

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the existing visual environment of the project corridor; the project's consistency with relevant regulations and policies; potential visual impacts associated with the proposed project and optional project components; and mitigation measures to reduce significant visual impacts where necessary.

## 3.2 Environmental Setting

### 3.2.1 Existing Conditions

#### 3.2.1.1 Terminology

##### Visual Character

The visual character of an area is usually defined by identifying its landscape components (e.g., water, vegetation, and human development) that form distinct visual units (areas). These units are further identified by their pattern elements (form, line, color, texture) and pattern character (dominance, scale, diversity, continuity). Any change in visual character cannot be described as positive or negative until the viewer's response to the change is taken into account. For example, if the public prefers the established visual character of an area's landscape, any change that would affect the character of that landscape can be evaluated as negative.

##### Visual Quality

Because the proposed project includes the construction of roadway thoroughfares and expressways, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (1981) was used to determine the visual quality of the aesthetics study area. The FHWA uses three criteria to measure visual quality—vividness, intactness, and unity—which are defined as follows:

- **Vividness:** The visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.
- **Intactness:** The visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. It can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.
- **Unity:** The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. It frequently attests to the careful design of individual components in the landscape.

Vividness is assessed using landform and landcover. Landform vividness is frequently determined by the pattern elements of form or line, such as the strongly defined skyline of a mountain landscape. Landcover consists of water, surface geology, vegetation, and human development. Areas

with high vividness, for example, often contain water, which creates a vivid landscape component as a result of linear visual effects (e.g., a shoreline or the sharp edge of a waterfall) and color.

Intactness can be assessed in terms of the quality of the natural visual appearance of an area. Low intactness occurs when an unsightly human-made element (“eyesore”) encroaches into an undisturbed natural area. High intactness is attributable to the natural visual order of an untouched landscape, such as a protected natural open space or park land.

Unity is generally used as a measure of how human and natural elements work together within the same visual unit. Human-made environments with no visual relation to natural landform or landcover patterns are usually considered to lack visual unity.

## Landscape Units

The FHWA guidance defines the affected environment in terms of landscape units, which can be thought of as outdoor rooms. Landscape units are defined as an area of distinct landscape character, which forms a spatially enclosed unit at ground level. A landscape unit may include more than one landscape component.

### 3.2.1.2 Scoring System

For this analysis, the existing visual quality of each landscape unit was determined by using a numeric rating. Vividness, intactness, and unity were rated on a scale from 1 to 7. Table 3-1 defines this scoring system. The vividness, intactness, and unity scores were averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number to determine the overall visual quality score for each landscape unit. An area is considered to have high visual quality if it is rated high for all three criteria.

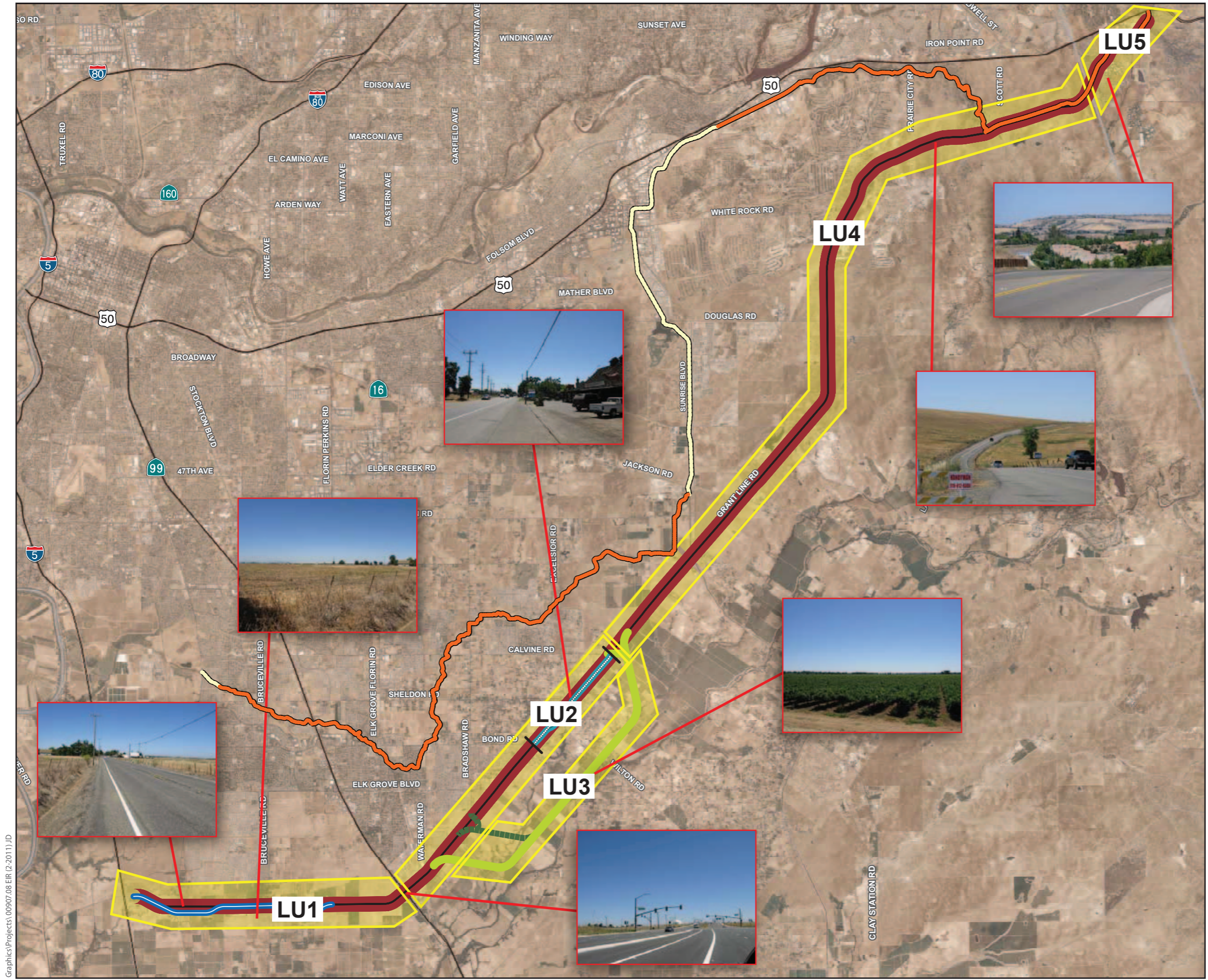
**Table 3-1. Visual Quality Scoring System**

Score	Definition
1	Very low
2	Low
3	Moderately low
4	Moderate
5	Moderately high
6	High
7	Very high









### 3.2.1.3 Regional Visual Quality and Character

The aesthetics study area is an approximately 35-mile-long corridor generally bound by I-5 on the west, the Cosumnes River on the south, Grant Line and White Rock Roads on the east, and US 50 on the north (Figure 3-1). Within Sacramento County, the corridor passes through the Franklin-Laguna and Cosumnes communities, the cities of Elk Grove Rancho Cordova, Folsom, and the community of Sheldon. Within El Dorado County, the corridor passes through the community of El Dorado Hills.

The natural landscape of the aesthetics study area has been modified by human-made elements including agriculture, residential and commercial development, transportation facilities (roads, rail, and highways), and mining activities, which has resulted in a diverse visual quality and character.



### LEGEND

-  Landscape Units (LU)
- LU 1 = Western LU
- LU 2 = Central LU
- LU 3 = Deer Creek Causeway LU
- LU 4 = Eastern LU
- LU 5 = El Dorado Hills LU
-  Kammerer Bypass
-  Deer Creek Causeway Option 1
-  Deer Creek Causeway Option 2
-  Sheldon Reduced Access Roadway (RAR) Option
-  Proposed Off-Corridor Multi-Use Path
-  Existing Off-Corridor Multi-Use Path
-  Project Build Alternatives



**Figure 3-1**  
Study Area and Landscape Units



The aesthetics study area largely consists of flat agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley, with interspersed development and transportation corridors (rail and highways/roads). The eastern end of the aesthetics study area transitions to rolling hills of the Sierra Nevada foothills, with interspersed development and transportation corridors.

The topography of the aesthetics study area varies from flat land to gently rolling hills, with elevations ranging from approximately 50 feet near the Cosumnes River to nearly 600 feet in northeastern El Dorado Hills. From some locations within the aesthetics study area, the distant Sierra Nevada, Mount Diablo, and Inner Coast Ranges are visible. Deer Creek, a tributary of the Cosumnes River, traverses the aesthetics study area in an east-west direction. Riparian vegetation and marshland habitat are present along the banks of this creek.

Urban forms within the aesthetics study area are highly variable. Although much of the aesthetics study area is rural, with agricultural uses and residential development, the northern portions exhibit more dense urbanized development associated with the fringes of Sacramento, Rancho Cordova, and other populated urban centers.

Existing roadways in the aesthetics study area are predominately rural in character (two-lane roadways); however, I-5, SR 99, and US 50 are major freeways that serve the Sacramento region. Because most vehicular movement occurs along transportation corridors, their placement largely determines what parts of the project corridor will be seen. Even for people not using the transportation system at a particular time, or who never use certain modes of travel, transportation systems are a dominant element of the visual environment.

### 3.2.1.4 Landscape Units in the Aesthetics Study Area

As shown in Figure 3-1, the aesthetics study area has been divided into five landscape units, each with its own distinct character and quality:

- **Western Landscape Unit:** The Western Landscape Unit extends from I-5 to SR 99, following the project corridor along Hood Franklin, Kammerer, and Grant Line Roads. This area includes the Kammerer Road Bypass Option.
- **Central Landscape Unit:** The Central Landscape Unit includes the central portion of Sheldon along Grant Line Road, and extends from SR 99 to the Grant Line Road/Calvine Road intersection. This area includes the Reduced Access Roadway Option.
- **Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit:** The Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit extends approximately 1.5 miles south of central Sheldon, from the Waterman Road/Grant Line Road intersection to the Mosher Road/Grant Line Road intersection. This area includes Deer Creek Causeway Options 1 and 2.
- **Eastern Landscape Unit:** The Eastern Landscape Unit follows Grant Line Road from Sunrise Boulevard to the Sacramento County/El Dorado County line.
- **El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit:** The El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit follows Grant Line and White Rock Roads, encompassing the portion of the aesthetics study area within El Dorado County, and ends at the US 50/Silva Valley Parkway interchange.

Table 3-2 indicates the existing ratings for the five landscape units in relation to the FHWA's three visual quality criteria, then indicates their overall visual quality.

**Table 3-2. Existing Visual Quality in the Aesthetics Study Area**

Landscape Unit	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Western	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low
Central	2	Low	2	Low	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low
Deer Creek Causeway	6	High	6	High	6	High	6	High
Eastern	4	Moderate	5	Moderately high	5	Moderately high	5	Moderately high
El Dorado Hills	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate

As shown in Table 3-2, the aesthetics study area is made up of landscape units with a wide range of visual quality scores (low to high). With the exception of the Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit, there are no areas of high visual quality. More-detailed discussions of these landscape units are provided below.

### Western Landscape Unit (Landscape Unit 1)

The visual character of the Western Landscape Unit is defined by flat agricultural fields, row crops, and scattered residential development. Within this unit, Hood Franklin Road runs in an east-west direction between I-5 and Franklin Boulevard. Kammerer Road also runs east-west between Bruceville Road and SR 99. Both Hood Franklin and Kammerer Roads are two-lane roadways without shoulders. There is currently no direct east-west connection between Hood Franklin and Kammerer Roads. The area directly between the I-5/Hood Franklin Road and SR 99/Grant Line Road interchanges consist of agricultural fields, and there are no pedestrian or bicycle facilities along the roadways within this unit.

There are scattered single-family homes and agricultural structures (i.e., barns and associated outbuildings) along the local roadways in this area. Overhead transmission lines run through the agricultural fields, and along and across many roads. Commercial and industrial development exists at the SR 99/Grant Line Road interchange.

The rural nature of this landscape creates a moderate level of vividness. Although most of this landscape unit appears intact and unified in its agricultural character, the random pattern of residential development along the roadways and the encroachment of commercial/industrial uses in the eastern portion detract from its intactness and unity. Overall, the visual quality of the Western Landscape Unit is moderately low.

## **Central Landscape Unit (Landscape Unit 2)**

This unit represents a mix of urban agricultural uses and rural residential and commercial development primarily centered along Grant Line Road between SR 99 and Sheldon. The western end of this unit is urbanized. Grant Line Road is a two-lane rural roadway with paved shoulders in areas that include commercial land uses. There are no pedestrian or bicycle facilities along Grant Line Road.

Sheldon has a distinct visual character composed of residential and commercial land uses lining Grant Line Road. Residences are well maintained, with many grass lawns, trees, and landscaping providing a setback from the roadway to the one- to three-story homes along Grant Line Road. Commercial development is centered around the Grant Line Road/Wilton Road intersection. The buildings vary in age and architecture, but present a uniquely unified aesthetic common to rural communities.

The uniqueness of Sheldon contributes to a moderate level of unity in this landscape unit. However, the random pattern of commercial and residential development creates a lower level of vividness and intactness. Overall, the visual quality of the Central Landscape Unit is moderately low.

## **Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit (Landscape Unit 3)**

The visual character of the Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit is defined by flat agricultural fields, row crops, and vineyards. Unlike other areas along the project corridor, this unit does not follow an existing roadway, although Wilton Road does cross in a north-south direction. Wilton Road is a two-lane rural roadway with no shoulders or pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

Few human-made structures are found in the Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit, except a historic grist mill site. Deer Creek, a tributary of the Cosumnes River, traverses this landscape unit in an east-west direction. Riparian vegetation and marshland habitat are present along the banks of the creek.

Because of its rural, agricultural, and natural characteristics and because there are few human-made structures, this unit exhibits high levels of unity, intactness, and vividness. Overall, the visual quality of the Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit is high.

## **Eastern Landscape Unit (Landscape Unit 4)**

The Eastern Landscape Unit has a rural character defined by rolling hills of grasslands. Although Grant Line Road cuts through the unit, its rural character (two-lane roadway) detracts little from the visual intactness and unity of the area. Small segments of the road contain paved shoulders. However, there are no pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

This landscape unit includes portions of Prairie City State Park and the northern terminus of Scott Road, which is designated by Sacramento County as a scenic corridor (Draft Sacramento County 2030 General Plan Update, 2010). Power transmission lines are also a feature of this landscape unit. Very few human-made structures exist in the unit.

The rural character, rolling hills, and vegetation create a visual experience with moderately high vividness. Because there are few human-made elements, the landscape unit is also visually intact and unified. Overall, its visual quality is moderately high.

## El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit (Landscape Unit 5)

The El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit has a suburban character and contains a variety of newer residential, commercial, and light industrial developments along White Rock Road. Natural hillsides form a visual backdrop for much of this area. White Rock Road is a dominant transportation corridor, with four lanes, a landscaped median, striped bike lanes, sidewalks, and paved shoulders.

The rolling hills and uniform commercial and residential development create a moderately vivid visual experience and a moderate level of intactness and unity. Overall, the visual quality of the El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit is moderate.

## Off-Corridor Multi-Use Trail System

In addition to the landscape units described above, several segments of paved multi-use trails exist in the aesthetics study area, northwest of the project's roadway corridor (Figure 3-1). These existing trails are located along the Folsom South Channel, adjacent to Sunrise Boulevard, and along the banks of Laguna and Alder Creeks. The trails are generally located in developed portions of the aesthetics study area. Because of the adjacent water features and natural vegetation along the creeks, the recreational trails are considered to have high visual quality.

### 3.2.1.5 Existing Viewer Sensitivity and Viewer Exposure

Viewer sensitivity relates directly to the viewshed in which a project would be located. The viewshed includes all areas where physical changes associated with the project are visible from a sensitive viewpoint, and is influenced by existing topography, vegetation, and structures. Viewer sensitivity is defined as viewer activity, awareness, local values, and cultural significance of the visual resource.

The sensitivities of different types of viewers within the aesthetics study area vary, depending on viewer activity and awareness of and familiarity with the surrounding environment. The comparative sensitivities of the various types of viewers in the study area are described below:

- **Recreational viewers:** Recreational viewers, including those on the trail system with views of the project corridor, would be most sensitive to change because the nature of their viewing experience is often focused on their visual surroundings. Recreational viewers typically include pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Residents:** Residents, particularly those with views of the project corridor from their homes, would be sensitive to potential visual impacts because of the relative permanence of their viewing experience.
- **Workers:** Employees of retail, commercial, and industrial businesses within the project corridor's viewshed would be considered sensitive viewers because they have frequent opportunities to experience the views from their workplaces and routinely visit the area. These views can be short or lengthy in duration.
- **Motorists:** Motorists would be those who drive through the study area. Depending on the route, these motorists could have short or lengthy views of the project corridor's viewshed.

## **3.2.2 Regulatory Setting**

Certain aesthetic resources in the study area are protected under state law and local planning documents. A summary of the regulations applicable to the project is provided below.

### **3.2.2.1 State**

#### **California Scenic Highway Program**

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the State Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to the highways. The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code 260 et seq. There are state-designated scenic highways in the aesthetics study area. SR 160 is the closest state-designated scenic highway, approximately 3 miles west of the study area and is not within the project's viewshed. Motorists traveling on SR 160 would not be able to see the project corridor.

### **3.2.2.2 Local**

#### **Sacramento County Scenic Highways and Corridors**

The Sacramento County General Plan (1993) protects the visual character along the major freeways in the county by establishing scenic corridors that extend 660 feet to each side beyond the right-of-way. Within the aesthetic study area, the freeways are surrounded by commercial and industrial land uses, and are not particularly scenic. These routes are mostly used for necessary travel rather than for pleasure driving. Nevertheless, the Sacramento County General Plan identifies SR 99 as a protected scenic corridor, including the portion that passes through the aesthetic study area.

The Sacramento County General Plan also identifies several roadways in the rural portions of the county that are considered scenic. Within the Eastern Landscape Unit, Scott Road is designated as a scenic corridor from Grant Line Road to Latrobe Road.

The Sacramento County General Plan is undergoing its first comprehensive update since 1993. This update is necessary to plan for growth in the current planning cycle (2005–2030), as well as to address new emerging planning issues. Formal adoption of the Sacramento County 2030 General Plan Update is anticipated to be completed in 2011. The goals and policies within the draft Circulation Element are consistent with the current protections of the county's scenic highways and scenic corridors described above. Refer to Table 3-3 below for a summary of these applicable policies.

#### **Local Planning Documents**

This section evaluates whether the proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of applicable local general and specific plans. Table 3-3 provides a summary of relevant visual resource guidelines from local agency general plans with an evaluation of project consistency.

**Table 3-3. Consistency with General and Specific Plan Policies Relating to Aesthetics**

Document	Element/Policy	Requirements	Project Consistency
<p><b>Sacramento County General Plan (1993)</b> Most of the project corridor is within unincorporated Sacramento County and therefore subject to the policies of the current general plan.</p>	<p>Scenic Highways Element Goal 1</p>	<p>To preserve and enhance the aesthetic quality of scenic roads without encouraging unnecessary driving by personal automobile.</p>	<p>The project would not alter the visual character or quality of Sacramento County–designated scenic freeways or roadways within the aesthetics study area.</p>
<p><b>Sacramento County 2030 General Plan Update</b> The general plan is undergoing its first comprehensive update since 1993. This update is necessary to plan for growth in the current planning cycle (2005–2030), as well as to address new emerging planning issues. Formal adoption of the general plan update is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2010. Although the policies in the general plan update have not been formally adopted by Sacramento County, at the time of project construction, it is likely that the proposed policies identified in this table will apply to the project.</p>	<p>Conservation Element Policy CO-136</p>	<p>Public roads, parking, and associated fill slopes shall be located outside of the stream corridor, except at stream crossings and for purposes of extending or setting back levees. The construction of public roads and parking should utilize structural materials to facilitate permeability. Crossings shall be minimized and be aesthetically compatible with naturalistic values of the stream channel.</p>	<p>The Deer Creek Causeway Options would be inconsistent with the natural appearance of the stream channel and marshland habitat in this portion of the aesthetics study area, and would therefore conflict with this policy. Potential impacts on the natural landscape of the study area are discussed further in Section 3.3.</p>
	<p>Circulation Element Policy CI-40</p>	<p>Roadway improvements along established scenic corridors shall be designed and constructed so as to minimize impacts to the scenic qualities of the corridor.</p>	<p>The project would not alter the visual character or quality of Sacramento County–designated scenic freeways or roadways within the aesthetics study area.</p>
	<p>Policy CI-45</p>	<p>Continue to provide scenic corridor protection for Scott Road from White Rock Road south to Latrobe Road, Michigan Bar Road, and Twin Cities Road from Highway 160 east to Highway 99.</p>	
<p><b>Elk Grove General Plan</b> The portion of the project corridor from Hood Franklin Road to the Grant Line Road/Wilton Road intersection (including Deer Creek Causeway Options 1 and 2) would be located within the City of Elk Grove’s sphere of influence (SOI). Although the project would not be located in an area subject to the policies of the</p>	<p>Conservation and Air Quality Element Policy CAQ-22</p>	<p>Stream crossings shall be minimized and be aesthetically compatible with the natural appearance of the stream channel. The use of bridges and other stream crossings with natural (unpaved) bottoms shall be encouraged to minimize impacts to natural habitat.</p>	<p>Deer Creek Causeway Options 1 and 2 would be within the Elk Grove SOI, and would be inconsistent with the natural appearance of the stream channel and marshland habitat in this portion of the aesthetics study area. Therefore, the project would conflict with this policy. Potential impacts on the natural landscape of the study area are discussed further in Section 3.3.</p>

Document	Element/Policy	Requirements	Project Consistency
Elk Grove General Plan, its location within the Elk Grove SOI would make the included policies applicable to the proposed improvements.	Noise Element Policy NO-9	Where soundwalls or noise barriers are constructed, the city shall strongly encourage and may require the use of a combination of berms and walls to reduce the apparent height of the wall and produce a more aesthetically appealing streetscape.	Soundwalls, overpass structures, landscaping, and other expressway-related structures and features would be consistent with the aesthetic recommendations implemented in other areas of Sacramento County. As such, the portion of the project corridor within the Elk Grove SOI would be consistent with the soundwall aesthetic requirements of the Elk Grove General Plan.
	Parks Trails and Open Space Element Policy PTO-15	<p>The city views open space lands of all types as important resource which should be preserved in the region, and supports the establishment of multipurpose open space areas to address a variety of needs, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of agricultural uses</li> <li>• Wildlife habitat</li> <li>• Recreational open space</li> <li>• Aesthetic benefits</li> <li>• Flood control</li> </ul> <p>To the extent possible, lands protected in accordance with this policy should be in proximity to Elk Grove, to facilitate use of these areas by Elk Grove residents, assist in mitigation of habitat loss within the city, and provide an open space resource close to the urbanized areas of Elk Grove.</p>	The portions of the project within the Elk Grove SOI would not affect the visual quality of existing open space lands, except for the area surrounding Deer Creek. Potential impacts on the natural landscape of the aesthetics study area are discussed further in Section 3.3.
<b>Rancho Cordova General Plan</b> The portion of the project corridor between the Grant Line Road/Jackson Road and Grant Line Road/Douglas Road intersections would be located within the Rancho Cordova SOI. Although the project would not be located in an area subject to the policies of the Rancho Cordova General Plan, its location within the Rancho	Land Use Element Policy LU.1.4	Promote high quality, efficient, and cohesive land utilization that minimizes negative impacts (e.g., traffic congestion and visual blight) and environmental hazards (e.g., flood, soil instability) on adjacent neighborhoods and infrastructure and preserve existing and future residential neighborhoods from encroachment of	The portion of the project corridor within the Rancho Cordova SOI generally provides a feeling of continuity, consistent with this policy.

Document	Element/Policy	Requirements	Project Consistency
Cordova SOI would make the included policy applicable to the proposed improvements.		incompatible activities and land uses.	
<b>Folsom General Plan</b> The portion of the project corridor between the White Rock Road/Prairie City Road intersection and the Sacramento County/El Dorado County line would be located within the Folsom SOI. Although the project would not be located in an area subject to the policies of the Folsom General Plan, its location within the Folsom SOI would make the included policies applicable to the proposed improvements.	Land Use Element Policy 1.1	New development shall preserve or enhance to the maximum degree feasible, the existing natural vegetation, landscape features and open space, consistent with the Goals and Policies of this Plan.	The portion of the project corridor within the Folsom SOI would widen existing roadways, which generally follow the natural contours of the land. By doing so, the effects on the existing form of the hills and surrounding rural landscape would be minimal, resulting in a less-than-significant visual impact. Potential impacts on the natural landscape of the aesthetics study area are discussed further in Section 3.3.
	Land Use Element Policy 1.2	Existing viewsheds and opportunities for viewsheds should be incorporated into the design of new developments.	The project would not result in significant impacts on the existing scenic vistas in the aesthetics study area (see Impact AES-1).
<b>El Dorado Hills Specific Plan</b> The portion of the project corridor within El Dorado County would be located within the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan (El Dorado County 1988)	Goal i	Provide an aesthetic environment for public, private, and the natural open space areas.	The portion of the project within the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan boundaries would not result in a substantial change in the visual character of this area (see Impact AES-2).
<b>Valley View Specific Plan</b> The northern boundary of the Valley View Specific Plan includes a 750 foot frontage along a portion of White Rock Road (directly across from the Town Center commercial area) that is part of the project corridor.	White Rock Village Policy 1	Provide an attractive entrance statement to White Rock Road and East Villages from White Rock Road.	The entrances from White Rock Road to the Valley View Specific Plan development (Keagles Lane and Sunset Mobiles Lane) were constructed in accordance with policies of the planning document. The portion of the project within the Valley View Specific Plan boundaries would not result in a substantial change in the visual character of this area (see Impact AES-2). Therefore, the aesthetic quality of these entrances would not be affected by the project.
<b>Carson Creek Specific Plan</b> The northern boundary of the Carson Creek Specific Plan includes an approximately one-mile frontage along a portion of White Rock Road (directly adjacent to the east of the El			The Carson Creek Specific Plan does not contain aesthetic policies relevant to the proposed project improvements. The portion of the project within the Carson Creek Specific Plan boundaries would not result in a substantial change in the visual character of this area (see Impact AES-2).

Document	Element/Policy	Requirements	Project Consistency
Dorado County line) that is part of the project corridor.			

### City of Elk Grove Rural Road Improvement Standards

The City of Elk Grove's Rural Road Improvement Standards (2007) establish unique road improvement design standards that are rural (rather than urban) in character for future road improvements in Elk Grove and Sheldon. These design standards apply to the proposed improvements within the Central Landscape Unit.

The design standards include basic street typologies, describing the range of public roads planned for Sheldon. Roadway widening occurs when certain thresholds are met. The street sections are refined on a case-by-case basis for preserving trees. All roads have minimal lane width, with open drainage and native landscape. Planned roads within this area do not include curbs, gutters, or sidewalks. Except for demonstrated safety needs or for necessary tree preservation, medians are not included in the Rural Road Improvement Standards.

## 3.3 Impact and Mitigation Discussion

### 3.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines identifies environmental issues to be considered when determining whether a project could have significant impacts on the environment. The project would have a significant impact if it would:

- have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- substantially damage scenic resources, including (but not limited to) trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project area and its surroundings; or
- create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

### 3.3.2 Approach and Methods

The visual impacts of the project were determined by assessing the visual change caused by the project and predicting viewer response to that change. Specifically, the visual impact was determined by comparing the visual quality of the existing landscape unit with the visual quality of the same landscape unit after project implementation. Changes in visual character are also considered and discussed.

The visual resource change is the sum of the changes in visual character and quality. The first step in determining visual resource change is to assess the compatibility of the proposed project with the visual character of the existing landscape. As previously discussed, the FHWA's *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* was used to determine visual character and quality. As shown in

Table 3-2, the aesthetics study area is made up of landscape units with a wide range of visual quality scores (from low to high). Except for the Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit, there are no areas of high visual quality. A decrease in the visual quality rating of 2 points or more would be considered significant.

Viewer response to project changes is the combination of viewer exposure and sensitivity to the project. The resulting level of visual impact is determined by combining the severity of resource change with the degree to which people are likely to oppose the change.

### 3.3.3 Impacts of the Proposed Project

#### Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

The relevant visual resource guidelines from the local planning documents in the aesthetics study area (Table 3-3) do not specifically identify any scenic vistas in the project region. In general, these guidelines require the preservation of the aesthetic quality of scenic corridors, open space lands, and natural landscape features (e.g., waterways and mountain ranges). For the purposes of this analysis, impacts on such views are evaluated in the context of impacts on scenic vistas.

**Scenic Corridors:** SR 160 is the closest state-designated scenic highway, approximately 3 miles west of the aesthetics study area; however, SR 160 is not within the project's viewshed. Motorists traveling on SR 160 would not be able to see the project corridor.

Although there are no designated scenic highways that would be affected by the project, Sacramento County identifies Scott Road and SR 99 as local scenic corridors. Scott Road between White Rock and Latrobe Roads is designated as a scenic corridor in the Scenic Highways Element of the Sacramento County General Plan and in the draft Circulation Element of the Sacramento County 2030 General Plan Update. The northern terminus of Scott Road intersects the project corridor, and a grade-separated interchange is proposed at this location that would realign the terminus of Scott Road. The project would change the visual character of the northern terminus of Scott Road by increasing the dominance of Grant Line Road. However, this would not substantially change the scenic character of most of Scott Road.

The scenic corridor along Scott Road extends for approximately 8 miles to Latrobe Road. For much of this length, there are views of rural hillsides, creeks, and trees with more distant views of the Sierra Nevada foothills and Sacramento Valley. Although the northernmost end of the Scott Road scenic corridor would experience some visual change, the overall aesthetic character and views along Scott Road would be unchanged by the project.

The Sacramento County General Plan and Sacramento County 2030 General Plan Update also protect the visual character of the county's major freeways. The portion of SR 99 that passes through the aesthetics study area, at the SR 99/Grant Line Road interchange, is identified as a freeway with a protected scenic corridor. The project would not result in substantial visual changes near the SR 99/Grant Line Road interchange because the roadways in this area are already constructed to four- to six-lane standard widths.

**Natural Landscape Features:** From some locations within the aesthetics study area, the distant Sierra Nevada, Mount Diablo, and Inner Coast Ranges are visible. However, because of their distance, views of each of these are limited. Also, because most of the project improvements would consist of at-grade facilities, the long-range views currently experienced by motorists, residents, and workers

would not be affected by the project. Construction of interchanges and elevated roadway segments could result in view blockage of distant natural features; however, because of the rural character of most of the project corridor, the number of affected viewers would be minimal. Elevated interchanges and roadway segments have the effect of removing near-ground visual obstructions (essentially seeing over foreground obstacles) allowing improved views of long-distance natural resources. This could result in improved views for motorists.

The overall impact of the project on scenic vistas would be minimal and is considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

### **Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality of Project Area and Surroundings**

The project would alter the visual character of the aesthetics study area by introducing major roadway segments and increasing the visual dominance of paved surfaces. However, the continuity of the new roadways would result in a more unified visual quality. Construction activities (e.g., establishing equipment storage and staging areas; storing excavated material and stockpiles; installing temporary construction offices, fences, sanitary facilities, and appurtenant structures; grading; construction of above-ground structures; and similar activities) would be highly visible and could temporarily affect grassland, agricultural lands, stream crossings, and similar features that could contribute to visual quality in the aesthetics study area.

**Western Landscape Unit:** Construction of a four- to six-lane thoroughfare with signalized intersections at Franklin Boulevard and Bruceville Road would increase the visual dominance of the transportation corridors in the Western Landscape Unit, except at the SR 99/Grant Line Road interchange where the roadway has already been constructed to the expressway standard. Portions of the new thoroughfare would connect Hood Franklin and Kammerer Roads through existing agricultural fields. These improvements would introduce a transportation corridor in an area where no roadway alignment currently exists, which would detract from the intactness and unity of the area. In areas where the project corridor would follow the existing alignment of Hood Franklin and Kammerer Roads, sidewalks and striped bike lanes would incrementally increase the dominance of the transportation facility. However, these facilities are typical visual features of transportation corridors, and would not constitute visual elements that would detract from the overall visual quality of the landscape unit.

Project improvements would displace several single-family homes and agricultural structures (i.e., barns and associated outbuildings), but their removal would further emphasize the rural agricultural aesthetic in this area and slightly increase the intactness and unity of the landscape unit.

Because of the conflicting effects on the intactness and unity of the area depending on the existing roadway alignments, scoring for overall visual quality within the Western Landscape Unit would generally remain the same, as shown in Table 3-4. Project improvements would include typical visual features of transportation corridors that are not anticipated to illicit strong viewer response in this area.

**Table 3-4. Visual Quality Changes in Western Landscape Unit with Proposed Project**

Conditions	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low
Project Conditions	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low

**Central Landscape Unit:** As previously discussed, the City of Elk Grove provides design standards to preserve and enhance existing rural character in the Central Landscape Unit. The rural roadway segments for the proposed project would consist of two to four lanes with paved shoulders and open ditches for drainage. No sidewalks or bike lanes are proposed for the rural roadway segment through the Sheldon area. A minimum 5-foot-wide paved shoulder would be constructed to accommodate bicyclists, or parallel and connecting local roads could accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. Project improvements in this area would include typical visual features of rural transportation corridors that are consistent with the applicable design standards.

Widening Grant Line Road through the Sheldon area would increase the visual dominance of the roadway, which would in turn diminish the unique rural character and unity of Sheldon. However, the major aesthetic elements of the well-maintained residences and unique commercial establishments of Sheldon would remain intact. Scoring for overall visual quality within the Central Landscape Unit would decrease with this option, as shown in Table 3-5. Although the proposed improvements would be consistent with the Rural Road Improvement Standards, viewer response to the widening of the roadway in this area is anticipated to be moderate.

**Table 3-5. Visual Quality Changes in Central Landscape Unit with Proposed Project**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low
Project Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	3	Moderately low	2	Low

**Eastern Landscape Unit:** Because the widened roadways would not be able to follow the natural contours of the land as closely as the existing two-lane rural roadways, expansion of Grant Line Road and portions of White Rock Road to a four- to six-lane expressway would increase their dominance in the landscape and decrease the vividness and intactness of the rural character and rolling hills that typify the Eastern Landscape Unit. Scoring for overall visual quality within the Eastern Landscape Unit would decrease slightly, as shown in Table 3-6.

**Table 3-6. Visual Quality Changes in Eastern Landscape Unit with Proposed Project**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	4	Moderate	5	Moderately high	5	Moderately high	5	Moderately high
Project Conditions	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate

**El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit:** White Rock Road is already a dominant visual feature in the landscape as a four-lane roadway with a landscaped median through much of this landscape unit, and widening would not change the views of rolling hills and surrounding commercial development. Scoring for overall visual quality within the El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit would remain unchanged, as shown in Table 3-7.

**Table 3-7. Visual Quality Changes in El Dorado Hills Landscape Unit with Proposed Project**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate
Project Conditions	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	4	Moderate

The overall impact of the project on scenic resources and visual character and quality would be minimal and is considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

### **Impact AES-3: New Source of Substantial Light or Glare That Adversely Affects Daytime or Nighttime Views**

The project could introduce new or enhanced street lighting into rural areas, which would alter the existing nighttime aesthetic and create new sources of light and glare.

In addition, construction activities occurring during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

#### **Mitigation Measure AES-1: Prepare and Implement a Construction Lighting Plan**

During the design of the project improvements, the JPA or individual jurisdictions will prepare and implement a plan for construction lighting that minimizes the release of light and glare either upward or toward properties and residences adjoining the construction site. At a minimum, the plan will contain the following elements:

- To minimize trespass lighting to the skies, use full cutoff luminaires. Full cutoff luminaires are designed to not emit any light above 90 degrees, thereby reducing sky glow.

- Use internal or external shields when necessary to minimize light trespass onto neighboring properties.

#### **Mitigation Measure AES-2: Conform to Lighting Design Standards**

Operational lighting of the project will be designed for safety and will include features that minimize the release of light and glare either upward or toward properties and residences adjoining the project corridor. The lighting design will conform to all applicable County, State, Federal, and public safety standards, as appropriate. Features could include shielding lighting elements, using lower-voltage lighting, incorporating downward-casting lighting, using lighting fixtures that conform to the visual character of the area, and similar design measures, as listed below:

- Consider the least intrusive lighting when improvements are made at an intersection, when lighting is needed for safety reasons, or when a new intersection is constructed.
- Minimize continuous roadway lighting.
- Calculate the optimum location, height, and spacing for alternative lighting solutions at each intersection using computer software.
- Do not permit the use of high-pressure sodium lamps. Metal halide is preferred because of the more natural color rendition and pure white light.
- Minimize trespass lighting to the skies by using full cutoff luminaires. Full cutoff luminaires are designed to not emit any light above 90 degrees, thereby reducing sky glow.
- Reduce the amount of light required for an intersection by using Caltrans' and Sacramento County Department of Transportation minimum requirements, as appropriate.
- Use internal or external shields when necessary to minimize light trespass onto neighboring properties.

#### **Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

During construction, large equipment and construction activities would be highly visible and would detract from the rural and agricultural setting of much of the project area. However, this condition would be temporary in nature and is considered less than significant.

In addition, construction activities during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### **3.3.4 Impacts of the Off-Corridor Multi-Use Path Alternative**

#### **Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista**

Constructing an off-corridor multi-use path instead of an expanded in-corridor multi use path would involve new segments of a multi-use path, linking existing segments of multi-use trails in the aesthetics study area. The new multi-use path segments would consist of paved, 12-foot-wide pathways that would cross Laguna Creek, Alder Creek, and the Folsom South Canal. The

northernmost segments of the new paths would be aligned and adjacent to the project corridor along White Rock Road. Figure 3-1 illustrates the location of the off-corridor multi-use trail system.

The scale of the pathways and their general route along creek banks would not affect scenic corridors or natural features that would constitute a scenic vista, as previously evaluated under the project impacts. As such, this alternative would not increase the project's potential to affect scenic vistas in the aesthetics study area. Therefore, the impact on scenic vistas would be minimal and is considered less than significant.

#### **Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality**

The construction of the paved multi-use pathways would generally have minimal effect on the visual character of the landscape. In agricultural and rural areas, construction of the new pathways would introduce paved surfaces into the visual environment; however, the scale of the pathways and route along creek banks would not result in a substantial change in the vividness, intactness, and unity of the agricultural and rural character of the area. The overall impact on scenic resources and visual character and quality would be minimal and is considered less than significant.

#### **Impact AES-3: New Source of Light or Glare**

No additional lighting of the off-corridor multi-use path is proposed. This alternative would not generate new sources of light and glare. There is no impact.

#### **Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

Construction of the off-corridor trail could require temporary use of nighttime lighting, which would alter the existing nighttime aesthetic and create new sources of light and glare. This impact would be temporary during construction but substantial, and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### **3.3.5 Impacts of the Project Options**

#### **3.3.5.1 Kammerer Road Bypass Option**

##### **Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista**

There are no scenic corridors or natural features in the vicinity of the Kammerer Road Bypass Option that would constitute a scenic vista, as previously evaluated under the project impacts. As such, this optional project component would not increase the project's potential to affect scenic vistas in the aesthetics study area. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant and no mitigation is necessary.

##### **Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality**

The Kammerer Road Bypass Option is located within the Western Landscape Unit. As previously discussed, this area is defined by flat agricultural fields, row crops, and scattered residential

development. The Kammerer Road Bypass Option would pass through the portion of the Western Landscape Unit between Hood Franklin and Kammerer Roads, and would not follow an existing roadway alignment.

This optional project component would avoid displacement of several single-family homes and agricultural structures (i.e., barns and associated outbuildings) along Kammerer Road that would occur with the proposed Kammerer Road project alignment. Removal of these structures under the proposed project was considered to emphasize rural agricultural aesthetic and increase the intactness and unity of the area. Instead, the Kammerer Road Bypass Option would introduce a transportation corridor in an area where no roadway alignment currently exists, which would detract from the intactness and unity of the landscape unit.

Although these improvements would slightly change the scoring for overall visual quality within the Western Landscape Unit (Table 3-8), the overall impact on scenic resources and visual character and quality would be minimal and considered less than significant.

**Table 3-8. Visual Quality Change in Western Landscape Unit with Kammerer Road Bypass Option**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low	3	Moderately low
Optional Project Component Conditions	4	Moderate	2	Moderately low	2	Moderately low	3	Moderately low

### **Impact AES-3: New Source of Light or Glare**

As with the proposed project, the Kammerer Road Bypass Option would introduce new or enhanced street lighting into rural areas, which would alter the existing nighttime aesthetic and create new sources of light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### **Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

During construction, large equipment and construction activities would be highly visible and would detract from the rural and agricultural setting of much of the project area. However, this condition would be temporary in nature and is considered less than significant.

In addition, construction activities occurring during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### 3.3.5.2 Deer Creek Causeway Options

#### Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista

Deer Creek Causeway Options 1 and 2 would create a highly vivid human-made element within the natural and agricultural setting, which includes riparian/wetland habitat associated with Deer Creek and the Cosumnes River floodplain. Implementation of either of these optional project components would diminish views of the natural resources available from existing roads and residences. Changes to these natural resources would constitute an adverse effect on scenic vistas, as previously evaluated under the project impacts. There are no substantial differences between Options 1 and 2. The impact on scenic vistas would increase with either of these optional project components in comparison to the proposed project, and would be substantial and considered significant. No mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. This impact is significant and unavoidable.

#### Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality

Either of these optional project components would introduce an elevated two-lane facility on concrete piers and bridges into an area with a predominantly rural, agricultural, and natural visual character and very few human-made structures. These improvements would diminish the character of the area, specifically at the overcrossing of Deer Creek and its associated riparian/wetland habitat in the Cosumnes River floodplain (Table 3-9). With either of these optional project components, the overall impact on scenic resources and visual character and quality would be substantial in comparison to the proposed project, and is considered significant. No mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. This impact is significant and unavoidable.

**Table 3-9. Visual Quality Change in Deer Creek Causeway Landscape Unit with Deer Creek Causeway Options**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	6	High	6	High	6	High	6	High
Optional Project Component Conditions	3	Moderate	3	Moderate	3	Moderate	3	Moderate

#### Impact AES-3: New Source of Light or Glare

Either of these optional project components would introduce a new source of light and glare into the aesthetics study area that would be visible by motorists and residents, particularly in the Central Landscape Unit encompassing Sheldon and nearby Wilton (to the east). The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### **Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

During construction, large equipment and construction activities would be highly visible and would detract from the rural and agricultural setting of much of the project area. However, this condition would be temporary in nature and is considered less than significant.

In addition, construction activities occurring during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

### **3.3.5.3 Reduced Access Roadway Option**

#### **Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista**

There are no scenic corridors or natural features in the vicinity of the Reduced Access Roadway Option that would constitute a scenic vista, as previously evaluated under the project impacts. As such, this optional project component would not increase the project's potential to affect scenic vistas in the aesthetics study area. Therefore, the impact on scenic vistas with this optional project component would be minimal and would be similar to that of the proposed project, which is considered less than significant.

#### **Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality**

The Reduced Access Roadway Option is located within the Central Landscape Unit, which includes a mix of agricultural and rural residential and commercial development primarily centered along Grant Line Road and Sheldon. This optional project component would create access roads or frontage roads on the eastern side of Grant Line Road through Sheldon, potentially requiring relocation or removal of several existing structures. Grant Line Road would be widened.

These improvements would increase the visual dominance of Grant Line Road and other paved surfaces, slightly detracting from the unique rural character and unity of Sheldon. However, the major aesthetic elements of Sheldon, including unique commercial buildings and well-tended residential areas, are anticipated to remain. The scoring for overall visual quality within the Central Landscape Unit would be similar to the project (Table 3-10). The overall impact on scenic resources and visual character and quality with this optional project component would be minimal and similar to the proposed project, which is considered less than significant.

**Table 3-10. Visual Quality Change in Central Landscape Unit with Reduced Access Roadway Option**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	4	Moderate	3	Moderately low
Optional Project Component Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	3	Moderately low	2	Low

**Impact AES-3: New Source of Light or Glare**

As with the proposed project, the Reduced Access Roadway Option would introduce new or enhanced street lighting into rural areas, which would alter the existing nighttime aesthetic and create new sources of light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

**Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

During construction, large equipment and construction activities would be highly visible and would detract from the rural and agricultural setting of much of the project area. However, this condition would be temporary in nature and is considered less than significant.

In addition, construction activities during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

**3.3.5.4 High Access Roadway Option****Impact AES-1: Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista**

There are no scenic corridors or natural features in the vicinity of the High Access Roadway Option that would constitute a scenic vista, as previously evaluated under the project impacts. As such, the no-build option would not increase the project's potential to affect scenic vistas in the aesthetics study area. Therefore, the impact on scenic vistas with the no-build option would be minimal and would be similar to that of the proposed project, which is considered less than significant.

**Impact AES-2: Damage to Scenic Resources or Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Quality**

The High Access Roadway Option is located within the Central Landscape Unit, which includes a mix of agricultural and rural residential and commercial development primarily centered along Grant Line Road and Sheldon. The no-build option would involve widening Grant Line Road from four to six lanes through Sheldon, consistent with the Elk Grove General Plan, potentially requiring relocation or removal of several existing structures.

These improvements would increase the visual dominance of Grant Line Road and other paved surfaces, slightly detracting from the unique rural character and unity of Sheldon. However, the major aesthetic elements of Sheldon, including unique commercial buildings and well-tended residential areas, are anticipated to remain. The scoring for overall visual quality within the Central Landscape Unit would be similar to the project (Table 3-11). The overall impact on scenic resources and visual character and quality with the no-build option would be minimal and would be similar to the proposed project, which is considered less than significant.

**Table 3-11. Visual Quality Change in the Central Landscape Unit with the High Access Roadway Option**

	FHWA Criteria						Visual Quality (Average Scores)	
	Vividness		Intactness		Unity		Score	Definition
	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition		
Existing Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	4	Moderate	3	Moderately Low
No-Build Option Conditions	2	Low	2	Low	3	Moderately Low	2	Low

### **Impact AES-3: New Source of Light or Glare**

As with the proposed project, the High Access Roadway Option would introduce new or enhanced street lighting into rural areas, which would alter the existing nighttime aesthetic and create new sources of light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

### **Impact AES-4: Temporary Alteration of Visual Character of the Project Area and Surroundings**

During construction, large equipment and construction activities would be highly visible and would detract from the rural and agricultural setting of much of the project area. However, this condition would be temporary in nature and is considered less than significant.

In addition, construction activities during nighttime hours could result in temporary increases in light and glare. The impact would be substantial and is considered significant. As described above, implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the impact of light and glare to a less-than-significant level.