

4.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the visual setting of the Fanita Ranch Project (proposed project) site and evaluates the potential for changes to visual character and quality with implementation of the proposed project. This analysis provides information on the character of the existing visual landscape, the locations and types of public views that include the project site, and the potential visibility of the proposed project from these public viewing locations. This section then evaluates potential impacts as a result of implementing the proposed project in terms of adverse effects to scenic vistas, visual character and quality degradation and landform alteration, damage to visual resources within a state scenic highway, and creation of new sources of light and glare affecting daytime and nighttime views. This section is based on a series of visual simulations and photographs taken from various views around the project site (Visual Impact Group 2020). The photographs considered and a description of the process used to prepare the visual simulations are provided in Appendix B.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

The following section describes the existing visual character of the project site and surrounding areas and identifies several public views that include the project site.

4.1.1.1 Existing Landform and Site Features

The proposed project consists of approximately 2,638 acres of undeveloped land located in the northwest quadrant of the City. Topographically, the project site consists of incised hillsides, ridgelines, and rock outcrops. The project site is characterized by a series of ridgelines and finger canyons predominantly in the northern and central portions of the site that trend in a northeast-to-southwest direction. The ravines between the ridges generally drain toward the southwest to Sycamore Canyon. There are also several large areas of flat or gently rolling terrain in the western and central portions of the project site. Numerous large rock outcrops are also present particularly in the northern and northeastern portions of the property. Elevations on the project site range from approximately 320 feet above mean sea level in the southern end of Fanita Parkway to approximately 1,200 feet above mean sea level at the ridgelines in the northeastern portion of the project site. Gentle and moderate slopes predominate the valley floor, which is in the northwestern and west-central portions of the project site, with steep-sloped terrain in the northeastern portion of the property and more gentle terrain in the southern portion of the project site.

The San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E) owns a 150-foot-wide easement with power transmission lines and towers that traverses the central portion of the project site from east to west. A water reservoir tank operated by Padre Dam Municipal Water District (PDMWD) north of the current terminus of Carlton Hills Boulevard is also located on site. The site supports a complex system of dirt roads and pioneered trails, many of which have experienced non-authorized use from

off-road vehicle traffic, bikers, hikers, dog walkers, and other forms of recreation. Some of the dirt roads occur on the SDG&E easement providing necessary access to power transmission lines. The site is regularly used by helicopter pilots and local first responder personnel for training purposes.

4.1.1.2 Existing Aesthetic Character

Although the project site is adjacent to urban development to the south and east, the existing aesthetic character of the project site is rural due to its undeveloped and isolated condition and its immediate proximity to large tracts of undeveloped land. Surrounding properties are mixed in character, with single-family residential subdivisions to the south of the project site (the City of Santee [City]), rural residential development farther to the east (Eucalyptus Hills in the County of San Diego [County]), PDMWD Ray Stoyer Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) and Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve to the southwest, and open space areas including Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon County Preserve and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar to the north and west. The steep hills and ridgelines along the periphery of the project site and lack of access isolate the site from the adjacent developed areas in the City. In addition, the vacant lands surrounding the project site define the area's subregional aesthetic character, of which the project site is a component.

The ridgelines and hills, significant rock outcroppings, and riparian areas with native oaks and sycamores on the project site represent visual resources to the project site and, where visible from off site, the surrounding trail users. The on-site ridgelines are visible from a variety of areas within the City and provide “residents with scenic backdrop and visual relief from developed portions of the City” (City of Santee 2003). These ridgelines dominate the southern and eastern boundaries of the project site and serve to limit the visibility of northern and central portions of the project site from off-site areas within the City.

4.1.1.3 Scenic Highways

State Route (SR-) 52 runs in an east–west direction approximately 1.8 miles south of the project site and is a designated state scenic highway within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego due to its views of Mission Trails Summit and Cowles Mountain.

4.1.1.4 Recreational Land Uses

There are no existing recreational facilities on the project site. However, unauthorized recreational use of the project site includes use of all-terrain vehicles, biking, and hiking.

4.1.1.5 Public Roadways and Rights-of-Way

The public roadways and rights-of-way surrounding the project site are primarily located to the south of the proposed project. Fanita Parkway runs in a north–south direction along the western boundary of the site. Mast Boulevard and Mission Gorge Road run parallel to each other in an east–west direction to the south of the project site and serve as central public roadways for the

City. Cuyamaca Street and Magnolia Avenue extend parallel to each other in a north–south direction to the southeast of the project site.

4.1.1.6 Light and Glare

There are two common types of light intrusion: light that emanates from the interior of structures and passes out through windows and light that projects from exterior sources, such as street, security, and landscape lighting. Light spillover is typically defined as the presence of unwanted or misdirected light on properties adjacent to a subject property being illuminated. Light spillover can be a nuisance to adjacent areas and can diminish views of the clear night sky.

Glare is described as the distraction, discomfort, or impairment of vision caused by extreme contrasts in the field of vision, where light sources such as sunlight, lamps, luminaries, or reflecting surfaces are excessively bright in relation to the general brightness of surroundings. Glare also results from sunlight reflecting off flat building surfaces, with glass typically contributing the highest degree of reflectivity. In its simplest form, glare is a consequence of the normally helpful capability of the human eye to adapt to different light levels.

Currently, the project site is undeveloped and not lit at night. Additionally, the site does not contain expanses of material that would result in glare. To the south and east of the project site is mostly residential development with some commercial uses mixed in. Night lighting from residential windows, roadway lights, and lit commercial signs is currently visible in these areas. Existing night lighting from Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve and minimal security lighting from the PDMWD Ray Stoyer WRF is visible southwest of the project site.

4.1.1.7 Key Vantage Points of the Project Site

Visual sensitivity can be described as viewer awareness of visual changes in the environment and is based on viewers' activities from public areas near a particular site, in this case, the project site. Sensitivity is based on the overall visual character and visibility of the existing project site. To define the visual quality of the project site, views that include the project site have been identified as key vantage points (KVPs). These KVPs are public viewing areas, and include street viewsheds, public viewpoints, and park views. Because it is not feasible to analyze all the locations from which the project would be seen, it is necessary to select a number of public KVPs that would most clearly display the visual effects of the project.

In order to depict representative existing views and the aesthetic character of the project site, photographs were taken of the project site from a variety of public KVPs within the City. Of the 37 photographs provided in Appendix B, 16 that depict representative views of the project site were selected for analysis. The representative KVPs include foreground, midground, and background views. Labels are provided on these photographs to illustrate the visible limits of the project site within the existing surrounding topography. A three-dimensional model of the proposed project was created using

high-resolution digital photography, Global Positioning System (GPS) data, project design files, and computer software. Then a high-resolution rendering of the computer model was placed over the digitized photographs of the project site to create accurate visual simulations of the proposed project.

Figure 4.1-1, KVP Location Key Map, identifies the locations of 16 representative public views of the proposed project with accompanying arrows depicting the direction from which of the view in the photographs. Figures 4.1-2 through 4.1-17 show photographs of existing views and a side-by-side comparison with the computer-generated visual simulations of the project site after implementation of the project. Each KVP is discussed below with a narrative description of the existing view.

KVP-1. KVP-1 shows a view looking north from the northbound SR-125 approximately 0.4-mile north of the Grossmont College Drive exit (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-2). SR-125 gently curves north and slopes downward to reveal considerable views of the Cities of Santee and El Cajon. Foreground views are characterized by paved asphalt of SR-125 with constant vehicle travel. Residential and commercial development of the Cities of Santee and El Cajon make up the midground views. Rolling hills, major ridgelines, and rock outcroppings of the project site line the background of this view. In addition, existing residential and industrial structures in the City of Poway and City of San Diego are slightly visible in the left side background view. Mount Woodson in the unincorporated community of Ramona is visible in the center background view.

KVP-2. KVP-2 shows a view looking north from the westbound SR-52 at the Cuyamaca Street on-ramp (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-3). Foreground and midground views are characterized by dense scrub vegetation, the paved asphalt on-ramp to westbound SR-52, and commercial and residential development. Residential development in the City characterizes the background view with rolling hills and rock outcroppings of the project site faintly visible in the left and central background view. Behind these hills in the center of the background view, Mount Woodson in the unincorporated community of Ramona is vaguely visible.

KVP-3. KVP-3 shows a view looking northwest from northbound Claret Street at the Sky Ranch neighborhood located within the southeast corner of the City (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-4). The foreground view is made up of residences and local streets within the Sky Ranch neighborhood. The San Diego River is visible running east–west surrounded by existing residential and commercial development dominating the midground view. The background view is characterized by rolling hills, vague outlines of dirt roads, and rock outcroppings characteristic of the undeveloped land on the project site and north and west of the project site.

KVP-4. KVP-4 shows a view looking north from northbound Fanita Parkway at the Lake Canyon Drive intersection (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-5). Foreground and midground views are characterized by a crosswalk and travel lanes on both roadways with eucalyptus trees, grass, and dense vegetation lining Fanita Parkway. Existing residential development in the Carlton Hills

neighborhood is visible in the midground right corner of the view. The background view includes Fanita Parkway as it disappears in the distance with faint views of a rolling hillside on MCAS Miramar property blocked by intervening midground vegetation.

KVP-5. KVP-5 shows a view looking north from the existing Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground entrance immediately west of Fanita Parkway (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-6). The foreground and midground views are characterized by a paved asphalt street, which is on the PDMWD Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground property, a black chain-link fence, overhead power lines, grasses, and trees lining either side of the PDMWD street. Camping spaces within the campground, which include spaces for recreational vehicles, are partially visible in the left side of the view. The midground view also includes the existing Fanita Parkway roadway, though blocked by tall grasses in this view, and existing residential development in the Carlton Hills neighborhood in the right corner of the view. The background view consists of rolling hills to the northwest (MCAS Miramar), which are partially blocked by intervening vegetation.

KVP-6. KVP-6 shows a view looking northeast from the northern terminus of Trailridge Avenue currently under construction as part of the Weston residential development (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-7). The Weston residential development abuts private property to the north. The foreground view is characterized by the roughly graded pads of future residences. Midground views include undeveloped shrub-like habitat within the City of San Diego (including the East Elliott Community Plan area), the Stowe Trail, photovoltaic solar panels, recreational vehicle (RV) campgrounds at the Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground, and existing residential development. Green rolling hills characteristic of MCAS Miramar and the project site line the background view with existing SDG&E power transmission lines and towers crossing the land in an east–west direction. The PDMWD Ray Stoyer WRF is barely visible beyond the campground and thick vegetation.

KVP-7. KVP-7 shows a view looking northeast from the publicly accessible Stowe Trail which runs in a north–south direction along the boundary of federal property of MCAS Miramar, property within the City of San Diego, PDMWD-owned land, and the project site (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-8). Foreground and midground views consist of scrubby uneven topography with the unmaintained dirt path of the Stowe Trail visible on the left side of the view going north. Photovoltaic solar panels overlying RV storage in the Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground is visible on the right side of the view. Existing residential development is partially visible between thick tree vegetation with existing SDG&E power transmission lines traversing east–west and north–south within this view. The rolling undeveloped hills of the project site and federal property of MCAS Miramar outline the background view.

KVP-8. KVP-8 shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Fanita Parkway at the intersection with Ganley Road (Figure 4.1-9). The paved asphalt of the Fanita Parkway/ Ganley Road intersection comprise the immediate foreground views with existing residential development

visible in the midground on the right side of the view and the gated entrance to the PDMWD Ray Stoyer WRF pictured on the left-hand side of the view. A trail parking area is seen in the central section of the view with a black gated entrance for pedestrians. Rolling hills of undeveloped land characteristic of federal property of MCAS Miramar and the project site are intermittently visible in the background view screened by tree vegetation. The project site is north of the existing residential community as indicated by the “Limits of Project Site” label shown on Figure 4.1-9. The future location of the northern extension of Fanita Parkway is visible from this vantage point.

KVP-9. KVP-9 shows a view looking north at the northern terminus of Swanton Drive at Los Lomas Drive on the southern project boundary adjacent to the proposed Special Use area (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-10). The foreground and midground views are characterized by the paved asphalt and sidewalks of the two roadways and existing residential development. The terminus of Swanton Drive with a chain-link fence separating the northern edges of existing residential development from the southern project site boundary characterizes the midground view. Green rolling hills and undeveloped land in the proposed Special Use area make up the background view.

KVP-10. KVP-10 shows a view looking north at the northern roundabout of the Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground west of the future extension of Fanita Parkway. Foreground and midground views consist of the asphalt pavement of the roundabout followed by a chain-link fence and gated entry into a dirt lot (Figure 4.1-11). RVs and overhanging photovoltaic solar panels in Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground are visible on the left side of the view with the roofs of existing residential development partially visible between thick vegetation on the right-hand side of the view in the midground. The future Fanita Parkway right-of-way is along the right midground view, though blocked by intervening grasses and shrubs. Tall palm trees and undeveloped sloped topography in the future Fanita Parkway right-of-way are slightly visible in the background view.

KVP-11. KVP-11 shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Cuyamaca Street at Chaparral Drive (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-12). The foreground view depicts the asphalt pavement single thru-lane, a left-turn lane with landscaped median, and sidewalk of Cuyamaca Street. The midground view is characterized by the intersection of Cuyamaca Street and Chaparral Drive surrounded to the left and right by existing residential development. A white wooden fence separates the existing residential development from other private land to the north. The location where future Cuyamaca Street meets the project boundary is not visible from this location. Steep mountainous undeveloped terrain and rock outcroppings of the southeastern portion of the project site are visible in the background view.

KVP-12. KVP-12 shows a view looking west at the current western terminus of Princess Joann Road at Dakota Ranch Road (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-13). The asphalt pavement and sidewalks of the Princess Joann Road/Dakota Ranch Road intersection characterize the foreground view. A wooden fence is seen on the left side of the view moving from foreground to midground in

an east–west direction along Princess Joann Road with large eucalyptus trees dominating the view behind it. Residential development is south of this fence. Additionally, existing residential development lines the right-hand side in the midground. A white wooden fence and gated access separate the dead-end street from the Cuyamaca Street right-of-way and other undeveloped privately-owned parcels (not the project site). Green rolling hills of undeveloped land on the project site and existing SDG&E power transmission lines and towers characterize the background view.

KVP-13. KVP-13 shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Magnolia Avenue (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-14). The foreground view is characterized by asphalt pavement, residential fencing, an easterly sidewalk, and westerly overhead power lines on northbound Magnolia Avenue. Existing residential development with trees and vegetation line both sides of the street in the midground view. White and chain-link fencing separates the current terminus of Magnolia Avenue from other undeveloped property (not the project site) in the midground view. A single residence is partially visible behind these fences hidden by thick vegetation. Steep mountainous terrain with prominent rock outcroppings line the background view primarily on the right side (not the project site). Lesser hilly slopes of private property in the City and on the project site are visible in the background view behind existing development on the left side of the view.

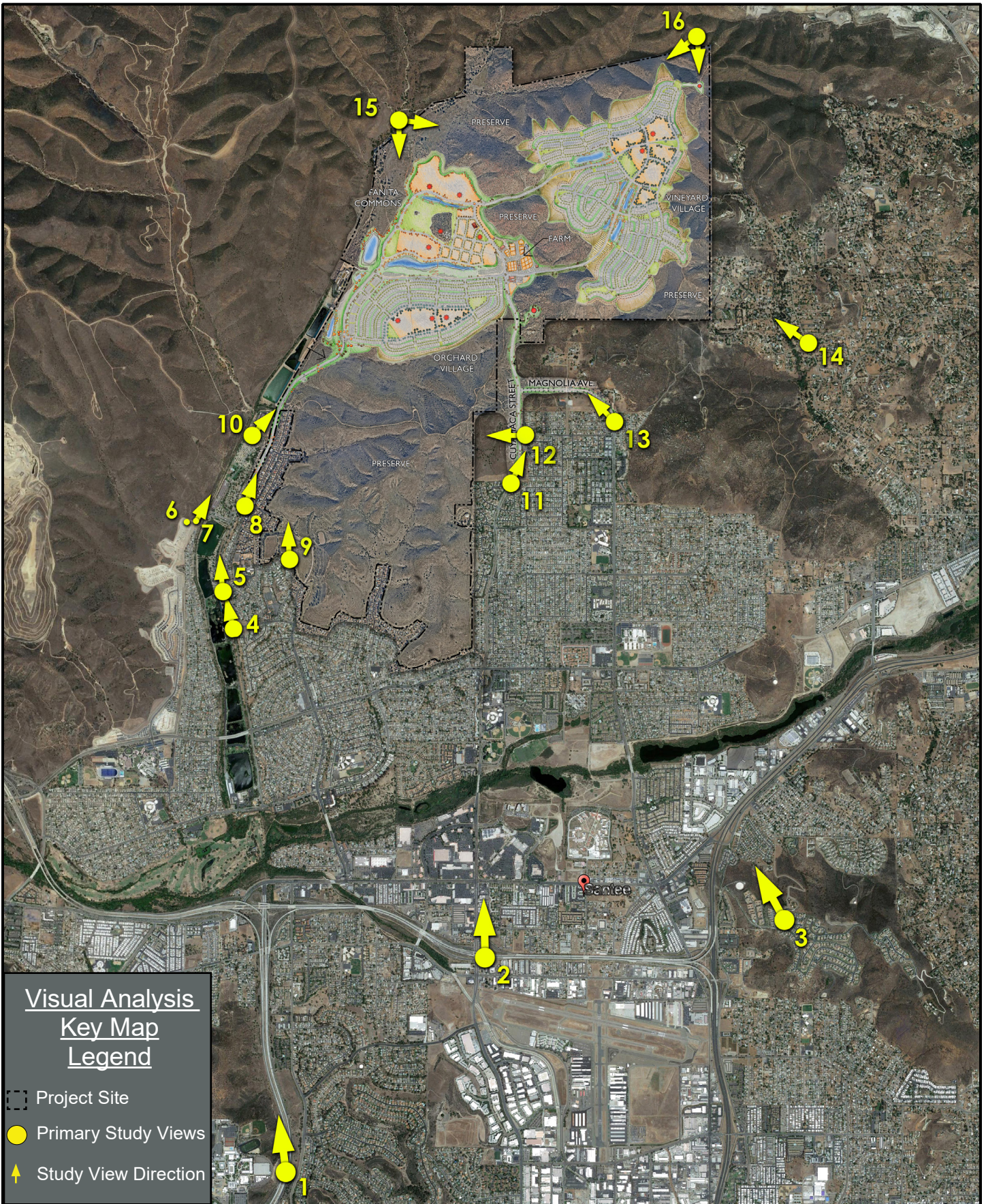
KVP-14. KVP-14 shows a view looking northwest from the intersection of Oak Creek Drive and Toyon Hills Drive within the unincorporated residential community of Eucalyptus Hills (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-15). The asphalt pavement of Toyon Hills Drive and non-native grasses and shrubbery characteristic of a rural residential front yard dominate the foreground view. A single two-story residence sits prominently in the midground view with additional residential development partially hidden by dense vegetation behind it. SDG&E power transmission lines are seen overhead following the line of Oak Creek Drive in a north–south direction. Ridgelines and rolling hills of the project site are visible in the background view.

KVP-15. KVP-15 shows a panoramic view looking south from the publicly accessible Stowe Trail at the northern border of the project site (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-16). The Stowe Trail extends along the border of MCAS Miramar and the project site into Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon County Preserve north of the project site. The immediate foreground view depicts a trail sign and predominantly grassy vegetation with some trees and shrubs distributed throughout the midground view. Uneven hilly terrain with scattered rock outcroppings on the project site comprise the background view.

KVP-16. KVP-16 shows a view looking south into the project site from an off-site location at the boundaries of the northeastern project site and County (see the existing condition on Figure 4.1-17). The foreground view consists of an unmanaged dirt road extending into the project site in a north–south direction with a wooden fence and gated access marking the project site and County boundary. The midground views are dominated by shrubby slopes and hilly terrain, which block any further background views.

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Visual Analysis
Key Map
Legend

- Project Site
- Primary Study Views
- Study View Direction

Source: Visual Impact Group 2020.

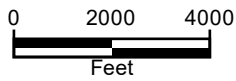
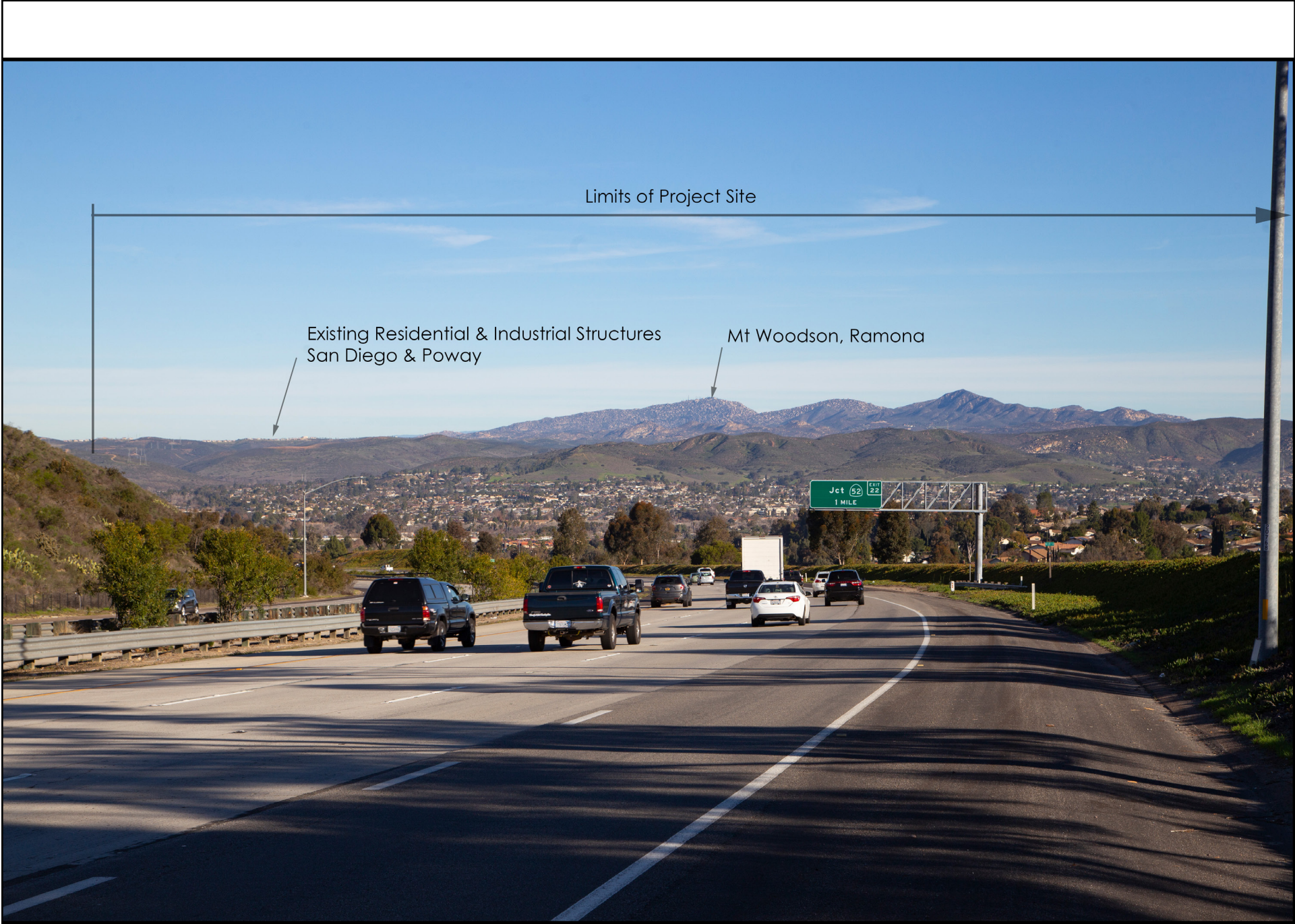


Figure 4.1-1
KVP Key Location Map

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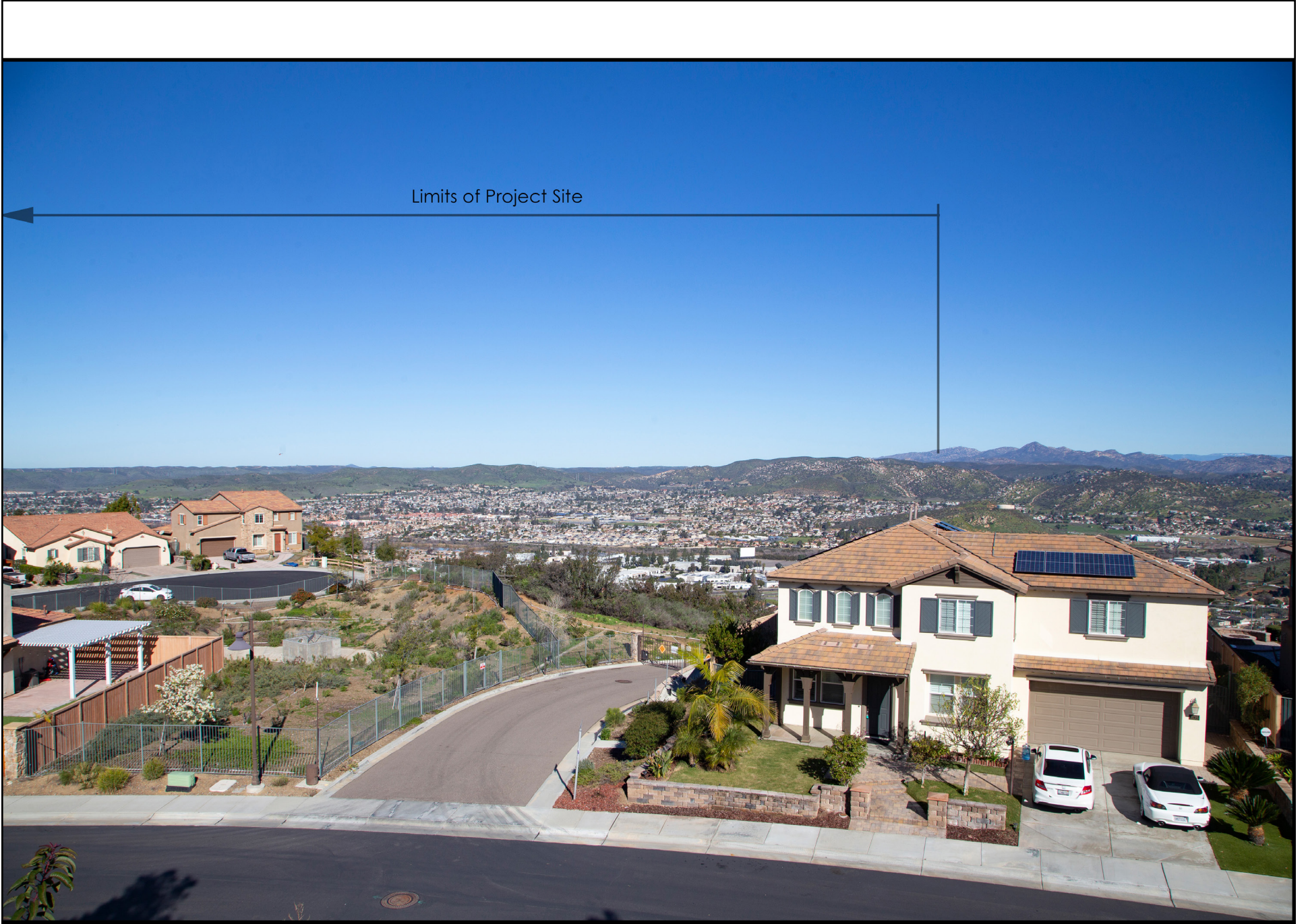


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The Project is not Visible from this Vantage Point

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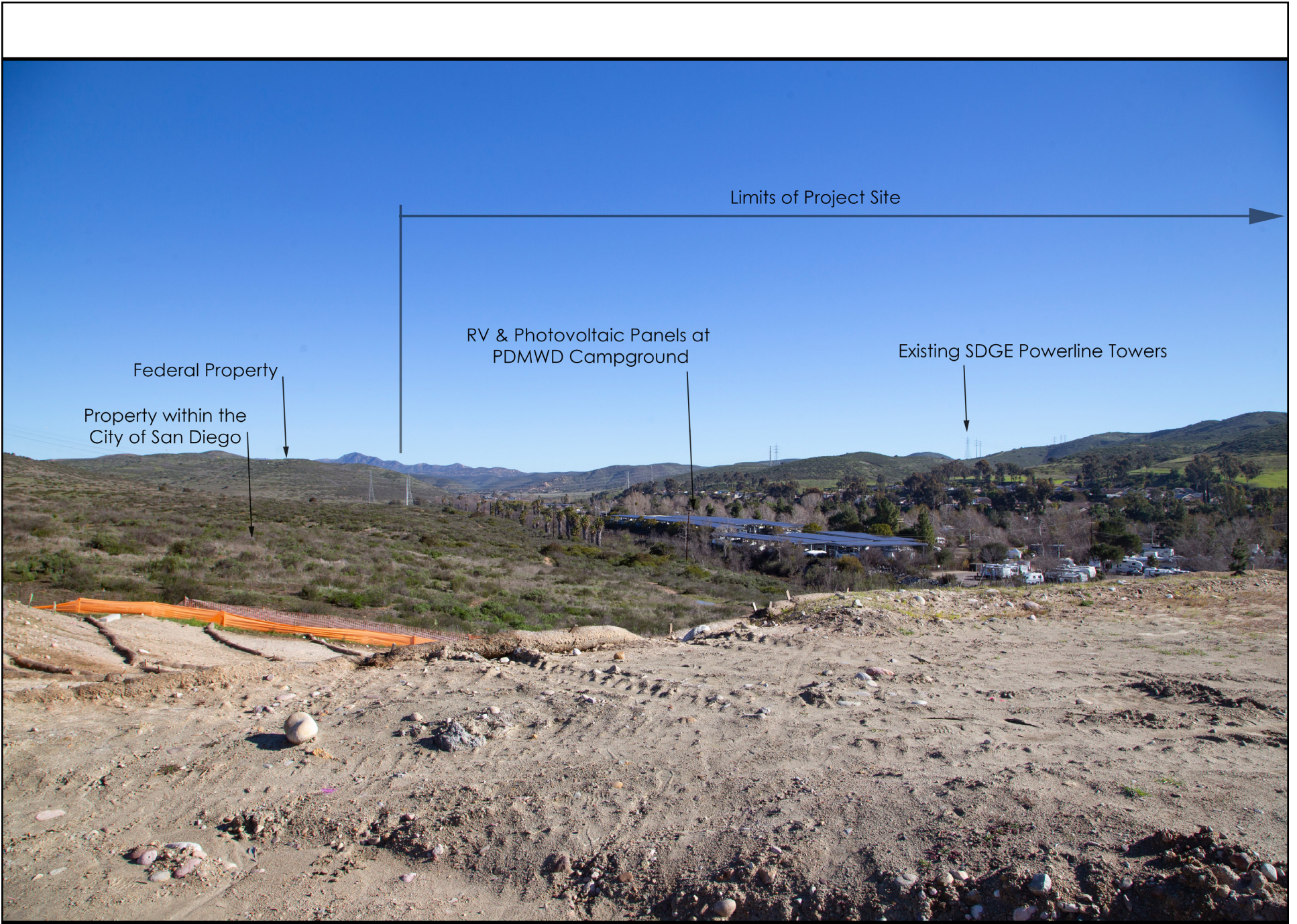


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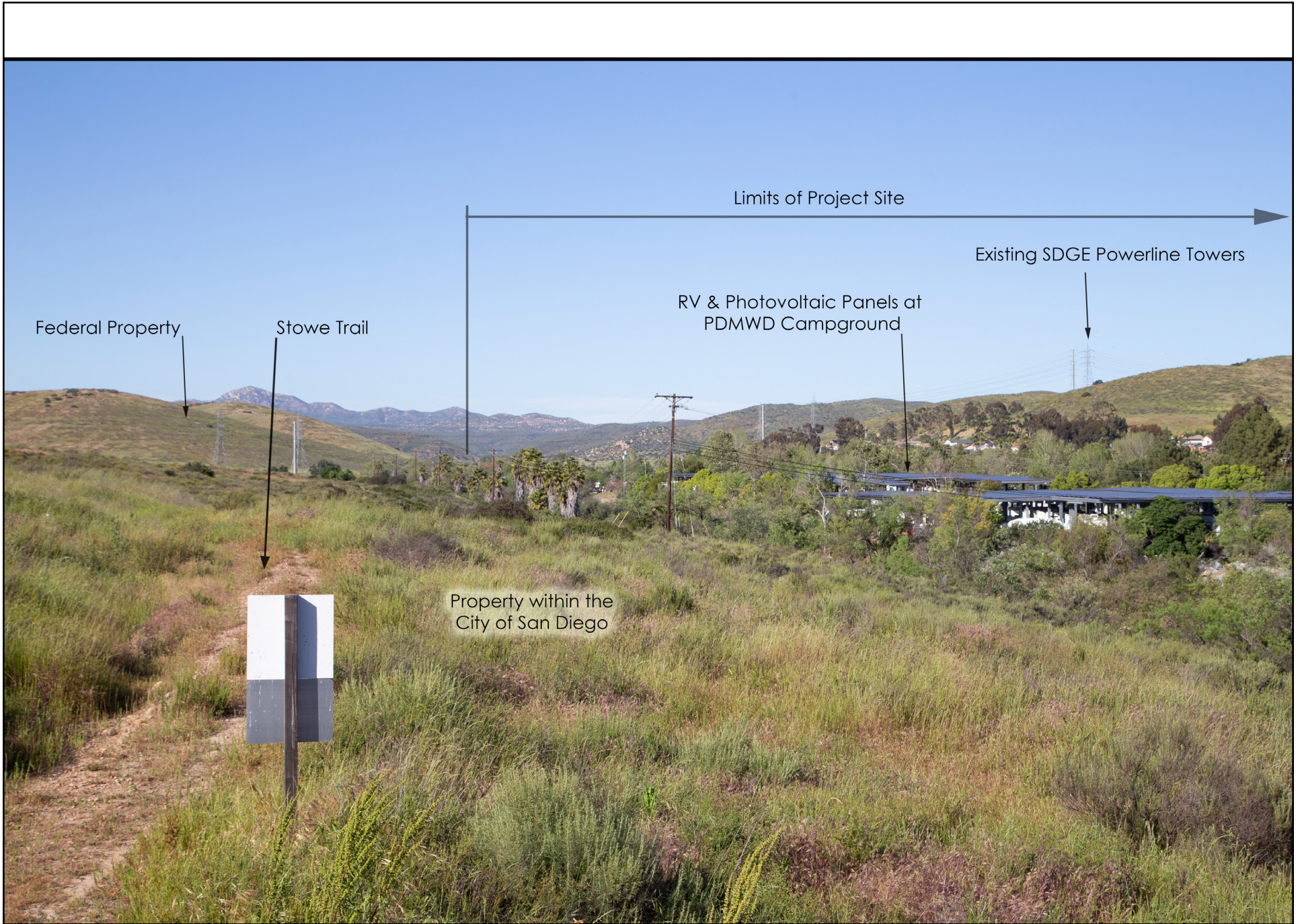


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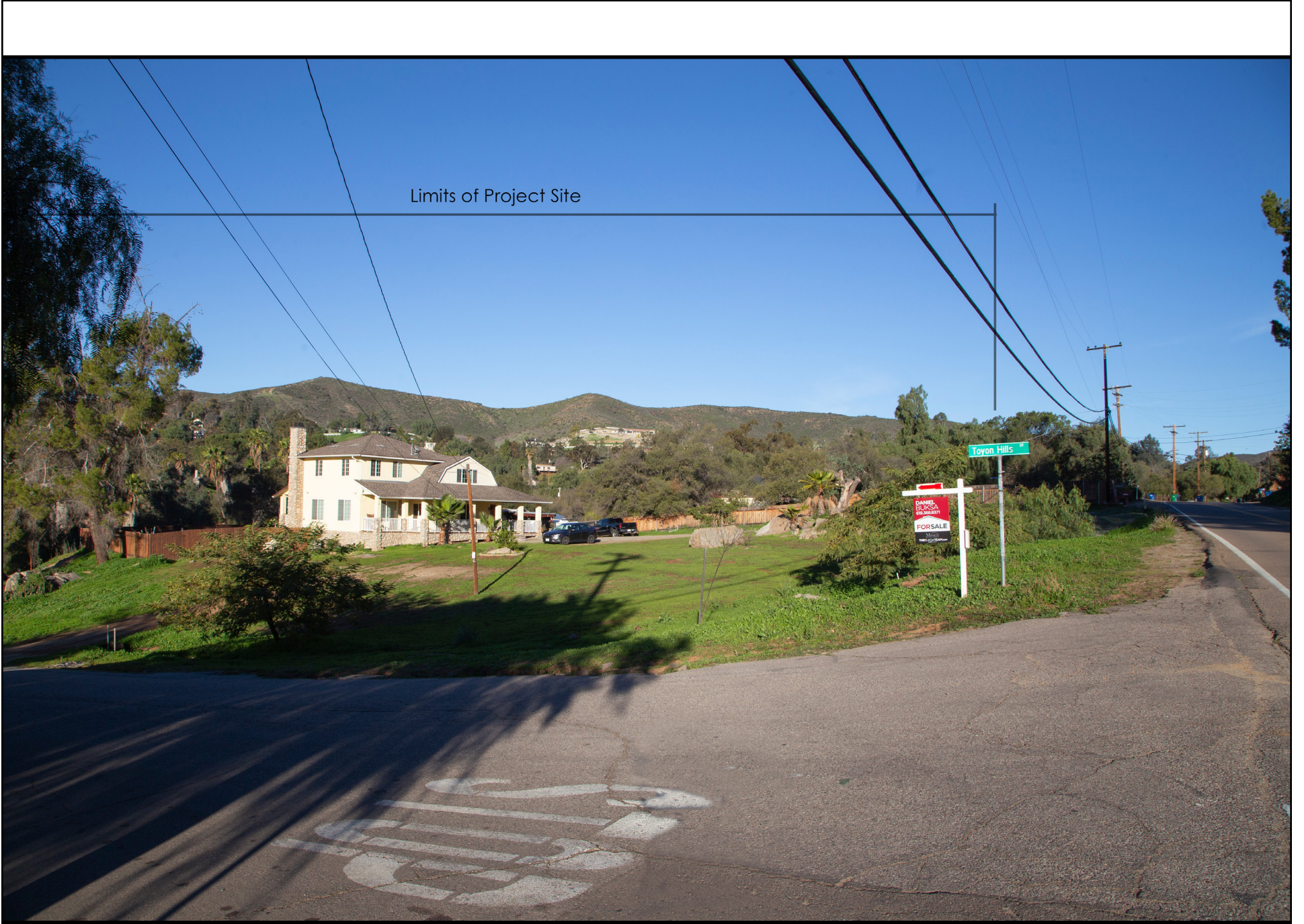


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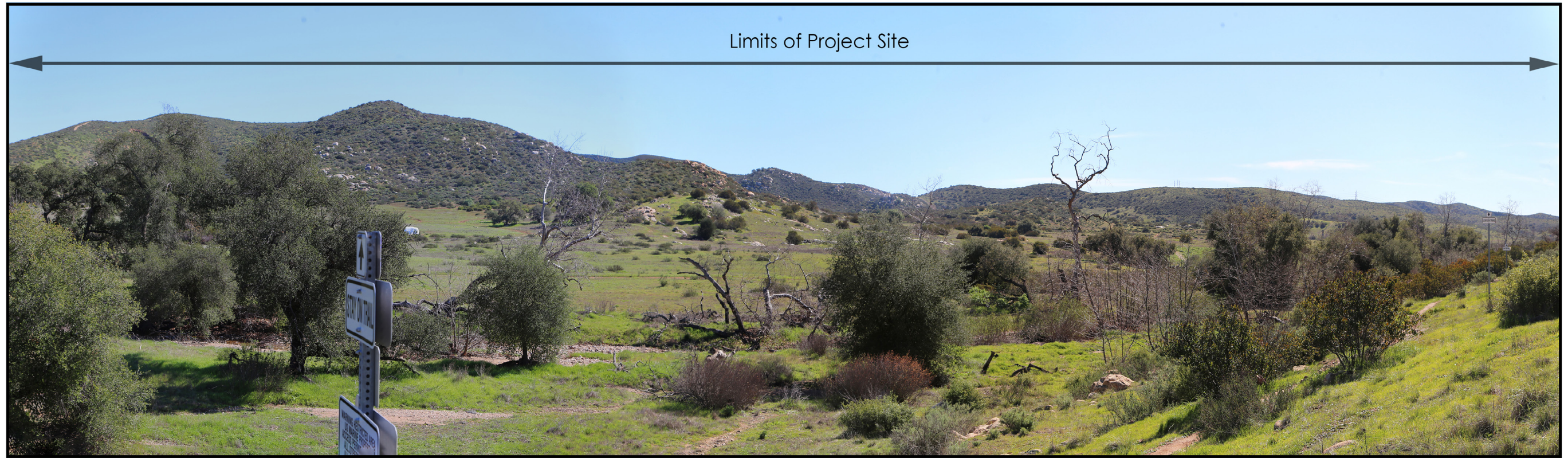


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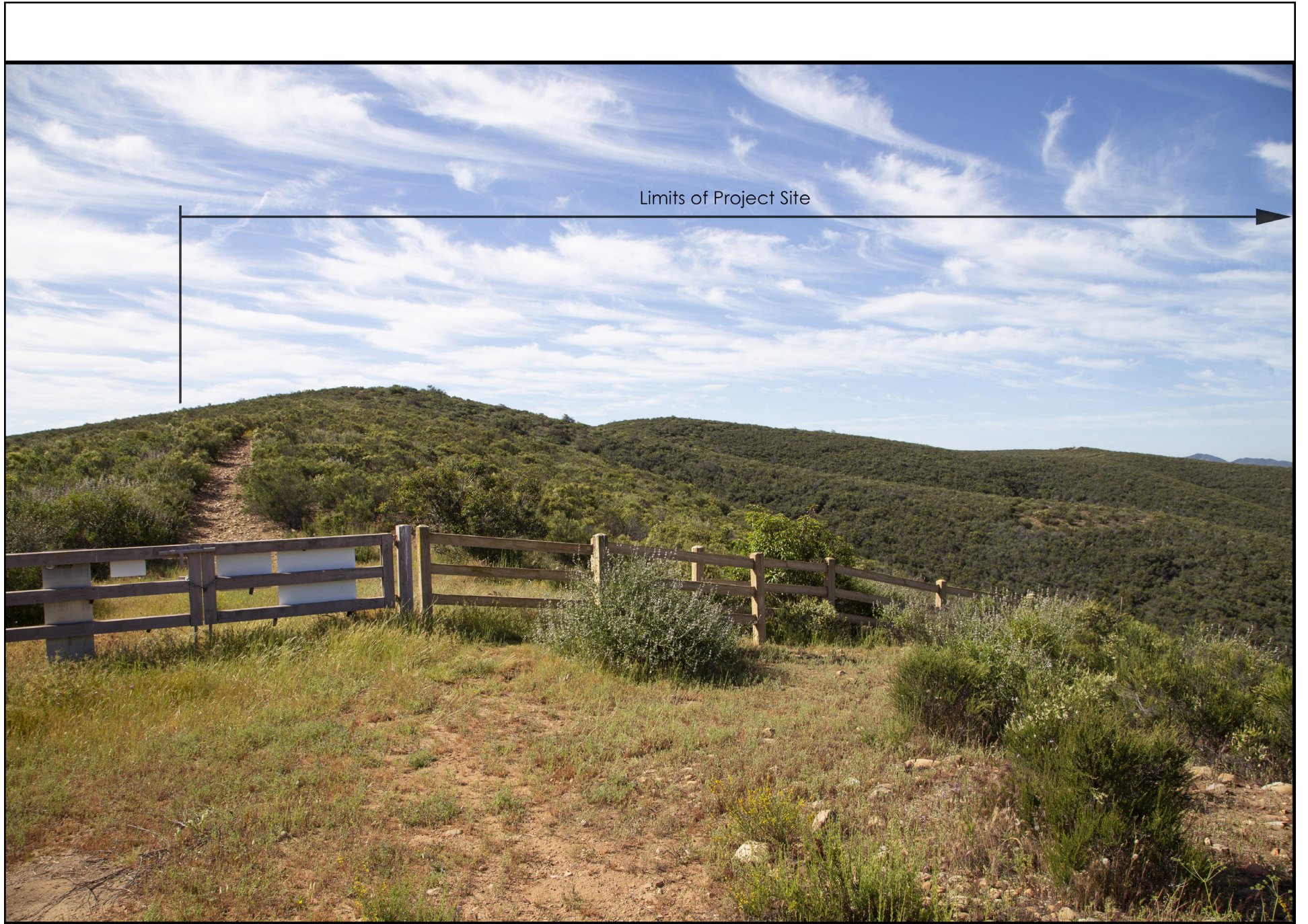


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4.1.2 Regulatory Framework

Applicable local regulations pertaining to aesthetics are discussed below. No relevant aesthetic-related federal or state regulations pertain to the proposed project.

4.1.2.1 Local

City of Santee Grading Ordinance

The City of Santee Grading Ordinance (Chapter 11.40 of the Santee Municipal Code) contains requirements regarding landform alteration and grading standards (City of Santee 2020). Applicable regulations from the Grading Ordinance relevant to landform alteration and aesthetic character of the proposed project include the following (City of Santee 2003):

- City review and approval requirements for manufactured slopes (cut and fill) in excess of 40 feet in height
- Benching and terracing requirements of manufactured slopes
- Limitations on manufactured slope gradients steeper than 2:1
- Slope rounding and contouring criteria
- Slope revegetation and maintenance criteria

Santee General Plan

Divided into nine elements, the Santee General Plan is a statement of intent as to the future development of the City. This is accomplished through objectives and policies that serve as a long-term policy guide for physical, economic, and environmental growth.

Several policies from the Santee General Plan Community Enhancement Element and Conservation Element are applicable to these goals and objectives.

Community Enhancement Element

The goal of the Community Enhancement Element is to respect and integrate the natural man made environments of Santee to enhance the quality of life, revitalize older neighborhoods and community places, and sustain a beautiful, distinctive, and well organized community for our citizens. The following objectives and policies contained in the Community Enhancement Element of the Santee General Plan that fall under the above goals are relevant to the analysis found in this section (City of Santee 2003):

- **Objective 13.0:** Integrate adequate open space uses into new development within the City.
 - **Policy 13.1:** The City shall ensure the provision of open space which provides adequate visual relief from developed portions of the City.

- **Policy 13.3:** The City shall ensure that open space is provided in hillside areas proposed for development that performs multiple functions of view maintenance, resource protection and hazard avoidance.
- **Objective 14.0:** Minimize alteration of existing topography especially in hillside areas during the development and redevelopment process
 - **Policy 14.1:** The City shall encourage and work with developers to minimize the impacts of grading for new development throughout the City.
 - **Policy 14.2:** The City shall ensure that development is oriented along natural terrain contours to the extent possible to maintain landform integrity.
 - **Policy 14.3:** The City shall require use of contour grading techniques and multi-layered landscaping, whenever possible, to ensure the natural appearance of manufactured slopes.
 - **Policy 14.5:** The City shall encourage the protection of prominent ridgelines whenever feasible. This shall be accomplished by siting development below ridgelines in such a manner that permits the ridgelines to remain visible.

In addition, the City has voluntarily added the Recreation Element to its General Plan to place increasing emphasis on the importance of incorporating these types of resources in the City. The City has set the goal for parks at 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 people in the City (City of Santee 2003). Extensively planned park facilities would be incorporated into the proposed project.

Conservation Element

The goal of the Conservation Element is to conserve open space, natural, and cultural resources. The following objectives and policies contained in the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan that fall under the above goals are relevant to the analysis found in this section (City of Santee 2003):

- **Objective 1.0:** Protect areas of unique topography or environmental significance to the greatest extent possible.
 - **Policy 1.1:** The City shall encourage that significant natural landforms be maintained during development whenever possible.
 - **Policy 1.2:** The City should encourage, through the environmental review process, the preservation of hillsides with steep slopes as appropriate to minimize danger from landslides and mudslides, as well as to protect key visual resources.
 - **Policy 1.3:** To protect and wisely manage hillsides and topographic resources, the City shall use hillside development guidelines.

Percent Natural Slope	Guideline
Less than 10%	This is not a hillside condition. Conventional grading techniques are acceptable.
10% to 19.9%	Development with grading will occur in this zone, but existing landforms should retain their natural character. Padded building sites are permitted on these slopes, but contour grading, split level architectural prototypes, with stacking and clustering are expected.
20% and over	Special hillside grading, architectural and site design techniques are expected, and architectural prototypes should conform to the natural landform. Compact development plans should be used to minimize grading footprints.

- **Objective 10.0:** Preserve significant natural resources such as mineral deposits, biological resources, watercourses, groundwater, hills, canyons, and major rock outcroppings such as part of a Citywide open space system.
 - **Policy 10.2:** The City should encourage the preservation of significant natural features, such as watercourses, ridgelines, steep canyons, and major rock outcroppings through the Development Review process.

4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have a significant impact on aesthetics and visual resources if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- **Threshold 2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- **Threshold 3:** In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.
- **Threshold 4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.4 Method of Analysis

Aesthetic experiences can be highly subjective and vary from person to person; therefore, when feasible it is preferable to evaluate aesthetic resources using a process that objectively identifies the visual features of the area, their importance, and the sensitivity of the associated viewers. The proposed project-related changes to the aesthetic character of the site and surrounding area are identified and qualitatively evaluated based on the extent of modification to the existing physical condition and viewer sensitivity to the modification.

The following section identifies viewer groups that would be sensitive to changes in the visual setting and discusses KVPs of the proposed project that would be visually accessible to these

viewers. The existing visual environment is then compared to the anticipated future visual environment through a series of computer-generated visualizations that include representative images of proposed project elements. A KVP location map is provided on Figure 4.1-1 and the visual simulations are provided on Figures 4.1-2 through 4.1-17. Regardless of the ultimate development on the proposed school site (school or residential), the impacts to aesthetics would be the same due to similar development views. Therefore, the analysis below adequately addresses the proposed project preferred land use plan with school and the land use plan without school.

4.1.5 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

4.1.5.1 Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas

Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Impact: The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Mitigation: No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact Analysis

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. Public views in the City consist of viewsheds, which are generally unobstructed panoramic views of a highly valued landscape from a public vantage point, and view corridors, which are views along public rights-of-way framed by permitted development. A substantial adverse effect to a scenic vista would occur if the project would degrade a view of a designated scenic viewshed or a highly valued landscape.

The Santee General Plan Community Enhancement Element describes numerous topographic features in the City and the surrounding vicinity as providing distinctive views and vistas from developed portions of the City. Although the Santee General Plan does not designate specific scenic vistas in the City, the major ridgeline and hillside systems provided by undeveloped areas of the northern portion of the City, including the project site, present a large portion of the views and vistas in the City. Jurisdictions outside of the City surrounding the project site, such as the County's Lakeside Community Plan, do not designate scenic vistas in the viewshed of the project site.

To show the changes in key views and describe the visibility of the proposed project from surrounding areas and potential scenic vistas, visual simulations were prepared using photographs of the project site and computer-generated, three-dimensional project modeling (Visual Impact Group 2020). The resulting visual simulations portray the project site after project implementation from the KVP locations shown on Figure 4.1-1.

The KVP locations shown in the visual simulations range from residential foreground views to more distant landscape background views. The change in visibility and views of the project site

after project implementation from each of the KVP locations is described below. For background views where the proposed project is small and difficult to see, labels are provided in the proposed condition view to assist the reader in identifying the specific villages in the proposed development. All proposed views represent ultimate views at full buildout of the proposed project with mature landscaping in place.

KVP-1. This KVP shows a view looking north from the northbound SR-125 approximately 0.4 mile north of the Grossmont College Drive exit. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-2 shows how the project site would appear to northbound travelers on SR-125 as they drive into the City. This KVP is approximately 3 miles south of the southern project site boundary. The major ridgelines and gentle slopes within the boundaries of the project site above the existing development in the City would be retained as part of the proposed Habitat Preserve. New residences in Vineyard Village would be visible from this KVP in the right-hand side of the view along the midground ridgeline. These residences would be designed with earth-toned colors, and landscaping of manufactured slopes with native landscaping would blend in with the existing native vegetation. Intervening topography would block views of development in lower elevations of the project site. Because the background ridgelines behind the proposed development dominate this view, and the proposed residences and landscaping would be designed to blend with the native vegetation, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-2. This KVP shows a view looking north from the westbound SR-52 on-ramp at the Cuyamaca Street. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-3 shows how the project site would appear to westbound travelers on SR-52. New residential development in Vineyard Village would be slightly visible in the distance from this KVP atop the distant ridgelines in the center background view. Intervening topography would block views of development in lower elevations of the project site. The change to the view would be minimal to the motorists traveling at an average speed of 65 miles per hour on the highway. In addition, a cumulative project (see Table 4-2, Cumulative Projects, in Chapter 4, Environmental Impact Analysis), the Sharp Medical Office building, is currently under construction in the midground view and, once completed, would effectively block the majority of the project site, including Vineyard Village, from this view. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-3. This KVP shows a view looking northwest from northbound Claret Street in the Sky Ranch neighborhood in the southeastern portion of the City. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-4 shows how the project site would appear from this public vantage point. From this view, the extensions of Cuyamaca Street and Magnolia Avenue would be slightly visible following the natural slopes of the ridge in the center background. These slopes would be naturally revegetated on both sides of the roadways to blend in with the existing landscape. The project proposes to grade these roadways in accordance with Hillside Development Guidelines (Policy 1.3 of the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan [City of Santee 2003]), which require contour

grading. The resulting revegetated slopes including fire protection zones would blend in with the native landscape. Some proposed residences in upper elevations of the Vineyard Village would be seen where the ridgeline “dips” in the right center background view. However, the alteration of the ridgeline is limited, and the proposed residences would not differ markedly from the appearance of the existing City development in the foreground. In addition, the background ridgelines behind the proposed development dominate the view. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-4. This KVP shows a view looking north from northbound Fanita Parkway at the Lake Canyon Drive intersection. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-5 depicts the improved and widened Fanita Parkway. Fanita Parkway would become a three-lane parkway with a raised landscaped median with two southbound travel lanes and one northbound travel lane. Bike lanes would be provided on both sides of the street with a multi-purpose trail on the west side. A solid masonry 6-foot-tall wall located approximately 2 feet downslope, resulting in a 4-foot-tall wall at grade with Fanita Parkway, would be provided along the western side of the street. New crosswalks for pedestrians would be painted on both roadways. The proposed landscaping on both sides of Fanita Parkway would enhance the views for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists using the roadway and new multi-purpose trail along Fanita Parkway. Overall, the proposed roadway, trail, and landscaping improvements would modestly change but not degrade views for users of Fanita Parkway. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-5. This KVP shows a view looking north at the existing Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground entrance immediately adjacent to the west of Fanita Parkway. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-6 shows how the view would change to campground users as a result of the proposed Fanita Parkway improvements. The existing access road and entry to the campground would remain consistent with the existing condition, and a black chain-link fence would still separate the campground property from the future alignment of proposed project. To the right of the black chain-link fence, the existing grasses and palm trees would be cleared and replaced with native ground covers, shrubs, and trees on an approximately 5-foot-tall slope. An approximately 6-foot-tall (4 feet tall at grade with Fanita Parkway) solid masonry noise wall would be along the western side of Fanita Parkway and would be slightly visible behind the proposed landscaping. The slope, wall, and landscaping on both sides of Fanita Parkway would provide additional screening of existing residences and the future extension of Fanita Parkway, which would not be visible by campground users. Overall, the proposed improvements would modestly change but not degrade views for users of the campground. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-6. This KVP shows a view looking northeast from the northern terminus of Trailridge Avenue, which is currently under construction in the Weston residential development. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-7 illustrates how the view would appear from a public street within this subdivision.

Proposed residential development in Fanita Commons and Vineyard Village would be slightly visible on various ridgelines on the project site with slightly more prominent development visible in Orchard Village in the central background. Moderate ridgeline alteration in the background of the view would result from the proposed project. However, the proposed development would blend with the native environment because grading has been designed to meet the elevation of natural contours, and resulting graded slopes would be landscaped with native vegetation to minimize the visibility. In addition, with the completed construction of the Weston residential development, apart from future residents, there would be limited public access to this street, and most of this view would be blocked by the new Weston residential development. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-7. This KVP shows a view looking northeast from the publicly accessible Stowe Trail which runs in a north–south direction along the boundary of federal property of MCAS Miramar, property within City of San Diego, PDMWD-owned land, and the project site. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-8 depicts how the view would look to trail users with the appearance of the proposed project. The existing SDG&E power transmission lines would still be visible from this vantage point. The outer edges of residential development in Fanita Commons, Orchard Village, and Vineyard Village would be slightly visible but would follow the natural slopes of the project site. However, the existing thick vegetation in the midground view would shield the view of much of the proposed development. In addition, the future development would be designed to blend in with the surrounding topography, further limiting the visibility of the proposed development. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-8. This KVP shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Fanita Parkway at the intersection with Ganley Road. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-9 depicts the extension of Fanita Parkway to the north past Ganley Road. Fanita Parkway would become a two-lane parkway with a landscaped median, a bike lane in each direction, an emergency parking/evacuation lane, a new multi-purpose trail, and a 6-foot-tall noise wall approximately 2 feet downslope (effectively 4 feet tall at grade with Fanita Parkway) on the western side of the street. Both sides of the street and the median would be vegetated with trees and shrubs. The extension of Fanita Parkway would enhance circulation for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists using the roadway and new multi-purpose trail. The off-site open space west of the Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground would still be intermittently visible through the landscaping. Though this view would undergo a noticeable change from the existing condition, it would not degrade the view. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-9. This KVP shows a view looking north at the northern terminus of Swanton Drive at Los Lomas Drive on the southern project boundary. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-10 shows how the view would change with the development of the Special Use area. The proposed uses on the Special Use area include a solar farm with RV storage, aboveground agriculture, a restricted use

area, water quality/hydromodification basins, and a Mini-Park. In this proposed view, the previously roughly graded land located just beyond the terminus of Swanton Drive would provide RV parking covered by a shade structure with rooftop solar panels reaching approximately 20 feet, which is less than the maximum height limit of 35 feet allowed in the Special Use area. However, the RV storage area and solar farm would not be visible in this view because they would be situated to the northeast behind the brown fence. Despite the change in use, this area would be screened with fencing, natural trees, and vegetation subject to the geologic recommendations set forth in Mitigation Measure GEO-1. In addition, a 50-foot distance buffer would be provided between the Special Use area and adjacent existing residences. A solid masonry wall would replace the current chain-link fence to further hide the proposed uses from nearby residences. The rolling hills in the distance would remain intact. Therefore, with the proposed screening, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-10. This KVP shows a view looking north at the northern roundabout of the Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve campground on the western boundary of the project site. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-11 shows how the future extension of Fanita Parkway would appear to the campground users. In the proposed condition, Fanita Parkway would be heavily screened by natural tree and shrub vegetation and fencing. A 6-foot-tall noise wall located approximately 2 feet downslope (effectively 4 feet tall at grade along the western perimeter of Fanita Parkway) would be barely visible in between the vegetation. The proposed changes would not affect the aesthetics of the view. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-11. KVP-11 shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Cuyamaca Street at Chaparral Drive. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-12 depicts the proposed extension of Cuyamaca Street. In this view, Cuyamaca Street north of Chaparral Drive would become a two-lane parkway with planted median, a bike lane in each direction, and a concrete multi-purpose trail on the western side of the street. Proposed development in Vineyard Village would be visible along the ridgetop. Though this view would undergo a noticeable change from the existing condition, it would not be degraded. The extension of Cuyamaca Street has been planned as part of the Santee General Plan Circulation Element roadway system. The improvements would include a new traffic signal at this intersection and would enhance circulation for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists using the roadway and new multi-purpose trail. Fill slopes on the west side of Cuyamaca Street would be landscaped with natural vegetation to blend in with the existing native vegetation. In addition, the proposed ridgetop development would follow the natural topography. Therefore, while views would change, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-12. KVP-12 shows a view looking west at the current western terminus of Princess Joann Road at Dakota Ranch Road. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-13 shows the future connection of Princess Joann Road with the extended Cuyamaca Street. In the proposed view, Princess Joann Road

would connect to the extension of Cuyamaca Street and viewers would see the intersection of Cuyamaca Street/Princess Joann Road instead of a dead-end street (current view). This change would provide a circulation improvement in the City as compared to the existing condition. Streetscape vegetation would be planted at this intersection. The existing slope in the background view would be re-contoured as part of the construction of Cuyamaca Street and revegetated. The proposed project proposes to grade this area in accordance with the Hillside Development Guidelines (Policy 1.3 of the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan [City of Santee 2003]), which require contour grading. The resulting revegetated slopes would blend in with the native landscape. Because the graded areas would be restored with native vegetation, and the larger slopes and ridges would be retained as a backdrop to Cuyamaca Street, the changes to this view would be modest. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-13. KVP-13 shows a view looking north at the current northern terminus of Magnolia Avenue. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-14 depicts the future extension of Magnolia Avenue. This street would curve to the west to connect with the future extension of Cuyamaca Street. The extension of Magnolia Avenue has been planned as part of the Santee General Plan Circulation Element roadway system. The proposed view would include two travel lanes, a painted center median, a bike lane and emergency parking on both sides of the street, a landscaped segment on the west side of the street, and a continuous sidewalk on the east side. Streetlights would be installed on the western side of the new street segment. These planned improvements would enhance the aesthetic of the view by providing clearer lane geometry on the existing street and planting additional trees and shrubs. In addition, the midground and distant views would remain relatively unchanged. The proposed project development, including Vineyard Village, would not be visible from this KVP. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-14. KVP-14 shows a view looking northwest at the intersection of Oak Creek Drive and Toyon Hills Drive within the unincorporated residential community of Eucalyptus Hills. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-15 is a representative view of the proposed project and how it would look to residents living in the adjacent neighborhood of Eucalyptus Hills. Some residences in the proposed Vineyard Village area would be visible in the central background view on the ridgetop. The alteration of the view and change from the existing condition is modest. In addition, the topography of the existing ridgeline would be contour graded and landscaped with native vegetation to blend with existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-15. KVP-15 shows a panoramic view looking south from the publicly accessible Stowe Trail at the northern border of the project site. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-16 shows how the view would look to Stowe Trail users. The Active Adult community in Fanita Commons would be predominantly visible in this view. Some residences would be seen along ridgelines in Vineyard

Village and Orchard Village in the left and right midground views. The ridgeline in the midground would be altered, and new residences associated with the Active Adult neighborhood in Fanita Commons would have the potential to impact views from this KVP. However, new development in Vineyard Village and Orchard Village would be situated below the ridgeline, would be in the distance from the viewpoint, and would not substantially alter the lines of the horizon or the background ridgeline. In addition, a manufactured slope spanning the northern boundary of this development would be revegetated with natural vegetation to blend with the existing landscape and partially cover the development. The proposed project proposes to grade this area in accordance with the Hillside Development Guidelines (Policy 1.3 of the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan [City of Santee 2003]), which require contour grading and clustering of development to reduce the grading footprint. The resulting revegetated slopes would blend in with the native landscape. The foreground, which dominates the view, would not be altered and would be maintained in its natural state. Therefore, while residences in the Active Adult neighborhood of Fanita Commons would be visible from this viewpoint, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

KVP-16. KVP-16 shows a view looking south onto the project site from the northeastern boundary of the project site and County boundary. The proposed condition on Figure 4.1-17 shows how the view would appear to the public utilizing the County trails north of the project site. In this view, several residences in the Vineyard Village area would be visible along the midground ridgeline along with a green water tank and perimeter trail. The proposed development would generally follow the existing topography of the ridgeline. The proposed project proposes to grade this area in accordance with Hillside Development Guidelines (Policy 1.3 of the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan [2003]), which require contour grading and clustering of development to minimize the grading footprint. The resulting revegetated slopes would blend in with the native landscape as it matures. The neighborhood landscaping would screen much of the development from the public view and result in a minor change in the overall viewshed. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact on scenic vistas in this view.

Additional vantage views were taken for the proposed project around the City and can be found in Appendix B. These views were not selected as primary KVPs because, from these vantage points, the proposed development would not be visible, there would be limited views of the development, or other views that provide representative views of the area were selected. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts on these views.

The proposed project's design would retain most of the major ridgelines and landform features on the project site visible from public viewpoints, and the surrounding topography would be retained. This would allow for the continued screening of views into much of the proposed project from throughout the City and adjacent public view areas. Additionally, the proposed project would comply with the design recommendations set forth by the City through the development review process, which ensures development projects adhere to the City's design principles. Further, there are no

designated scenic vistas on or around the project site. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not obstruct or detract from a designated scenic vista. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant; therefore, no mitigation is required.

4.1.5.2 Threshold 2: Scenic Highways

Would the proposed project substantially degrade scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Impact: The proposed project would not degrade views within a state scenic highway.

Mitigation: No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Before Mitigation: No impact.

Significance After Mitigation: No impact.

Impact Analysis

A “state scenic highway” refers to any interstate, state, or county street that has been officially designated as scenic and thereby requires special scenic conservation treatment. SR-52 is a state designated scenic highway which runs in an east–west direction approximately 1.8 mile south of the southern project site boundary. The approximately 3.5-mile segment from Santo Road east to Mast Boulevard within the City of San Diego was officially designated as a state scenic highway in February 2016 (Caltrans 2017). Due to its distance and intervening topography, future project development would not be seen from this location. To demonstrate this, three locations were studied along this designated segment as part of the visual simulation effort for the proposed project (see Appendix B, views 29, 30, and 31). As part of that effort, all three locations were determined to have no view of the project site. Consequently, the proposed project would not alter views from within the rights-of-way of a designated or eligible state scenic highway. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact associated with views from scenic highways.

Mitigation Measures

No impact would occur; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

4.1.5.3 Threshold 3: Visual Character

In non-urbanized areas, would the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.

Impact: The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on the visual character and quality of the site and would have a less than significant impact on publicly visible landform alteration.

Mitigation: No mitigation is required.

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact Analysis

Visual Character

As new land uses are introduced into the landscape, they become part of the visual environment. The visual environment can be subject to fragmentation or integrity loss. The proposed project would allow the construction of new development within currently undeveloped land resulting in the permanent alteration of the existing topography, thus affecting the landform and visual quality of the project site.

Analysis of the proposed project's impacts on visual quality and character considers the changes in publicly available KVPs of the project site. As discussed in Section 4.1.5.1, 16 KVPs were analyzed depicting various existing and proposed condition views surrounding the project site and the off-site improvement areas. The proposed project would alter the existing aesthetic characteristics of the project site from a variety of vantage points within the City and adjacent areas. As demonstrated by the representative KVPs, changes in the project site's aesthetic appearance would be visible from public vantage points located adjacent to the project site on the south, west, and east; recreational areas such as Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve and Stowe Trail; and major roadways such as SR-125, Fanita Parkway, Cuyamaca Street, and Magnolia Avenue.

As illustrated with the KVPs (Figures 4.1-2 through 4.1-17), some existing residences and user groups would be affected by the proposed landform alteration and site development. The KVP that displays the largest potential change in visual character is KVP-15, which shows a view looking south onto the project site from the Stowe Trail. This KVP shows the proposed Active Adult neighborhood and, due to close proximity to the existing trail, reveals considerable views of the development. However, the proposed landscaping and revegetated slopes would screen much of this development and allow it to blend in with the surrounding existing environment. In addition, the proposed project proposes to grade this area in accordance with Hillside Development Guidelines (Policy 1.3 of the Conservation Element of the Santee General Plan [City of Santee 2003]), which require contour grading and clustering of development to minimize the grading footprint. The resulting revegetated slopes would blend in with the native landscape and further act as wildfire buffers to the community.

Due to uneven topography and the far distances from the proposed village development area to the nearest off-site receptors, it is difficult to distinguish the proposed development along most ridgelines. In addition, the proposed project's design would retain most of the major ridgelines and landform features on the project site's periphery, which would allow for the continued screening of views into much of the proposed project from throughout the City and adjacent areas. The changes in views due to the extension of Fanita Parkway, and the off-site improvements to Cuyamaca Street and Magnolia Avenue have been anticipated as part of the Santee General Plan Circulation Element roadway improvements. These improvements would be enhanced through the use of natural

vegetation, landscaping, and revegetated manufactured slopes. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on the visual character or quality of the area.

Landform Alteration

Sensitive landforms are natural landforms that are unique or contribute to the character of a site. The Santee General Plan Conservation Element (City of Santee 2003) identifies two main topographic landforms that exist in the City, one being the Peninsular Range, which traverses much of the project site. Policies within the Conservation Element call for significant natural landforms to be maintained during development whenever possible. To protect and wisely manage hillsides and topographic resources, the City lays out specific hillside development guidelines described below in Table 4.1-1.

Table 4.1-1. City of Santee Hillside Development Guidelines

Percent Natural Slope	Guideline
Less than 10%	This is not a hillside condition. Conventional grading techniques are acceptable.
10% to 19.9%	Development with grading will occur in this zone, but existing landforms should retain their natural character. Padded building sites are permitted on these slopes, but contour grading, split level architectural prototypes, with stacking and clustering are expected.
20% and over	Special hillside grading, architectural and site design techniques are expected, and architectural prototypes should conform to the natural landform. Compact development plans should be used to minimize grading footprints.

Source: City of Santee 2003.

Construction of the proposed project would involve extensive excavation and grading into the native terrain. Earthwork would involve approximately 27 million cubic yards of cut and fill materials, which would be balanced on site (Figure 3-16, Conceptual Cut and Fill Plan, in Chapter 3, Project Description). Construction would include cuts up to 165 feet and fills up to 142 feet. The site would be graded into development pads using a maximum 2:1 slope ratio for fill slopes and a maximum 1.5:1 for cut slopes, which is a requirement of the Santee Municipal Code, Section 11.40.320, and to closely mimic the interval of the natural contours. The Special Use area has been previously graded and no significant grading or introduction of water into the soil is proposed.

While the proposed project would generally preserve the existing contours of the landforms where feasible for development, the proposed project includes considerable grading into steeply sloped areas. Some of the largest differences from the existing grade would occur with the development of a Neighborhood Park and multi-family residences in the central area of Orchard Village and Low Density Residential in southern and central areas of Vineyard Village. The prominent hilltop in Fanita Commons would be preserved within the planned Community Park. These large cut and fill slopes, as identified on the Vesting Tentative Map, that are visible from the public rights-of-way would utilize landform grading techniques to recreate and mimic the flow of natural contours and drainages within the natural surroundings. Where development is proposed on hillsides, grading would be efficient to minimize the grading footprint. Special contour grading techniques would be utilized at edges and transitions in landform. In addition, the proposed extensions of Fanita Parkway

and Cuyamaca Street into the village development area would be designed to preserve natural hillsides and rock outcroppings and follow the existing slopes and landforms to the extent possible.

Manufactured slopes along the edges of the development footprint, primarily visible along the northern village development area of Vineyard Village and at the proposed extensions of Cuyamaca Street and Magnolia Avenue, would be revegetated with natural vegetation to restore the native habitat and blend with the existing environment, further limiting the visibility of the landform alteration of these areas. These slopes, some of which are highly visible from public rights-of-way, are identified in the Fanita Ranch Specific Plan as “public interest” slopes. During construction, these slopes would be temporarily devoid of vegetation; however, they would be revegetated and landscaped in compliance with the Santee Municipal Code, Chapter 12.26, Landscape and Irrigation Regulations, and the Guidelines for Implementation of the City of Santee Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (2017). Therefore, by complying with the policies in the Santee General Plan and the requirements of the Santee Municipal Code, as well as adhering to the guidelines set forth in the Fanita Ranch Specific Plan, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact associated with landform alteration.

Mitigation Measures

Impacts would be less than significant regarding the impacts to visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings and landform alteration; therefore, no mitigation is required.

4.1.5.4 Threshold 4: Lighting and Glare

Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views?

Impact: The proposed project would not create a new source of light that may adversely affect nighttime views.

Mitigation: No mitigation required.

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.

Impact Analysis

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the development of new structures that would have the potential to increase sources of light or glare. The proposed new development would take place in currently undeveloped areas, and potential new sources of light would include exterior building illumination, sports field lighting, Special Use area security lighting, residential lighting, parking lots, new landscaped areas, and new roadway lighting. New sources of glare could result from reflective building surfaces or the headlights of vehicular traffic.

During the day, lighting has limited potential to impact views. Potential impacts from glare would primarily occur from the sun reflecting off reflective building surfaces. Daytime views that are subject to a substantial amount of new glare may be significantly impacted. However, the proposed

project would not include the implementation of large, uninterrupted expanses of glass or any other highly reflective material. The Special Use area would include space for approximately 18.4 acres of photovoltaic solar panels atop an RV/boat storage area, which could result in potential glare impacts to surrounding residents. However, photovoltaic solar panels are designed to absorb light, not reflect it, and would be coated with anti-reflective materials to maximize light absorption. In addition, solar panels face upward resulting in a small likelihood of directly affecting nearby residents on the ground. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial glare that would adversely affect daytime views in the area.

Sensitive views of the night sky could be impacted from new light and glare in a previously undeveloped area. The proposed project would include 2,949 residences with a school, or 3,008 residences without a school, commercial uses, parks, open space, agriculture uses, and a network of streets with off-site roadway improvements. In addition, yellow flashing beacons with advisory speed signs would be situated along the proposed extension of Magnolia Avenue to alert drivers of steep roadway grades and to reduce speed. These lighted beacons would be directed away from existing residences and comply with the standards in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices Chapter 4L (Caltrans 2014). The increase in light and glare from the implementation of the proposed project would have a potentially significant impact to views of the night sky. The proposed project would be replacing a natural backdrop with a large residential development with exterior building illumination, sports field lighting, residential lighting, parking lots, new landscaped areas, and new roadway lighting.

To minimize the impacts of lighting and glare as a result of new development, the proposed project has prepared a Conceptual Lighting Plan as part of the Fanita Ranch Specific Plan. The Conceptual Lighting Plan provides general lighting design guidance for streets, pathways, common open space, recreation areas, buildings, special accent lighting, and sign illumination. Refer to Figure 4.1-18, Conceptual Lighting Plan, for an illustration of proposed lighting throughout the proposed project. One of the primary goals of the Conceptual Lighting Plan is to reduce or eliminate light pollution by utilizing low glare and full cutoff light fixtures, lower wattage luminaires, and lighting controls to create a “Dark Sky” friendly community. This would be achieved by designing lighting according to use; prohibiting certain types of light sources; using appropriate shielding and direction of lighting sources; and enforcing lighting curfews for certain uses. Outdoor lighting would be designed and placed to efficiently direct light downward, particularly lighting for streets and parking areas. All outdoor lighting would be shielded to confine light within the site and prevent glare onto adjacent properties, the Habitat Preserve, riparian areas, and streets.

The Conceptual Lighting Plan for the proposed project states specific requirements for lighting within or adjacent to the Habitat Preserve and other environmentally sensitive areas. These requirements would prohibit lighting in or adjacent to conserved habitat, except where essential for roadway use, facility use, safety, or security purposes; use of low-pressure sodium illumination sources or other similar technology; would not use low-voltage outdoor or trail lighting, spotlights

or bug lights; and would shield light sources adjacent to conserved habitat so that the lighting is focused downward. Proposed Streets “V” and “W” would traverse the Habitat Preserve to connect Fanita Commons and Orchard Village with Vineyard Village. These streets would be designed to include wildlife crossings and use retroreflective pavement markers and touch-activated lighted bollards, instead of conventional lighting, to allow for the safe crossing of automobiles and wildlife while minimizing excessive light pollution on adjacent uses.

In addition, the anticipated development of the proposed project would be required to comply with the lighting guidelines of the Santee General Plan and the City Zoning Ordinance (Title 13 of the Santee Municipal Code) to assure that the proposed project would not include nuisance lighting. Therefore, by complying with the City Zoning Ordinance, guidelines in the Santee General Plan, and adhering to the requirements set forth in the Conceptual Lighting Plan designed for the proposed project, the proposed project’s potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Impacts would be less than significant; therefore, no mitigation is required.

4.1.6 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

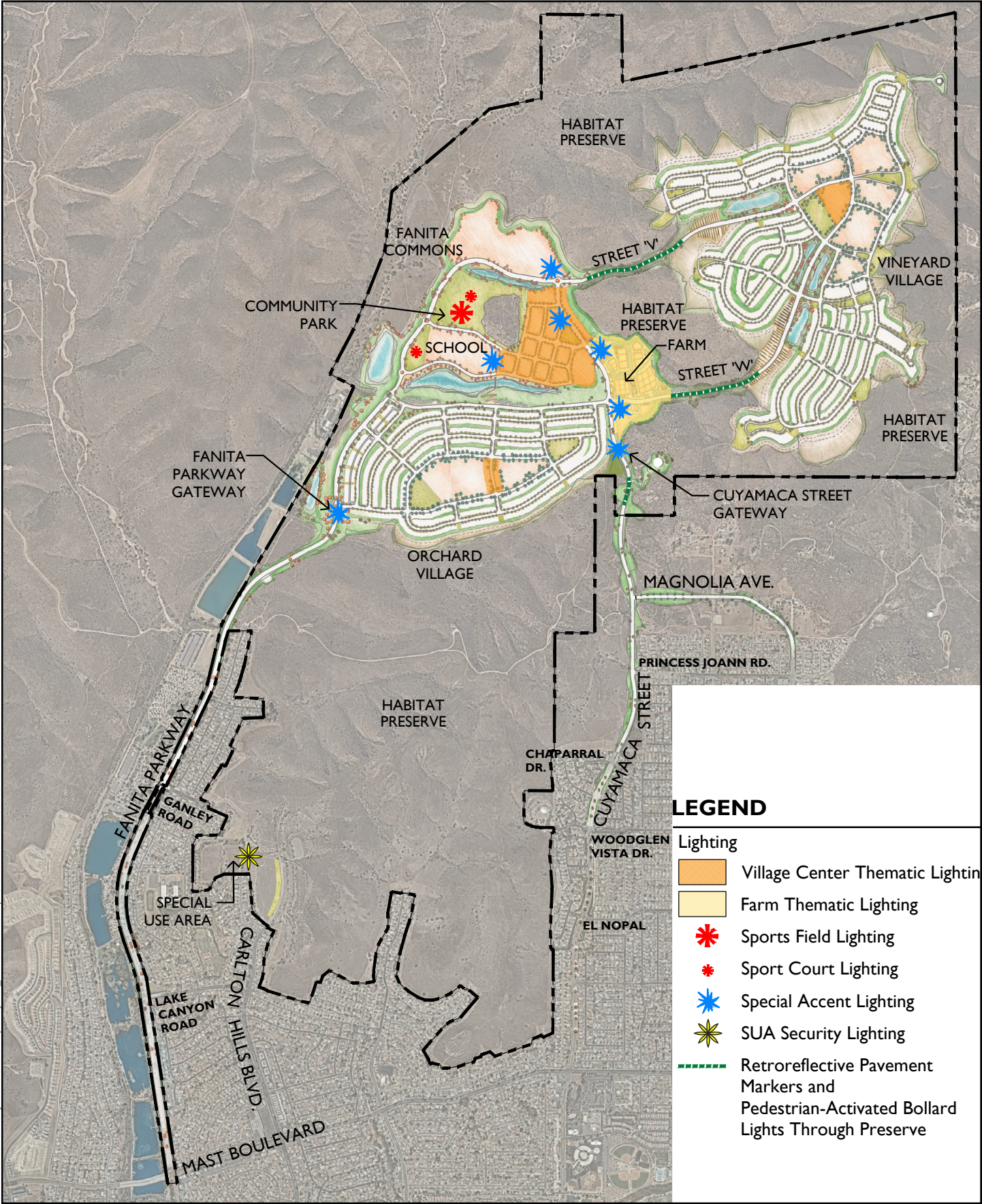
Would the proposed project have a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulative aesthetic impact considering past, present, and probable future projects?

Cumulative Impact	Significance	Proposed Project Contribution
Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas	Less than Significant	Not cumulatively considerable
Threshold 2: Scenic Highways	Less than Significant	Not cumulatively considerable
Threshold 3: Visual Character	Less than Significant	Not cumulatively considerable
Threshold 4: Lighting and Glare	Less than Significant	Not cumulatively considerable

4.1.6.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative impacts regarding scenic vistas is defined as the City and immediate surrounding areas. A significant cumulative impact would occur if cumulative projects would cause a view blockage of scenic vistas. The City does not currently designate any official scenic vistas as a part of the Santee General Plan. Implementation of the cumulative projects, identified in Table 4-2 in Chapter 4, could potentially impact views as a result of additional new development in the project vicinity and cause an impact on scenic vistas. Similar to the proposed project, each of the cumulative projects would have to conform to building standards, such as density, height, contour grading, and landscaping, in place at the time of entitlement. In addition, public views of each cumulative project would be considered during the entitlement process. As such, development of the proposed project, in conjunction with other cumulative projects, would not result in a significant impact to public scenic vistas. The proposed project’s contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

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LEGEND

- Lighting
- Village Center Thematic Lighting
- Farm Thematic Lighting
- ✱ Sports Field Lighting
- Sport Court Lighting
- ★ Special Accent Lighting
- ✱ SUA Security Lighting
- Retroreflective Pavement Markers and Pedestrian-Activated Bollard Lights Through Preserve

Source: Fanita Ranch Specific Plan 2020.

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4.1.6.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Scenic Highways

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative impacts in regard to scenic resources within a state scenic highway is defined as the limits of the scenic highway designation. A significant cumulative impact would occur if the cumulative projects would cause combined view blockage of scenic resources within a state scenic highway. The only state designated scenic highway in proximity to the project site is the SR-52 segment from Mast Boulevard to Santo Road in the City of San Diego. Cumulative projects, identified in Table 4-2 in Chapter 4, that could affect views of the designated segment of SR-52 include the Sycamore Landfill expansion and the Weston residential development due to their proximity to the highway. These projects could have the potential to impact scenic resources within the limits of a scenic highway. However, all development within the City would be required to comply with the Santee General Plan and Santee Municipal Code, which would avoid significant impacts to state scenic highways. As stated previously, the proposed development would not be visible from the designated segment of SR-52. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

4.1.6.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Visual Character

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative impacts in regard to visual character, quality, and landform alteration is defined as the City limits and immediately surrounding areas. A significant cumulative impact would occur if cumulative projects would change the overall visual character or quality of the area. Cumulative projects, described in Table 4-2 in Chapter 4, would occur in off-site areas throughout the City and could impact the visual character of the City. Because the majority of the cumulative projects would be situated in the urbanized City boundaries, they would be required to be compatible with surrounding development. Because cumulative projects would be required to comply with the Santee Municipal Code and adhere to policies set forth in the Santee General Plan associated with grading, excavation, and hillside development, a significant cumulative impact would not occur without implementation of the proposed project.

Similar to the other cumulative projects, the proposed project would be required to comply with the Santee Municipal Code and adhere to policies set forth in the Santee General Plan associated with grading, excavation, and hillside development. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

4.1.6.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Lighting and Glare

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative impacts in regard to light and glare is defined as the City limits. A significant cumulative impact would occur if cumulative projects would create new sources of substantial light and glare. Increased light would be generated by streetlights, residential lighting, parking lot lights, new commercial and mixed-use development, and signage. Increased lighting would potentially adversely affect adjacent properties and the overall nighttime lighting levels within the City. Increased glare within the City could potentially occur as a result

of new development containing building materials, roofing materials, or windows that would reflect sunlight. If multiple projects were introduced in the City emitting considerable amounts of light and glare, a cumulative impact could occur.

The proposed project, in combination with other cumulative projects identified in Table 4-2 in Chapter 4, would have the potential to produce new sources of light and glare as a result of exterior building illumination, residential lighting, parking lots, new landscaped areas, photovoltaic solar panels, and new roadway lighting. In order to minimize light spillover and glare, the proposed project has prepared a Conceptual Lighting Plan, which would ensure the proposed project maintains a “Dark Sky” friendly community. In addition, the proposed project and cumulative projects would be required to comply with lighting design set forth in the Santee Zoning Ordinance and guidelines for lighting in the Santee General Plan Community Enhancement Element. Therefore, with implementation of the City’s existing regulations to minimize lighting and glare, the proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to new sources of light and glare. The proposed project’s contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

4.1.7 References

- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2014. “Chapter 4L: Flashing Beacons.” In California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. November 7.
- Caltrans. 2017. California Scenic Highway System Lists. Accessed May 2020. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.
- City of Santee. 2003. Santee General Plan. Adopted August 27.
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- City of Santee. 2020. Santee Municipal Code.
- Visual Impact Group. 2020. The Process of Creating Accurate Visual Simulations.