

6 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

This chapter provides an evaluation of the potential aesthetic and visual resources effects of implementing the proposed City of Folsom 2035 General Plan (2035 General Plan). As established in the Notice of Preparation for the proposed 2035 General Plan (see Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation*), urban development and other activities subject to the plan may result in adverse effects to the visual resource environment.

The following environmental assessment includes a review of aesthetic and visual resources potentially affected by the implementation of the 2035 General Plan, including a description of the existing visual character of the natural landscape, the built environment, and scenic corridors. This analysis includes a review of regulations, requirements, plans, and policies applicable to aesthetics and visual resources.

The existing condition of the aesthetic and visual resources environment in the City of Folsom was determined by visual reconnaissance, and a survey of photographic records and maps of environmental resources and recreation areas. Rules and regulations influencing the visual environment were identified by a review of State regulations and scenic highway programs, and local agency zoning and design regulations. Potential impacts related to aesthetics and visual resources were determined by comparing potential activities to the existing environment, based on CEQA assessment criteria, and by considering the policies, regulations, and guidelines adopted by the City of Folsom and by State resource agencies.

6.1 SETTING

The environmental and regulatory setting of the City of Folsom with respect to aesthetics and visual resources is described below for both the physical environment and the body of federal, state, and local policies and regulations that govern such resources.

6.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Scenic resources contribute to a sense of identity, and can provide positive psychological benefits as well as economic value. The definition and value of a scenic resource is largely subjective, but generally relates to the breadth, uniqueness, unity, and effect of a view.

The dominant visual character of Folsom is of extensive and lush landscaping. Most major roadways in the city have a landscaped median or planted buffers, and many commercial properties have landscaping on their street frontage and in their parking lots. The landscaping is pervasive and consistent in style, so much so that areas lacking in it are conspicuous by its absence. The dominance of single family residential neighborhoods in the city with well-kept landscaping and the frequent green belts along creeks add to the green aesthetic. The built environment of the city is dominated by one to two-story structures, including residential uses, multifamily residences, business and commercial centers, big box retail, and office parks. The Historic District in downtown Folsom consists of residential and commercial uses whose design evokes Folsom's rich historic past from the California gold rush through the 1950s.

The City of Folsom through its Zoning Code and Building ordinance regulates street level aesthetics and character throughout the city and in particular areas by specialized documents such as the

Historic District Design and Development Guidelines. The Folsom Lake State Recreation Area General Plan (2010) and the American River Parkway Plan (2008), undertaken by federal and state agencies, and Sacramento County and other local agencies respectively, address the preservation and enhancement of the scenic resources in the Recreation Area and the Parkway. For an evaluation of the proposed 2035 General Plan with the policies of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area General Plan and the American River Parkway Plan, including visual quality objectives, please refer to Chapter 4, *Land Use, Population, and Housing*, of this Draft PEIR.

SCENIC CORRIDORS

Chapter 17.59.040 of the City's Municipal Code addresses signs within the city and in scenic corridors. The Planning Director must approve signs visible from a scenic corridor, and their appearance and lighting are regulated. Chapter 17.59.040(H)(1) of the FMC designates the following as scenic corridors (Folsom 2017b):

- Greenback Lane (east of Madison Avenue to the Rainbow Bridge)
- Green Valley Road (from East Natoma Street to the city limits)
- Blue Ravine Road
- East Bidwell Street (from Blue Ravine Road east to the city limits)
- Prairie City Road (from Blue Ravine Road south to Highway 50)
- East Natoma Street (from Green Valley Road to the city limits)
- Folsom Boulevard
- Folsom-Auburn Road

Sacramento County's 2030 General Plan designated Highway 50 and Scott Road south of White Rock Road as scenic corridors (Sacramento County 2011). There are no State-designated scenic highways within or adjacent to Folsom (Caltrans 2017). Figure 6-1 shows the scenic roadways regulated by the City and Sacramento County.

FOLSOM LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA AND THE AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY

Folsom Lake and the American River, including the accompanying parkway and trail that connect Sacramento and Folsom, are two of the major scenic resources in Folsom. The green corridors that follow the city's creeks are another major visual resource, as are views to the Sierra Nevada foothills and certain scenic roadways. The Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (FLSRA) General Plan includes the portion of the American River Parkway administered by the State. The FLSRA has many scenic resources characterized by panoramic views as well as both landscape and built features of interest. Within the city, these resources include:

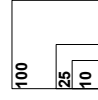
- Folsom Dam, Observation Point, and Folsom Point are major vista points on the lake, with views of open water and the Sierra foothills;
- The steep-walled American River Gorge, south of the dam;
- Lake Overlook, just north of Nimbus Dam, which has views of Lake Natoma and the Sierra Foothills to the north, and a view south over the Sacramento Valley;
- The Truss Bridge, originally built in 1893 and moved elsewhere before being reinstalled in 2000 as a pedestrian and bicycle crossing; and
- Rainbow Bridge, built in 1917, is noted by its underside arch and classic design and serves as a symbol of Folsom.

Figure 6-1

City of Folsom

Scenic Corridors

- 2035 General Plan Planning Area
- Folsom City Boundary
- Scenic Corridors Designated in the Folsom Municipal Code
- Scenic Corridors Designated in the Sacramento County 2030 General Plan
- Parks & Open Space



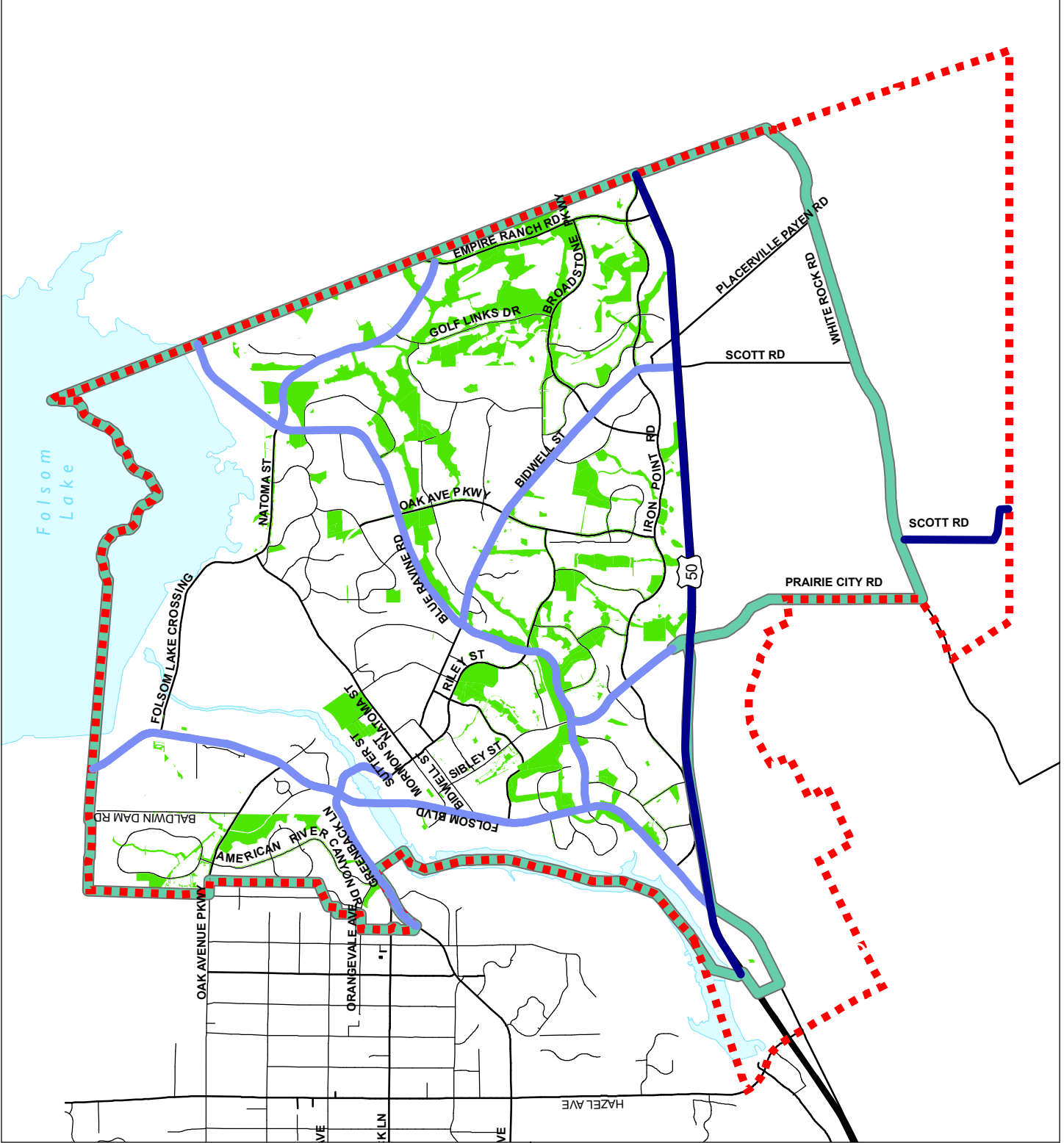
ACRES



Miles

Created by Planning Partners 2018.

Additional Sources:
City of Folsom, 1988 and 2018;
Sacramento County, 2011.



The Lake Natoma Cliffs are not in the city but can be seen from the Folsom side of the river, rising 150 feet above the western shoreline.

FOLSOM, SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 50

The area of Folsom south of Highway 50 is entirely within by the area governed by the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (FPASP). The FPASP area consists of over 3,336 acres of undeveloped grasslands that was previously used for cattle grazing, although as of the date of this Draft PEIR, the construction of streets and other backbone infrastructure has been initiated in the eastern portion of the area. The FPASP area presents a large stretch of undeveloped land along Highway 50 in eastern Sacramento County that contains oak woodlands and rock outcroppings.

The landscape of Folsom south of Highway 50 is characterized by low hills covered with oak trees, narrow valleys containing creeks, and lowlands and rolling hills covered with annual grasses and scattered trees, and occasional features such as rock outcroppings, agricultural fencing, and ruins of former farm structures. These vistas are viewed by travelers on Highway 50, Prairie City Road south of Highway 50, and White Rock Road, rural residents near and within the area, and Folsom residents living just north of Highway 50. The general experience of driving on both Prairie City Road and White Rock Road includes views of gently rolling hills covered in annual grasses, and the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range in the distance.

The Specific Plan requires a minimum of 30 percent open space, which will preserve the existing scenic qualities on 1,118 acres (1,054 acres of Measure W open space)¹, and a 50-foot-wide landscaped corridor on the south side of Highway 50.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Existing urban development and motor vehicles in the City of Folsom produce light and glare. Primary sources of light are streetlights, parking lot lighting, and automotive headlights. Glare is a visual sensation caused by excessive and uncontrolled brightness, which can be disabling or uncomfortable. General sources of glare include reflected sunlight from the windows of buildings and automobiles.

6.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

The following regulations of federal, state, and local agencies govern various aspects of aesthetics and visual resources.

FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

No federal laws or regulations pertaining to aesthetics or visual quality apply to the 2035 General Plan.

¹ For further information regarding the different types of open space, see Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft PEIR.

CALIFORNIA LAWS AND REGULATIONS

California Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263)

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. The California Scenic Highway Program is administered by Caltrans. The program was designed to protect scenic state highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to the highways. A California highway may be designated as scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. There are no State designated scenic highways in the 2035 General Plan Planning Area (Caltrans 2017).

California Building Code

The California Building Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2) contains various building standards derived and adapted from the International Building Code, authorized by the California legislature, that address California building issues. They include standards for outdoor lighting intended to improve energy efficiency, minimize light pollution and nighttime glare, and provide design solutions to shield and control outdoor lighting fixtures.

LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The City of Folsom has adopted ordinances and standard conditions to protect aesthetic and visual resources during the construction and operation of urban development. These requirements are found in the Folsom Municipal Code (FMC) and design guidelines.

Signage in Scenic Corridors (FMC Chapter 17.59.040(H))

Folsom has established special provisions for the placement of signage in scenic corridors within the City of Folsom. The Code identifies designated scenic corridors within the city.

Hillside Development Standards (FMC Chapter 14.33)

The purpose of the Hillside Development Standards is to, in part, protect significant natural features and provide for functional and visually pleasing development of the city's hillsides by establishing procedures and standards for the siting and design of physical improvements and site grading. The Ordinance also contains standards for street lighting and exterior lighting to reduce off-site fugitive light and glare. (Folsom 2017a)

MU, Mixed-Use Zones (FMC Chapter 17.23)

This chapter of the Zoning Code provides design standards for mixed-use zones. The code states that the design details, including lighting, shall be determined by considering public views, among other criteria.

Parking Requirements (FMC Chapter 17.57)

These parking requirements dictate that lighting, if provided, is directed away from residential areas and public streets so that the light source is not visible from such areas in order to insure the general safety of other vehicular traffic and the privacy and well-being of the residential areas.

Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development

The purpose of these Guidelines is to establish specific development standards and design guidelines for the development of multi-family residences that are necessary to promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The Guidelines establish site-planning principles, including those for site layout, project entrances, parking requirements, parking layout, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, grading and drainage standards, and requirements for open space/recreational amenities. The Guidelines also establish architectural design, lighting, safety, and landscape requirements for many aspects of the design of multi-family structures and projects.

Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Community Design Guidelines

The Community Design Guidelines are intended to provide the a vision of the level of design quality expected in the FPASP area for “Public Realm” improvements, which include the streets, parks, public places, schools, and open spaces. The Community Design Guidelines are written as a series of performance based objectives and policies. Performance based objectives use the terms “should” or “encouraged” to indicate a desired design expectation. Policies use the term “shall” to indicate required results based on the Folsom Municipal Code, FPASP Polices, EIR Mitigation Measures, and the Community Design Guidelines.

Folsom Plan Area/Russell Ranch Adopted Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures adopted by the City during its approval of the FPASP and the Russell Ranch project related to visual resources include:

Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan EIR/EIS

- Mitigation Measure 3A.1-1: Construct and Maintain a Landscape Corridor Adjacent to U.S. 50.
- Mitigation Measure 3A.1-4: Screen Construction Staging Areas.
- Mitigation Measure 3A.1-5: Establish and Require Conformance to Lighting Standards and Prepare and Implement a Lighting Plan.

Russell Ranch Project EIR

- Mitigation Measure 4.1-1: Locate construction staging areas as far away as possible from sensitive biological resources and sensitive land uses.
- Mitigation Measure 4.1-2: Prepare and submit a lighting plan.

6.1.3 PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goal and policies from the proposed 2035 General Plan address aesthetics and visual resources.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Policy NCR 1.1.7: Fugitive Light. Encourage measures to limit fugitive light from outdoor sources, including street lighting.

Goal NCR 2.1: Allow residents to enjoy views of the hills, lakes, river, and habitats that make Folsom such a beautiful place to live.

Policy NCR 2.1.1: Maintain Scenic Corridors. The City shall protect views along identified scenic corridors.

Policy NCR 2.1.2: Complementary Development. Through the planned development process, require new development to be located and designed to visually complement the natural environment along Folsom Lake, the American River, nearby hillsides, and major creek corridors such as Humbug, Willow, Alder, and Hinkle.

Policy NCR 5.1.6: Historic District Standards. Maintain and implement design and development standards for the Historic District.

6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

6.2.1 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

As set forth in Appendix G, Question I of the State CEQA Guidelines, the following criteria have been established to quantify the level of significance of an adverse effect to aesthetics and visual resources evaluated pursuant to CEQA. An impact would exceed an impact threshold under these circumstances:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. *(I.a)*
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. *(I.b)*
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. *(I.c)*
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. *(II.d)*

6.2.2 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The aesthetics and visual resources evaluation includes a review of visual and scenic resources potentially affected by the implementation of the 2035 General Plan, and the total buildout envisioned under the Plan. The quality of the City of Folsom's visual character is subjective and dependent upon each viewer's preferences, which can vary as individuals respond differently to changes in the visual environment. As a result, the level of the project's visual impacts can be difficult to quantify. Therefore, the evaluation takes a conservative approach, and provides a qualitative discussion of the potential for the 2035 General Plan project to result in urban development that would affect the visual character of the city.

Both natural and man-made landscape features contribute to perceived visual character and the scenic attractiveness of the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area's rural and urban landscapes. Natural landscape features can include vegetation, grasslands, water resources, landforms, rock outcroppings, and topography. Man-made landscape features can include recreational amenities, public roadways, sidewalks, street lighting, grazing lands, and rural and urban structures. The evaluation describes both the existing natural and man-made landscape features, and how both the overall development and the development at specific locations proposed under the 2035 General Plan can affect the existing features of the natural environment and characteristics of the man-made environment.

These potential impacts could occur throughout the city, although the majority of the land available for new development with urban uses (77 percent of the citywide total or 2,218 acres) would be located within the FPASP area south of Highway 50. North of Highway 50, 441 acres in 453 parcels are planned for urban uses by 2035. Additionally, implementation of the 2035 General Plan could result in the redevelopment of 60 parcels totaling 74 acres with mixed-use development within the East Bidwell Corridor (Mintier Harnish 2017). As defined by the East Bidwell Corridor mixed-use overlay district, mixed uses within the corridor would include residential, retail, office, and medical uses in varying proportions along East Bidwell Street from Riley Street to Highway 50. Implementation of mixed uses throughout this area could result in buildings up to three stories in height, although the prevailing underlying maximum height limit set forth in the City’s Zoning Code would be unchanged by the 2035 General Plan. Similar development could occur in the vicinity of light rail stations along Folsom Boulevard.

The evaluation also determines whether the goals and policies in the 2035 General Plan promote compatibility with the existing environment, and the extent to which they would protect existing scenic landscapes. For the purpose of this evaluation, the aesthetic value of the area is a subjective measure of the visual character and scenic quality analyzed based on CEQA assessment criteria.

6.2.3 LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

There are no impacts of this type for this issue area.

6.2.4 POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following discussion examines the potential impacts of the proposed project based on the impact threshold criteria described above.

Impact AES-1 Adverse effect on a scenic vista or substantially degrade the scenic character	
Applicable Regulations	Folsom Municipal Code, Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development, FPASP Community Design Guidelines.
Adopted Mitigation Measures	FPASP Mitigation Measures 3A.1-1, 3A.1-4, Russell Ranch Mitigation Measure 4.1-1.
Proposed GP Policies that Reduce Impacts	Policies NCR 2.1.2, NCR 5.1.6.
Significance after Implementation of GP Policies	Significant; mitigation required.
Mitigation Measures	None available.
Significance after Mitigation	Significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of the proposed 2035 General Plan would lead to urban development that could result in the degradation of the visual quality of scenic vistas and visual quality. Although the proposed 2035 General Plan contains policies to maintain and protect scenic resources, because development would permanently alter scenic vistas and the visual character within the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area, this would be a significant impact.

New development associated with the 2035 General Plan could result in changes to important scenic resources as seen from visually sensitive locations. A scenic vista is generally considered a view of an area that has remarkable scenery or of a resource that is endemic to the area. Scenic vistas within the

city vary from short-range to long-range views, depending upon the topography, intervening buildings, and the presence of mature vegetation.

As described above in the environmental setting, important existing scenic resources include major natural open space features such as the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area and the American River Parkway. Another important scenic resource is the Historic District (as regulated by the Historic District zoning designation). South of Highway 50, the FPASP area includes over 3,336 acres of undeveloped grasslands. The scenery consists of grasslands on rolling hills and narrow valleys, waterways, and oak woodlands.

Additional views throughout the city include those created by topographic variation. In effect, views in the city from residents in elevated locations could be modified with buildout of the 2035 General Plan. For example, for people living east of East Bidwell Street, on the westernmost ridge facing west, views extend from internal views upslope and downslope within the residential neighborhood, to the East Bidwell Street commercial corridor, and on to the distant skyline of downtown Sacramento at a distance of 21 miles on exceptionally clear days. (Google Earth 2017).

Table 6-1 includes existing City regulations, in addition to policies from the 2035 General Plan and mitigation measures for development of the FPASP area that protect scenic vistas and visual character. The table also sets forth how each cited regulation acts to protect sensitive resources.

Table 6-1 Regulatory Requirements and Proposed 2035 General Plan Goals/Policies Related to Scenic Vistas and Visual Character	
Measure Identification	How the Regulation or Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact
FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	
<i>None applicable</i>	--
STATE REGULATIONS	
<i>None applicable</i>	There are no state scenic routes within or viewable from the City of Folsom.
CITY REQUIREMENTS	
<i>FMC Chapter 14.33 - Hillside Development Standards</i>	Protects significant natural features and provides for functional and visually pleasing development of the city's hillsides.
<i>FMC Chapter 17.23 – MU, Mixed-Use Zones</i>	Provides design standards for mixed-use zones that consider public views.
<i>Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development</i>	Provides design standards for multi-family development that include landscaping and architectural design standards.
<i>Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Community Design Guidelines</i>	Provides design guidelines for the FPASP area that identify landscaping elements to be used along streets and other public spaces.
FOLSOM PLAN AREA SPECIFIC PLAN EIR/EIS	
<i>Mitigation Measure 3.A.1-1</i>	Requires the funding, construction, and maintenance of a landscaped corridor in the FPASP south of Highway 50 to create a visual buffer for motorists traveling along this corridor.
<i>Mitigation Measure 3.A.1-4</i>	Requires screening of construction areas to minimize the short-term degradation of visual character for existing land uses during construction in the FSASP.

Table 6-1 Regulatory Requirements and Proposed 2035 General Plan Goals/Policies Related to Scenic Vistas and Visual Character

Measure Identification	How the Regulation or Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact
RUSSELL RANCH PROJECT EIR	
<i>Mitigation Measure 4.1-1</i>	Requires screening of construction areas to minimize the short-term visual effects during construction in the FSASP.
2035 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES	
<i>Goal NCR 2.1</i>	States that residents should be allowed to enjoy views of the hills, lakes, river, and habitats that make Folsom such a beautiful place to live.
<i>Policy NCR 2.1.2: Complementary Development</i>	Requires new development be located and designed to visually complement the natural environment along Folsom Lake, American River, nearby hillsides, and major creek corridors such as Humbug, Willow, Alder, and Hinkle.
<i>Policy NCR 5.1.6: Historic District Standards</i>	Requires maintaining and implementing design and development standards for the Historic District, which increases value and appreciation of surrounding historic buildings.

Source: Planning Partners 2018.

Implementation of the 2035 General Plan would allow development on 453 total vacant parcels encompassing 441 acres north of Highway 50, as well as redevelopment of the 60 parcels totaling 74 acres in designated areas. None of the proposed development with implementation of the 2035 General Plan would directly impact identified important scenic resources north of Highway 50. However, any development on these parcels, along with redevelopment, would result in some change to the existing visual character and views of the area, particularly as perceived by individuals near the developed or redeveloped property. Various chapters of the City’s Municipal Code would act throughout the city to protect important scenic resources as development occurs during the life of the 2035 General Plan. Further, the policies proposed in the Natural and Cultural Resources element of the 2035 General Plan include a variety of regulations and incentives aimed at protecting scenic resources and vistas.

For residents of neighborhoods in elevated locations, there are a variety of views extending from short-range to long-range. Because portions of these views can be enjoyed from backyards and from inside residences, residents would be sensitive to modifications of these views. The proposed infill development in vacant or underutilized sites and intensification of land uses at developed sites would be visible from viewpoints within single-family neighborhoods. Therefore, development associated with the 2035 General Plan may add an imposing element to the short-range view and impede portions of the medium-range or partial long-range views enjoyed by these residents. However, the design of the proposed commercial and residential uses would be similar to that of nearby commercial and residential uses, and future projects would be required to be consistent with the City’s design guidelines, where applicable. Although some viewers could experience impairment to existing medium-range and long-range views, in most cases such views are already impaired to some degree.

The 2035 General Plan includes the East Bidwell Corridor overlay, which would allow the flexibility to develop the area as mixed use and the potential intensification of land uses within the East Bidwell corridor. This development would be regulated by the City’s Municipal Code and applicable design guidelines, and while uses may intensify within the corridor, the height restrictions for

existing zoning districts would not change. Therefore, except for travelers on East Bidwell Street, views from neighboring areas would not change substantially.

There are a total of 3,336 acres in the FPASP area south of Highway 50, of which 1,118 acres are designated as open space (1,054 acres of Measure W open space). The remaining 2,218 acres would be developed with a variety of urban land uses and supporting infrastructure. Therefore, viewsheds within the FPASP area that include thousands of acres of open space would no longer exist. The FPASP EIR/EIS identified mitigation measures to reduce the impact of substantial alteration of a scenic vista in the FPASP area by requiring a landscaped corridor south of Highway 50 and the screening of construction sites. However, as previously evaluated in the FPASP EIR/EIS and the Russell Ranch EIR, overall development in this area would substantially degrade the existing scenic view of the landscape, as views along nearby roadways would change from rolling hills and grasslands to housing developments, schools, and general commercial endeavors. Once open space is converted to urban land uses, it is a permanent change in land use and to the visual character. For these reasons, the FPASP EIR/EIS concluded that the modification of the viewscape within the FPASP area constituted a significant and unavoidable impact to visual quality.

Even with implementation of existing regulations and 2035 General Plan policies, as well as existing mitigation measures for the FPASP area, new development would substantially degrade scenic vistas and visual character in the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area, particularly within the FPASP area. Because this potential impact would not be fully reduced, and because it would not be feasible to avoid all direct impacts to identified resources, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Significance of Impact: Significant.

Mitigation Measure AES-1: None available.

Because it is infeasible to allow new development associated with the 2035 General Plan buildout without permanently and substantially altering existing scenic vistas and visual character, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

Impact AES-2 Damage to scenic resources within a scenic corridor	
Applicable Regulations	Folsom Municipal Code, FPASP Community Design Guidelines.
Adopted Mitigation Measures	FPASP Mitigation Measure 3A.1-1.
Proposed GP Policies that Reduce Impacts	Policy NCR 2.1.1.
Significance after Implementation of GP Policies	Significant; mitigation required.
Mitigation Measures	None available.
Significance after Mitigation	Significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of the proposed 2035 General Plan could lead to urban development and other activities that could damage scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a designated scenic corridor. While the 2035 General Plan contains goals and policies and existing design guidelines that would preserve the viewsheds within most designated scenic corridors, views from two designated scenic corridors in the FPASP area would be substantially damaged with 2035 General Plan buildout. This would be a significant impact.

According to the California Department of Transportation Map, the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area does not contain, nor is it visible from, a State-designated scenic highway (Caltrans 2017). However, the City of Folsom and County of Sacramento have designated several roadways within the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area as scenic corridors (see Figure 6-1). Development associated with the 2035 General Plan could damage or change views from these designated scenic corridors.

Table 6-2 includes existing City regulations, in addition to policies from the 2035 General Plan and mitigation measures for development of the FPASP area that protect scenic corridors. The table also sets forth how each cited regulation acts to protect sensitive resources.

Table 6-2 Regulatory Requirements and Proposed 2035 General Plan Goals/Policies Related to Scenic Corridors	
Measure Identification	How the Regulation or Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact
FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	
<i>None applicable</i>	--
STATE REQUIREMENTS	
<i>None applicable</i>	--
CITY REQUIREMENTS	
<i>FMC Chapter 17.59.040(H) – Signage in Scenic Corridors</i>	Identifies designated scenic corridors within the city and includes special provisions for the placement of signage in scenic corridors within the City of Folsom.
<i>Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Community Design Guidelines</i>	Provides design guidelines for the FPASP area streets, signature corridors, and landscape corridors and provides recommended design elements along these streets.
FOLSOM PLAN AREA SPECIFIC PLAN EIR/EIS	
<i>Mitigation Measure 3A.1-1</i>	Requires the funding, construction, and maintenance of a landscaped corridor in the FPASP south of Highway 50 to create a visual buffer for motorists traveling along this corridor.
RUSSELL RANCH EIR	
<i>None applicable</i>	--
2035 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES	
<i>Goal NCR 2.1</i>	States that residents should be allowed to enjoy views of the hills, lakes, river, and habitats that make Folsom such a beautiful place to live.
<i>Policy NCR 2.1.1: Maintain Scenic Corridors</i>	Requires the City to protect views along identified scenic corridors.

Source: Planning Partners 2018.

The Folsom Municipal Code identifies specific scenic corridors within the city and regulates signage along these routes to minimize additional visual impact. The 2035 General Plan reinforces the Municipal Code and requires protection of these views, though much of these corridors are largely built out. Of the designated corridors, additional development as a result of 2035 General Plan buildout would occur on East Bidwell Street (designated as a scenic corridor from Blue Ravine Road east to the city limits). Redevelopment and subsequent mixed-use development in buildings up to 35 feet in height could occur along this portion of the roadway corridor, and could alter the corridor to a denser, more pedestrian friendly area. In general, parking would be available at the rear of buildings. Views to travelers on East Bidwell Street could become shorter range, and could consist

of multi-story buildings substantially nearer the existing roadway than prevail at the time of preparation of this Draft PEIR. However, changed views would not vary substantially from the existing commercial aspect of the corridor, and there are no existing scenic resources along this corridor. This would be a less-than-significant impact.

Scott Road south of White Rock Road and Highway 50 are designated scenic corridors in Sacramento County because they are considered to be located within an especially scenic rural portion of the county. Even with implementation of FPASP EIR/EIS mitigation requiring creation of a landscaped corridor along the south of Highway 50, views south from this highway would be substantially altered. The Scenic Highways Element of the Sacramento County General Plan describes views from Scott Road as consisting of grasslands and cattle-grazing lands. While this portion of Scott Road is not located within the FPASP area, the western lowlands of the FPASP are visible from this corridor. Development associated with the 2035 General Plan would substantially damage views from the portion of Scott Road designated as a scenic corridor, and views along this roadways would change from rolling hills and grasslands to housing developments and general commercial uses. As previously evaluated in the FPASP EIR/EIS and the Russell Ranch EIR, overall development in this area would substantially degrade the existing scenic view of the landscape. For this reason, the FPASP EIR/EIS concluded that the modification of the viewscape from scenic corridors adjacent to the FPASP area constituted a significant and unavoidable impact to visual quality.

Even with implementation of existing regulations and 2035 General Plan policies, as well as existing mitigation measures for the FPASP area, new development would substantially degrade views from scenic corridors in the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area, particularly within the FPASP area. Because this potential impact would not be fully reduced, and because it would not be feasible to avoid all direct impacts to identified resources, this impact would be significant.

Significance of Impact: Significant.

Mitigation Measure AES-2: None available.

Development in accordance with the 2035 General Plan would permanently and substantially alter the scenic character of the FPASP area from open space to urban development, and would therefore substantially damage the viewshed from the northern portion of Scott Road. These changes are inherent to the change from a rural to urban development pattern, and no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce impacts associated with the damage of scenic resources within a designated scenic corridor. Therefore, this . remains significant and unavoidable.

Impact AES-3 Create new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views	
Applicable Regulations	California Building Code, Folsom Municipal Code, Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development, FPASP Community Design Guidelines.
Adopted Mitigation Measures	FPASP Mitigation Measures 3A.1-5, Russell Ranch Mitigation Measure 4.1-2.
Proposed GP Policies that Reduce Impacts	Policy NCR 1.1.7.
Significance after Implementation of GP Policies	Significant; mitigation required.
Mitigation Measures	AES-3: Nighttime Lighting Measures.
Significance after Mitigation	Significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of the proposed 2035 General Plan would lead to urban development and other activities that could create new sources of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the city. The City’s Municipal Code and design guidelines include lighting standards to reduce the creation of new sources of light and glare. However, new development, particularly within the FPASP, could still increase the amount of light and glare that would result in nighttime glow. This would be a significant impact.

The development proposed under the 2035 General Plan could increase the amount of light and glare through the installation of exterior lighting within areas proposed for new residential and commercial development, or with the modification of existing buildings, which could result in increased ambient nighttime lighting. These potential impacts could occur throughout the city, although the majority of the land available for new development with urban uses (77 percent of the citywide total or 2,218 acres) would be located within the FPASP area south of Highway 50. North of Highway 50, 441 acres in 453 parcels are planned for urban uses by 2035 and an additional 60 parcels totaling 74 acres, mostly within the East Bidwell corridor, could be redeveloped with more intense uses than currently exist. Because the majority of the urban development consistent with the 2035 General Plan would occur in the FPASP area that currently has minimal to no light and glare, it is expected that new sources of light and glare in this location could contribute to new substantial sources of light pollution.

Table 6-3 includes existing State and City regulations, in addition to mitigation measures for development of the FPASP area designed specifically to reduce the creation of any new sources of light or glare, which could impact nighttime views in the city. The table also sets forth how each cited regulation acts to protect sensitive resources.

Table 6-3 Regulatory Requirements and Proposed 2035 General Plan Goals/Policies Related to Reduction of Light Pollution	
Measure Identification	How the Regulation or Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact
FEDERAL REGULATIONS	
<i>None applicable</i>	--
STATE REGULATIONS	
<i>California Building Code</i>	Includes standards for outdoor lighting intended to minimize light pollution and nighttime glare, and provide design solutions to shield and control outdoor lighting fixtures.

Table 6-3 Regulatory Requirements and Proposed 2035 General Plan Goals/Policies Related to Reduction of Light Pollution

Measure Identification	How the Regulation or Policy Avoids or Reduces Impact
CITY REQUIREMENTS	
<i>FMC Chapter 17.59.040(H) – Signage in Scenic Corridors</i>	Identifies designated scenic corridors within the city and includes special provisions for the placement and lighting of signage in scenic corridors within the City of Folsom.
<i>FMC Chapter 14.33 - Hillside Development Standards</i>	The Ordinance contains standards for street lighting and exterior lighting to reduce off-site fugitive light and glare.
<i>FMC Chapter 17.23 – MU, Mixed-Use Zones</i>	This chapter of the Zoning Code provides design standards for mixed-use zones. The code states that the design details, including lighting, shall be determined by considering public views, among other criteria.
<i>FMC Chapter 17.57 – Parking Requirements</i>	These parking requirements dictate that lighting, if provided, is directed away from residential areas and public streets so that the light source is not visible from such areas in order to insure the general safety of other vehicular traffic and the privacy and well-being of the residential areas.
<i>Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development</i>	The Guidelines also establish architectural design, lighting, safety, and landscape requirements for many aspects of the design of multi-family structures and projects.
<i>Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Community Design Guidelines</i>	Provides design guidelines for the FPASP area, including lighting recommendations.
FOLSOM PLAN AREA SPECIFIC PLAN EIR/EIS	
<i>Mitigation Measure 3A.1-5</i>	Requires the development and implementation of an on-site lighting plan and by requiring conformance with general plan standards for the off-site facilities to minimize nighttime light and glare.
RUSSELL RANCH EIR	
<i>Mitigation Measure 4.1-2</i>	Requires a lighting plan for outdoor light sources to minimize nighttime light and glare.
2035 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES	
<i>Policy NCR 1.1.7: Fugitive Light</i>	Encourages the City to establish measures to limit fugitive light from outdoor sources, which would minimize nighttime light and glare.

Source: Planning Partners 2018.

Lighting throughout the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area would be required to comply with the California Building Code as incorporated into the City of Folsom Building Code, which regulates lighting intensity, efficiency, and shielding. It requires that lighting fixtures be designed to minimize light pollution and glare. Additional chapters of the Folsom Municipal Code regulate lighting for parking and other development, and the Design Guidelines for Multi-Family Development include lighting standards that ensure that lighting for multi-family development would be focused within the project boundary, and shielded away from adjacent roadways and properties. The City also requires lighting plans for commercial, multi-family residential and single-family residential subdivision projects.

Adherence to existing Municipal Code requirements would minimize adverse effects from light spillover to nearby properties and glare. Individual projects as part of the 2035 General Plan would be subject to CEQA review. New lighting associated with these projects would be reviewed on an individual basis during the City's development review process and would be regulated by the City's Municipal Code and design guidelines, as applicable.

Currently, the FPASP area consists of grasslands and oak woodlands, with a few utility-related structures (e.g., electrical transmission lines, radio towers). With the exception of lighting used on tall structures for airspace safety purposes and one on-site rural residence, there are currently no artificial light installations. Implementation of proposed development would include lighting for roadways; commercial, office, and industrial buildings; parking lots; residences; and other public facilities such as schools and parks. In addition, nighttime lighting or the presence of reflective surfaces on buildings in the commercial, office, and industrial areas (e.g., reflective window glazing) may result in light and glare shining onto motorists on Highway 50, White Rock Road, Placerville Road, Scott Road, and Prairie City Road, and to residences within the City of Folsom and the community of El Dorado Hills. As set forth in the FPASP EIR/EIS, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3A.1-5 would reduce impacts associated with effects from new sources of light and glare to less-than-significant levels by establishing on-site lighting standards in the specific plan, requiring conformance with established general plan standards, and requiring the project applicant(s) of all project phases to prepare and implement a lighting plan. The FPASP Community Design Guidelines (April 2015) provides recommendations for lighting in the FPASP area.

While the California Building Code and various chapters of the City Municipal Code would limit light trespass and reduce light pollution, new development would introduce a substantial quantity of nighttime light over a large area of a rural landscape that is essentially dark under existing conditions, and skyglow effects in the FPASP would be a significant impact. To ensure citywide lighting standards are universally applied to development anticipated with the 2035 General Plan, the following mitigation measure would be required.

Mitigation Measure AES-3a:

Add new **Policy NCR 2.1.3: Light Pollution Reduction.**

The City shall minimize obtrusive light by limiting outdoor lighting that is misdirected, excessive, or unnecessary, and requiring light for development to be directed downward to minimize overspill and glare onto adjacent properties and reduce vertical glare.

Mitigation Measure AES-3b:

Add new **Implementation Program NCR-6: Lighting Design Standards.**

Establish consistent lighting standards for outdoor lighting of city development to reduce high-intensity nighttime lighting and glare. These standards shall be consistent with the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Community Design Guidelines. Additional standards shall be considered, including the use of automatic shutoffs or motion sensors for lighting features to further reduce excess nighttime light.

To reduce impacts associated with light and glare, the City will require the following lighting standards:

- Shield or screen lighting fixtures to direct the light downward and prevent light spill on adjacent properties.
- Place and shield or screen flood and area lighting needed for construction activities and/or security so as not to disturb adjacent residential areas and passing motorists.

- For public street, building, parking, and landscape lighting in residential neighborhoods, prohibit the use of light fixtures that are of unusually high intensity or brightness (e.g., harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs) or that blink or flash. For public parks and sports facilities, the City will use the best light and glare control technology feasible, along with sensitive site design.
- Use appropriate building materials (such as low-glare glass, low-glare building glaze or finish, neutral, earth-toned colored paint and roofing materials), shielded or screened lighting, and appropriate signage in the office/commercial areas to prevent light and glare from adversely affecting motorists on nearby roadways.

Implementing Policy: NCR 2.1.3

Environmental Effects of Measures: Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-3 would result in a new policy and implementation plan to reduce nighttime lighting effects. The measure may require adoption of an ordinance or revision to the Municipal Code. Implementation of the measure would not result in an expansion of the area within the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area devoted to urbanized land uses, and would not act to increase the intensity of existing or planned land uses. These measures would not directly result in any increased construction activities or increases in operational-related nighttime lighting effects. No environmental effects would occur beyond those identified in this PEIR.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-3 would partially reduce significant impacts associated with effects from skyglow under the 2035 General Plan. However, because of the scale and location of the FPASP, screening or shielding of light fixtures to direct light downward or the use of low-pressure sodium or other lighting would not reduce the effects of new skyglow on the night sky to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. No other feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce impacts associated with new skyglow to a less-than-significant level because it is technically infeasible to allow new development without introducing new skyglow effects.

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