
4.1 - Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

4.1.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing aesthetics, light, and glare and potential effects from project implementation on the site and its surrounding area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on site reconnaissance performed by MBA and project renderings and visual simulations prepared by The Planning Center that have been verified as accurate by MBA.

As explained in Section 1, *Introduction*, this project-level DEIR, where applicable, incorporates by reference information and analysis contained in the City of San Bernardino General Plan EIR and the Paradise Hills Specific Plan (PHSP) EIR, certified by the San Bernardino City Mayor and Common Council in 2005 and 1993, respectively. The PHSP EIR contemplated buildout of the General Plan at a programmatic level and concluded that all impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare were less than significant after mitigation.

This DEIR accounts for modifications to the baseline conditions that have occurred since certification of the previous EIRs and changes that have increased the size and intensity of the Proposed Project. Accordingly, not all of the conclusions in the previous EIRs are applicable to the Proposed Project, and new analysis is provided for potential impacts not previously considered in those documents.

4.1.2 - Environmental Setting

Visual Setting

San Bernardino Valley

The UHSP Project Site is located in the northern portion of the San Bernardino Valley. The valley bottom is mostly developed with urban and suburban uses, while significant portions of the foothills and nearly all of the ridgelines have remained undeveloped. From the valley floor, the San Bernardino Mountains rise steeply to the north. The UHSP site is located on a sloping alluvial bench at the foot of the mountains. Isolated cabins or glare from windows of homes along the Rim of the World Highway (SR-18), including some in the community of Crestline and isolated houses or cabins along SR-18, can be seen from the project vicinity. Despite its elevation above surrounding areas, views of the site are limited due to the intervening Badger Hill near the south-central portion of the site. In addition, the low, rolling Kendall Hills are a half mile southwest of the site and block views to and from the site in that direction (e.g., from the I-215 Freeway).

Project Site

The project site occupies 404 acres along Badger Creek and the associated alluvial fan that extends away from the creek canyon. Photographs of the project site are provided in Exhibit 3-5a through Exhibit 3-5h in Section 3.0, *Project Description*.

Surrounding Land Uses

The project vicinity is comprised of existing uses including the campus of CSUSB to the south and several flood control basins maintained by the San Bernardino County Flood Control District. The Andy Jackson Airpark is located immediately west of the site, near the northwest corner of the proposed development area (Planning Area 1). Much of the land to the west, north, and east of the site is vacant. Existing residential neighborhoods are located approximately 600 feet south of the eastern end of the site (Planning Areas 16-20). These neighborhoods are east of the CSUSB campus and are located along North I Street north of Northpark Boulevard. An aerial photograph showing existing land uses on and around the project site is shown in Exhibit 4.1-1 through 4.1-3.

Views

Views are described in terms of what can be seen from the parcels comprising the project site, as well as from locations from which the parcels can be seen. Views from the project site are important, since the project will involve development of public places and residential units and since there are nearby residences and public places from which the project features will be visible.

Views from Surrounding Land Uses

A summary of views from surrounding land uses is provided below. Viewer sensitivity tends to be highest from public places, such as the CSUSB campus and the Andy Jackson Airpark. Views of surrounding land uses are provided in the previous Exhibits 3-5a through 3-5h.

State Scenic Highways

The I-215 Freeway in the vicinity of the project site is not classified as a scenic highway by either the County of San Bernardino (CSB General Plan, 6-7) or the State of California. Exhibit 4.1-3 shows various view angles looking north towards the project site.

Light and Glare

The project vicinity is comprised of vacant land and limited developed uses, the largest of which is the CSUSB campus. There are no existing sources of light on the project site. Nearby sources of light include street lighting along Northpark Boulevard and the Cal State campus, lighting on the CSUSB campus to the south and southeast, including athletic fields and court lighting.

Regulatory Framework

The Community Design Element of the City's General Plan sets forth the following goals and policies on scenic vistas, visual character, and light and glare that relate to the Proposed Project:

Goal 5.4: "Ensure individual projects are well designed and maintained."

- Policy 5.4.1: Aggressively apply and enforce citywide landscape and development standards in new and revitalized development throughout the City. (LU-1 and LU-6)



Source: Google Earth Pro.



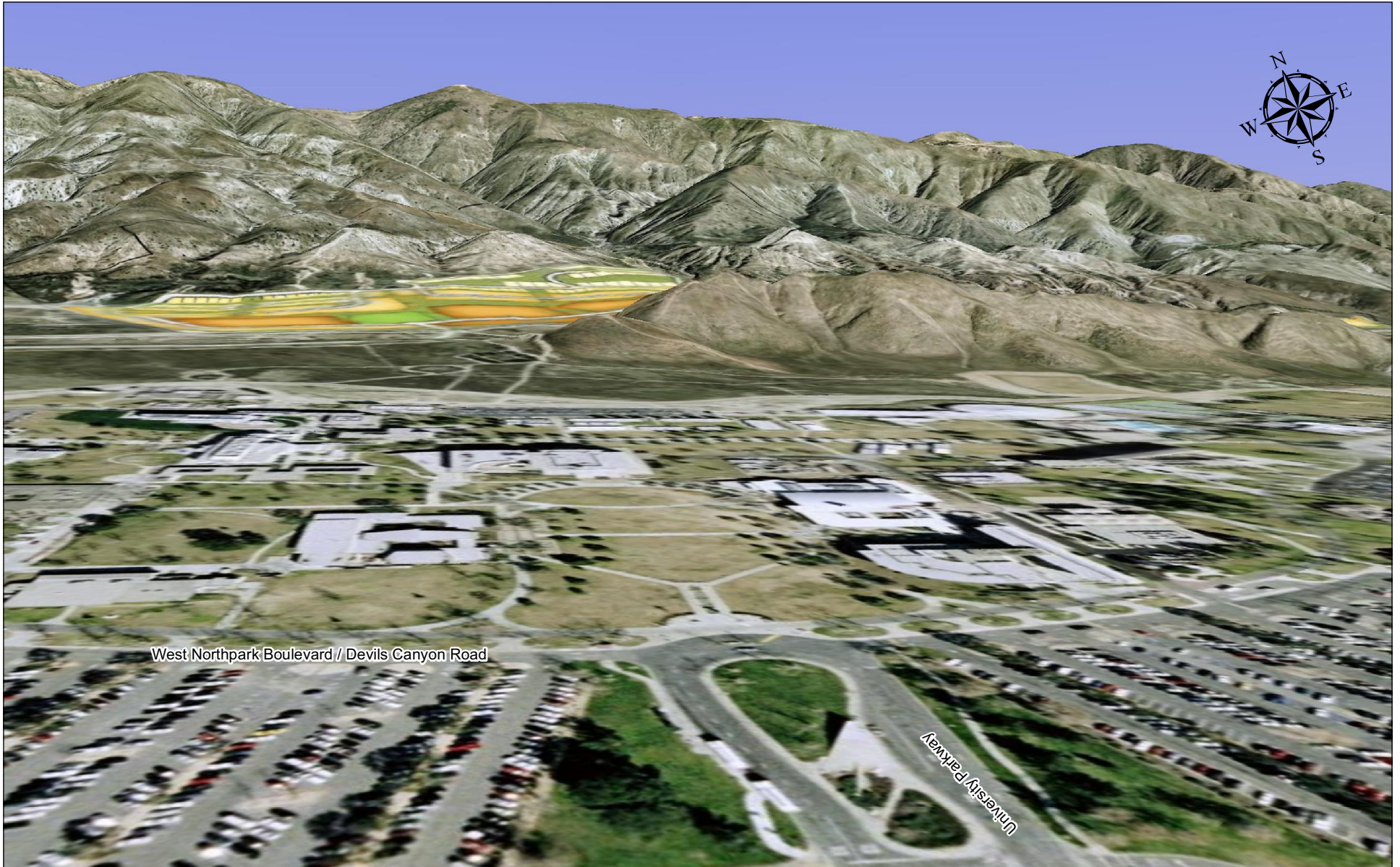
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Feet

Michael Brandman Associates

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Exhibit 4.1-1
Photo Rendering 1
Looking NE Towards UHSP Site (Wide View)

UNIVERSITY HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN EIR



Source: Google Earth Pro.



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Feet

Michael Brandman Associates

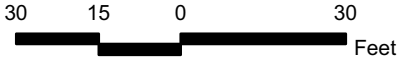
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Exhibit 4.1-2
Photo Rendering 2
Looking NE Towards UHSP Site (West End)

UNIVERSITY HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN EIR



Source: Google Earth Pro.



Michael Brandman Associates

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Exhibit 4.1-3
Photo Rendering 3
Looking North Towards UHSP Site

UNIVERSITY HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN EIR

- Policy .54.2: Ensure that the design of all public facilities fits well into their surroundings and incorporates symbolic references to the City, including its past and/or present, as appropriate. (LU-1)

Analysis: The proposed University Hills Specific Plan contains extensive aesthetic treatments including landscaping and architectural variety. Therefore, the UHSP is consistent with this goal and policies.

Goal 5.5: “Develop attractive, safe, and comfortable single-family neighborhoods.”

- Policy 5.5.1: Require new and in-fill development to be of compatible scale and massing as existing development yet allow the flexibility to accommodate unique architecture, colors, and materials in individual projects. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.5.2: Improve the pedestrian atmosphere of the street by orienting new homes to the street with attractive front porches, highly visible street facades, and garages located in the rear of the property. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.5.3: Maintain, improve and/or develop parkways with canopy street trees, providing shade, beauty and a unifying identity to residential streets. (CD-3)
- Policy 5.5.4: Setback garages from the street and minimize street frontage devoted to driveways and vehicular access.
- Policy 5.5.5: Provide continuous sidewalks and links to nearby community facilities and retail centers. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.5.6: Ensure a variety of architectural styles, massing, floor plans, façade treatment, and elevations to create visual interest. (LU-1 and CD-3)
- Policy 5.5.7: In residential tract developments, a diversity of floor plans, garage orientation, setbacks, styles, building materials, color and rooflines shall be preferred over more uniform design patterns. (LU-1)

Analysis: The UHSP project contains safe, and comfortable single-family neighborhood treatments including landscaping and architectural variety. Therefore, the UHSP is consistent with this goal and policies.

Goal 5.6: “Ensure that multi-family housing is attractively designed and scaled to contribute to the neighborhood and provide visual interest through varied architectural detailing.”

- Policy 5.6.1: Reduce the visual impact of large-scale, multi-family buildings by requiring articulated entry features, such as attractive porches and detailed facade treatments, which create visual interest and give each unit more personalized design. (LU-1)

- Policy 5.6.2: Discourage visually monotonous, multi-family residences by incorporating different architectural styles, a variety of rooflines, wall articulation, balconies, window treatments, and varied colors and building materials on all elevations. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.6.3: Reduce the visual impact of parking areas by utilizing interior courtyard garages, parking structures, subterranean lots, or tuck-under, alley-loaded designs. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.6.4: Provide usable common open space amenities. Common open space should be centrally located and contain amenities such as seating, shade and play equipment. Private open space may include courtyards, balconies, patios, terraces and enclosed play areas. (LU-1)
- Policy 5.6.5: Provide convenient pedestrian access from multi-family development to nearby commercial centers, schools, and transit stops. (LU-1)

Analysis: The UHSP project contains attractive multi-family housing aesthetic treatments including landscaping and architectural variety. Therefore, the UHSP is consistent with this goal and policies.

Note: Goal 5.1 and its policies are related to Gateways, Goal 5.2 and its policies are related to Enhanced Arterial Corridors, Goal 5.3 and its policies are related to existing District/ Neighborhood Design Features, and Goal 5.7 is related to commercial and industrial development – these 4 goals and their policies are not directly applicable to the Proposed UHSP Project.

NOP Comments

There were no comments received during the NOP period or at the scoping meeting regarding potential aesthetic impacts.

4.1.3 - Thresholds of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, to determine whether impacts to aesthetic resources are significant environmental effects, the following questions are analyzed and evaluated. Would the Project:

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

4.1.4 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Scenic Vistas

Impact AES-1: The Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Impact Analysis

The City of San Bernardino General Plan does not identify any specific scenic vistas on the project site. However, the site does have views of the valley to the south and the mountains to the north, especially in the higher elevations of the site. The primary scenic vistas visible from the project site and surrounding land uses are Badger Hill and the Kendall Hills. Long-distance views are available across the San Bernardino Valley to the south and towards the San Gabriel Mountains to the west when the air is clear. Development of the Proposed Project will change views of the area, although no identified scenic vistas are expected to be substantially impacted by the project. Several visual simulation of the Proposed Project site, as viewed from different vantage points, are provided in Exhibit 4.1-1 through Exhibit 4.1-3.

MBA personnel conducted site reconnaissance, reviewed aerial and site photographs, and referenced the applicable planning documents for the project site. MBA personnel photographed the project site from multiple short-range and long-range viewpoints. Photographs include views of and from the project site. Visual simulations of the Proposed Project were prepared by The Planning Center. The UHSP site will be visible from various locations, including the CSUSB campus, residences to the west and southwest across Northpark Boulevard, and the residential neighborhoods south of Planning Area 20. Views onto the project site will be somewhat limited by intervening structures and topography (e.g., Badger Hill). The “lower” portions of the West Village area (Planning Areas 1-15) will be visible to some degree from residences southwest of the site across Northpark Boulevard and the CSUSB campus. The two reservoir sites (Planning Areas 22 and 23) and their associated landscaped slopes will also be visible from residences southwest of the site across Northpark Boulevard and the CSUSB campus. Some of the West Village may also be visible from neighborhoods southeast of the site, although Badger Hill will largely block views from these neighborhoods. However, the East Village area will be visible from the neighborhoods southeast of the site. The reservoir sites and large lot detached units that may eventually be built in Planning Area 15 would be the most visible as they are the highest “up the slope” from surrounding areas. The higher density residential development in the West Village area (Planning Areas 7-9) are located around the clubhouse at a lower elevation which will limit views of these areas. They will be visible from various locations on the CSUSB campus looking north across the flood control basins, and the height of higher density housing (i.e., 2-3 stories vs. 1-2 stories for single family detached units) will also increase their visibility from surrounding areas.

Compared to development that could occur under the Paradise Hills Specific Plan (PHSP), the UHSP project would appear more densely developed on the lower alluvial fan or bench areas, both in the West Village and East Village areas. The PHSP would also have allowed low density residential development further up into Badger Canyon (PHSP Planning Areas 4-6) compared to the UHSP. In contrast, the PHSP would have allowed hillside development further up the slope in its Planning Area

3 which includes areas north of the San Andreas Fault in the western portion of the site compared to the limited large lot development that may eventually be built in UHSP Planning Area 15.

Summary of Impacts

From the visual simulations, it appears most views of the site would be obstructed by Badger Hill, especially from existing residences to the southeast, and by the Kendall Hills, which will block views from the southwest including the I-215 Freeway. Limited views of the site, especially the upper portions adjacent to the San Andreas Fault and Badger Canyon, will occur with distance from the site, including from residences across Northpark Boulevard to the southwest and from the CSUSB campus. The Specific Plan landscaping guidelines indicate that manufactured slopes will be replanted, but some of these slopes may be visible from locations south and southwest of the site (see Exhibits 4.1-1 through 4.1-3). The upper slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains and Badger Canyon will remain as permanent open space and views of these areas will not change from present conditions.

Several policies in the City of San Bernardino General Plan recognize that the project site (as the PHSP site) will be developed with residential uses. The proposed UHSP land plan increases development intensity on the alluvial fan areas but clusters or concentrates residences south of the San Andreas Fault and out of Badger Canyon. On balance, the proposed UHSP land plan appears to be equivalent or superior to the previously approved PHSP in terms of visual impacts; therefore, the Proposed Project's impacts on scenic vistas will be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact with implementation of the Specific Plan.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

State Scenic Highways

Impact AES-2:	The project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway.
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Impact Analysis

I-215 is not an "Officially Designated" State Scenic Highway within the limits of the City of San Bernardino. The primary scenic resources within the San Bernardino city limits that are visible from the project site are the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, Badger Hill and the San Bernardino Valley further to the south, the Kendall Hills to the southwest, and the San Gabriel Mountains at distance to the west. As shown in Exhibit 4.1-3, views of the project site are not available from I-215 because of visual obstructions.

Summary of Impacts

The project site is not visible from I-215 or SR-18, and neither of these are designated scenic routes in the vicinity of the project site. Development of the Proposed Project would not affect views of the hills from I-215 because of the intervening Kendall Hills (see AES-1 discussion above). For these reasons, the Proposed Project will have no impact on State scenic highways.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Visual Character

Impact AES-3: Development of the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project would develop new buildings and infrastructure on approximately 170 acres of the 404-acre site – the remainder of the land (the upper hillsides and Badger Canyon) will remain undeveloped as permanent open space. The alluvial terrace on which the project is located is visible from surrounding areas, although many views are blocked by Badger Hill (between the CSUSB campus and the project site) and the Kendall Hills to the southwest. The visual simulations prepared by The Planning Center and verified as accurate by MBA, indicate that views of the developed portion of the project will be limited, and the more visible upper slopes will remain in their natural condition. The previous section AES-1 provides an evaluation of various views of the site and potential visual impacts from development under the proposed UHSP. The Proposed Project will fundamentally change views of the area (i.e., from vacant hillside land to suburban residential development) but these changes, while extensive, are not considered significantly adverse since the property is approved and planned for residential development. In addition, the proposed UHSP land plan clusters development on the flatter alluvial fan areas south of the San Andreas Fault and largely preserves the slopes north of the fault as well as all of middle and upper Badger Canyon. Therefore, the UHSP project will not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site and its surroundings. An evaluation of the Proposed Project’s architectural design and landscaping characteristics, and shade and shadow effects are described below.

Removal of Existing Structures and Infrastructure

The only existing building and infrastructure onsite are local service overhead electrical lines and two remnant building foundations. Removal of these structures will not substantially degrade the area’s visual quality.

Architectural Design and Landscaping

The architectural design and landscaping outlined in the UHSP indicate the planned structures will provide high quality visual character and diversity, with prominent open spaces and landscaped slopes separating residential neighborhoods as slopes increase to the north for both the West Village and East Village areas. Roof materials and designs appear to be consistent with the general character of upscale neighborhoods in San Bernardino, although the skyline or roofline appearance will not be the same as detached single family neighborhoods due to higher residential densities (up to 20 units per acre). Construction of the two onsite reservoirs (in Planning Areas 22 and 23) will require grading of slopes north of the San Andreas Fault which will be landscaped and maintained after installation. Individual or a master Home Owners Association (HOA) will be responsible for maintaining common landscaped areas which will help reduce visual impacts that might occur if plants, turf, etc. were allowed to become overgrown or die.

Shade and Shadow

The proposed residential structures are relatively low (i.e., up to three stories) and so will not create significant shade or shadow effects on offsite properties compared to taller structures (e.g., parking structures, office buildings, etc.) such as those south of the site on the CSUSB campus. The tallest building on the site (from floor elevation) will likely be the Clubhouse (height limit to 40 feet). Proposed buildings will cause some limited shade and shadow effects onsite especially along the east, north, and west sides of taller buildings.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact with implementation of the Specific Plan.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Light and Glare

Impact AES-4: **The Proposed Project would create new sources of substantial light or glare that may adversely affect day or nighttime views.**

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project would develop 170 of 404 acres in northern San Bernardino at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains. Many or most of the Proposed Project's structures would be multi-storied, have large glass windows, and many would be equipped with exterior lighting. This analysis assesses the Proposed Project's light and glare impacts.

The project site has no demonstrable improvements or structures, so there are no concerns regarding light and glare at present. Once the project is constructed, new windows, especially on the second story of two-story units, may cause glare in surrounding areas at certain times of day. Due to the

intervening Badger Hill and Kendall Hills, glare impacts are expected to be limited. In addition, the Proposed Project's residential structures are expected to employ the use of tinted or treated glass, especially on south-facing windows, to reduce heat buildup during the summer – this window treatment will also help reduce glare from glass windows.

New sources of light would be emitted from exterior building lighting, street lighting, parking structure lighting, illuminated signs, and vehicular headlights. However, the Specific Plan limits lighting in parking areas to be “adequate illumination for safety and security. Parking lot lighting fixtures shall maintain a minimum of 1 foot-candle of illumination at ground level at any location within the parking facility. The level of lighting shall not exceed 0.5 foot-candle at any residential property line or 1 foot-candle at any nonresidential property line.” With these restrictions, lighting impacts of the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact with implementation of the Specific Plan.

