenic vistas.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.