

4.6 VISUAL/AESTHETICS

This section presents a Tier 1/Program level assessment of potential visual and aesthetic impacts associated with the Parkway. Additional information on visual and aesthetics resources are provided in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) Visual Impact Assessment (URS, 2007h), which is available at the locations identified in the Executive Summary, including the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) website.

4.6.1 REGULATORY SETTING

Both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) require consideration of impacts to visual and aesthetic resources. A general discussion of NEPA and CEQA requirements is provided in Chapter 1 of this Tier 1 EIS/EIR. In additions, other types of legislation influence visual and aesthetic resources. Relevant laws and guidelines are described below.

FHWA Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects

NEPA requires "...the use [of] all practical means ... to assure ... esthetically ... pleasing surroundings." The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) added Title 23 of the U.S. Code to reflect NEPA's directives. In order to regulate aesthetic adherence to Title 23, FHWA developed the Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects (VIAHP) manual (1981). The Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS, 2007h) was prepared on the basis of the methodology set out in this manual.

4.6.1.1 General Plans and Policies

General Plans for Sutter County, Placer County, Sacramento County, the City of Roseville, the City of Rocklin, and the City of Lincoln include guidelines relevant to visual resources. Table 4.6-1 summarizes relevant visual resource guidelines contained within these plans.

4.6.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The study area largely consists of flat agricultural lands, with interspersed rural development surrounded by the peaks of the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Sutter Buttes to the northwest, and the Inner Coastal Range to the west. Approximately 91 percent of the parcels within the study area support various forms of agriculture, including pasture/grazing land (for cattle or sheep) cultivated agriculture (such as rice production), or other ranchland (Mara Feeney & Associates and North Fork Associates, 2007). Some industrial development has occurred in the westernmost and easternmost portions of the study area. More dense urban development is located adjacent to the eastern end of the study area, in the incorporated cities of Lincoln and Rocklin. The City of Roseville lies to the south of the Eastern Segment and to the east of the Central Segment of the study area.

FHWA guidance defines affected environment in terms of landscape units, or outdoor rooms. Landscape units are defined as an area or volume of distinct landscape character that forms a spatially enclosed unit at ground level; it may include more than one landscape type. There are three landscape units in the study area, each having its own distinct landscape character. These are the Western, Central, and Eastern Segment Landscape Units (Figure 2-1, Project Alternatives), which approximately correspond to the three segments of the study area. These are described further in Section 4.6.2.2.

4.6.2.1 Existing Typical Viewsheds

For the purposes of this report, the viewshed includes views to and from the corridor alignment alternatives, discussed by landscape unit. The project viewshed consists of a wide variety of foreground,

**Table 4.6-1
Summary of General Plan Policies and Goals (P&Gs)**

Document	P&Gs	Requirements
Sutter County General Plan	Land Use Visual & Scenic Routes <i>Goal 1.H</i>	To preserve and protect the visual and scenic resources of the area.
	Land Use Visual & Scenic Routes <i>Policy 1.H-1</i>	The County shall require that new development be designed to utilize vegetation for screening structures and parking areas.
	Conservation/Open Space – Natural Resources <i>Goal 4.E</i>	To conserve, protect, and enhance open space lands and natural resources in Sutter County.
	Conservation/Open Space – Natural Resources <i>Goal 4.E-1</i>	The County shall support the preservation of natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural resources as open space to the maximum extent feasible.
Placer County General Plan	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Goal 1.K</i>	To protect the visual and scenic resources of Placer County as important quality-of-life amenities for County residents and a principal asset in the promotion of recreation and tourism.
	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Policy 1.K.1</i>	The County shall require that new development in scenic areas (e.g., river canyons, lake watersheds, scenic highway corridors, ridgelines, and steep slopes) is planned and designed in a manner which employs design, construction, and maintenance techniques that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Avoid locating structures along ridgelines and steep slopes; b. Incorporate design and screening measures to minimize the visibility of structures and graded areas; c. Maintain the character and visual quality of the area.
	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Policy 1.K.2</i>	The County shall require that new development in scenic areas be designed to utilize natural landforms and vegetation for screening structures, access roads, building foundations, and cut and fill slopes.
	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Policy 1.K.3</i>	The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.
	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Policy 1.K.4</i>	The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limit cuts and fills; b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land; c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time; d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season; and e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development.

**Table 4.6-1
Summary of General Plan Policies and Goals (P&Gs) (Continued)**

Document	P&Gs	Requirements
Placer County General Plan (continued)	Land Use Visual and Scenic Resources <i>Policy 1.K.5</i>	The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to fit the natural terrain.
	Land Use Scenic Routes <i>Policy 1.L.3</i>	The County shall protect and enhance scenic corridors through such means as design review, sign control, underground utilities, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.
	Land Use Scenic Routes <i>Policy 1.L.4</i>	The County shall provide for landscaping and/or landscaped mounding along designated scenic corridors where desirable to maintain and improve scenic qualities and screen unsightly views.
	Land Use Scenic Routes <i>Policy 1.L.8</i>	The County shall include aesthetic design considerations in road construction, reconstruction, or maintenance for all scenic routes under County jurisdiction.
	Land Use Development Form and Design <i>Goal 1.O</i>	To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer County
	Land Use Development Form and Design <i>Policy 1.O.9</i>	The County shall discourage the use of outdoor lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.
	Recreational & Cultural Resources Recreational Trails <i>Goal 5.C</i>	To develop a system of interconnected hiking, riding, and bicycling trails and paths suitable for active recreation and transportation circulation.
	Recreational & Cultural Resources Recreational Trails <i>Policy 5.C.4</i>	The County shall require the proponents of new development to dedicate rights-of-way and/or the actual construction of segments of the Countywide trail system pursuant to trails plans contained in the County's various community plans.
Recreational & Cultural Resources Recreational Trails <i>Policy 5.C.5</i>	The County shall encourage the preservation of linear open space along rail corridors and other public easements for future use as trails.	
County of Sacramento General Plan	Land Use Element Agricultural-Recreation Reserve	This designation identifies lands that have potential recreational value but that would remain in agricultural or related and compatible open space use for the plan period. The location and extent of this category are determined by the presence of scenic, aesthetic, wildlife, or other resources that require special protection and that may have potential recreational value. The intent of the General Plan is that these lands remain in agricultural uses through the plan period, although some low-intensity recreational uses that do not require the provision of urban services or flood protection may be permitted. Such recreational uses may be either publicly or privately owned and must be compatible with adjoining agricultural and natural preserve uses.

**Table 4.6-1
Summary of General Plan Policies and Goals (P&Gs) (Continued)**

Document	P&Gs	Requirements
County of Sacramento General Plan (continued)	Land Use Element Visual Quality <i>LU-24</i>	Require overhead light fixtures to be shaded and directed away from adjacent residential areas.
	Land Use Element Visual Quality <i>LU-25</i>	Require exterior lighting to be low-intensity and used only where necessary for safety and security purposes.
	Circulation Element <i>Policy CI-6.</i> <i>Implementation Item B</i>	Prepare new Transportation Improvement Standards that better integrate pedestrian, transit, and bicycle access and aesthetics.
	Circulation Element <i>Policy CI-16</i>	Sacramento County shall implement a program to buffer land uses from each other and transportation system facilities that is effective and aesthetically pleasing and minimizes the amount of land lost to buffers.
	Open Space Element <i>Policy OS-10</i>	Permit development clustering in urban areas where grouping of units at a higher density would facilitate on-site protection of woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, urban stream corridors, scenic areas, or other appropriate natural features as open space.
	Open Space Element <i>Key Open Space Concepts</i>	Open space linkages in the urban environment are also important because they provide definition and scale to neighborhoods and visual, psychological relief to the pervasiveness of urban sprawl. They also create the opportunity for attractive, safe transportation corridors for non-vehicular travel.
Roseville General Plan	Land Use Element Growth Management <i>Goal 13</i>	New development to the west of Fiddymont Road shall be consistent with the City's desire to establish an edge along the western boundary of the City that fosters a physical separation from County lands through a system of connected open space; a well-defined sense of entry to City from west; opportunities for habitat preservation and recreation; and view preservation corridors that provide an aesthetic and recreational resource for residents.
	Land Use Element Community Design <i>Policy 8</i>	Encourage and promote the preservation of historic and/or unique, culturally and architecturally significant buildings, features, and visual environments.
City of Rocklin General Plan	Conservation, Development, and the Utilization of Natural Resources <i>Goal OCR- 53</i>	To consider the visual qualities of development projects and project compatibility with surrounding areas, especially when projects are proposed in urbanizing areas abutting rural or semi-rural areas where significant natural resource values exist.
City of Lincoln General Plan	Land Use <i>Goal LU-12</i>	To enhance the urban form while maintaining visual and physical access to distinctive environmental features.
	Land Use Open Space Views <i>Policy LU-12.1</i>	The City shall maintain visual access to hillside views by regulating building orientation, height, and bulk.

**Table 4.6-1
Summary of General Plan Policies and Goals (P&Gs) (Continued)**

Document	P&Gs	Requirements
City of Lincoln General Plan (continued)	Land Use Open Space Views <i>Policy LU-12.3</i>	To enhance views of hillsides, open space, and other distinctive views within the community, proposed project designs would be expected to maintain some viewshed by regulating building orientation, height, and mass.
	Land Use Visual Access to Creeks and Wetland Areas <i>Policy LU-12.6</i>	Wherever practical, the City would encourage new development to be oriented toward adjacent creeks and wetland areas and provide visual access to these areas.
	Open Space and Conservation Protect Natural Resources <i>Policy OSC-1.1</i>	The City shall strive to protect natural resource areas, fish and wildlife habitat areas, scenic areas, open space areas, and parks from encroachment or destruction by incompatible development.
	Open Space and Conservation Encourage Planting of Native Vegetation <i>Policy OSC-5.4</i>	The City shall encourage the planting of native trees, shrubs, and grasslands in order to preserve the visual integrity of the landscape, provide habitat conditions suitable for native vegetation, and ensure that a maximum number and variety of well-adapted plants are maintained.

middleground, and background views. Foreground and middleground viewsheds generally follow the study area boundary. Sunset Boulevard West/Howsley Road delineates the majority of the north study area boundary. Background views of the surrounding landscapes (including, but not limited to, the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Sutter Buttes, and the Inner Coastal Range) are found throughout all viewshed landscape units.

Based on assessment of viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure and the extent of the viewshed, 22 viewsheds were identified in the study area (Figure 4.6-1). Viewer exposure is determined by assessing the *number* of viewers exposed to the resource change and the type of viewer activity, the physical *location* of the viewer, and the *duration* of the view. Duration of view is influenced by the location of the viewer. A viewer traveling in a vehicle experiences a limited duration of a particular view, whereas a resident may have a view that is constant. Viewer exposure also is affected by features such as topography and the built environment, which may block or partially obscure views. All such factors are considered when assessing viewer exposure of a project. High viewer exposure can increase the need for design modifications early in project development to avoid or minimize adverse visual impacts. Viewer sensitivity is defined as viewer *activity*, *awareness*, *local values*, and *cultural significance* of the visual resource. Understanding viewers' concern for scenic quality and viewers' response to change of the visual resources that make up the view helps determine viewer sensitivity. Often communities may place visual significance on landscape components and areas that would otherwise appear unexceptional in a visual resource analysis; in effect assessment of viewer sensitivity takes into account local values and goals. The sensitivities of different types of viewers within the foreground, middleground, and background of the study area vary depending on viewer activity and awareness of and familiarity with the surrounding environment.

Additional details of the comparative sensitivity and exposure of the various types of viewers in the study area listed below are provided in the Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR. Viewshed

locations within the three identified landscape units represent typical key views of various sensitivities within the project vicinity from a variety of view distances (foreground, middleground, and background). The flat topography of the area lends itself to broad, expansive views that include all three distance zones.

Additional details of these 22 representative Landscape Unit Viewshed Locations, along with photographs and existing visual quality ratings for each view, are provided in the Visual Impact Assessment for the Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS, 2007h).

4.6.2.2 Visual Character

FHWA methodology defines visual resources in terms of visual character and visual quality. Visual character is descriptive and nonevaluative. Visual character (e.g., water, vegetation, and manmade development) is usually described by identifying *landscape types* that form *visual units*. These units include *pattern elements* (form, line, color, texture) and *pattern character* (dominance, scale, diversity, continuity). Any change to these visual units cannot be described as positive or negative until compared with the viewer response to change.

Visual Quality is described in Section 4.6.2.3.

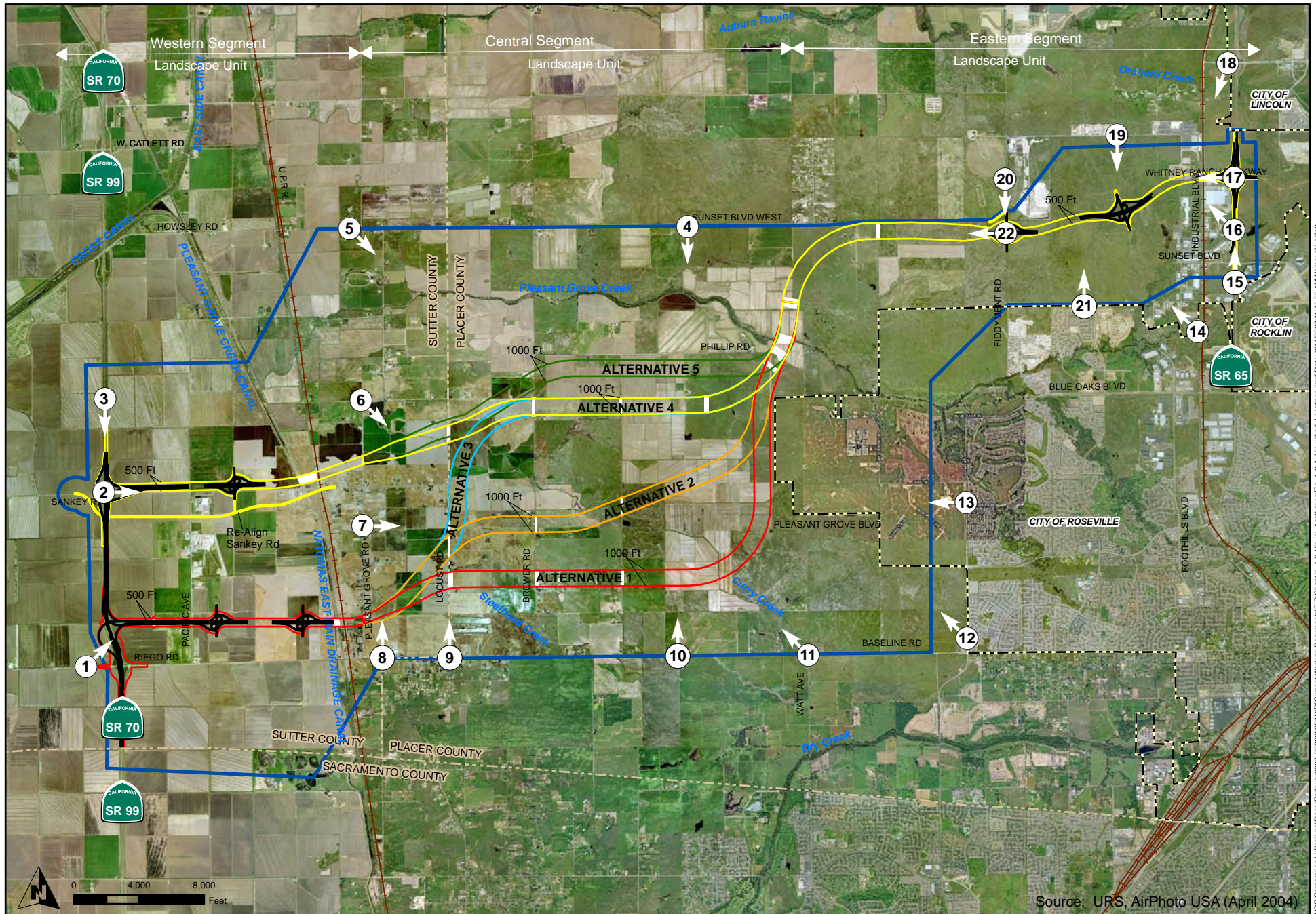
Western Segment Landscape Unit

The visual character for the Western Segment Landscape Unit generally is described as agricultural in nature, with minimal influence from development (Figure 4.6-2). The Western Segment Landscape Unit includes unincorporated portions of Sutter and Sacramento counties and is approximately 10,402 acres (approximately 29 percent of the study area). State Route (SR) 70/99 runs north to south along the western edge of the segment, while major east-west arterials include Riego Road (rural arterial), Sankey Road (rural roadway), Howsley Road (roadway), and Pleasant Grove Road (rural arterial), which straddles the border between the Western and Central segments. Other infrastructure in this segment landscape unit includes the Union Pacific Railroad, which runs north-south in the middle of the segment landscape unit, as well as a fire station near Sankey Road. Water features in the Western Segment Landscape Unit include Pleasant Grove Creek, the Cross Canal, the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal, Steelhead Creek, and scattered vernal pool wetland complexes.

Background views from the Western Segment Landscape Unit include views of the Inner Coastal Range to the West, the Sutter Buttes to the northwest, and views of the peaks of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east. The Western Segment Landscape Unit contains industrial/commercial uses within Sutter County, including the Sysco facility along Pacific Avenue near the intersection of Sankey Road, and an industrial park south of the Sysco facility. As in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit, these industrial facilities are located near a major highway, in this case SR 70/99, which is approximately 1 mile west. There are also areas of rural residential development located on or near Pleasant Grove Road within this landscape unit. Land use in this area of Sutter County is rice production with scattered rural residences.

Central Segment Landscape Unit

The Central Segment Landscape Unit has a visual character that is agricultural in nature, with large expanses of relatively undeveloped or farmed lands (Figure 4.6-3). The Central Segment Landscape Unit encompasses parts of unincorporated Sutter and Placer counties and is the largest of the three segment landscape units. It includes approximately 15,292 acres (approximately 43 percent of the study area). The major roadways include Riego/Baseline Road, Sankey Road, and Pleasant Grove Road, which straddles the border between the Western and Central segments. The public land uses existing within this segment landscape unit include the planned City of Roseville's Retention Basin near Phillip Road and a small wildlife



Source: URS, AirPhoto USA (April 2004)

	Alternative 1		Alternative 4		County Boundary		Interchanges
	Alternative 2		Alternative 5		City Boundary		Overcrossing
	Alternative 3		Study Area Boundary		Viewshed Location With View Direction		



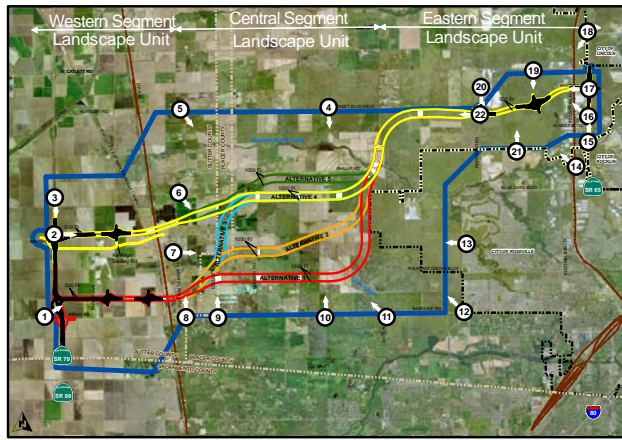
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Viewshed Locations For Western, Central and Eastern Segment Landscape Units

Figure 4.6-1

June 2007

URS Corporation L:\Projects\PlacerParkway\2007_2806655\AXXD\Current Working Documents\EIS\Chapter_4_6-1_Viewshed_Locations.mxd Date: 2/14/2007 11:45:33 AM Name: akkeee00



Western Segment Landscape Unit - Northbound traveler views on SR-70/99 @ Sankey Rd. looking east toward project. County of Sutter, CA (See ② on map inset)

Source: URS, Google Earth (April 2006)

- Alternative 1 (Red line)
- Alternative 2 (Orange line)
- Alternative 3 (Light Blue line)
- Alternative 4 (Yellow line)
- Alternative 5 (Green line)
- Study Area Boundary (Blue outline)
- County Boundary (Dashed line)
- City Boundary (Dotted line)
- Interchanges (Black line with arrows)
- Overcrossing (White rectangle)
- Viewshed With View Direction (ID icon with arrow)

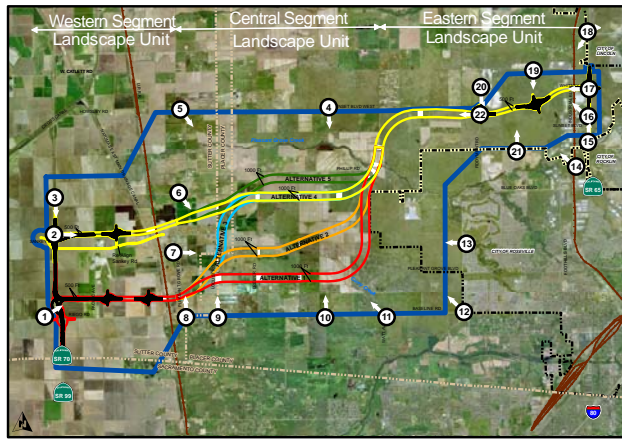


Tier 1 EIS/EIR

Western Segment Landscape Unit

Figure 4.6-2

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Central Segment Landscape Unit - Eastbound traveler on Sunset Blvd. West between Pettigrew Rd. and Dinky Ln. looking south toward proposed project. County of Placer, CA (See ④ on map inset)

Source: URS, Google Earth (April 2006)

- █ Alternative 1
- █ Alternative 2
- █ Alternative 3
- █ Alternative 4
- █ Alternative 5
- █ Study Area Boundary
- County Boundary
- City Boundary
- Interchanges
- Overcrossing
- ID → Viewshed With View Direction



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Central Segment Landscape Unit

Figure 4.6-3

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preserve near the Brewer Road crossing of Curry Creek. Water-related features in the Central Segment Landscape Unit include Pleasant Grove Creek, Steelhead Creek, Curry Creek, a small water-ski park/catfish farm near the intersection of Baseline Road and Locust Road, and various vernal pool and wetland complexes located throughout the segment landscape unit. Background views from the Central Segment Landscape Unit are similar to those from the Western Segment. The predominant land uses in this segment landscape unit are agricultural, with small enclaves of rural residential uses (specifically near Baseline and Pleasant Grove roads). In addition, there is a small industrial wood fabrication facility near the rural residential homes close to the intersection of Baseline and Pleasant Grove Roads.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

The Eastern Segment Landscape Unit is characterized as a varied landscape that includes agricultural land, areas of dense residential development, and areas developed as major roadways (Figure 4.6-4). The Eastern Segment Landscape Unit is approximately 9,754 acres in size (approximately 28 percent of the study area) and includes areas within the City of Rocklin, the City of Roseville, and unincorporated Placer County. SR 65 and several regional arterial roadways such as Sunset Boulevard, Blue Oaks Boulevard, Pleasant Grove Boulevard, and Baseline Road run through portions of this segment landscape unit. Large regional facilities in this segment landscape unit include the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill/Materials Recovery Facility, the Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant (PGWWTP), the newly constructed Roseville Energy Park, and Sacramento Municipal Utilities District/Western Area Power Authority power lines. Streams in this segment landscape unit include a small tributary of Orchard Creek in the northern part of the Eastern Segment, north of the proposed corridor alignment; Pleasant Grove Creek; and Curry Creek. This segment landscape unit also contains the largest area of vernal pool and wetland complexes, specifically in the area adjacent to the existing PGWWTP. Background views from the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit are similar to those from the Western Segment. The current land use in the easternmost portion of this segment landscape unit is a mixture of industrial and commercial uses near the SR 65 corridor. Public facilities, including the landfill and the PGWWTP, grazing land, or idle farmland, cultivated agricultural land, and a few rural residences are located in the western portion of this segment landscape unit.

4.6.2.3 Visual Quality

In addition to inventorying visual character for each of the landscape units, existing visual quality was rated. The FHWA VIAHP Manual uses three criteria to measure visual quality: vividness, intactness, and unity. An area or landscape unit is considered to have High visual quality if it is rated high for all three criteria. Additional details of these criteria are provided in the Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS, 2007h). As the evaluation of visual character and quality is highly subjective, FHWA Landscape Unit Checklist/Visual Inventory and Analysis worksheets are used as an assessment tool. Completed worksheets used for the visual impact analysis are included in the Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS, 2007h). Table 4.6-2 indicates ratings for the three landscape units in relation to the FHWA's three criteria.

**Table 4.6-2
FHWA Visual Quality Assessment**

Segment Landscape Units	FHWA Criteria		
	Vividness	Intactness	Unity
Western	Moderate	Low	Low
Central	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Eastern	Moderate/Low	Low	Low

Each segment landscape unit’s overall visual quality rating is Moderate to Low. There are no existing areas of High visual quality in the study area.

Table 4.6-3 identifies existing visual character/quality and viewer sensitivity/exposure by landscape unit in the study area. Additional details of viewer sensitivity and exposure are provided in Section 4.6.2.1.

**Table 4.6-3
Existing Visual Character/Quality and Viewer Sensitivity/Exposure by Landscape Unit**

Segment Landscape Unit	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate	Moderate
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Low/Moderate	Low/Moderate
Eastern	Urban with Agricultural Influence	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

4.6.2.4 Existing Viewshed Lighting

FHWA guidance requires assessment of nighttime views and changes to lighting and glare. Placer Parkway would require installation of nighttime lighting fixtures. Existing lighting sources in the study area are limited to the developed areas, which are predominantly in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit. At the Tier 1 stage, detailed design information on potential location, types, and quantity of proposed project lighting is not available; therefore, analysis of impacts from proposed lighting is not included in this assessment.

4.6.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.6.3.1 Methodology for Impact Evaluation

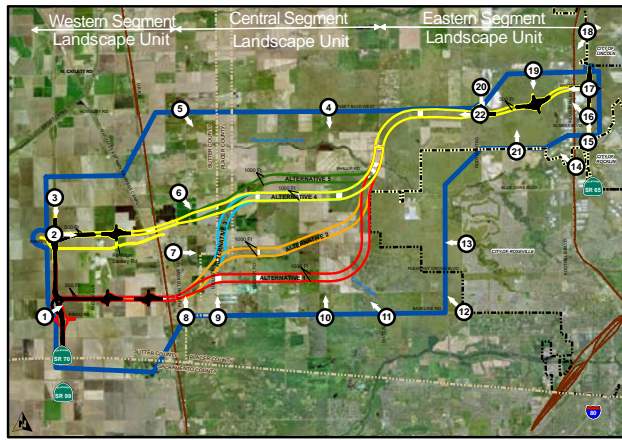
The analysis of visual impacts for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR was based on the methodology set out in the VIAHP Manual. This follows four principal steps:

1. Define the affected environment, including project setting and viewshed (see Section 4.6.2);
2. Identify key views for visual assessment (see Section 4.6.2 and Visual Impact Assessment);
3. Assess the visual impacts of project, including resource change and viewer response; and
4. Propose methods to mitigate adverse visual impacts.

4.6.3.2 Evaluation Criteria

VIAHP guidelines define “visual impact” as follows: resource change + viewer response = visual impact. To evaluate *resource change*, the presence, character, and quality of visual resources in the study area must be determined. To evaluate *viewer response*, one must define the viewers (*of* and *from* the project), their exposure, and their sensitivity. Viewer response is a measurement of existing viewers. FHWA does not require a visual analysis to hypothesize future viewers who may be affected by a project. Therefore, a Visual Impact Assessment analyzes impacts of a future project on existing viewers. Additional details of the VIAHP methodology are provided in the Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS, 2007h).

FHWA has defined the following measures of visual impact levels:



Eastern Segment Landscape Unit - Westbound traveler on Whitney Ranch Parkway & SR-65 looking west toward proposed project. County of Placer, CA (See 17 on map inset)

Source: URS, Google Earth (April 2006)



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Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

Figure 4.6-4

June 2007

- **Low** – Minor adverse change to the existing visual resource, with low viewer response to change in the visual environment. May or may not require mitigation.
- **Moderate** – Moderate adverse change to the visual resource with moderate viewer response. Impact can be mitigated within five years using conventional practices.
- **Moderately High** – Moderate adverse visual resource change with high viewer response or high adverse visual resource change with moderate viewer response. Extraordinary mitigation practices may be required. Landscape treatment required would generally take longer than five years to mitigate.
- **High** – A high level of adverse change to the resource or a high level of viewer response to visual change such that architectural design and landscape treatment cannot mitigate the impacts. Viewer response level is high. An alternative project design may be required to avoid highly adverse impacts.

4.6.3.3 Direct Impacts

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative (see Section 2.3-1), land for the future construction of the Placer Parkway would not be acquired and the Placer Parkway would not be constructed. No impacts to visual resources would occur as a result of the No-Build Alternative.

Alternative 1 – the Red Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit

Visual Character. Under Alternative 1, visual character in the Western Segment Landscape Unit would change from predominantly agricultural in nature with urban influences, to a shared urban and agricultural character. The Parkway would bring co-dominance between agricultural- and urban-based forms, lines, colors, and textures. Agricultural pattern elements (flat forms, clean lines, green/natural undertones, and rich rural textures) currently dominate the Western Segment Landscape Unit. The influence of additional urban pattern elements (linear and concrete forms, more dominant roadway and structural lines, gray and black color undertones, and concrete/pavement textures) would create a strong change in visual character and increase the visual diversity of the study area; a process already began with the implementation of the West Roseville Specific Plan (WRSP), which has introduced grading and other preconstruction improvements to the area. Landscaping and other mitigation strategies are identified to help soften the change in character and are discussed further in Section 4.6.4.

Alternative 1 would result in a change in character within the Western Segment Landscape Unit as agricultural land is converted to highway use. Changes to the visual character with the Parkway would include the introduction of new, highly visible structures, including two or three interchanges, with a freeway-to-freeway interchange, bridges, and local street over crossings. The scale and dominance of these changes in conjunction with the existing flat natural environmental would change existing panoramic views of the area. Consequently, due to changes in the form, line, color, and textures introduced by the Parkway changes in scale, continuity, diversity, and dominance, under Alternative 1, the character of the Western Segment Landscape Unit would be characterized as agricultural/urban co-dominant (see Table 4.6-4).

Visual Quality. Alternative 1 would not affect the characterization of visual quality in the Western Segment Landscape Unit, which would remain Moderate to Low. Under Alternative 1, the Western

Segment Landscape Unit would continue to be characterized as having Moderate visual intactness, and the addition of the Parkway would further contribute to the lack of integrity of the landscape. Existing unity for the Western Segment Landscape Unit is considered Low, as agricultural areas are interspersed with roadways and limited urban development. Background views from the Western Segment Landscape Unit would continue to include views of the Inner Coastal Range to the west, the Sutter Buttes to the northwest, and views of the peaks of the Sierra Nevada to the east. The Parkway would further reduce this unity. Overall, the Western Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 1 would maintain a Moderate/Low visual quality rating (Table 4.6-4).

**Table 4.6-4
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts of Alternative 1
(FHWA Criteria)**

Segment Landscape Unit	Resource Change		Viewer Response		Potential Impact
	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure	
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate	Moderate
Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

Viewer Sensitivity. Under Alternative 1, viewer sensitivity to the Western Segment Landscape Unit has been classified as Moderate/High because the viewer’s concern for scenic quality and change to the existing visual setting is anticipated to be High. Currently most viewers within the study area are commuters using existing roadways, and therefore existing viewer sensitivity is Low. Viewer sensitivity may change with the introduction of new major structures associated with Parkway, such as the freeway-to-freeway interchange and one or two additional interchanges within this landscape unit. Although viewer focus would likely be on the Parkway itself, new structures would create visual interest and would heighten traveler viewer sensitivity to the project. Heightened viewer sensitivity would also occur as agricultural lands are used for the Parkway. In addition, there are scattered rural residences and some residential communities that would have views of the Parkway with the introduction of this alternative. Viewer sensitivity under Alternative 1 would shift from Moderate (Table 4.6-3) to Moderate/High Sensitivity (Table 4.6-4).

Viewer Exposure. Alternative 1 would create a change in viewer exposure from and of the Parkway. The majority of viewers of Alternative 1 within the Western Segment Landscape Unit would be travelers viewing the project from SR 70/99. Existing traffic along this major roadway can be characterized as moderate to heavy and continuous. Existing exposure for views from SR 70/99 of Alternative 1, however, can be characterized as Moderate to Low since most viewers would be exposed to changes in views for minimal duration (while traveling) at high rates of speed. Alternative 1 would add vehicular capacity to the study area, thereby adding additional viewers from Alternative 1. In addition, Alternative 1 would potentially have recreational/commuter bicycle viewers in the study area who would have longer, continual views of Alternative 1. The number of viewers would remain moderate to heavy. Existing residences within the study area would have stationary views (in addition to moving views to and from their homes) of Alternative 1. The number of residences with views of the alternative is characterized as Low for the Western Segment Landscape Unit. However, the frequency of exposure for these residences would be High. Although overcrossings and interchanges would be visible from a

variety of nearby residential viewers and travelers, the existing flat topography minimizes direct views of the roadway itself for most viewsheds within the Western Segment Landscape Unit. Overall viewer exposure of the Western Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 1 would shift from Moderate (Table 4.6-3) to Moderate/High (Table 4.6-4).

Central Segment Landscape Unit

Visual Character. Under Alternative 1, the character in the Central Segment Landscape Unit would remain agricultural in nature but would have a stronger urban influence due to the addition of the Parkway. The resource area would change from predominantly agricultural in nature with large expanses of relatively undeveloped or farmed lands to a mix of urban- and rural-influences. Agricultural pattern elements (flat forms, clean lines, green/natural undertones, and rich rural textures) currently dominate the Central Segment Landscape Unit. Alternative 1 would introduce urban-based forms, lines, colors, and textures to a relatively rural area; a process already began with the implementation of the WRSP, which has introduced grading and other preconstruction improvements to the area. The influence of urban pattern elements (linear and concrete forms, more dominant roadway and structural lines, gray and black color undertones, and concrete/pavement textures) would increase visual diversity. Landscaping and other mitigation is proposed to help soften the change in character (see Section 4.6.4). Even with the inclusion of the Parkway, the Central Segment Landscape Unit would remain agricultural in nature, but the additional urban pattern elements would add to the urban influence already found in the region.

The continuity of farming lands in the Central Segment Landscape Unit area is currently broken up by rural roadways. Alternative 1 would cause a distinct change in character for a corridor within this landscape unit as agricultural areas are used for the Parkway. Changes to the visual character with the Project include the introduction of new highly visible structures, including a bridge over Pleasant Grove Creek and local street overcrossings. The scale and dominance of these changes in conjunction with the existing flat natural environmental would impede some existing panoramic views and add views to other areas of the region. Alternative 1 would create changes in the form, line, color, and textures introduced by the Parkway that would create changes in scale, continuity, diversity, and dominance. However, under Alternative 1, the character of the Central Segment Landscape Unit would remain agricultural with an urban influence.

Visual Quality. Alternative 1 would not affect the existing vividness of the Central Segment Landscape Unit, which is characterized as Moderate, reflecting its flat rural terrain. Background views from the Central Segment Landscape Unit would not change. The existing Low intactness rating of the Central Segment Landscape Unit would not be substantially affected by Alternative 1. Urban development (including rural roadways and scattered residences/businesses) intermixed with rural development (agricultural fields) already has changed the original natural setting that once existed. Alternative 1 would only add to the lack of integrity of the landscape, further lowering the intactness of the area. Existing unity for the Central Segment Landscape Unit is considered Moderate. Manmade natural landscapes (e.g., agricultural areas) co-exist with the rural roadways and limited rural-based development, but the overall harmony of the agricultural setting in the region remains unified. Alternative 1 would result in the Central Segment Landscape Unit becoming less predominantly agricultural in nature. The introduction of a manmade, urban feature would decrease the unity of the area to Low. Overall, the Central Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 1 would maintain a Moderate visual quality rating.

Viewer Sensitivity. Under Alternative 1, viewer sensitivity to the Central Segment Landscape Unit has been classified as Moderate/High because the viewer's concern for scenic quality and change to existing visual resources is anticipated to be High. Currently most viewers within the study area are commuters using existing roadways; therefore, existing viewer sensitivity to Alternative 1 would be Low. Viewer sensitivity may change with the introduction of proposed structures associated with the alternative, such

as the overcrossings within this landscape unit. Although viewer focus probably would be on the alternative itself, new structures would create visual interest and heighten traveler viewer sensitivity of the Parkway. In addition, heightened viewer sensitivity from nearby residences (and other viewers) of the alternative would occur as agricultural lands are converted to urban Parkway uses. Viewer sensitivity under Alternative 1 would shift from Low/Moderate (Table 4.6-3) to Moderate/High (Table 4.6-4).

Viewer Exposure. Alternative 1 would create a change in viewer exposure from and to the Parkway. Although existing traffic through the landscape unit is characterized as moderate to heavy and continuous, the existing exposure for the majority of viewers is characterized as Moderate to Low since most viewers would be exposed to changes in views for minimal duration (while traveling) at high rates of speed. In addition, Alternative 1 would potentially have recreational/commuter bicycle viewers in the study area who would have longer, continual views of Alternative 1. Viewers in existing residences within the study area would primarily have stationary views of Alternative 1 and experience relatively high exposure to these views. Overcrossings and interchanges would be visible to a variety of nearby viewers and travelers, and existing flat topography would allow direct views of the roadway for viewsheds in proximity to Alternative 1 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit. Overall viewer exposure of the Central Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 1 would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

Visual Character. Under Alternative 1, the character of the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit would change dramatically. Substantial additional urban influences would be introduced to the character of the area (e.g., three new interchanges including a freeway-to-freeway interchange and local street overcrossings). The Eastern Segment Landscape Unit includes views from portions of Rocklin, Roseville, and Lincoln within Placer County. Agricultural lands and rural development surround the urban development, but of the three landscape units, the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit contains the most urban character. This segment landscape unit contains a mixture of industrial and commercial uses, including large regional facilities and infrastructure. Alternative 1 would introduce additional urban-based forms, lines, colors, and textures, thus creating a stronger urban influence. Linear and concrete forms, more dominant roadway and structural lines, gray and black color undertones, and concrete/pavement textures would add to the urban characterization of the area. However, agricultural pattern elements (flat forms, clean lines, green/natural undertones, and rich rural textures) would remain a dominant influence. Landscaping and other mitigation is proposed to help soften the edges of these mixed areas (see Section 4.6.4).

The Eastern Segment Landscape Unit is characterized as diverse, with areas of flat, rural agricultural lands adjacent to large-scale residential developments lying within and adjacent to the Alternative 1 corridor. Currently there are few aboveground structures, overcrossings, or interchanges within the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 1. Urban influences in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit do include the Union Pacific Railroad and the Rio Bravo biomass power plant property in the vicinity of Industrial Boulevard. Changes in visual character would affect views of and from the Parkway from surrounding areas. Consequently, due to changes in the form, line, color, and textures introduced by Alternative 1 that would create changes in scale, continuity, diversity, and dominance, the character of the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit would shift from Urban with Agricultural Influence to Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant.

Visual Quality. Alternative 1 would not substantially affect the vividness of the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit, which would remain Moderate to Low. This segment landscape unit is typified by a mix of agricultural lands and dense residential developments. Notable visual features consist of industrial and commercial structures. Background views from the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit would not change. The addition of this alternative would contribute further to the lack of integrity of the landscape, thereby further lowering the intactness of the area. Existing unity for the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit is

considered Low, with agricultural landscapes interspersed with roadways and areas of urban development. Alternative 1 would further disrupt this existing low level of visual unity. Overall, the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 1 would maintain a Moderate to Low visual quality rating.

Viewer Sensitivity. Under Alternative 1, viewer sensitivity to the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit has been classified as Moderate/High. Currently most viewers within the study area are commuters using existing roadways. Viewer sensitivity would change with the introduction of new major structures associated with the alternative, such as the freeway-to-freeway interchange and overcrossings. Although viewer focus probably would be on the Parkway itself, new structures would create visual interest and would heighten traveler viewer sensitivity of the project. Heightened viewer sensitivity would also occur for those viewers within the region who would view this alternative on a regular basis (e.g., residents and commuters). Viewer sensitivity under Alternative 1 would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate/High.

Viewer Exposure. The Eastern Segment Landscape Unit currently has a Moderate/High viewer exposure due to the large numbers of residential and traveler viewers within the area. The majority of traveler viewers of Alternative 1 within the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit would have views from SR 65. Existing traffic along this major roadway can be characterized as moderate to heavy and continuous. Most viewers of Alternative 1 from SR 65 would be exposed to changes in views for minimal duration while traveling at high rates of speed. Alternative 1 would add vehicular capacity to the study area, thereby adding additional viewers from Alternative 1. In addition, Alternative 1 would potentially have recreational/commuter bicycle viewers in the study area who would have longer, continual views of Alternative 1. The number of viewers would remain moderate to heavy. Viewers in existing residences within the study area would have primarily stationary views of Alternative 1 and would experience relatively high exposure to these views. The number of residences with views of Alternative 1 is characterized as High for the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit because of the nearby developed areas (including potential views from the three surrounding incorporated cities). Although overcrossings and interchanges would be visible from a variety of nearby residential viewers and travelers, the existing flat topography minimizes direct views of the roadway itself for many viewsheds at a greater distance from the alternative within the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit. Overall viewer exposure of the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 1 in place would remain unchanged at Moderate/High.

Summary of Potential Visual Impacts

For Alternative 1, potential visual impacts are found to be Moderate/High, as defined by FHWA criteria. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure) by landscape unit (Western, Central, and Eastern segment landscape units). Table 4.6-4 presents the summary of potential visual impacts by Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 1 in place using FHWA visual impact methodology.

Based on a Tier 1 analysis, Alternative 1 is consistent with local General Plan policies and goals. This alternative would provide a buffer between the roadway that eventually would be constructed and adjacent uses, include context-appropriate landscaping concepts, and be compatible with planned trail systems. Roadway design details have not been developed for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR.

Alternative 2 – the Orange Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 would be the same as with Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Central Segment Landscape Unit

The potential impacts for Alternative 2 through the Central Segment are virtually the same as described for Alternative 1. The following paragraphs focus on impacts that differ between these two alternatives.

Visual Character. The Visual Character within the Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 is similar to that for Alternative 1 (agricultural with urban influence). Alternative 2, however, would cross many branches of Curry Creek, thereby adding additional urban influences to the rural agricultural setting and character of the area. In addition, the distance from Country Acres residences would be farther with Alternative 2 than with Alternative 1; hence, urban influences with this alternative would likely be more out of character with the existing setting. Even with these differences, the overall visual character for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 2 would continue to be characterized as agricultural with an urban influence.

Visual Quality. The Visual Quality within the Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 would be similar to that for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1. The main difference between these two alternatives is that the additional creek crossings associated with Alternative 2 probably would degrade the existing scenic quality more than under Alternative 1. Although the visual quality for both alternatives would remain unchanged (both being classified as having Moderate to Low scenic visual quality), Alternative 2 would likely have a lower visual quality rating than Alternative 1.

Viewer Sensitivity. The Viewer Sensitivity for Alternative 2 would be similar to that for Alternative 1 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 2 would be farther away from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts from viewer sensitivity, therefore, would be slightly less for Alternative 2 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit than for Alternative 1. Overall, viewer sensitivity for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 2 in place would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate.

Viewer Exposure. The Viewer Sensitivity and Exposure for Alternative 2 would be similar to that for Alternative 1 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 2 would be farther away from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts from viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure, therefore, would be slightly less for Alternative 2 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit than for Alternative 1. Viewer exposure for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 1 would remain similar to existing conditions, categorized as Moderate/High.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Summary of Potential Visual Impacts

Potential visual impacts with Alternative 2 would be Moderate/High, as defined by FHWA criteria. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure) by landscape unit (Western, Central, and Eastern segment landscape units). Table 4.6-5 presents the summary of potential visual impacts, by landscape unit, with Alternative 2 using FHWA visual impact methodology.

**Table 4.6-5
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts of Alternative 2
(FHWA Criteria)**

Segment Landscape Unit	Resource Change		Viewer Response		Potential Impact
	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure	
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

With respect to consistency with local General Plan policies and goals, Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 – the Blue Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 3 would be the same as described for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Central Segment Landscape Unit

Although Alternative 3 would vary from Alternative 1 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit, the potential impacts for both are similar. Therefore, refer to the discussions for Alternative 1 wherever it is cited. The following paragraphs cover only the ways in which the impacts of Alternative 3 would differ from those of Alternative 1.

Viewer Sensitivity. The Viewer Sensitivity for Alternative 3 would be similar to that of Alternatives 1 and 2 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 3 would be farther from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts from viewer sensitivity, therefore, would be slightly less for Alternative 3 than from either Alternatives 1 or 2 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit. Overall, viewer sensitivity for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 3 would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate.

Viewer Exposure. The Viewer Exposure for Alternative 3 would be similar to that for Alternatives 1 and 2 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 3 would be farther from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts to viewer exposure, therefore, would be slightly lessened for Alternative 3 within the Central

Segment Landscape Unit than from Alternatives 1 or 2. Viewer exposure in the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 3 would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 3 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Summary of Potential Visual Impacts

Potential visual impacts from Alternative 3 would be Moderate/High, as defined by FHWA criteria. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure) by landscape unit (Western, Central, and Eastern segment landscape units). Table 4.6-6 illustrates the summary of potential visual impacts of Alternative 3 by landscape unit, using FHWA visual impact methodology.

With respect to consistency with local General Plan policies and goals, Alternative 3 would be similar to Alternative 1.

**Table 4.6-6
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts of Alternative 3
(FHWA Criteria)**

Segment Landscape Unit	Resource Change		Viewer Response		Potential Impact
	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure	
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

Alternative 4 – the Yellow Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit

Visual Character. Under Alternative 4, the character of the Western Segment Landscape Unit would change from predominantly agricultural in nature with urban influences to a shared urban and agricultural character. The Parkway would bring co-dominance between agricultural- and urban-based forms, lines, colors, and textures. These agricultural pattern elements (flat forms, clean lines, green/natural undertones, and rich rural textures) currently dominate the Western Segment Landscape Unit. The influence of additional urban pattern elements (linear and concrete forms, more dominant roadway and structural lines, gray and black color undertones, and concrete/pavement textures) would add diversity to the area. Landscaping and other mitigation is proposed to help soften the change in visual character (see Section 4.6.4). The continuity of farming lands in the Western Segment Landscape Unit for Alternative 4 is currently broken up by rural roadways, rural residences, and scattered industrial land uses.

There are currently no aboveground roadway structures, overcrossings, or interchanges within the Western Segment Landscape Unit. Alternative 4 would change this existing visual character with the addition of the roadway and associated features (most predominantly the freeway-to-freeway interchange at Sankey Road). This would include the conversion of agricultural land to highway use. Changes in visual character would affect views “of” and “from” the road from surrounding areas. The scale and dominance of these changes in conjunction with the existing flat, natural environment would allow for vast unimpeded panoramic views of the area. The visual character change would greatly affect the existing roadway(s) as well as the surrounding nature of the area.

Consequently, due to changes in the form, line, color, and textures introduced by Alternative 4 that would create changes in scale, continuity, diversity, and dominance, the character of the Western Segment Landscape Unit would shift from Agricultural Dominant to Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant.

Visual Quality. Under Alternative 4, vividness of the Western Segment Landscape Unit would remain characterized as Moderate. The rural nature of the project vicinity is typical of the area and includes very few notable foreground/middleground visual features. Background views from the Western Segment Landscape Unit would not change. Alternative 4 would affect the intactness of the Western Segment Landscape Unit by introducing additional urban structures/roadway (most notably the freeway-to-freeway interchange at Sankey Road). Consequently, the visual quality of the area would remain characterized as Low. In addition, Alternative 4 would contribute further to the lack of landscape integrity of the area. Existing unity for the Western Segment Landscape Unit is considered Low and would remain Low. Manmade natural landscapes (e.g., agricultural areas) currently co-exist with the roadways and limited urban development. This visual quality would be similar under Alternative 4. With the introduction of Alternative 4, the Western Segment Landscape Unit unity would degrade further. Overall, the Western Segment Landscape Unit would maintain a Moderate/Low visual quality rating under Alternative 4.

Viewer Sensitivity. Under Alternative 4, viewer sensitivity to the Western Segment Landscape Unit has been classified as Moderate/High since the viewer’s concern for scenic quality and change to existing visual is anticipated to be moderate. Currently most viewers within the study area are commuters using existing roadways; therefore, existing viewer sensitivity is Low. Viewer sensitivity may change with the introduction of the Parkway. In addition, the realignment of Sankey Road would bring heightened sensitivity to those familiar with the existing roadway. Although viewer focus would likely be on the freeway itself, new structures would create visual interest and heighten traveler viewer sensitivity of the Parkway. Heightened viewer sensitivity would also occur as agricultural lands are used for the Parkway.

Viewer Exposure. Alternative 4 would create a change in viewer exposure from and of the Parkway. The majority of viewers of Alternative 4 within the Western Segment Landscape Unit would be traveler views from SR 70/99. Existing traffic along this major roadway can be characterized as moderate to heavy and continuous. Existing exposure for views from SR 70/99 of Alternative 4, however, can be characterized as Moderate to Low since most viewers would be exposed to changes in views for minimal duration (while traveling) at high rates of speed. After Sankey Road is converted and realigned, the exposure to nearby viewers would change dramatically. Alternative 4 would add vehicular capacity to the study area, thereby adding viewers from and to Alternative 4. In addition, Alternative 4 potentially would have recreational/commuter bicycle viewers in the study area who would have longer, continual views of Alternative 4. The number of viewers would remain moderate to heavy. Viewers in existing residences within the study area would primarily have stationary views of Alternative 4, and the frequency of exposure to these views for these residences would be relatively high. The number of residences with views of the Alternative 4 alignment would be low for the Western Segment Landscape Unit. Although overcrossings and interchanges would be visible from a variety of nearby residential viewers and travelers, the existing flat topography would minimize direct views of the roadway itself for most viewsheds within the Western Segment Landscape Unit. Overall viewer exposure of the Western Segment Landscape Unit under Alternative 4 would shift from Moderate to Moderate/High.

Central Segment Landscape Unit

Although Alternative 4 would vary from Alternative 1 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit, the potential impacts for both are similar. Therefore, refer to the discussions for Alternative 1 wherever it is cited. The following discussions cover only the ways in which the impacts for Alternative 4 would differ from those for Alternative 1.

Visual Character. The Visual Character within the Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 4 would be similar to that for Alternative 1. Although each alternative would clearly cause substantial resource changes, the precise extent of such effects cannot be defined at the Tier 1 level. This level of detail would be included in the Tier 2 visual analysis. Until then, potential impacts for Alternative 4 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit are considered the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Visual Quality. The Visual Quality within the Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 4 would be similar to that for Alternative 1. Although each alternative would clearly cause substantial resource changes, the precise extent of such effects cannot be defined at the Tier 1 level. This level of detail would be included in the Tier 2 visual analysis. Until then, potential impacts for Alternative 4 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit are considered the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Viewer Sensitivity. The Viewer Sensitivity for Alternative 4 would be similar to that for Alternative 1 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 4 would be farther away from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts from viewer sensitivity, therefore, would be slightly less for Alternative 4 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit than for Alternative 1. Overall, viewer sensitivity for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 4 would shift from Low/Moderate to Moderate.

Viewer Exposure. The Viewer Exposure for Alternative 4 would be similar to that for Alternative 1 in the Central Segment Landscape Unit. The key difference is that Alternative 4 would be farther away from the majority of traveler views and residential views (particularly from Country Acres residents). Impacts to viewer exposure, therefore, would be slightly less for Alternative 4 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit than for Alternative 1. Viewer exposure for the Central Segment Landscape Unit with Alternative 4 would remain similar to existing conditions, which are categorized at Moderate/High.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 4 would be the same as that for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Summary of Potential Visual Impacts

Potential visual impacts of Alternative 4 would be Moderate, as defined by FHWA criteria. This conclusion was reached based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure) by landscape unit (Western, Central, and Eastern segment landscape units). Table 4.6-7 presents the summary of potential visual impacts by Landscape Unit with Alternative 4, using FHWA visual impact methodology.

Potential impacts of Alternative 4 are similar to Alternative 1. With respect to consistency with local General Plan policies and goals, Alternative 4 would be similar to Alternative 1.

**Table 4.6-7
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts of Alternative 4
(FHWA Criteria)**

Segment Landscape Unit	Resource Change		Viewer Response		Potential Impact
	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure	
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

Alternative 5 – the Green Alternative

Alternative 5 – Western Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 5 would be the same as for Alternative 4; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 4.

Alternative 5 – Central Segment Landscape Unit

The Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 5 is similar to that for Alternative 4. The resource change and viewer response would be the same for both alternatives; therefore, the potential impacts for Alternative 5 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 4.

Alternative 5 – Eastern Segment Landscape Unit

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 4 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Summary of Potential Visual Impacts

Potential visual impacts with Alternative 5 would be Moderate, as defined by FHWA criteria. This conclusion was reached based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure) by landscape unit (Western, Central, and Eastern Segment landscape units). Table 4.6-8 presents the summary of potential visual impacts by landscape unit with Alternative 5, using FHWA visual impact methodology.

The potential impacts of Alternative 5 are similar to those of Alternative 1. With respect to consistency with local General Plan policies and goals, Alternative 5 would be similar to Alternative 1.

**Table 4.6-8
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts of Alternative 5
(FHWA Criteria)**

Segment Landscape Unit	Resource Change		Viewer Response		Potential Impact
	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure	
Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate
Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

Comparison of Alternatives

Potential impacts of the five build alternatives by segment landscape unit are summarized in Table 4.6-9.

**Table 4.6-9
Comparison of Aesthetic Impacts with Alternatives in Place**

Alternative	Segment Landscape Unit	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure
Alternative 1	Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
	Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate
	Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Alternative 2	Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
	Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Alternative 3	Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
	Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

**Table 4.6-9
Comparison of Aesthetic Impacts with Alternatives in Place (continued)**

Alternative	Segment Landscape Unit	Visual Character	Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Viewer Exposure
Alternative 4	Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Moderate/Low	Moderate	Moderate/High
	Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Alternative 5	Western	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/High
	Central	Agricultural with Urban Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Eastern	Agricultural/Urban Co-Dominant	Low/Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate/High

Table 4.6-10 presents a summary and ranking of the five build alternatives. The No-Build Alternative is not shown on Table 4.6-10 because no impacts would be associated with this alternative. A ranking of 1 indicates the least potential for aesthetic impacts among the five build alternatives, as rated by FHWA criteria.

**Table 4.6-10
Summary and Ranking of Alternatives by Aesthetic Impact Rating**

Alternative	Visual Character^a	Visual Quality^a	Viewer Sensitivity^a	Viewer Exposure^a	Potential Level of Impact from Build Alternative	Impact Ranking (lowest to highest)
Alternative 4	Moderate/High	Low/ Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate	Moderate	1
Alternative 5	Moderate/High	Low/ Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate	Moderate	1
Alternative 3	Moderate	Low/ Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate	Moderate/High	3
Alternative 2	Moderate	Low/Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate/High	5
Alternative 1	Moderate	Low/Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate/High	5

Notes:
1 = least potential impacts and 5 = greatest potential impacts
^a With build alternative in place

Alternatives 4 and 5 would have potentially Moderate impacts, based on FHWA visual impact criteria. Alternative 3 would have more impacts than Alternatives 4 and 5 and would be considered Moderate/High using FHWA visual impact criteria. Alternatives 1 and 2 would have the most visual impacts of all alternatives, with potentially Moderate/High impacts using FHWA visual impact criteria.

4.6.3.4 Secondary and Indirect Impacts

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative (see Section 2.3-1), land for the Parkway would not be acquired and the Parkway would not be constructed. There would be no secondary or indirect impacts on visual resources under the No-Build Alternative.

Build Alternatives

Direct visual impacts associated with the Parkway build alternatives could result in secondary and indirect impacts on visual resources in the study area. Potential secondary and indirect impacts associated with growth are discussed in Section 6.1, Growth.

Placer Parkway would lead to a conversion of portions of a rural area into a more urban landscape. This could result in a perceived reduction in the visual quality of the existing natural environment. The Parkway would also result in changes in the type of viewer in the study area. The presence of the Parkway would change the viewer exposure (e.g., number, location, and duration of existing viewers) to the area. The Parkway would introduce numerous commuters to the area, who would experience short-duration views of the surrounding landscape from the Parkway, in contrast to the limited number of existing viewers who consist primarily of local residents and agricultural workers.

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would potentially have more interchanges than Alternatives 4 and 5 (six versus five) and therefore bring more visually dominant, manmade/urban structures to the area. This would increase the urban influences in the area, consequently replacing natural features and elements with increased areas of pavement, buildings, and other urban elements. In addition, the positioning of Alternatives 1 and 2 would be closer to an existing, frequently traveled local roadway (Baseline Road), thereby introducing additional light, movement, and urban feel to the area. This could have a secondary impact of bringing in more urbanization to an area now dominated by rural influences.

4.6.3.5 Cumulative Impacts

For this cumulative analysis, future planned and proposed development (see Figure 4.1-4) is considered to take into account the level at which viewers would be exposed to and potentially affected by the Parkway in combination with projects planned for the study area in subsequent years.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative (see Section 2.3-1), land for the Parkway would not be acquired and the Parkway would not be constructed. There would not be any cumulative impacts on visual resources under the No-Build Alternative.

Alternative 1 – the Red Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

With the addition of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan (SPSP) (in full build-out), there would be an increase in potential viewers of Alternative 1 in the Western Segment Landscape Unit. More views from the Parkway would be created due to increased traveler capacity. Along with increased numbers of people/viewers, there would also be an expanded built environment (versus the existing open, agricultural aesthetic). The proposed built environment of the SPSP also would obscure/screen views (of and from the proposed Alternative 1) of many potential viewers. Although Placer Parkway would change the visual character of the region, it may, when combined with the visual effect of the SPSP have a reduced cumulative impact compared to direct impacts because it would more readily blend with the changing nature of the landscape, which would be shifting from rural/agricultural to more urban/commercial. Nevertheless, when considering Alternative 1 together with the effect of the SPSP, there would be a cumulative impact to the existing visual resources. Placer Parkway would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Central Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Planned/proposed development in the Central Segment Landscape Unit would contribute to an overall shift in visual character from predominantly rural agricultural to a mix of rural/agricultural and urban commercial/residential. This would be a cumulative visual impact.

Alternative 1 would be located within the proposed Curry Creek Community Plan area, which is on land owned by AKT Development, as well as within the proposed Regional University Specific Plan (RUSP) area, and the City of Roseville Retention Basin. This alternative would be located adjacent to the western boundary of the Sierra Vista Specific Plan (SVSP) area (Figure 1-15). Visual impacts would be High (as defined by FHWA criteria) for Alternative 1 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit. For this landscape unit, Alternative 1 would introduce a moderate to high level of adverse change to the resource area, and a high level of viewer response to visual change is anticipated. Architectural design and landscape treatments can help mitigate these potential impacts, but not below a level of significance. This conclusion was reached based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) and reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure).

When considered in combination with all the projects proposed for the Central Segment Landscape Unit, the visual impact of Alternative 1 is diminished yet still substantial due to the increase in number of potential viewers. Under current conditions, if the Parkway were built, it would contrast greatly with the existing rural/agricultural aesthetic. However, in 2040, assuming projects occur as is currently planned/proposed, Placer Parkway would not be as prominent because it would be more similar to the surrounding environment. Alternative 1 would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Like the Central Segment Landscape Unit, the Eastern Segment would see substantial growth if the multiple planned/proposed projects identified for this area occur. The following proposed development projects (Brookfield, SVSP, Creekview Specific Plan, Placer Ranch Specific Plan) fall within the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit and, if built, would continue the shift in the visual character of this area from rural agricultural mixed with urban/residential to predominantly urban commercial/ residential. Some developments would expand the boundaries of Roseville westward.

Within the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit, visual impacts from Alternative 1 are found to be High, as defined by FHWA criteria. For this segment landscape unit, Alternative 1 would introduce a moderate to high level of adverse change to the resource area, and a high level of viewer response to visual change is anticipated. Architectural design and landscape treatments can help mitigate these potential impacts but not below a level of significance. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure). More viewers will reside in and travel through the area and thus be exposed to views of the Parkway. The Parkway would not be as visually prominent when contrasted with the development that is proposed to occur. Alternative 1 would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Alternative 2 – the Orange Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit would be the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Central Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Although Alternative 1 would vary from Alternative 2 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit, the potential cumulative impacts for both are similar because they would travel through the same planned/proposed development areas. Because Alternative 2 would bisect the proposed RUSP, its contribution to cumulative visual impacts would be greater than under Alternative 1.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 2 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 – the Blue Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 3 would be the same as for Alternative 1. Therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit would be the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Central Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Alternative 3 would not cross directly through any of the numerous development projects planned for the Central Segment Landscape Unit. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to the overall urban influences encroaching on the area in 2040 and would contribute to cumulatively substantial visual impacts. Within the Central Segment Landscape Unit, visual impacts of Alternative 3 would be Moderate, as defined by FHWA criteria. For the Central Segment, Alternative 3 would introduce a moderate level of adverse change to the resource area, and a high level of viewer response to visual change is anticipated. Architectural design and landscape treatments can help mitigate these potential impacts. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that

change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure). Alternative 3 would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 3 would be the same as for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Alternative 4 – the Yellow Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Within the Western Segment Landscape Unit, visual impacts under Alternative 4 would be Moderate, as defined by FHWA criteria. For this segment landscape unit, Alternative 4 would introduce a moderate level of adverse change to the resource area, and a high level of viewer response to visual change is anticipated. Architectural design and landscape treatments can help mitigate these potential impacts. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure). These factors are described below.

As with Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, whose cumulative impacts are described above, the addition of the SPSP (in full build-out) would increase potential viewers of Alternative 4 in the landscape unit, but also more views from the Parkway would be created due to increased traveler capacity. Along with increased numbers of people/viewers, there would also be an expanded built environment (versus the existing open, agricultural aesthetic). The planned/proposed built environment of the SPSP would also obscure/screen views (of and from the proposed Alternative 1) of many potential viewers. While Placer Parkway would change the visual character of the region, it may, when combined with the visual effect of the SPSP project, have less of an impact compared to direct impacts because it would more readily blend with the changing nature of the landscape that would be shifting from rural/agricultural to more urban/commercial. Alternative 4 would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Central Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

Despite the large amount of planned development for the Central Segment Landscape Unit, Alternative 4 would travel through predominantly agricultural/rural land. The RUSP development area would be just south of Alternative 4 and shift the aesthetic for much of the central area to more urban/residential. Within the Central Segment Landscape Unit, cumulative visual impacts with Alternative 4 would be substantial. For this segment landscape unit, Alternative 4 would introduce a moderate level of adverse change to the resource area, and a high level of viewer response to visual change is anticipated. Architectural design and landscape treatments can help mitigate these potential impacts. This conclusion was based on analyzing the changes to the resource area (reviewing potential changes to visual character and visual quality) as well as reviewing anticipated viewer response to that change (as identified by analyzing viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure). Alternative 4 would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 4 would be the same as that for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Alternative 5 – the Green Alternative

Western Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Western Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 5 would be the same as those for Alternative 4; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 4.

Central Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The Central Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 5 would be similar to that for Alternative 4. The resource change and viewer response would also be similar for both alternatives; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for Alternative 5 within the Central Segment Landscape Unit are generally the same as discussed for Alternative 4. However, Alternative 5 would run just south of the Reason Farms Environmental Preserve, where land has been set aside for various recreational uses within the City of Roseville Retention Basin property. While Alternative 5 would be adjacent to the preserve, it appears that recreational uses generally are planned for the central area of the retention basin property, away from the southeastern area where the Placer Parkway would border the property. Consequently, Alternative 5 would have a slightly greater impact than Alternative 4 due to its closer proximity to an area intended to be preserved as an undeveloped area suitable for informal recreation.

Eastern Segment Landscape Unit – Planned/Proposed Development

The resource changes and viewer responses in the Eastern Segment Landscape Unit of Alternative 5 would be the same as that for Alternative 1; therefore, the potential cumulative impacts for this segment landscape unit are the same as discussed for Alternative 1.

Summary of Cumulative Impacts on Visual Resources

Figure 1-15 shows planned and potential development in and near the study area. The combined visual effect of this development would change the visual character of the region. The extensive development, while bringing more potential viewers to the area, may actually diminish the visual impact of the Parkway because the Parkway would blend more readily with the changing nature of the landscape, which would be shifting from rural/agricultural to more urban/residential. Because there would be an increase in residents and potential viewers in the area, the potential cumulative impacts should continue to be assessed.

All build alternatives in combination with the planned and proposed development in and near the study area would contribute to a change in visual character and quality of the study area. By 2040, the study area will consist of much more built environment versus the existing farming environment, with many more structures/roads versus open space. Essentially, the area will shift from rural to urban/suburban, which will result in a cumulative visual impact.

4.6.4 AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION, AND/OR MITIGATION MEASURES

4.6.4.1 Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid land use conversion impacts, which would also minimize visual impacts in the study area. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives (see Section 2.5). Landscape concepts were identified in a collaborative effort, including

biologists, landscape architects, and visual analysis experts to minimize visual effects of the Parkway.

- In order to reduce environmental impacts, including visual impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4). These alternatives did not meet the project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.
- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid visual impacts. These efforts included:
 - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddymont Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.
 - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone (see Section 2.5) that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone. The buffer zone would further the “parkway” concept by maintaining a visual open space concept and encouraging linkages to other open spaces along the corridor.

4.6.4.2 Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- PCTPA will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on visual resources. Coordination will include development of specific project design details for the Parkway and other projects as described below, to minimize impacts and cooperation between PCTPA and local jurisdictions with respect to potential impacts on other planned facilities.

4.6.4.3 Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- All visual mitigation strategies will be designed and implemented with the concurrence of the Caltrans District Landscape Architect, or as defined by FHWA.
- Parkway features and treatments will be designed to help complement the existing agricultural landscape within south Sutter and southwestern Placer counties where agricultural activities are projected to continue. In accordance with the FHWA and Caltrans requirements, the Caltrans District Landscape Architect will review all project features and treatments before project design completion.
- Landscaping concepts for Placer Parkway will respect the topography and vistas in the study area and complement the varying character of land adjacent to the Parkway corridor. Where wetlands adjoin the Parkway, designs shall use appropriate wetland species to the extent practicable. At the time of the Tier 2 environmental review, a Landscaping Conceptual Plan shall be developed for the Parkway, to be reviewed by the Caltrans District Landscape Architect (see the Visual Impact Assessment for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR for further details). Lighting elements will be approved for safety by Caltrans.

4.6.4.4 Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- In order to ensure compatibility with future planning efforts, it is assumed that local jurisdictions would also review the Visual Impact Assessment (URS, 2007h) for this Tier 1 EIS/EIR.
- Design of lighting elements would consider requirements of the Landscaping Conceptual Plan for minimizing potential aesthetic impacts (e.g., shielding lighting elements, using lower voltage lighting for planting areas, and proposing lighting fixtures that complement the visual character of the area).

4.6.5 TIER 1 AND TIER 2 STUDIES

- Analyses begun in Tier 1 which will be undertaken in greater detail in Tier 2
 - A Visual Impact Analysis including a project-specific evaluation of major design features.
 - The development of a Landscape Conceptual Plan (as required by the FHWA and Caltrans). This would incorporate use of native plant materials as much as possible and include selection of appropriate species, such as sycamores and poplars, in areas requiring drainage. Where appropriate, shrubs and ground cover plantings would be used in lieu of grasses to reduce irrigation requirements, with the exception of wetland areas, which would use appropriate wetland species. This plan would use guidance included in “Landscape Concepts,” dated December 7, 2005, as approved by the Caltrans Sacramento Office of Landscape Architecture and attached herein as Appendix B. To better understand potential viewer response to the proposed project, it is recommended that existing viewer conditions (e.g., existing population and travel counts) be updated, where appropriate, with future evaluations of the study area. This would help better understand existing viewer exposure (number of viewers, location of viewers, and duration of current views) as well as viewer sensitivities to the project (to include viewer activity, local values, and cultural significance of the area).
- Analyses that will begin in Tier 2
 - A project-specific evaluation of potential impacts associated with proposed Parkway lighting.