
AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

The potential visual impacts of the proposed new recreational facility on a portion of the San Rafael Airport were assessed through a comprehensive analysis of both existing and anticipated future conditions. The analysis considered the existing setting of the Project site and its surrounding area, the existing visual character of the proposed Project site, the nature and makeup of present views toward the site from surrounding areas, how the site's visual character and present views would be affected by the proposed Project and how the changes compare to the specific criteria that have been established for determining visual impacts.

Private views, or those views that are from private property, are not assessed under CEQA. Neither the San Rafael *General Plan 2020* nor the City's Municipal Code contain any policies or ordinances that protect or preserve views from private vantage points or require the assessment of private view impacts. All view related policies of the City of San Rafael relate to public views. However, while impacts to private views would not be regarded as impacts to the environment under CEQA, this document is intended to be a disclosure document, enabling the City's decision makers to base their decisions on the broadest range of information available. Therefore, the Project's potential impacts to private views are discussed as part of this EIR.

The study began with field visits to the Project site and the surrounding areas by City planning staff conducted between March 2005 and December 2005. An inventory of existing conditions, viewing opportunities, and use landscape character, and scenic quality was developed. Site photographs were taken to establish a baseline and provide reference for analysis.

An important component of the visual analysis of the proposed Project involved depicting the proposed Project through computer-generated photo simulations. Furthermore, story poles of the proposed Project were erected to visually represent the height, mass and location of the proposed structure and to help staff identify the number and location of the photo simulations. The photo simulations show what the proposed Project would look like in views from various points surrounding the Project site. Most of the visual simulations were prepared from public viewpoints, however, as discussed above, some private viewpoints were also utilized for discussion purposes. Ultimately, six photo simulations were used, four

from public view points and two from private viewpoints. The private viewpoint simulations are shown in Exhibit 1 of the Initial Study prepared for this Project, provided in **Appendix A** of this EIR.

The photo simulations were prepared by eStudioDat for the Project applicant and reviewed by City staff and the City's Design Review Board. The six photo simulations, each including existing and proposed conditions, and a key to the locations of the photo simulations are included in this EIR as **Figures 5-2 through 5-7**. A map showing the locations of the features discussed in this section has been included as **Figure 5-1**.

SETTING

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE

The Project site is located in a flat portion of a valley that is surrounded by hills and ridgelines to the north, south and west sides. Mt. Tamalpais, the highest peak in Marin County, is located to the southwest of the site and can be viewed from various points on this site and from sites to the north and west of the Project site. Additionally, there are views of portions of the Marin County Civic Center from locations on the site and from the McInnis County Park located to the north and east. The Project site is within the San Rafael Airport site. Approximately 12% of the airport site is currently developed with structures and site improvements, including 100 single-story metal hangers, various light-industrial/commercial structures, fencing, a paved runway and taxi area, two residential structures, paved and unpaved roadways, unpaved runway-taxiway clear zones and native and non-native landscaping.

The airport site is bordered by the North Fork of the Gallinas Creek to the north and the South Fork of the Gallinas Creek to the south. The border with the creeks includes over 12,000 linear feet of a maintained perimeter levee system that extends from the southwest corner of the site along the southern perimeter, then wrapping back to the west along the northern border of the site. The land within the levees exhibits an elevation of approximately 0-to-3 feet above mean sea level and the levees that border the site extend to 9 feet above mean sea level. Eucalyptus trees that range between 10 and 25 feet in height are currently planted along side much of the levee system along the northern and southern sides of the airport site.

There are no State-designated scenic highways on this site or in the surrounding area.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE'S SURROUNDINGS

North

Across Gallinas Creek, the site is bordered by McInnis Park, a regional park operated by Marin County. This park contains numerous outdoor sports fields, buildings and structures. A

majority of the park is located at a higher elevation than the airport site, ranging from 0 feet along the North Fork of the Gallinas Creek and raising to approximately 60 feet at the rear of the miniature golf course. The Park contains a softball field to the northwest that includes 70 to 80-foot tall light standards, a miniature golf course to the north, a golf course to the north and east of the site that includes a club house peaking at 27.5 feet tall, a two-story, 16-foot tall structure containing the tee boxes and 40 to 60-foot tall fencing on the south side of the driving range. There is a public trail system maintained by the County that begins at the parking lot of the golf course and parallels the North Fork of the Gallinas Creek and eventually leads to the San Francisco Bay to the east. Further north from the park there is a ridgeline that runs from west to east and peaks at approximately 150 feet elevation. To the northwest of the airport site, there is another ridgeline that runs from Highway 101 to Silvera Parkway and peaks at approximately 190 feet elevation.

South

Across the Gallinas Creek to the south, the site is bordered by the residential communities of Santa Venetia and Northridge (both areas located in unincorporated Marin County), Marin Lagoon and commercial/office development (Embassy Suites and Autodesk office buildings). The closest portion of the residential communities to the south would approximately range from 1,300 feet to 1,900 feet from the edge of the proposed Project. Many of the commercial and office buildings in this area are multiple stories and reach or exceed 36 feet in height. Vendola Drive is a public street that parallels the South Fork of the Gallinas Creek in Santa Venetia and primarily hosts single-family residential structures. The entire northern edge of Vendola Drive is developed with primarily one-story residential structures. Further south from the Santa Venetia neighborhood, there is a ridgeline that runs from west to east and peaks at approximately 1,000 feet of elevation. Mt. Tamalpais is the highest point in Marin County and is located approximately 9 miles to the southwest.

West

There is a mixture of residential developments (Contempo Marin and Captains Cove,) and office/commercial development (Smith Ranch Office Park, Regency Theater and Northgate Industrial Park to the west of the site). The Marin County Civic Center is also located approximately 1.4 miles southwest of the subject site. The Captain's Cove neighborhood is a medium density neighborhood that is developed with two story residences. Contempo Marin is a medium density mobile home park that is developed with single story structures. The office/commercial development in this area includes a wide range of multistory structures, with many of those reaching or exceeding 36 feet in height. About one mile to the southwest, there is a hillside that peaks at approximately 300 feet in elevation. Professional Center Parkway, Channing Way and Sterling Way are public streets that are located on this hillside and ridgeline and provide access to the existing multi-family residential development and church that are located along this ridgeline. Many of these structures are two to three stories in height and are built on the ridgeline.

VIEW FROM THE PUBLIC PARK AND OPEN SPACE

Portions of the County Park, golf course and trail system afford views of the Marin County Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais and the hills and ridgelines surrounding this valley. The primary views from the County Park are to the south and the hills behind Santa Venetia and to the southwest to Mt. Tamalpais. The Park also hosts easterly views toward the San Francisco Bay and southerly views to the hills south of Santa Venetia. There is a trail along the North Fork of the Gallinas Creek that parallels the creek until the confluence of the North and South Forks of Gallinas Creek. From that point, there are a series of other trails that lead to the east and north toward the San Francisco Bay and surrounding wetlands. Of this trail system, approximately 10,500 feet, or 2.1 miles, affords views of the entire Las Gallinas Valley, including Marin Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais. Additionally, the County Park includes a boat launch from which the public can navigate towards the Bay. Some of the airport property is shielded from view from the park and the creek itself through existing 9-foot tall levees bordering the airport property and Eucalyptus trees that are planted along the northern levee.

VIEWS FROM SURROUNDING AREAS

The primary view of homes in Santa Venetia is across the South Fork of the Gallinas Creek and San Rafael Airport property towards McInnis Park and the hills north of Smith Ranch Road. The primary view of the Contempo Marin and Captain's Cove residential developments is to the south and southwest, toward the hills behind Santa Venetia, the Marin Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais. Given their location and existing vegetation in the area, these neighborhoods do not have direct views toward the Bay to the east.

REGULATORY SETTING

In addition to the thresholds of significant established by CEQA, the City of San Rafael *General Plan 2020* contains a Community Design Element which identifies the City's policies relating to design and aesthetics. In this element, the following goals and policies establish a thresholds for evaluating aesthetics with respect to views, light and glare.

SAN RAFAEL GENERAL PLAN COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

CD-5. Views.

Respect and enhance to the greatest extent possible, views of the Bay and its islands, Bay wetlands, St. Raphael's church bell tower, Canalfront, marinas, Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Civic Center and hills and ridgelines from public streets, parks and publicly accessible pathways.

Policy CD-5a Respect and enhance to the greatest extent possible, views of the Bay and its islands, Bay wetlands, St. Raphael's church bell tower, Canalfront,

marinas, Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Civic Center and hills and ridgelines from public streets, parks and publicly accessible pathways.

CD-19. Lighting.

Allow adequate site lighting for safety purposes while controlling excessive light spillover and glare.

CD-19a. Site Lighting. Through the design review process, evaluate site lighting for safety and glare on proposed projects.

CD-19b. Lighting Plan. Require new development and projects making significant parking lot improvements or proposing new lighting to prepare a lighting plan consistent with the Design Guidelines for review by City planning staff.

SAN RAFAEL ZONING CODE ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN REVIEW PERMITS

Exterior Lighting

14.25.050.F.4 Exterior Lighting. Light sources should provide safety for the building occupants, but not create a glare or hazard on adjoining streets or be annoying to adjacent properties or residential areas.

SAN RAFAEL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The San Rafael Design Guidelines provide the following additional direction for review of lighting:

- limit the intensity of lighting to provide for adequate site security and for pedestrian and vehicular safety;
- shield light sources to prevent glare and illumination beyond the boundaries of the property; and
- lighting fixtures should complement the architecture of the project.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following thresholds for measuring a Project's environmental impacts are based upon CEQA Guidelines thresholds:

- Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

- Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- Would the Project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Scenic Vistas and Public Views

For the purposes of this analysis, the Project would result in a significant impact to scenic vistas and public view if development would result in the loss of ½ of the view of the resource, either panoramically (horizontal plane) or vertically (measured bottom-to-top). Based on this standard, the development of this site would have a less than significant effect on a scenic vista.

The Community Design Map in *General Plan 2020* illustrates the community design elements for the City of San Rafael.¹ There are no gateways, historically or architecturally significant buildings or areas, transportation corridors or visually significant hillside, ridges or landforms located on this site. The Community Design Map does illustrate that some areas surrounding the site contain creeks and streams (to the north, south, and east), visually significant hillsides, ridges, and landforms (to the southwest, and northwest) and a historically and architecturally significant building and areas (Marin Civic Center) (to the southwest).

As mentioned above, the Community Design Element **Policy CD-5** states that to the greatest extent possible, views of the Bay, Bay wetlands, Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Civic Center and hills and ridgelines from public streets or publicly accessible pathways should be respected and enhanced. Although there are no specific scenic vistas identified by the Community Design Map of the General Plan that are on or around this site, the views of the surrounding hills and ridges, including Mt. Tamalpais, as well as the Marin Civic Center, which are beyond this site, may be considered a scenic vista and therefore have been analyzed below. Of these, the predominant view that could be considered a scenic vista is from McInnis Park located to the north that is directed toward the natural environment in the Las Gallinas Creek Valley and the hills and ridgelines to the south above Santa Venetia. Furthermore, the southwestern view from the County Park toward the Marin Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais are public views that could be considered as a scenic vista since the Civic Center is considered a historically and architecturally significant building and Mt. Tamalpais is the tallest peak in the County. In

¹ City of San Rafael, *General Plan 2020*, Exhibit 17.

analyzing this policy, it has to be read in context of all policies contained in the General Plan. *General Plan 2020* assumes certain development that would occur by build-out in the year 2020 and this development would by its nature pose some impact to views. Therefore, this policy is not intended to preclude all development that would have some impact on a view of the listed sites, but rather as a tool to evaluate the significance of the impact.

The analysis below discusses both public and private views on the Project site. The locations of the photographs were chosen based on a comparison of the site plan with the Community Design Map in *General Plan 2020*, and input from discussions at two City Design Review Board hearings that identified significant views in the area. **Figure 5-1** provides a key to the locations and directions of the views analyzed below.

Public Views #1 and 2

The first two public views analyzed are two views from the parking lot at the McInnis Park clubhouse (see **Figures 5-2 and 5-3**). The first, Public View #1, is located at the entrance to the levee trail system, approximately 375 feet from the proposed structure and the second, Public View #2, is from the middle of the parking lot at the McInnis Park clubhouse approximately 550 feet from the proposed structure.

The Project site is at a lower elevation than the surrounding County Park and is bordered by a levee that is at +9 feet elevation above mean sea level. With the 9-foot tall levee that exists to the rear of the proposed new building, the lower 9 feet of the proposed structure (33.5 feet tall as defined by the Uniform Building Code or 38 feet tall to the top of the roof) would not be visible from off-site. Furthermore, the rear of the proposed building would be approximately 350 feet from the closest portion of the public trail at the County Park. The nearest residence to the proposed building is located approximately 1,345 feet to the southeast in the Santa Venetia residential development. Given the amount of separation from the new building to the closest public area to the north and the distance and height of the hills and ridges to the south, the proposed building would affect only a small portion of the scenic vista to the south. As illustrated on the photo simulations prepared for the Project, the new building would block approximately the bottom 1/3 of the view of the hills to the south, which is less than the threshold of 1/2 as stated above. Therefore, this would be considered a ***less than significant*** impact.

Furthermore, as illustrated by site visits and photo simulations prepared for this Project, the proposed green, tan and brown colors, in combination with the existing Eucalyptus trees alongside the levees, would allow the new building to blend into the hillside, not stand out or create contrast to the hillside backdrop and would neither break the ridgeline or skyline of the hills to the south and west.

With respect to the views of the Civic Center, the proposed Project would not impact any of the limited views from these locations given that the Civic Center is situated to the southwest of the proposed structure and would be out of the line of site. Furthermore, these views of the

Civic Center from this vantage point are already extremely limited due to existing vegetation on the McInnis Park site and on other properties, off the airport site, to the southwest.

Public View #3 and 4

As previously mentioned, a portion of the levee trail system along the North Fork of the Gallinas Creek also hosts a southwesterly view from which the Marin Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais can be seen. The two photo simulations to illustrate these views were taken from two different points along the levee trail. The first, Public View #3, was taken from the levee trail approximately 720 feet east of the trailhead and directly north of the pump house on the airport property (see **Figure 5-4**). The second, Public View #4, was taken further east along the levee trail at the creek bend, approximately 2,000 feet east of the trailhead and just north of the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Gallinas Creeks (see **Figure 5-5**). It should be noted that the additional trees shown on the simulation in **Figure 5-5** are not currently shown on the Project's landscape plan in **Figure 3-10**. As described in greater detail below, the Project's preliminary review by the City's Design Review Board resulted in the request that the Project's final design and landscape plans be presented to the Board for final review and approval. There is an existing row of eucalyptus trees on the Project site running adjacent to the existing drainage swale along the site's northwest edge. The DRB specifically requested, and the Applicant agreed, that the existing gap in this row of trees be filled in. Filling in the gap in the line of trees would not be required in order to mitigate a potential environmental impact of the Project; therefore, cannot be required as mitigation. Therefore, in order to ensure this occurs, this document recommends a condition of Project approval requiring the landscape plans presented to the City's DRB to identify the inclusion of replacement trees to fill in the gap discussed herein.

As designed, the Project would not impact any existing views of Mt. Tamalpais from any off-site public vantage point. There is a 600-foot portion of the levee trail system that provides public views of the Marin County Civic Center (Public View #3) that would be affected by the proposed Project. The Project would block views of Quail Hill, which appears as a long ridge located in the mid-ground area behind the Civic Center but in front of Mt. Tamalpais, but this is not considered a significant impact. The San Rafael *General Plan 2020* Goal CD-5, provided above under the Regulatory Setting section, requires development projects to respect and enhance views of ridgelines from publicly accessed areas to the greatest extent possible. The height of the building is constrained by the topographical orientation of the site and its location near the San Rafael Airport; therefore, its current design already represents an accounting of these constraints to the greatest extent possible. Moreover, the majority of the existing views of the Civic Center along this 600-foot stretch are already mostly blocked by the existing 15-to 25-foot tall Eucalyptus trees (that would grow to 50-100 feet at maturity) that are planted on the north side of the Project site as well as other development further southwest of the site, leaving only the top or small portions of the Civic Center buildings and steeple visible from the trail. As documented in the photo simulations and verified by field observations of erected story poles, the proposed new structure would

impact only a very small portion of the existing views. Furthermore, this 600-foot section is a small portion of the existing levee trail which encompasses approximately 10,500 feet, or 2.1 miles, of trails with views of the Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais. There would still be ample opportunities for views of the Civic Center from the remaining miles of the public trail system. Considering the amount of the view of the Civic Center that is already blocked or will become blocked by existing tree growth, the amount of new impact by the addition of the proposed structure, and the small portion of the overall public trail system which is impacted, a *less than significant* impact would occur.

With respect to Public View #4, the proposed structure would block the lower ¼ of the hillside to the south on which the Professional Center Parkway and Channing Way are located but would neither break nor silhouette the ridgeline or result in altering a significant public viewshed. As discussed above, a significant impact would occur if any portion of the proposed Project would block ½ of the hillside; therefore, this is not considered a significant impact. Additionally, the design of the Project includes colors, materials and landscaping that would effectively blend the structure in with its background. The Project proposes to plant trees along the eastern edge of the building and the outdoor fields. These new trees would be located in front of the structure, and thereby screen a majority of the new building from this vantage point. With the addition of the trees, the primary view from this vantage point would be of trees, rather than the building. Lastly, from this vantage point, the structure would neither impede nor block any views of the Civic Center given that the Civic Center is located to the south of the proposed building. Therefore, impacts to this view are considered *less than significant*.

Private Views

Although the City does not have any policies or regulations relating to private views, for discussion purposes the City has evaluated impacts to private views as part of this EIR. The primary private view that is applicable to this Project is the northerly view towards McInnis Park and the hillside and ridgelines behind the park from the residential neighborhood to the south (Santa Venetia). Two photo simulations were prepared to illustrate the Project's impacts on these views (see Exhibit 1, Initial Study, **Appendix A**). The first, Private View #1, is from the backyard of a private residence at 501 Vendola Drive and the second, Private View #2, is from the second floor of a residence at 825 Vendola Drive. In regard to these views, the proposed Project would block less than the bottom 1/3 of the view of the hills to the north but would not break or silhouette any of the hillside or ridgelines that are to the north, behind McInnis Park. Additionally, the proposed building colors, which are green, tan and brown, would effectively blend in with the predominant colors in the natural setting that surround the new structure and minimize the visibility of the structure. Furthermore, the building would be situated within an area of the site where the existing levees and Eucalyptus trees would screen much of the view of the new structure. The Project has included a proposal to add additional Eucalyptus trees along the southern levee to complete any gaps in the trees that currently exist. This would further shield the building from views from the

south. As part of the ongoing approval process, the City has expressed interest in revising the landscaping plan to include native, fast growing trees rather than eucalyptus trees. A substitution of tree species would not significantly change the visual impact related to trees and surrounding views. If the Project is approved, this can be required as a condition of approval.² As discussed above, private views, or those views that are from private property, are not assessed under CEQA. Neither the San Rafael *General Plan 2020* nor the City's Municipal Code contain any policies or ordinances that protect or preserve views from private vantage points or require the assessment of private view impacts. However, given the discussion in this section, the Project is not expected to adversely affect the surrounding views from residential developments.

City of San Rafael Design Review Board

The City of San Rafael Design Review Board (DRB) has reviewed the design of the proposed recreational facility at two publicly noticed board meetings. On July 19, 2005, the DRB reviewed the proposed new recreational facility, accepting the staff report and presentation by staff and accepting public testimony on the design-related matters. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Board continued the item to allow the applicant to consider the comments made by the public and prepare photo simulations from McInnis Park and Vendola Drive. The Project applicant had erected story poles prior to the DRB's meeting to illustrate the proposed height and mass of the structure. However, the Board determined that photo simulations from various public vantage points were necessary to better understand and evaluate the potential visual impacts of the Project.³

On November 8, 2005, the Project returned to the DRB for a second review and the Board recommended approval of the Project design to the Planning Commission and City Council. The Board reviewed the proposed Project and the photo simulations presented in this EIR and recommended that the architecture was well designed and appropriate for the site. The Board found the building massing, scale and colors appropriate for the site and that the proposed design would effectively integrate with the surrounding natural environment.⁴

In terms of the Project's potential impact to views on the surrounding areas (Mt. Tamalpais, Civic Center, and hillside and ridgelines) from the public vantage points, the Board determined that the building was of a low-profile design that would not block any view of Mt. Tamalpais and not alter the aesthetics of the ridgeline or silhouette any ridgelines given that the Project would block only a small portion (lower one-third) of the hills to the south. Furthermore, the majority of the Board found that although the proposed structure may block some portions of views of the Civic Center from a 600-foot portion of the County trail along

² Minutes, Design Review Board, July 19, 2005.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Minutes, Design Review Board, November 8, 2005.

the creek, this view was already compromised by existing vegetation and only represents a small portion of views from the 2.1 miles of public trails and vantage points with view of the Marin Civic Center.

As part of their recommendation for approval, the Board identified a few components of the Project for which it was directed that there be a follow-up review of the architectural details of the proposed new bridge deck, landscaping around the building, and more detailed architectural plans of the building, a final lighting plan, and final drainage plan. Further, the Board recommended that: a) a perpetual maintenance agreement be required for on-going maintenance of the property; b) the overflow parking lot be paved and not remain as a gravel surface as currently proposed; c) more fast growing native trees be used to fill in gaps of the Eucalyptus screening tress along the southern and northern perimeter of the site (near the levees); and d) color scheme for the building be muted slightly to reduce any potential reflectivity.⁵ If enacted, none of these changes to the Project would invalidate the conclusions drawn in this chapter.

In summary, this Project would have a *less than significant* effect on a scenic vista given that the proposed Project would: a) neither break nor silhouette any significant ridgelines, including Mt. Tamalpais; b) be partially screened from off-site view by the existing 9-foot tall levees and perimeter landscaping; and c) would not affect other protected public views except for a small amount of new view blockage to views of the Civic Center from a 600-foot section of public trail system to the north, given that this view is already partially blocked by existing vegetation and available from other vantages along the 2.1 mile trail system.

⁵ Ibid.

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Figure 5-1
Key to Location of Photo Simulations



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Existing View



Proposed View

Figure 5-2
Public View # 1: View from McInnis Park Trailhead



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Existing View



Proposed View

Figure 5-3
Public View # 2: View from Parking Lot at McInnis Park



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Existing View



Proposed View

Figure 5-4
Public View # 3: View from Levee Trail at Pump House



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Existing View



Proposed View

Figure 5-5
Public View # 4: View from Levee Trail at Creek Bend



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Scenic Resources

The Project site is not identified as a scenic resource by the San Rafael *General Plan 2020* and neither includes, nor is surrounded by any scenic resources such as rock outcroppings, heritage trees, or a state scenic highway. As previously mentioned, the City of San Rafael *General Plan 2020* Community Design Element, Policy CD-5, states “Respect and enhance to the greatest extent possible, view of the Bay and its islands, Bay wetlands, St. Raphael’s church bell tower, Canalfront, marinas, Mt. Tamalpais, Marin Civic Center and hills and ridgelines from public streets, parks and publicly accessible pathways.” The natural ridgelines that are situated south and west of the site as well as the Marin Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais to the southwest may be considered scenic resources and therefore have been evaluated.

The proposed structure would not significantly impact any significant resource in the area given that: a) the building is set below the existing levee which lowers the effective building height viewed from the north and south by 9 feet; b) the proposed building, given its distance and separation from public vantage points to the north and the lower elevation of the site, would not block more than the bottom 1/3 of the hillside setting to the south and would neither break the ridgeline of any hills or the skyline, nor impact any portion of views of Mt. Tamalpais; c) the building colors proposed would blend with the colors of the natural hillside backdrop; d) the existing Eucalyptus trees along the north and south side of the proposed building would screen a majority of the structure, effectively eliminating any contrast and reducing its mass and bulk; e) the publicly accessible levee trail system to the north contains many miles of trails with views of the Civic Center and Mt. Tamalpais and this building would only partially impact a 600-foot section of that trail and of that 600 feet, a majority already hosts trees that reduce and impact the views of the Civic Center; f) the 600-foot section of trail represents a small portion of the overall public trail system at the County Park and even with the addition of the proposed structure, many miles of views of the Civic Center would remain; g) the distance of the proposed Project site from public vantage points result in long distance view of the surrounding hillsides and ridgelines, including Mt. Tamalpais; and h) the City’s Design Review Board has reviewed the proposed structure and its design and found the Project to be consistent with the design policies contained in the San Rafael *General Plan 2020*. Based on the analysis above, a *less than significant* impact would occur.

Visual Character

As discussed, the City of San Rafael Design Review Board has reviewed the design of the proposed recreational facility on two occasions and found that the architecture would be consistent with City’s design criteria. The Board reviewed both the proposed design in context with the subject site and the existing visual character of the surroundings, and determined that the proposed structure would integrate well with the surrounding environment and is designed in such a manner to minimize its visibility from off-site. The

Project site is surrounded by a regional park that includes numerous structures, tall fencing for the driving range and large light standards for the golf course and softball fields. Furthermore, the Project site is surrounded by development on the west, north and south and when this Project is viewed in context with the surrounding development, it would not degrade the visual character of the surrounding area.

The existing development on the airport site includes metal airport hangers and light industrial buildings that are fairly utilitarian in their architectural design. This new building would be an improvement over the architectural character of the surrounding buildings. It would provide a new structure with a variety of materials and colors and ample articulation and interest in the building elevations. In their recommendation, the DRB noted that the proposed structure is well designed and an improvement to the architectural character of other structures in the area. The DRB also found that colors proposed for the building would blend with the predominantly green, brown and tan colors that are found on the hillsides that serve as a southern backdrop to this proposed Project. Furthermore, the existing Eucalyptus trees along side the levees to the north and south sides of the airport site provide partial screening of the area and would thereby reduce the visual impact and mass of the proposed structure. The landscape plan would include the planting of additional fast growing trees along the northern and southern perimeter levees to further screen the building from off-site view and allow the structure to blend with the natural setting.

As illustrated in the photo simulations prepared for the Project, the proposed new building would be significantly lower than the hills and ridgeline located to the south of this site and the proposed structure would not silhouette any ridgeline.

When viewed in context with the massing and height of the structures found on the entire airport site, the adjacent County Park and visible commercial areas, a *less than significant* visual impact to the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings would occur.

Light and Glare

Impact Aesth-1 Light and Glare. Project lighting may exceed the light intensity standards of the surrounding community, particularly the inclusion of exterior field lighting. Unless subject to proper review and approval, the impact of the Project's proposed exterior lighting on the surrounding community is considered to be *potentially significant*.

The proposed recreational facility building and site improvements would include low-level building mounted lighting and site lighting for the parking lot and driveway leading to the site. Exterior lighting is proposed for the outdoor soccer field; however, the soccer warm-up area would remain unlit during the night-time. Lighting would also be installed along the entire length of the existing and proposed roadway.

The City of San Rafael does not have a written policy establishing a specific threshold regarding spillover of light from a Project site to adjacent areas, but uses *General Plan 2020* and the City's Design Review Criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of lighting. Based on conversations with the City's Planning Department, however, the general policy used for project review purposes is that lighting should provide a minimum 1 foot candle intensity ground level overlap for safety. Given that this project is in an undeveloped area, urban lighting standards may not be appropriate for the site. Lighting should be maintained at the minimum level necessary for security and safety, and excessive light and glare should be avoided. Therefore, light that exceeds an average of 1.0 foot candles intensity, or light spillover beyond a property line to adjacent areas, would be considered a potentially significant impact.⁶ This general rule is established as the significance threshold for the purposes of this analysis.

The Applicants propose a state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly lighting system designed by Musco Lighting that uses 50% less electricity and produces 50% less spill and glare than traditional fixtures. This technology enables shorter poles while still achieving adequate lighting. The average pole height is only 31.5 feet, which is half as tall as the light poles at neighboring facilities.

As discussed, the Project would utilize four types of lights: wall lights on the building, pole-mounted lights for the parking lot, bollard lights for the existing and new roadway and the southern portion of the parking lot, and finally, pole-mounted lights over the outdoor soccer area.

In terms of building light, eight under-canopy lights are proposed at the three building entries (triple tube compact fluorescent) and 23 building mounted lights (14-inch square, 150-watt metal halide) would be located on all four building elevations and would be mounted to the wall at a height of 14 feet and shielded to direct light downward.

The parking-lot lighting would be composed of (15) 14-foot tall double-head standards (150-watt metal halide) and bollards would be (31) 42-inches tall (70-watt metal halide), placed along the entry to the parking lot and the entire southern edge and a portion of the eastern edge of the parking lot. Additional bollard lights are proposed along the entire length of the existing roadway from Smith Ranch Road and proposed San Rafael Airport Recreational Facility roadway extension leading to the new building.

Lastly, the outdoor soccer field would be illuminated by eight (8) pole-mounted, 1500 Watt Green Generation luminaires. The lights along the northern edge of the soccer field, closest to Gallinas Creek, would be mounted on 40-foot poles; and the lights along the southern edge of the soccer field, closest to the airport runway, would be mounted on 23-foot poles. The

⁶ Kraig Tambornini, City of San Rafael Planning Manager, personal communication, August 8, 08.

following table, reproduced from the Project Description in Chapter 3, provides further details and specifications for the proposed facility lighting; the exterior lighting plan can be seen in **Figure 3-9** of the Project Description.

TABLE 5-1
PROJECT LIGHTING SPECIFICATIONS

Quantity	Location	Specifications
31	Access Road and Parking Lot Perimeter	Guardco BR-8 Round Bollards @ 40' O.C., 42" high with 70 watt metal halide lamps.
23	Main Building	Guardco BE-14 wall-mounted luminaires @ 50' O.C., 14' above finished floor with 150 watt metal halide lamps.
8	Building Entrances	Guardco Designer Canopy Luminaires @ 20' O.C., with 42 watt compact fluorescent lamps.
19	Paved Parking Lot and Unpaved Overflow Parking	Guardco Square Form 10, A14, 2-way side pole mounted @ 40' O.C., 14' average finished floor with 150 watt metal halide lamps
4	Outdoor Soccer Field	Musco Green Generation 1500 WMZ Luminaires, 3/Pole, 40' high, @ 30' O.C., with 1500 watt metal halide lamps.
4	Outdoor Soccer Field	Musco Green Generation 1500 WMZ Luminaires, 2/Pole, 23' high, @ 30' O.C., with 1500 watt metal halide lamps.

Source: Applicant; note: further details of the Musco Green Generation Luminaires are provided in **Appendix B**

Two photometric studies were prepared for the proposed Project; one study shows the lighting levels for the parking lot and exterior building lots, and the other study shows the lighting levels resulting from illuminating the outdoor soccer field (see **Figures 5-6 and 5-7**).

Figure 5-6 demonstrates that the lighting levels would range from 0 foot-candles to 12.2 foot-candles on the portion of the site supporting the building and the parking lot, with an average of 1.84 foot-candles. This photometric study indicates that all proposed lighting would be focused on the building, driveway, and parking lot areas and would not spillover onto adjacent properties or the creek. As stated above, as a general rule the City of San Rafael considers average lighting intensity greater than 1.0 to potentially impact the surrounding areas. Although **Figure 5-6** demonstrates that the proposed lighting will be focused on the building, with little to no spillover, the 1.84 foot-candle average intensity is identified as a *potentially significant* impact.

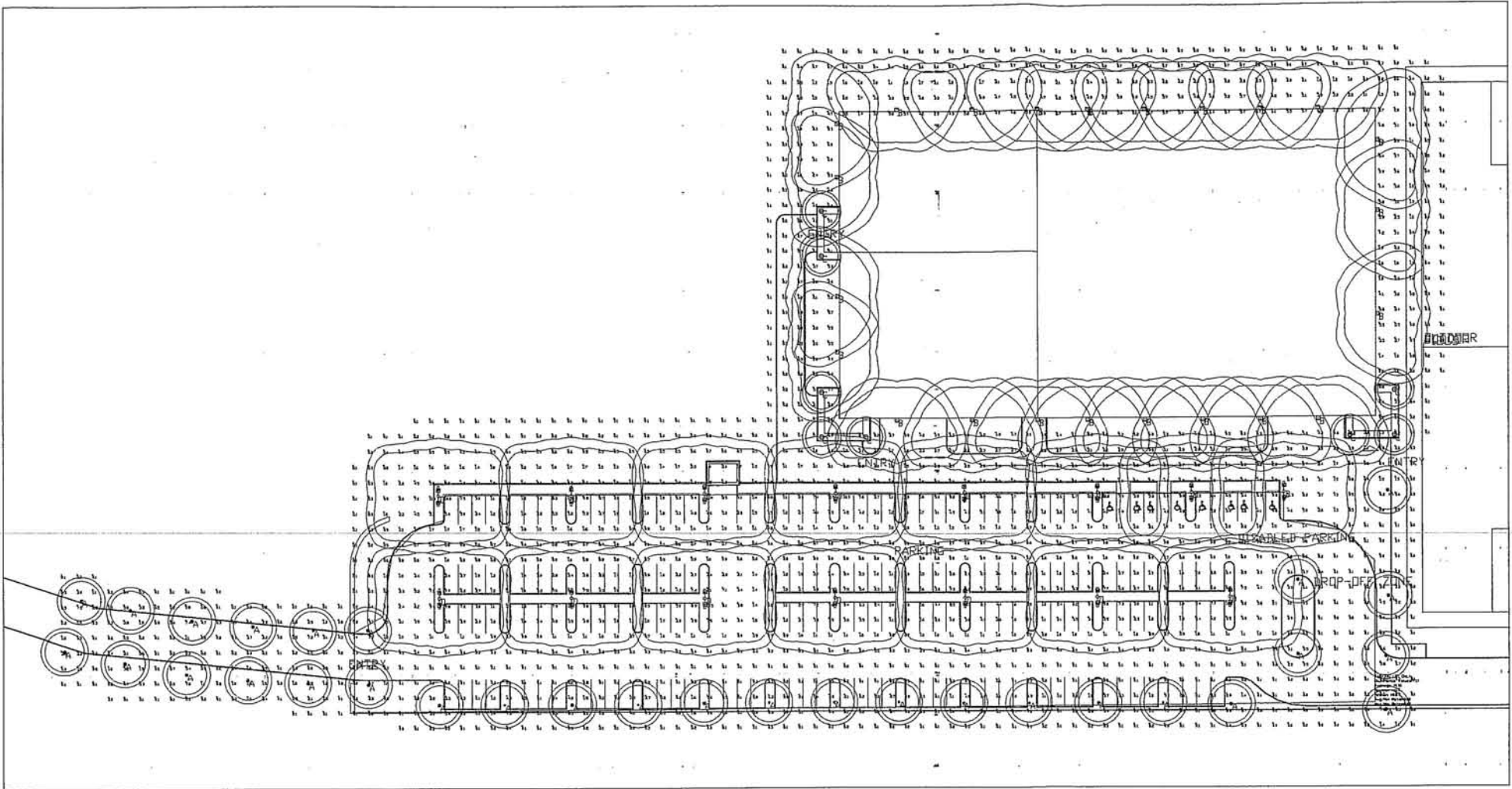
Figure 5-7 demonstrates that the lighting levels for illuminating the outdoor soccer field would range from 0 to 71 foot-candles, with an average of 2.0 foot-candles. As **Figure 5-7** demonstrates, however, the majority of the light intensity will be focused primarily on the outdoor soccer field, with some illumination of the overflow parking area south of the field.

There would be spillover onto the creek of approximately 0.1 foot-candles at the northeast corner of the Project site where the east-flowing creek bends toward the south. Additionally, there would be some spill over the Project site's southern boundary, but it would not reach the nearby runway. The City of San Rafael considers that average lighting intensity greater than 1.0 foot candles could potentially impact the surrounding areas. Moreover, as provided in the Regulatory Setting section of this Chapter, the City's design review criteria for exterior lighting states that light sources should provide safety for building occupants but should not create a glare or hazard on adjoining streets or be annoying to adjacent properties or residential areas.

As demonstrated in **Figure 5-7** the playing field will receive the greatest intensity of the field lighting; however, the overall average light intensity would be 2.0 foot-candles. Additionally, there would be some spill over onto the nearby creek, which is over the Project site's property line. Lastly, the existing use on the site does not provide a significant source of night-time glare and is not currently an annoyance to adjacent properties or residential areas. Considering the proposed field lighting's upper intensity range of 71 foot-candles, the addition of night-time field lighting has the potential to become an annoyance to adjacent properties and residential areas, particularly the nearby Contempo Marin Mobile Home Park located to the west.

Because the proposed field-lighting's overall average of 2.0 foot-candles would exceed 1.0 foot-candle average intensity, illumination from the proposed field-lighting would extend beyond the property line to the north, and the addition of field-lighting has the potential to create excessive light and glare altering the ambient light levels in the area and causing an annoyance to adjacent properties and residential areas, this is identified as a ***potentially significant*** impact.

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Luminaire Location Summary				
Project: All Projects				
Symbol	Qty	Label	Arrangement	File Name
●	31	A	SINGLE	BSR1X.ies
■	23	B	SINGLE	GS317M.ies
○	8	C	SINGLE	GDCF42F.ies
□	15	D	BACK-BACK	GS317M.ies

INDIVIDUAL LUMINAIRE ISOLINES REPRESENT THRESHOLDS OF .25 AND .5 FOOTCANDLES.

Luminaire Schedule						
Project: All Projects						
Symbol	Qty	Label	Arrangement	Lumens	LLF	Description
●	31	A	SINGLE	5200	0.720	GARDCO BR800-100MH
■	23	B	SINGLE	13300	0.720	GARDCO BE 14-3-150MH
○	8	C	SINGLE	3200	0.860	GARDCO 220-F-42TRF
□	15	D	BACK-BACK	13300	0.720	GARDCO 1413_150MS

Numeric Summary								
Project: All Projects								
Description	CalcType	Units	Avg	Max	Min	Avg/Min	Max/Min	# Pts
Illuminance	Fc	1.82	12.2	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	1983

ALR ASSOCIATED LIGHTING REPRESENTATIVES, INC.
8480 ENTERPRISE WAY
P.O. BOX 2265
DALLAS, TX 75221
PHONE: (510) 638-0158 - FAX (510) 638-2908

ALL VALUES SHOWN ARE MAINTAINED HORIZONTAL FOOTCANDLES AT GRADE

PHOTOMETRIC DATA USED AS INPUT FOR THESE CALCULATIONS IS BASED ON ESTABLISHED IES PROCEDURES AND PUBLISHED LAMP RATINGS. FIELD PERFORMANCE WILL DEPEND ON ACTUAL LAMP, BALLAST, ELECTRICAL, AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS.

Calculations have been performed according to IES standards and good practice. Some differences between measured values and calculated results may occur due to tolerances in calculation methods, testing procedures, component performance, measurement techniques and field conditions such as voltage and temperature variations. Input data used to generate the attached calculations such as room dimensions, reflectances, furniture and architectural elements significantly affect the lighting calculations. If the real environment conditions do not match the input data, differences will occur between measured values and calculated values.

REPORT FOR: JHS PROPERTIES; ROBERT HERBST
BY: APPLICATIONS ENGINEERING; JIM MCCARTY, LC
SALES REPRESENTATIVE: ALRI STEVE ELLSWORTH

AGI32 VERSION 1.66
AGI (C) 2002 LIGHTING ANALYSTS, INC.
1034 WEST CHATFIELD AVENUE, SUITE 100, LITTLETON, CO 80127

Figure 5-6
Illumination Summary - Parking Lot

Source: Associated Lighting Representatives

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As discussed in the Project Description in Chapter 3 of this EIR, it is a stated Objective of the Project Applicant to qualify the proposed Project for certification under the US Green Building Council. The Applicant has indicated that the Project has been registered for certification under their Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) program. This program encourages environmentally sound practices in both construction and ongoing Project operation through, among other means, the use of high efficiency field lighting combined with ample natural lighting (windows) to reduce electrical usage. The Applicant has several LEED® approved measures intended for use in the Project, including the use of Musco Green Generation Lighting on outdoor fields as described above, which use 50% less power than traditional systems and are designed to significantly reduce glare and spillover when compared with standard field lighting fixtures. The Project's certification under the LEED® program would be considered an overall benefit of this Project, but would not be required in order to mitigate an adverse environmental effect of the Project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines or the CEQA environmental checklist. However, the City would like to ensure that the Project ultimately completes the USGBC's LEED® certification process; therefore, it is recommended that the City require proof of certification as a condition of Project approval.

The existing McInnis County Park to the north contains light standards ranging from 60-80 feet tall for the driving range and softball field, and these facilities operate until 10 p.m. Furthermore, the light standards at the softball fields and driving range are not completely downshielded and operate at higher lighting levels than that proposed at this site.

Additionally, the proposed materials for the recreational facility include a combination of metal panels and roofing. The proposed metal roof is designed to minimize reflectivity and all windows or glass surfaces would include glare reducing and color harmonizing finishes. The entire building would be painted in earthtone colors that blend with the surrounding natural environment.

The biological assessment prepared for the Project found that the proposed lighting may pose a negative impact on wildlife and habitat in the North Fork of Gallinas Creek. This EIR includes **MM Bio-3a**, which requires the lighting of the outdoor soccer field and warm-up area to be designed to have focused illumination areas to ensure there is no direct lighting of off-site areas, including the creek. This requirement can be verified through satisfactory compliance with **MM Aesth-1a**, which is recommended below. Incorporated into **MM Aesth-1a** is City's standard condition of approval requiring all lighting on development projects to be subjected to a 90-day lighting level review period, which helps to assure lighting levels achieved in the field are consistent with photometric plans. A verification of the Project's compliance with **MM Bio 3-a** can be made at this time.

As discussed above in the analysis of scenic vistas and public reviews, the Design Review Board reviewed Project on two occasions. On those occasions, the DRB also reviewed the lighting plan as it existed at that point, which did not include the proposed outdoor sports

field lights; these were proposed once the decision was made to prepare an EIR. The lighting plan that the DRB reviewed is shown in **Figure 5-6**. The DRB found that the lighting levels of the then proposed lighting plan were appropriate and would be at an acceptable level. At the time the Board recommended approval of the Project design to the Planning Commission and City Council but recommended a condition of approval requiring that the final lighting plan return to the DRB for approval. The City also maintains a standard condition of approval requiring all lighting on development projects to be subjected to a 90-day lighting level review period, which helps to assure lighting levels achieved in the field are consistent with photometric plans. Considering that the DRB has not yet reviewed the proposed field lighting plans, a mitigation measure will be included that requires the Project lighting plan to return to the DRB for consideration and approval prior to the issuance of building or grading permits. As part of their earlier review, the DRB also determined that the materials and colors proposed are appropriate for the site and would not be reflective or glare producing. However, they also recommended that prior to issuance of any building permit, the proposed building materials and colors be studied to ensure that they are not reflective or glare producing. These requirements would be included as a condition of approval should the Project be approved.

In conclusion, the proposed Project would result in an average light intensity that exceeds the City's general rule of 1.0 foot-candles. Additionally, while iterations of the Project have been reviewed and approved by the DRB, it has not reviewed the proposal to include outdoor field lighting. The City requires final lighting approval by the DRB as a standard condition of Project approval. For these reasons, this is considered a *potentially significant* impact, requiring the following mitigation measures:

Mitigation Measure

- MM Aesth-1a Design Review Board Lighting Approval.** Prior to issuance of building permits, the Project Proponent shall prepare an exterior lighting plan for all areas of the Project site subject to the photometric analysis for the review and approval of the Design Review Board. The plan shall meet the following performance standards and include the following information:
- Sufficient exterior lighting to establish a sense of well-being to the pedestrian and one that is sufficient to facilitate recognition of persons at a reasonable distance. Type (lighting standard) and placement of lighting shall be to the satisfaction of the Police Department and Department of Public Works;
 - A minimum of one foot-candle at ground level overlap provided in all exterior doorways and vehicle parking areas, and on outdoor pedestrian walkways presented on a photometric plan;
 - A maximum of one (1) foot-candle intensity at the property line and edge of conservation area;
 - Vandal-resistant garden and exterior lighting;
 - A lighting standard that is shielded to direct illumination downward and to limit casting light and glare on adjacent properties;
 - Exterior lighting on a master photoelectric cell, which is set to operate during hours of darkness;
 - The plan shall include a note requiring a site inspection 90 days following installation and operation of the lighting. The post construction inspection by the City shall allow adjustments in the direction and/or intensity of the lighting, if necessary;
 - Outdoor field lighting shall be set to turn off 15 minutes after the last scheduled game, or by 10 p.m. at the latest;
 - Security level lighting shall be set to turn off in parking areas and pedestrian walkways one-half hour after close of the facility, e.g. by 12:30 a.m.
- MM Aesth-1b Design Review Board Materials and Colors Approval.** Consistent with the recommendations of the Design Review Board subsequent to an earlier review, the DRB shall also review and approve the proposed building

materials to ensure that the proposed Project is designed with non-reflective and/or tinted glass to minimize potential daytime glare impacts pursuant to the Design Review Permit criteria established in the San Rafael Municipal Code Title 14 (zoning), Chapter 25 (Design Review). Additionally, Project landscape plans shall show the area where the DRB requested the gap in the Eucalyptus row to be filled in. Replacement species shall be consistent with City tree guidelines.

Resulting level of significance

Implementation of **MM Aesth-1a** and **MM Aesth-1b** above will ensure that Project lighting does not adversely affect the surrounding community, nor interfere with the operations of the San Rafael Airport. Additionally, the analysis above references **MM Bio-3a** and **MM Bio-3b** that the Applicant will be required to implement, which address potential lighting impacts on sensitive off-site habitat, including the North Fork of Gallinas Creek adjacent to the Project site. Implementation of **MMs Aesth-1a, Aesth-1b, Bio-3a, and Bio-3b** will successfully reduce any potentially significant lighting impacts to a level considered *less than significant*.