

APPENDIX G

Visual Resources Report

Visual Resources Report

Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
amsl	above mean sea level
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
City	City of Santa Clarita
County	County of Los Angeles
LACoFD	LA County Fire Department
Project	Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project
SR	State Route

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project (Project) proposes to develop 341 age-restricted, detached single-family residential units, a 3.1-acre recreation center, and 2.6 miles of publicly accessible trails across approximately 193.8 gross undeveloped acres in the City of Santa Clarita. See Figure 1, Project Location and Figure 2, Existing On-Site and Off-Site Land Uses. The project would result in the creation of 420 separate lots, consisting of 341 residential lots, one recreational lot, 21 private street lots, and 57 open space lots. A site plan illustrative is provided on Figure 3, Site Plan. Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed project land uses, and the associated lot numbers and acreage.

Table 1. Summary of Project Uses

Land Use	Lot Numbers	Acres
Single Family (detached) age-restricted units	1 through 341	58.7
Recreation Area/Clubhouse	342	3.1
Private Streets/Driveways	343 through 365	22.4
Open Space	366 through 420	106.6
Public Streets (On-Site portion of Lost Canyon Road extension)	Not Applicable	3.0
	Total	193.8

1.2 Project Location

The project site consists of approximately 193.8 gross acres of vacant land in the City of Santa Clarita (City) in the easternmost portion of the City, as shown in Figure 1. The project site is separated into two parts by the Southern Pacific Railroad, which runs east-west just south of the northern portion of the project site. The project site consists of the following Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs): 2840-001-118, 2840-015-025, -031, -032, -033, -034, -035, -045, and -047.

The project site is located approximately 26 miles north of downtown Los Angeles and is locally accessible via Lost Canyon Road and Oak Springs Canyon Road. Regionally, the project site is accessible from State Route 14 (SR-14) freeway via Sand Canyon Road, west of the project site. The project site is found on the Mint Canyon US Geologic Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle, Township 4N, Range 15W, Sections 13, 14, 23, and 24.

The vacant project site is bordered by the Santa Clara River to the north (and further north—SR-14), existing single-family development to the west, Sand Canyon County Club to the south, and undeveloped land to the east. Unincorporated Los Angeles County is located east of the project site, and the Angeles National Forest is located 0.25-mile east of the project site. See Figure 2.

1.3 Project Description

1.3.1 Residential Lots

The 341 proposed residential lots would each consist single-family detached dwelling unit, for a total of 341 dwelling units on-site. The residential lots would range from approximately 5,000 to 7,500 square feet in size. The project will include nine distinct residential floor plans available in the following architectural styles: Spanish Hacienda, Adobe Ranch, and Agrarian Farmhouse. The dwelling units would range in size from approximately 1,531 to 3,782 square feet. The floor plans include a minimum of two-bedroom, two-bathroom units, and a maximum of five-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom units. The dwelling units would be a minimum of one-story, with an optional secondary-story massing over a portion of the ground floor. All residential units would be situated in the southern portion of the project site (south of Southern Pacific Railroad) within 58.7 acres on Lots 1 through 341. A site plan of the Project is presented as Figure 3.

1.3.2 Open Space

A total of 106.6 acres of open space would be included within the project. Approximately 73.8 acres would be natural open space with no improvements other than potential temporary disturbance near adjoining improvements. The above-mentioned natural open space mostly borders existing natural open space outside of the project site's boundaries and would preserve a significant ridgeline (in the southeasternmost portion of the project site), conserve habitat areas, and provide a buffer and transition to the proposed developed uses at the project site.

The remaining approximately 32.7 acres of open space would be improved with the following features: landscaping, manufactured slopes, trails, fuel modification zones, community amenities (pickle ball, dog park, etc.) and flood control features. The improved open space lots would generally be located throughout the project site.

The northern portion of the project site (north of Southern Pacific Railroad), which include Lots 375 through 380 and 416 through 420, portions of which would be dedicated to the City upon implementation of the project.

A Homeowners' Association (HOA) would be established for maintenance of improved open space, trails (, slopes, and all common landscaped areas.

1.3.2.1 Recreational Facilities

1.3.2.1.1 Recreation Center

The project would provide a 3.1-acre recreation center/clubhouse in the central portion of the project site, at Lot 342.. The recreation center may include one central building that is anticipated to include the following features: club room, kitchen, lobby, flex space, golf room, fitness center, yoga room, and restrooms. Other amenities include a courtyard, event lawn, fitness lawn, swimming pool with spas, restrooms, two Bocce Ball courts, a golf-cart parking lot, vehicle parking stalls, entry garden, patios, event/multi-purpose lawn, tree grove with games, lounge, and picnic areas, and a fitness loop.

1.3.2.1.2 Other Recreational Amenities

In addition to dedicated open space and the recreation center at the project site, the project would include other recreational amenities throughout the project site, including four pickleball courts, four horseshoe pits, a dog park, and trails, as discussed further below.

1.3.2.2 Trails

1.3.2.2.1 On-Site Trails

The project would include a trail network on-site and would include the construction off-site along Lost Canyon Road to Sand canyon Road and connect existing Oak Springs Canyon trails at the southern portion of the site. Figure 4a and Figure 4b, Conceptual Walls and Fencing Locations, includes the trail system planned throughout the project site. A trailhead and emergency staging area would be located at the northern portion of the project site to provide trail connectivity to the proposed off-site Lost Canyon Road trail, and perimeter trails.

1.3.2.2.2 Off-Site Trails

The project proposes an off-site an approximately 0.58-mile trail on the northern side of Lost Canyon Road. This 8-foot-wide decomposed granite trail would connect to the project's proposed on-site trail at the northwestern portion of the project site boundary, and would include a trail on the newly constructed Lost Canyon Road bridge. This trail would be located within the existing 60-foot right-of-way of Lost Canyon Road.

Additionally, the project would include an approximately 0.3-mile 12-foot-wide decomposed granite trail on the west side of proposed "J" Street, which would connect the project's proposed trail network to the off-site trails within Robinson Ranch to the south of the project site..

1.3.3 Landscaping

The project site would be redeveloped to include landscaping throughout the residential, recreational, and improved open spaces. Approximately 16 percent of the total project site's acreage would be devoted to landscaping with low to moderate water needs. The project would result in planting of approximately 910 trees planted on-site, including, but not limited to, oak trees, Maidenhair Tree, Crape Myrtle, Bay Laurel, fruitless olive, and Chinese Pistache, among others. Landscaping would also include large screening and accent, massing, and shade condition shrubs, vines, succulents, grasses, and groundcover.

1.3.4 Oak Trees

In accordance with Section 17.51.040 of the Municipal Code, the project would require an Oak Tree Permit for the cutting, pruning, removal, relocation, endangerment, damage, or encroachment into the protected zone of any regulated oak tree, with further protections for heritage oak trees (any oak tree measuring 108 inches or more in circumference). Within the project survey area, which includes the project site and associated off-site areas, there are 421 oak trees, and 355 of these oak trees meet the criteria for regulation under the Municipal Code. Of the 355 regulated trees, 73 trees are considered heritage trees by the City.

Including off-site project impacts, the proposed project would involve removal of 16 regulated oak trees (including three heritage trees). The project would further result in major encroachment into the protected zone of seven regulated oak trees (including one heritage tree), and minor encroachment into the protected zone of 82 regulated oak trees (including 44 heritage trees). In total, 60 dead trees, which are not regulated by the City, are located within the project survey area, of which 12 would be removed due to their location in the project footprint. The remaining 299 trees, including 250 regulated trees (of which 25 are heritage trees) and six non-jurisdictional trees, would remain in place without impacts (Dudek 2025a).

To address anticipated impacts to oak trees, the Arborist Report prepared for the Project (Dudek 2025b) recommends mitigation for tree removals and protective measures for work encroachment into a Protected Zone and for trees that will remain on site.

Pursuant to the City's Oak Tree Protection Ordinance, the appraised value of trees to be removed from a site shall be applied toward planting oak trees in the site's developed landscape. As such, the Arborist's Report recommends planting a mixture of native oak trees of various sizes (15-gallon, 24-inch, 48-inch, and 60-inch boxes) in the developed landscape and adjacent open space area. Specifically, 712 24-inch box mitigation trees may be required based on the appraised value of proposed regulated oak tree removals and major encroachment into oak tree protection zones associated with the development footprint, which would result in a replacement ratio of 31 trees for each removed/major encroachment tree.

Regarding trees to be retained on site, the Arborist's Report provides tree protection recommendations to mitigate project impacts from construction encroachment into the protected zone of regulated trees. The would help minimize impacts to preserved and encroached-upon trees and would be implemented prior to, during, and following construction. These include measures such as exclusion fencing and worker training to avoid direct impacts to trees as well as irrigation and monthly inspections by an arborist to promote the long-term health of retained trees.

Lastly, as an oak tree permit is required for cutting, pruning, removal, relocation, endangerment, damage, or encroachment into the protected zone of any oak tree on any public or private property within the City, the Applicant would need to apply for a Class IV oak tree permit (City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code Section 17.23.170).

1.3.5 Fuel Modification

The project is proposing a 200-foot buffer on the east, west, and south sides, including a "fuel modification plan." The Proposed Project aligns with LA County Fire Department (LACoFD) requirements and will consist of a 30-foot wide Zone A and a 70-foot wide Zone B (both Zones A and B will be irrigated) and a 100-foot thinning Zone C. A Fuel Modification Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Forestry Division of the LACoFD for consistency with defensible space and fire safety guidelines. The FMZs will be constructed from the structure outward toward undeveloped areas. An FMZ is a strip of land where combustible vegetation has been removed and/or modified and partially or completely replaced with more adequately spaced, drought-tolerant, fire-resistant plants in order to provide a reasonable level of protection to structures from wildland fire.

1.3.6 On-site Utilities Improvements

Once constructed, the proposed project would include new sources of lighting, infrastructure improvements including curb and gutter, storm drain, and water and sewer connections to existing facilities within the local vicinity.

1.3.6.1 Lighting

While a conceptual lighting plan has yet to be developed for the Project, all lighting installed on the project site would comply with Chapter 17.51.050(D), Outdoor Lighting Standards, of the City's Unified Development Code that requires (1) all light sources to be directed downward and shielded such that the lighting sources are not visible from the public right-of-way and (2) all lighting sources not illuminate other (i.e., offsite) properties.

1.3.6.2 Basins

On the northern portion of the project site, north of the Southern Pacific Railroad, two proposed water quality basins would be constructed with implementation of the project. These biofiltration basins would be planted and tube steel fencing would be installed around the perimeter

On the southern portion of the project site, the project's HOA would maintain one water quality basin and two debris basins. An HOA-maintained debris swale would be located along the project's proposed residences on the eastern side of the project site and would be separated by a proposed trail running north to south between the homes and debris swale.

1.3.6.3 Walls and Fencing

The proposed project would include the installation of new walls and fences within the project site, as depicted on Figures 4a through 4c. A four-foot-tall equestrian lodge pole fence would line one side of the on-site portion of Lost Canyon Road, the emergency staging area on-site, trailhead and along portions of the on-site Oak Springs Canyon Road. Six-foot-tall masonry walls, tubular steel fences, low masonry wall with tubular steel, low masonry walls with tempered glass, pilasters, and fences and would be located throughout portions of the development area. Residential units would have 5.5-foot-tall solid vinyl fencing at side yards and gates.

1.3.7 Circulation and Access

The project would include a number of on-site and off-site circulation improvements. These are discussed in detail below.

1.3.7.1 Roadway Improvements and Access

1.3.7.1.1 On-Site Roadway Improvements and Access

Access to the project site would be via Lost Canyon Road connecting to the proposed "A" Street on-site, and via Robinson Ranch Road, connecting to the proposed "J" Street.

Currently, Lost Canyon Road terminates at the project boundary near the northwesternmost corner of the project site, where it turns southerly into Oak Springs Canyon Road. With project implementation, Lost Canyon Road would be extended into the project site, aligned east/west and generally parallel to the existing Southern Pacific Railroad to the south, and then would turn southerly. The on-site portions of Lost Canyon Road would include two 14-foot-wide travel lines, parkways, and a 12-foot-wide trail along its northern right-of-way.

As the northern and southern portions of the project site are currently separated by an off-site railroad and are therefore unconnected, the project would include an off-site undercrossing with the extension of Lost Canyon Road to provide access between the northern and southern portions of the site, underneath the existing railroad. The Lost Canyon Road railroad undercrossing would include two 14-foot-wide travel lanes, 3- to 5-foot parkways on each side, and a 12-foot-wide trail on the eastern side of the street. Lost Canyon Road would continue south to the project gate where the road would be “A” Street.

The project would have gated entries on proposed “A” Street (just south of the proposed railroad undercrossing) and on proposed “J” Street (north of the “J” Street intersection with Oak Spring Canyon Road). As such, public access to the project site would be restricted behind the gated entries on “A” and “J” Streets. However, the proposed extension of Lost Canyon Road and portions of “J” Street leading off-site would be open for public vehicular access.

“A” Street would be the primary gated access road into the residential portion of the project site. On-site private streets (“A” Street through “I” Street and “K” Street through “O” Street) would provide vehicular and pedestrian access throughout the proposed residential community. These on-site private streets would consist of two 10-foot-wide travel lanes, one 8-foot-wide parallel parking area on each side of the street, 5-foot-wide sidewalks along both sides of the road, and associated curb and gutter improvements, for a total of 46-foot-wide streets. These private streets provide connectivity throughout the proposed single-family residential units on-site and would terminate in eight cul-de-sacs.

A future, private, 28-foot-wide access road/utility easement (28 foot of pavement plus a 5-foot parkway) is anticipated to be constructed at the project site, as implemented through development of a future/unrelated project (TTM 65159), to provide an access road for TTM 65159. If constructed, this would be located north of the proposed residences and would ultimately connect to the public portion of “A” Street located on-site. In addition, a future 28-foot gated emergency vehicle access road will be provided from the extension of “H” Street.

As stated previously, “J” Street would provide a second gated access to the project site from the southern portion of the project site. Portions of “J” Street would be located on-site but would ultimately connect to Robinson Ranch Road (off-site), south of the project site, discussed further below. “J” Street would intersect the existing Oak Springs Canyon Road located at the project site.

Oak Springs Canyon Road would be improved on site from the intersection “J” Street to the project easterly boundary with 26 feet pavement superelevated to the north where a rolled curb would be provided. Westerly of “J” Street, Oak Springs Canyon Road would transition back to the exiting dirt road.

1.3.7.1.2 Off-Site Roadway Improvements and Access

As stated previously, the existing, off-site Lost Canyon Road would extend into the project site. However, the project would include off-site repaving along the alignment of Lost Canyon Road until its intersection at Sand Canyon Road. All off-site improvements in Lost Canyon Road would be within the existing 60-foot right-of-way. The off-site portions of Lost Canyon Road would include two 13-foot-wide travel lanes, with an 8-foot-wide trail on one side and associated parkways and rolled curbs and gutters. The project would include the construction of a bridge at Lost Canyon Road, 0.07-mile west of the project site. This bridge would include two 13-foot-wide lanes and a 8-foot-wide pedestrian pathway/trail. At the intersection of Sand Canyon Road and Lost Canyon Road, the Project would include construction of a traffic roundabout.

As stated above, portions of “J” Street would be located on-site. However, the off-site portions of “J” Street would include a southerly alignment between existing off-site residences to the west and the Sand Canyon Country Club to the east, eventually connecting to Robinson Ranch Road. “J” Street would include two 13-foot-wide travel lanes, with an 12-foot-wide trail on the west side, totaling 34- to 38-foot-wide along its alignment.

1.3.7.2 Pedestrian Facilities

1.3.7.2.1 On-Site Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian sidewalks and trails are proposed throughout the project site. Pedestrian sidewalks would be located on both sides of the private, on-site roadways, and decomposed granite multi-use trails would be located throughout the project site.

1.3.7.2.2 Off-Site Pedestrian Facilities

See Section 1.3.2.2, Trails, for details of the proposed trails on Lost Canyon Road and “J” Street.

1.4 Construction

The project is anticipated to be constructed over a five-year period, commencing in 4th quarter 2026 and ending 2031 and a full operational buildout of 2031. The initial grading, off-site infrastructure, on-site utilities, and paving activities would occur in 2026 and 2027, with building construction and landscape activities for on-site residences and recreational components occurring thereafter.

1.5 Waivers

As described further in Section 2.3.2, Santa Clarita Unified Development Code (“UDC”), below, the project is requesting the following waivers:

1. Minimum Lot Size and Lot Width per Chapter 17.57 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires a minimum lot area of 43,560 square feet for NU5 and 20,000 square feet for UR1. The project provides three product types: 50 feet by 100 feet, 60 feet by 100 feet, and 70 feet by 100 feet. The project is requesting approval for a minimum net lot area of 5,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 50 feet.

2. Minimum Setback per Chapter 17.57 of the Municipal Code

- The project is requesting reductions in front yard setbacks, rear yard setbacks, reverse corner lot side yard setbacks, and cul-de-sac lot widths.

3. Maximum Retaining Wall Height per Section 17.57.020 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires that retaining walls not exceed six feet in height. The project applicant requests an increase in the height limits of certain retaining walls.

4. Maximum Length of Continuous Retaining Wall per Section 17.57.020 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires that the maximum length of any continuous retaining wall not be more than 100 linear feet. The project is requesting an increase in the continuous length of certain retaining walls.

5. Ridgeline Preservation per Section 17.38.070 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires a one (100) foot vertical and a one hundred (100) horizontal distance from an identified significant ridgeline. The project is requesting a reduction in the vertical setback.

2 Regulatory Setting

2.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations that are particularly applicable to aesthetics/visual resources and the CEQA review of the Project.

2.2 State

2.2.1 California Scenic Highway Program

State Scenic Highway Program

Established in 1963 by the State Legislature and managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the goal of the State Scenic Highway Program is to “preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California” by identifying those portions of the State highway system and adjacent scenic corridor that require special conservation treatment (Caltrans 2008). Highways included in the State Scenic Highway Program should “traverse an area of outstanding scenic quality, contain striking views, flora, geology, or other natural attributes” (Caltrans 2008). Caltrans designated both eligible and official state scenic highways. Eligible state scenic highways consist of state routes nominated for official designation by the local governing body with jurisdiction over the lands adjacent to the proposed scenic highway. In order to be identified as an “eligible” state scenic highway, a visual assessment of the proposed corridor and a Scenic Highway Proposal must be completed by the local jurisdiction and Caltrans must determine that the route meets scenic highway criteria. Official State Scenic Highway designation requires preparation of a Corridor Protection Plan containing measures, ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies applicable to the area of land within the scenic corridor and the Plan must be deemed acceptable by Caltrans.

From approximately Interstate 210 (near Tunnel Station) to State Route 126 (near Castaic), Interstate 5 is an eligible state scenic highway (Caltrans 2024). At its intersection with State Route 14, Interstate 5 is approximately 8.2 miles to the west of the project site. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway, State Route 2 in the San Gabriel Mountains, is located approximately 16 miles to the southeast of the project site. Due to distance and intervening terrain, views to the project site are not available from either Interstate 5 or State Route 2.

2.3 Local/Regional

2.3.1 City of Santa Clarita General Plan

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the City’s General Plan establishes a policy framework for the designation and long-term preservation of open space within the planning area, and addresses the wide range of community benefits derived from open space. According to the City General Plan, open spaces provide the benefits of wildlife habitat preservation, scenic views, water recharge and watershed protection, enhancement of air quality, protection of cultural and historical resources, moderation of microclimates, and enhanced property values. In addition, open space contributes to community character and the distinctive sense of place enjoyed by Santa Clarita Valley residents (City of Santa Clarita 2011).

The Land Use Element addresses existing development patterns in the Santa Clarita Valley planning area and establishes a framework for focusing future growth in a logical and orderly manner. The process of developing the land use plan involves analysis of existing land use patterns and projected growth, the need to protect sensitive habitats and natural resources, and consideration of the constraints and opportunities inherent in the physical environment. A goal of the Land Use Element is to provide all residents with a well-rounded and healthy lifestyle, including a variety of jobs, housing, goods, and services to meet the diverse needs of the Valley’s growing population.

The following objectives and policies of the Conservation and Open Space (“CO”) Element and the Land Use (“LU”) Element are applicable to the Project.

Conservation and Open Space Element

- Goal CO 6: Preservation of scenic features that keep the Santa Clarita Valley beautiful and enhance quality of life, community identity, and property values.
- Objective CO 6.2: Protect the scenic character of view corridors.
- Policy CO 6.2.1: Where feasible, encourage development proposals to have varied building heights to maintain view corridor sight lines.
- Objective CO 6.3: Protect the scenic character of major water bodies.
- Policy CO 6.3.2: Protect the banks of the Santa Clara River and its major tributaries through open space designations and property acquisitions, where feasible, to protect and enhance the scenic character of the river valley.
- Objective CO 6.4: Protect the scenic character of oak woodlands, coastal sage, and other habitats unique to the Santa Clarita Valley.
- Policy CO 6.4.2: Through the development review process, ensure that new development preserves scenic habitat areas to the extent feasible.
- Policy CO 6.5.1. In approving new development projects, consider scenic views at major entry points to the Santa Clarita Valley, including gateways located at the Newhall Pass and along Lake Hughes Road, Route

126, Bouquet Canyon Road, Sierra Highway, State Route 14, and other locations as deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority.

- Policy CO 6.6.1. Enhance views of the night sky by reducing light pollution through use of light screens, downward directed lights, minimized reflective paving surfaces, and reduced lighting levels, as deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority.
- Policy CO 8.2.4. Establish maximum lighting levels for public facilities, and encourage reduction of lighting levels to the level needed for security purposes after business hours, in addition to use of downward-directed lighting and use of low-reflective paving surfaces.

Land Use Element

- Policy LU 1.1.4: Preserve community character by maintaining natural features that act as natural boundaries between developed areas, including significant ridgelines, canyons, rivers and drainage courses, riparian areas, topographical features, habitat preserves, or other similar features, where appropriate.
- Objective LU 1.2: Maintain the distinctive community character of villages and neighborhoods throughout the planning area by establishing uses, densities, and design guidelines appropriate to the particular needs and goals of each area, including but not limited to the following:
 - Policy LU 1.2.5: In Sand Canyon, ensure compatibility of development with existing rural, equestrian lots and the adjacent National Forest land; provide additional recreational trail links; minimize impacts to the Santa Clara River from incompatible development; and maintain community character in accordance with the City's Sand Canyon Special Standards District.
 - Policy LU 1.1.4: Preserve community character by maintaining natural features that act as natural boundaries between developed areas, including significant ridgelines, canyons, rivers and drainage courses, riparian areas, topographical features, habitat preserves, or other similar features, where appropriate.
- Objective LU 2.2: Protect significant community resources from encroachment by incompatible uses, where feasible and appropriate.
- Objective LU 6.1: Maintain the natural beauty of the Santa Clarita Valley's hillsides, significant ridgelines, canyons, oak woodlands, rivers, and streams.

2.3.2 City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code

Title 17, Zoning. Title 17, Zoning of the City's UDC("UDC") includes regulations concerning the location, nature, and extent of development that may occur in the City. It also establishes zone-specific height limits, setback requirements, and other development standards, for residential, agricultural, commercial, and all other types of sites. Sections of the UDC applicable to aesthetics and visual resources are discussed in further detail below.

Chapter 17.3 Overlay Zones

- **Chapter 17.38.070 RP, Ridgeline Preservation Overlay Zone.** In an effort to achieve the City’s objective to preserve the ridgelines within the City limits for the public health, safety and welfare for the long-term benefit of the community, maintenance of the unique visual characteristics, resources and ridgeline integrity, and to achieve a higher quality of life for its residents, the ridgeline preservation (RP) zoning overlay classification was established.

Chapter 17.39 Special Standards Districts

- Chapter 17.39.030 Sand Canyon Special Standards District states that the purpose of the special standards district is to maintain, preserve, and enhance the rural and equestrian character of Sand Canyon. Applicable policies from Chapter 17.39.030 include the following:
 - 2. Any new development shall adhere to the following standards or provide the following amenities:
 - a.Trails.
 - i. Riding and hiking trails shall be provided as depicted on the latest Sand Canyon Backbone Trails exhibit on file with Parks, Recreation and Community Services to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services;
 - ii.Trails shall be fenced to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, with fences of a rustic wood appearance;
 - iv. There shall be no obstruction including, but not limited to, on-street parking, landscaping, trash receptacles, or other similar structures within a designated trail;
 - d.Street lights, in accordance with City standards, shall be installed only at road-to-road intersections;
 - f. Street paving, curbs, gutters and sidewalks shall not be required of new development. Minimum City standards for all weather access shall be provided. An engineering analysis shall be required to determine how all weather access will be provided for emergency vehicles. Surface material may consist of graded dirt, gravel or asphaltic concrete to achieve the required standards;
 - h. Street trees shall not be required; however, the planting of oaks and other mature trees shall be encouraged;
 - m. Fences. Non-view-obscuring fences, not to exceed five (5) feet in height, shall be permitted to be located within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback. Where a non-view-obscuring fence is constructed within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback, and is five (5) feet in height, the applicant shall be required to landscape the frontage of their property along the property line that abuts the adjacent right-of-way. View-obscuring walls

or fences that are higher than three (3) feet six (6) inches shall not be permitted to be located within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback;

Chapter 17.51 Property Development Standards.

- **Chapter 17.51.030, Landscaping and Irrigation Standards.** Section 17.51.030 of the UDC pertains to landscaping and irrigation standards. It outlines the requirements for landscaping and irrigation in various zones to ensure aesthetic appeal, environmental sustainability, and efficient water use. This section includes guidelines on the types of plants that can be used, irrigation methods, and maintenance practices to promote a harmonious and attractive community.
- **Chapter 17.51.050, Outdoor Lighting Standards.** Section 17.51.050 (D), Lighting Standards, of the UDC requires that all new non-exempt outdoor lighting:
 - be directed downward and be of a cut-off design so the luminary and/or lens do not protrude below the luminary housing and is not visible from a public right-of-way.
 - not illuminate other properties and shall be directed downward to prevent off-site glare; and
 - operated so that they do not disturb the peace, quiet, and comfort of adjacent, neighboring uses, and shall be screened and/or shielded from surrounding properties and streets.

In addition, the City (pursuant to Chapter 17.51.050 (D)(1)(d) requires that all applications for new buildings and building addition include a lighting plan that identifies the location, fixture type, fixture height, and photometric information of all outdoor lighting. Information about shut-off timers and hours of operation for outdoor lighting shall also be included in the lighting plans.

Chapter 17.57 Property Development Standards – Residential.

Chapter 17.57.020, Residential Development Standards. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide development standards for all properties and structures permitted within residential zones. These standards ensure that all new single-family homes shall be designed with architectural treatments and articulation on all sides (three hundred sixty (360) degree architecture). Further, all building materials shall be high quality, durable, and natural-appearing. Homes on corner lots or view corridors that are more visible to the public shall require a higher level of design on the more prominent elevations.

Chapter 17.68 Transfer Development Rights, Density Bonus, and Cluster Developments. Section 17.68.030, Density Bonus Requirements - Senate Bill (SB) 1818, which amended the State Density Bonus Law (Government Code 65915) to offer incentives for the development of affordable housing for low-income, moderate-income, and senior citizen households, of the City’s Municipal Code (Municipal Code), codifies the requirements of Government Code Section 65915. Pursuant to subdivisions (b)(1) of California Government Code Sections 65915-65918, as the project proposes an age-restricted (senior citizen) housing development, the project applicant is eligible for a density bonus of 20 percent of the number of senior units and a parking reduction. As such, the project is requesting the following waivers:

6. Minimum Lot Size and Lot Width per Chapter 17.57 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires a minimum lot area of 43,560 square feet for NU5 and 20,000 square feet for UR1. The project provides three product types: 50 feet by 100 feet, 60 feet by 100 feet, and 70 feet by 100 feet. The project is requesting approval for a minimum net lot area of 5,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 50 feet.

7. Minimum Setback per Chapter 17.57 of the Municipal Code

- The project is requesting reductions in front yard setbacks, rear yard setbacks, reverse corner lot side yard setbacks, and cul-de-sac lot widths.

8. Maximum Retaining Wall Height per Section 17.57.020 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires that retaining walls not exceed six feet in height. The project applicant requests an increase in the height limits of certain retaining walls.

9. Maximum Length of Continuous Retaining Wall per Section 17.57.020 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires that the maximum length of any continuous retaining wall not be more than 100 linear feet. The project is requesting an increase in the continuous length of certain retaining walls.

10. Ridgeline Preservation per Section 17.38.070 of the Municipal Code

- The Municipal Code requires a one (100) foot vertical and a one hundred (100) horizontal distance from an identified significant ridgeline. The project is requesting a reduction in the vertical setback.

Chapter 17.86.040 - Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Development.

Grading where average slopes are greater than ten percent (10%) and involving more than one hundred (100) cubic yards is subject to Section 17.51.020 (Hillside Development). For specific requirements involving view corridors, scenic vistas, ridgelines, grading on slopes exceeding fifty percent (50%), and maximum slope heights, refer to Section 17.38.070 (RP—Ridgeline Preservation Overlay Zone) and Section 17.51.020 (Hillside Development).

2.3.3 City of Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines

The project site is located within the Canyon Country community area of the City and the community character and design guidelines presented below are applicable to the Canyon Country area. The intent of these guidelines is to retain and encourage architectural variety, promote quality development, and ensure that both existing and new development:

- are compatible in size, scale, and appearance with the character of Santa Clarita;
- are attractive and an asset to the community;

- preserve and enhance natural features of the site;
- incorporate quality architecture, community character features, multiple building forms, desirable building details, and other elements that display excellence in design;
- provide pedestrian-oriented design to enrich the pedestrian experience;
- include pedestrian friendly amenities, such as pedestrian connections, plazas, seating, bike racks, fountains, and other similar features, for the enjoyment of the community and visitors;
- promote the use of high quality materials;
- promote well-landscaped parking lots with efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation; and
- provide suggestions for ways to improve the environmental performance of projects through the strategic incorporation of green building components.

More specifically, the guidelines discuss design trends and quality design principles; define the individual character of each community within Santa Clarita and list suggested building materials and identify specific design considerations; and provide guidelines for the single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial land use categories. No single architectural theme is promoted, but rather the emphasis is to promote variety. (City of Santa Clarita 2009).

2.3.4 City of Santa Clarita Beautification Master Plan

In 2001, the City adopted the Santa Clarita Beautification Master Plan, which contains citywide design guidelines as well as specific guidelines tailored to maintain community character within Canyon Country, Newhall, Saugus, and Valencia. According to the document, “the Beautification Master Plan addresses concepts for streetscape design, landscape enhancement, gateways, and monumentation and signage, on both a regional and a community scale. The Master Plan strives to maintain the identity of individual communities while unifying the entire City through design. Specific components of the City’s Beautification Master Plan (Canyon Country) applicable to the Project consist solely of use of natural lodge pole fencing that, as shown on Figure 4a, that is proposed along the extension of Lost Canyon Road and along the site’s southern boundary (i.e., along Oak Springs Canyon Road).

2.3.5 City of Santa Clarita Environmental Checklist

The City of Santa Clarita Environmental Checklist includes the following threshold and standard of review for determining significance related to visual resources:

Would the project:

5. Result in changes to the topography of any identified Ridgeline.

3 Environmental Setting

3.1 Project Site and Surrounding Area

The approximately 193.8 -acre project site is located south of State Route 14 (SR-14) north Robinson Ranch Road, and east of Sand Canyon Road within the City of Santa Clarita, California. The project site is comprised of two distinct areas: a northerly area partially within the Santa Clara River floodplain including hilly to flat, scrub covered and occasional oak tree clumped terrain and located north of railroad track and a southerly area (located south of the railroad track) of mostly scrub covered and coast live oak dotted lands traversed by several informal trails and crossed by a meandering northwest to southeast wash in the southwestern corner. Topography within the project site is generally flat but undulating with slopes scattered along the Santa Clara River, the eastern boundary of the project, and the project's southwestern corner. Elevation ranges from approximately 1,550 feet above mean sea level (amsl) in the northwestern corner of the review area to 1,730 feet amsl in the southeastern corner of the review area. While the project site is vacant, the northerly portion of the project site includes several poles supporting a local electrical distribution line.

The location of photographs capturing existing conditions on the project site is shown on Figure 5, Key Map: Project Site Existing Conditions. Selected photographs are presented on Figure 6, Project Site Existing Conditions. The photographs detail existing character of the site as informed by existing vegetation and terrain. See Photos A through D on Figure 6.

The project site is bordered by the Santa Clara River to the north (and further north—SR-14), existing single-family development to the west, Sand Canyon County Club to the south, and undeveloped, mountainous terrain to the east. Unincorporated Los Angeles County is located east of the project site, and the Angeles National Forest is located 0.25-mile east of the project site. Photographs of select development and features in the surrounding area are presented on Figure 7, Surrounding Area Existing Conditions. The wide, braided, shrub and sand covered terrain of the Santa Clara River abuts the project site on the north. On the west, the northern portion of the project site abuts Oak Springs Canyon Road. A local unstriped two lane road, Oak Springs Canyon Road extends west, becoming Lost Canyon Road, and passes through a single-family residential neighborhood that also includes an equestrian facility and several properties supporting equestrian uses and features (i.e., pens, fenced corrals, small stables). To the east, the northern portion of the project site abuts a narrow strip of terrain that extends down into the Santa Clara River floodplain and includes terrain of a similar elevation as the nearby railroad tracks. On the west, the southern portion of the project site abuts developed, rural residential lands that include homes, ponds, pools, and equestrian uses/elements all of which are typically surrounded by mature trees and/or shrub covered hilly terrain. Residential estates on properties featuring manicured lawns are also intermixed in the area. In addition to Sand Canyon Country Club greens and a large, north-south driving range that are situated amongst rolling, scrub and oak tree covered terrain, rural residential lands with equestrian facilities are located to the south of the project site and south of Oaks Springs Canyon Road.

3.2 Scenic Vistas

Scenic resources identified in the Santa Clarita General Plan include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes that contribute to a high level of visual quality. The public may associate natural landforms and landscapes with scenic resources, such as lakes, rivers and streams, mountain meadows, and oak woodlands. Scenic resources can also include manufactured open spaces and the built environment, such as parks, trails, nature preserves, sculpture gardens, and similar features. Scenic resources in the Santa Clarita Valley near the project site include Sand Canyon, Santa Clara River, and hilly and mountainous terrain to the north, east, and south of the City limits.

3.3 Scenic Highways

There are no eligible or officially designated state scenic highways located nearby. Interstate 5 (from approximately Interstate 210 (near Tunnel Station) to State Route 126 (near Castaic)), is an eligible state scenic highway and is approximately 8.2 miles away from the project site. State Route 2 in the San Gabriel Mountains is an officially designated state scenic highway but is located approximately 16 miles to the southeast of the project site.

There are no locally designated scenic roadways in the Project area (City of Santa Clarita 2011).

3.4 Visual Character and Quality

Refer to Section 3.1, Project Site and Surrounding Area, above, for a summary of existing development and conditions on the project sites and in the immediate surrounding area. Existing visual character and quality of the site and views is further described through the discussion of select views below.

3.4.1 Views

3.4.1.1 Project Visibility

The visual environment can be vast; therefore, for purposes of analyzing impacts, boundaries must be placed on it. The area within those boundaries is commonly referred to as the viewshed. The viewshed is the area visible from an observer's viewpoint, including the screening effects of intermediate vegetation and structures. The most comprehensive viewsheds are generally from scenic viewpoints, singular vantage points that offer an unobstructed view of expansive visible landscape components. Its components include the underlying landform (topography, e.g., foothills, mountains, flatlands) and the overlaying landcover (e.g. water features, vegetation, cultural sites, and buildings).

The Project viewshed is shown on Figure 8, Project Viewshed. The projection of potential project visibility reflects the typical height of proposed two-story residences (30 feet high) and existing terrain. The potential screening of views to the Project site associated with existing vegetation and development is not reflected in Figure 8, Project Viewshed.

3.4.1.2 Viewpoints

Six locations from which representative views of the project site are available to viewer groups in the surrounding area were selected to evaluate the anticipated visual change associated with implementation and operation of the proposed project. These locations (i.e., viewpoints) form the basis of the impact analysis as it relates to visual character and quality of the site and surrounding area. The views at identified locations are also characteristic of the range of viewing angles, distances, number of viewers, and general visibility to the project site available to local viewer groups in the surrounding area and reflect commonly travelled routes, . The quality of the existing view and character of the landscape at the viewpoints was captured in photographs taken during the November 2024 photographic inventory. The location of the viewpoints and their relationship to the Project component site is depicted on Figure 9, Viewpoints. The existing photographs taken at each viewpoint are included on Figures 10a, 11a, 12a, 13a, 14a, and 15a.

Table 2, Viewpoints and General Visibility, below lists the identified viewpoints and provides the location, approximate distance, viewing angle/observer position, and general visibility conditions to the project sites. A brief description of the view and visual character of the landscape is also provided below by key view location. In addition, an assessment of existing visual quality based on the BLM’s scenic quality evaluation process as established in Manual H-8410 (BLML 1986) is provided and quality is assessed as High, Moderate, or Low based on the following factors: landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity, and cultural modifications (i.e., development).

Table 2. Viewpoints, Visual Character and General Visibility of Project Site (Existing Conditions)

View #	Location	View Direction and Location	Distance to Project Site/Boundary (Approximate)	Visual Character and General Viewing Conditions to Project Site
1	34° 25'28.95"N 118° 24'55.63"W	East/Northeast from Lost Canyon Road	95 feet to the northwestern corner of the project site (near where Lost Canyon Road turns southerly into Oak Springs Canyon Road)	<p>The curving alignment of the confluence of Lost Canyon Road and Oak Canyon Road is visible in the immediate foreground. Dirt and rock strewn shoulders parallel the roads. Densely vegetated hilly terrain lies to the east and the dark foliage of several mature oak trees mark the landscape (a particularly tall oak tree to the southeast blocks distant terrain from view). Tall and thin wood poles supporting a local electrical distribution line are present and crest a low hill and distant, rugged mountainous terrain is detectable to the east/southeast. See Figure 10a, Viewpoint 1: Lost Canyon Road (Existing Conditions).</p> <p>At this location, the larger southern portion of the Project Site is blocked from view by intervening terrain (hills). The proposed areas identified for extension to and improvement of Lost Canyon Road (including associated landform alteration to accommodate the proposed road extension) is within the foreground of the available view.</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 1 presents moderate visual quality as it includes some variety in landforms</p>

Table 2. Viewpoints, Visual Character and General Visibility of Project Site (Existing Conditions)

View #	Location	View Direction and Location	Distance to Project Site/Boundary (Approximate)	Visual Character and General Viewing Conditions to Project Site
				(rolling hills and background mountains) and limited variety in visible vegetation and landscape colors.
2	34° 25' 39.14"N 118° 24' 42.17"W	Southeast from eastbound State Route 14	865 feet to the northernmost boundary of the project site	<p>As experienced from View 2 (eastbound State Route 14; approximate AADT of 107,500 vehicles^a), the visible valley landscape is broad and primarily limited by the distant mountainous terrain that stretches across the background of the view. The lower elevation foreground includes a descending slopes that transition to low, undulating terrain of the Santa Clarita floodplain (seasonally dry at the time of the November photo inventory) that is dotted with low, spreading shrubs and occasionally, by clumps of mature trees. The floodplain is crossed by several curving areas of exposed, greyish sands. The middleground of the view features hilly, scrub shrub covered terrain (several low-profile structures with light colored exteriors are visible atop a low ridge to the south) and the background is marked by steep and rugged mountainous terrain. See Figure 11a, Viewpoint 2: Eastbound State Route 14 (Existing Conditions).</p> <p>At this location, the proposed Lost Canyon Road extension alignment area is generally visible but obscured by distance and intervening vegetation and terrain. The southern portion of the project site upon which residential lots are proposed is mostly blocked from view by intervening terrain and mature oak tree vegetation.</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 2 presents High visual quality mainly due to the inclusion of several terrain types (valley/wash, low hills, and a broad mountain range) some visible variety in vegetation (and colors expressed by vegetation), and the visual prominence of adjacent scenery (i.e., mountain terrain).</p>
3	34° 25' 45.42999"N 118° 24' 11.099"W	Southwest from State Route 14	700 feet to the northernmost boundary of the project site	As experienced from View 3 (westbound State Route 14; approximate AADT of 107,500 vehicles ^a), the visible landscape is similar to that appearing in View 2. The travel lanes of the state route stretch across the immediate foreground and the landscape then transitions to a series of low to high, mounded hills covered with dark shrubs and yellow grasses. The straight line of an elevated railroad track atop bermed land is obscured in the foreground and runs

Table 2. Viewpoints, Visual Character and General Visibility of Project Site (Existing Conditions)

View #	Location	View Direction and Location	Distance to Project Site/Boundary (Approximate)	Visual Character and General Viewing Conditions to Project Site
				<p>between the mounded terrain. Clumped groupings of dark trees dot the terrain as do the lightly covered exteriors and roofs of residential homes. Beyond the foreground, steep and rugged mountainous terrain rises. See Figure 12a, Viewpoint 3: Westbound State Route 14 (Existing Conditions).</p> <p>At this location, terrain and vegetation within the alignment of the proposed Lost Canyon Road extension alignment area is generally visible. The southern portion of the project site upon which residential lots are proposed is visible beyond the railroad tracks.</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 3 presents moderate visual quality. While a similar assortment of landscape terrain as at View 2 is present, overall visual quality is muted by the limited clarity of vegetation type and color variety.</p>
4	34° 25' 45.79"N 118° 24' 10.60"W	Southwest from westbound Soledad Canyon Road	0.3 mile to the northernmost boundary of the project site	<p>Due to its elevated location, views to the project site from Soledad Canyon Road are available but routinely blocked by intervening terrain, street trees, and sound walls. The view in Figure 13a, Viewpoint 4: Soledad Canyon Road (Existing Conditions), is opportunistic and captures some site visibility prior to southerly views from the road becoming completely blocked by a large sound wall visible in the photograph. At this location, the lower elevation terrain present in the northern portion of the project site is visible but indistinct for other lower elevation terrain in the foreground. The elevated east-west mound upon which UPRR track is constructed is visible as flatter elevation lands to the south where residential lots are proposed. Beyond the project site the local terrain rises to a relatively low, north-facing slope (several homes/structures are constructed on the low slope) and finally, to a steep and broad mountain range.</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 4 presents moderately high visual quality. A similar variety of landscape, vegetation, and colors as at View 2 is present at View 3; however, the prominence of Soledad Canyon Road in the foreground lowers overall visual quality to a moderately high level.</p>

Table 2. Viewpoints, Visual Character and General Visibility of Project Site (Existing Conditions)

View #	Location	View Direction and Location	Distance to Project Site/Boundary (Approximate)	Visual Character and General Viewing Conditions to Project Site
5	34° 24' 59.86"N 118° 24' 24.89"W	Northeast from eastbound Oak Spring Canyon Road (private)	35 feet to the southernmost boundary of the project site	<p>At this location, views to the southern portion of the project site are available and the landscape is marked by dense and moderately tall shrubs that parallel Oak Spring Canyon Road (and seemingly cover terrain to the immediate north), scattered and mature oak trees, and undulating hillsides and low ridges. See Figure 14a, Viewpoint 5: Eastbound Oak Springs Canyon Road (Existing Conditions).</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 5 presents moderate visual quality. While the landscape includes low hills including features with interesting geological banding, background mountains are mounded and are not dominant features. Some variety of vegetation and color is present but contrast are generally weak (subtle variation in muted coloring is present).</p>
6	34° 25' 0.83"N- 118° 24' 15.98"W	North from westbound Oak Spring Canyon Road (private)	Adjacent to project boundary (approximately 150 feet from nearest proposed residential lot)	<p>Views to nearly the entirety of the southern portion of the project site (i.e., where residential lots and other uses are proposed) are available at this elevated vantage point along Oak Springs Canyon Road. In addition, the view stretches north to include visible portions of the Santa Clara River floodplain, the light tan soundwall that parallels State Route 14, and residential structures and mature trees located north of the state route. In the background, low hills, pockets of visible residential development, and a seemingly low yet broad mountain ridge mark the view. See Figure 15a, Viewpoint 6: Westbound Oak Springs Canyon Road (Existing Conditions).</p> <p>The existing landscape at View 6 presents moderate visual quality. Compared to View 5, the valley and wash terrain is more perceptible and a greater density of oak trees is present in the foreground. However, at this particular viewpoint, perceptible (and light colored) development to the north of SR-14 is pronounced and the local hilly terrain has been noticeable altered to accommodate proposed development to the northwest.</p>

Source: a. Caltrans 2023

3.5 Light and Glare

There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). Light introduction can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, diminish the view of the clear night sky, and if uncontrolled, can disturb wildlife in natural habitat areas. Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person as they look directly into the light source of a luminaire. Light spill is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated.

The project site does not contain any structures producing light and glare impacts. However, the project site is impacted by light and glare produced from surrounding uses including roadways and residential uses. Within the Project area, streetlights are not installed on Oak Spring Canyon Road, Lost Canyon Road, Sand Canyon Road, or State Route 14; however, streetlights are installed on Soledad Canyon Road. Vehicular headlights on the roads mentioned above are a regular source of night lighting in the Project area but due to distance between roads and the Project site, vehicular headlights is not a substantial source of light on the Project site. In a similar manner. Interior and exterior lighting from existing homes along Lost Canyon Road and Oak Springs Canyon Road contributes lighting to the nighttime environment but these sources generate relatively low illumination levels that are generally localize to the immediate area. Vehicular headlights on nearby roads and State Route 14, and streetlights (depending on the viewing angle to streetlights) are also potential sources of glare in the Project area.

4 Impact Analysis

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Background Research and Field Survey

The project setting was developed by reviewing available information on visual resources in the project vicinity. The Santa Clarita General Plan (City of Santa Clarita 2011) was reviewed to better understand the spatial distribution of land uses in the Project area and to gather information regarding the prevalent urban design concepts that may be present in the community. In addition, a field survey of the Project component sites and surrounding areas was conducted by Dudek in November 2024. A supplemental field survey was conducted in July 2025 to obtain additional photographs of neighborhood development along Lost Canyon Road. During both surveys, viewing conditions were clear and atmospheric conditions were fair with temperatures in the high 70s, low winds and prevalent clouds. Observations were recorded in a series of field notes as well as via photographs captured using an Apple iPhone 12. Select photographs obtained during the November 2024 field survey were subsequently used as baseline images for visual simulations (each of these photographs was taken without zoom and with a 24mm focal length (35mm focal length equivalent)).

4.1.2 Viewpoints and Project Viewshed

A photographic inventory was conducted to document the visual setting and to help illustrate the existing visual character of the Project area. Natural and manufactured visual resources were documented to inform the visual setting and the overall visual character of the area. Existing views from selected public vantage points (i.e.,

Viewpoints) within the topographical viewshed of the Project were documented and photographed. Viewpoints are representative of off-site vantage points that capture the various distance zones, viewing angles and landscape context of locations in the surrounding area from which views of the project site are available.

The Project viewshed is depicted on Figure 8, Project Viewshed.

4.1.3 Visual Simulations

Visual simulations are included and used in this analysis to represent the relative scale and extent of change to the existing visual environment anticipated to occur because of Project implementation. Visual simulations were prepared from representative viewpoints in the surrounding area and depict the Project at build-out. Photo simulations include existing site photographs as background images and true-scale 3D models of the Project provided by the Project design team rendered onto the existing photographs. Background photographs were taken during the November 2024 site visit conducted by Dudek from selected Viewpoints (see Section 4.1.1 for details concerning photographic field surveys conducted for the Project). Using available topography, a 3D surface was created for the existing terrain then imported into 3ds Max. This 3D surface was used to camera-match the background photos to the terrain model. 3D models were then created for all proposed facilities that would be visible from the selected viewpoints. The visual simulations present an estimated future view to the Project by the unaided human eye (e.g., zoom effects are not reflected in the baseline photographs or visual simulations prepared from selected views) that would be experienced by the public from publicly accessible locations including commonly travelled routes in the local area. Visual simulations are presented on Figures 10b, 11b, 12b, 13b, 14b, and 15b.

In regard to proposed residential homes, Dudek coordinated with the applicant to select appropriate home models and the simulations three different home models, three residential structure exterior colors, and three roof types reflected in the Project's *Planning Notebook* (Kimley-Horn 2025). Lastly, the landscaping reflected in visual simulations is shown at estimated ten (10) years of growth.

4.1.4 CEQA Thresholds

The above data was referenced to determine the potential visual impacts in relation to significance thresholds. Visual changes and level of significance were evaluated based on the duration of the anticipated view, line-of-sight in relation to whether interrupted or direct views would change, distance of the view (foreground, mid-view, or distant view), and number of viewers. The visual changes were then assessed to determine whether a significant impact would result in relation to California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") significance thresholds. In addition, the City of Santa Clarita Environmental Guidelines were reviewed to ensure coverage of resources not captured in the CEQA significance thresholds. Where a potentially significant impact was identified, mitigation measures were recommended to reduce the identified impact.

4.1.5 Scenic Vistas

For purposes of this report, scenic vistas are considered formally designated public vantage points offering views of primarily natural settings containing recognized scenic features or landscapes of special importance. As stated in Section 3.2 above, scenic resources identified in the Santa Clarita General Plan include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes that contribute to a high level of visual quality. Scenic resources in the Santa Clarita Valley near the project site include Sand Canyon, Santa Clara River, and hilly and mountainous terrain to the north, east, and south of the City limits.

The concepts of view blockage, interruption, and degradation are used to determine the severity of potential impacts to scenic vista. If views from public vantage points across a project site include recognized scenic features, project components are examined to determine the likelihood for view obstruction (i.e., view blockage), view interruption (i.e., intrusion on available view due to contrasting features), or degradation (i.e., decline in scenic quality).

4.1.6 Scenic Highways

Scenic highways include those state facilities that have been officially designated or nominated for official designation through eligible status by the California Department of Transportation. If a project site is located within the viewshed of a scenic highway, then the potential for impacts to scenic highways is informed by the presence of existing scenic resources on the project site, project plans to avoid/protect or disturb existing scenic resources, and the visibility of scenic resource disturbance from an officially designated or eligible state scenic highway. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Appendix G Guidelines, scenic resources include trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings and may also include locally recognized scenic resources including oak trees, vineyards, and rolling hills.

4.1.7 Visual Character and Quality

Impacts to existing visual character and quality are determined through consideration of potential conflicts with applicable regulations governing scenic quality.

4.2 Thresholds of Significance

The following significance criteria included in Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) assist in determining the significance of a visual resources impact. Impacts would result if the project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

In addition, the City of Santa Clarita Environmental Checklist includes the following threshold for determining significance related to visual resources:

5. Result in changes to the topography of any identified Ridgeline¹

Regarding Significance Threshold 3 and pursuant to Public Resources Code 21071, an “urbanized area” is understood to mean either of the following:

1. An incorporated city that meets either of the following criteria:
 - Has a population of at least 100,000 persons.
 - Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.

2. An unincorporated area that satisfies the criteria in both paragraph (1) and (2) of the following criteria:
 - Is either of the following:
 - (A) Completely surrounded by one or more incorporated cities, and both of the following criteria are met:
 - (i) The population of the unincorporated area and the population of the surrounding incorporated city or cities equals not less than 100,000 persons.
 - (ii) The population density of the unincorporated area at least equals the population density of the surrounding city or cities.

According to the California Department of Finance, the City of Santa Clarita had an estimated population of 230,428 persons as of January 1, 2024 (California Department of Finance 2024). Pursuant to Public Resources Code 21071, the City of Santa Clarita is an urbanized area and as such, the approach threshold for visual character and quality is whether the project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Regarding Significance Threshold 5, a small segment of a City-designated Significant Ridgeline is within the southeast corner of the Project site. See Figure 2. As proposed and depicted on Figure 3, the southeast corner of Project (including the City-designated Significant Ridgeline) would be preserved as open space and no changes to the topography of the ridgeline would occur due to proposed site development. The Project avoids impacts to the segment of the City-designated Significant Ridgeline within the property boundaries (the ridgeline would be preserved) and therefore, no impacts would occur and no further discussion is required.

4.2.1 Scenic Vistas

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

In addition to nearby roadways including Oak Springs Canyon Road, Lost Canyon Road, and Soledad Canyon Road, the proposed project would be visible from several locations, including SR-14 residential uses. While the proposed project would likely be visible from scenic vistas offered from local mountain terrain, no formal scenic vistas occur

¹ Subsequent to the adoption of Resolution 05-38, the City modified its hillside guidelines to consider any change to primary ridgelines as significant.

in nearby mountains the project itself would not represent an overly distinct or otherwise unique component of a scenic vista view due to the presence of development in the surrounding area and intervening topography.

It should be noted that the Project is requesting several waivers from development standards of the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code including a reduction in vertical setback from the identified significant ridgeline located in the southeastern corner of the Project site. Where applicable, the scenic vista analysis below includes a discussion of potential effects to views and visual quality associated with reduced visibility of the portion of City-identified scenic ridgeline that occurs within the boundaries of the Project site.

Construction

While Project construction activities would alter views across portions of the project site from surrounding locations, construction activities would not block or substantially interrupt public views to the Santa Clara River, nor to hilly and mountainous terrain to the east and south of the project site. During construction, graded surfaces, construction materials, equipment and truck traffic would be visible, mostly from viewpoints proximate to the project site including Lost Canyon Road/Oak Springs Canyon Road, private residential drives located east of Oak Springs Canyon Road, and to a somewhat lesser extent due to greater distance, State Route 14. As needed, soil would be stockpiled and equipment for grading activities would be staged at various locations throughout the project site and would proceed in an orderly fashion as activities in specific areas are completed. While landscape changes associated with development of the currently vacant site would be detectable from nearby public (and private) vantage points in the surrounding area, instances of partially blocked views to background mountainous terrain would be temporary and fleeting. Further, increased activity and landform alteration occurring on the project site would not substantially degrade the composition or quality of existing public views across the site and to scenic mountainous terrain beyond. As such, impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Operation

In order to evaluate potential impacts to select views during the operational phase of the project, visual simulations of project components were prepared from five public vantage points in the area surrounding the proposed project. A discussion of view effects at each selected public vantage point is presented below in Table 3, Summary of Changes to Identified Views during Operations.

Table 3. Summary of Changes to Identified Views during Operations

Views	Location	Analysis
1	Lost Canyon Road	As shown on Figure 10b, Viewpoint 1: Lost Canyon Road (Visual Simulation), the foreground elements in the landscape would be noticeably altered. Specifically, the existing curved alignment of Lost Canyon Road at Oak Spring Canyon Road would be straightened to form a new t-intersection. Lost Canyon Road would be extended and proceed through the hilly terrain to the east to provide a northern driveway/access road for the project. New vegetation would be planted along the improved roadways and formal rolled curbs and curb cuts would be construction. A new trail would be constructed and would generally parallel extended Lost Canyon Road. An equestrian crossing would be installed at the new Lost Canyon Road/Oaks Springs Canyon Road intersection.

Table 3. Summary of Changes to Identified Views during Operations

Views	Location	Analysis
		<p>At Viewpoint 1, foreground views would be visibly altered and some modification of nearby hillsides to accommodate the extension of Lost Canyon Road would be detectable. Specifically, the proposed cuts would result in diagonal and denuded slopes (these effects would be partially masked by proposed landscaping along Lost Canyon Road) and to reduced color and texture contrasts associated with vegetation removal, the slopes would be replanted. See Figure 10b. The existing partial background views to regional mountainous terrain would remain (no new view blockage would occur).</p> <p>Finally, at View 1 and with implementation of the Project, the visible landscape would retain moderate visual quality as project components would add variety to the scene but would generally appear to be harmonious with existing terrain and vegetation. Accordingly, impacts to overall scenic quality would be less than significant.</p>
2	Eastbound State Route 14	<p>As shown in Figure 11b, Viewpoint 2, Eastbound State Route 14 (Visual Simulation), the foreground of the view (i.e., the Santa Clara River floodplain) would remain mostly intact and the middleground (south of the elevated UPRR track) would be altered by the construction/addition of new residential structures. The prominent mountainous terrain in the background would not be altered and no new view blockage associated with the project would occur. In the distance foreground, new vibrant green tones attributed to vegetation planted along extended and improved Lost Canyon Road would be slightly detectable as would the roofs and light colored exterior walls of several new residential structures that would be constructed south of the existing elevated UPRR track.</p> <p>Despite the visibility of project components, the scenic qualities of the view and integrity of the Santa Clara River floodplain and mountainous terrain landscapes would largely remain intact.</p> <p>Note that as experienced from Viewpoint 2, the City-identified significant ridgeline in the southeastern corner of the Project site is not particularly distinct and may be overlooked due to the larger scale and prominence of the nearby mountains in the background of the view. While the Project is requesting a reduction in vertical setback from the identified significant ridgeline located in the southeastern corner of the Project site, the ridgeline would remain visible above the roofline of proposed homes and overall effects to the scenic qualities of visible ridgelines would not be significant.</p> <p>Lastly, at View 2 and with implementation of the Project, overall visual quality would be reduced but perceptible contrast associated with alteration of terrain, removal of vegetation, and introduction of homes on the Project site would be weakened by distance and existing foreground vegetation that would remain in place (and</p>

Table 3. Summary of Changes to Identified Views during Operations

Views	Location	Analysis
3	Westbound State Route 14	<p>partially block project components from view). Accordingly, impacts to overall scenic quality would be less than significant.</p> <p>As shown in Figure 12b, Viewpoint 3, Westbound State Route 14 (Visual Simulation), the lower elevation valley portion of the landscape would be visibly alter by the introduction of residential development. In particular, proposed homes would cover the Project site and home exteriors and roofs would be visible above the horizontal line created by the UPRR track. Lower elevation ridgelines near the Project site would be partially obscured by proposed homes; however, the overall composition of the view would remain intact and prominent mountainous terrain in the background would remain visible. No blockage of distant mountainous terrain would occur.</p> <p>From Viewpoint 3, proposed homes on the Project site would partially obscure the lower elevation portions of the City-identified significant ridgeline mapped within the southeastern corner of the Project site. Despite this blockage, the ridgeline (as viewed from westbound State Route 14) is not particularly distinct in the landscape and the Project would not substantially alter the availability of views to prominent ridgelines and mountainous terrain. Accordingly, scenic vista impacts associated with the requested reduction in vertical setback from an City-identified scenic ridgeline would be less than significant.</p> <p>Lastly, at View 3 and with implementation of the Project, overall visual quality would be reduced but would remain at a moderate level. Perceptible contrast associated with introduction of homes on the Project site would be weakened by distance and the visual prominence of surrounding terrain would continue to enhance the scenic quality of the post-development scenario of the view. Accordingly, impacts to overall scenic quality would be less than significant.</p>
4	Soledad Canyon Road	<p>As shown in Figure 13b, Viewpoint 3, Soledad Canyon Road (see Visual Simulation of the Project), the foreground of the view would remain intact and the middleground of the framed valley landscape would be marked by numerous roofs and light colored exterior walls of new residential homes to be constructed south of the UPRR track. The brief view to the project site available at View 3 would be altered as new homes would occur at a currently vacant site marked by relatively flat terrain covered in shrubs and occasionally dotted by mature trees. The background view to the broad, rugged mountain range to the south would remain intact (no new view blockage associated with the project would occur).</p> <p>From Viewpoint 4, the roofs of proposed homes on the Project site would partially obscure the lower elevation portions of the City-identified significant ridgeline mapped within the southeastern corner of the Project site. Despite this blockage, the City-identified ridgeline is difficult to detect in the view and may be overlooked by Soledad Canyon Road motorists (the ridgeline creates a soft line in</p>

Table 3. Summary of Changes to Identified Views during Operations

Views	Location	Analysis
		<p>the landscape that lacks definition). Accordingly, scenic vista impacts associated with the requested reduction in vertical setback from an City-identified scenic ridgeline would be less than significant.</p> <p>Lastly, at View 4 and with implementation of the Project, overall visual quality would be reduced but would remain at a moderate level. Perceptible color contrast associated with introduction of homes on the Project site and the removal of existing vegetation would be weakened by distance and the visual prominence of surrounding terrain would continue to enhance the scenic quality of the post-development scenario of the view. Accordingly, impacts to overall scenic quality would be less than significant.</p>
5	Oaks Springs Canyon Road (eastbound)	<p>As shown in Figure 14b, Viewpoint 5, Eastbound Oaks Springs Canyon Road (Visual Simulation), foreground views would be substantially altered by new vegetation and by the two-story vertical profile of visible homes to the north on the project site. The collection of local hills visible to the north and northeast from Viewpoint 5 would be mostly blocked by roofs of new homes and these components would also partially block more distant mountainous terrain from view.</p> <p>Lastly, at View 5 and with implementation of the Project, overall visual quality would be reduced but would remain at a moderately low level. Perceptible view interruption and loss of vegetative diversity on the site associated with the introduction of homes across the site would occur; however, as this particular advantage point is not considered a scenic vista and has not been designated a scenic vista by any agency with jurisdiction over the Project, a significant scenic vista impact would not occur. Further, the scenic hill and mountain backdrop would continue to be visual prominent and line of sight to these features would be retained in the post-development scenario.</p>
6	Oak Springs Canyon Road (westbound)	<p>As shown in Figure 15b, Viewpoint 6, Westbound Oaks Springs Canyon Road (Visual Simulation), the foreground would be substantially altered by new post and rail trail fencing and by the development of numerous visible homes and project roads. Project development would completely transform the existing onsite landscape but views to more distant hills and mountains would remain intact (no new view blockage of these features would occur).</p> <p>Lastly, at View 5 and with implementation of the Project, overall visual quality would be reduced but would remain at a moderately low level. Perceptible view interruption and loss of vegetative diversity on the site associated with the introduction of homes across the site would occur; however, as this particular advantage point is not considered a scenic vista and has not been designated a scenic vista by any agency with jurisdiction over the Project, a significant scenic vista impact would not occur.</p>

Summary

As presented in referenced figures/simulations and described in Table 3, during operations the project would result in alterations to the foreground and middleground of views available from public roads in the surrounding area. However, views of scenic resources (Santa Clara River floodplain, local hills, and regional mountains) would mostly remain intact. Where view blockage of hills and mountains would occur (for example, at Viewpoints 2, 3, 4, and 5), the duration of view blockage would be brief. Further, terrain that would be partially blocked by proposed homes on the Project site generally encompasses lower elevation slopes and ridgeline sections as opposed to visually prominent peaks and mountains (including the regional mountains that provide a scenic backdrop to available views from State Route 14 and Soledad Canyon Road. As evident in visual simulations from Viewpoint 2 (Eastbound State Route 14), Viewpoint 3 (Westbound State Route 14), and Viewpoint 4 (Soledad Canyon Road), the detectable blockage of local slopes and ridgelines would occupy a small percentage of the available view. Similarly, a small percentage of visible slopes in the broad landscapes occurring within views from State Route 14 and Soledad Canyon Road would be altered (i.e., partially blocked) by proposed homes on the Project site. Views to the vast majority of the prominent terrain in the local landscape would be preserved and minimal interruption would occur. At State Route 14 that supports the largest volume of potential viewers to landscape alteration attributed to the project, subtle modifications to vegetation and terrain in/near the Santa Clara River floodplain would occur. Further, visible roofs and exterior walls of homes would not be visually prominent and would neither block prominent mountain terrain from view nor substantially detract from available views of the landscape. As evidenced in the visual simulations prepared for the Project, the two-story scale of proposed homes, combined with provided setbacks from selected viewpoints and the relatively flat to moderate terrain of the Project site, would minimize potential for proposed homes to result in significant blockage of views to prominent terrain in the local landscape.

While the majority of existing onsite oak trees would be protected in place, site development would require the removal of select oak trees. As such and specifically from Viewpoint 6, existing views of oak trees on the Project site would be obstructed or altered by project development. Despite this change, the removal of oak trees in views from higher volume mobile vantage points in the surrounding area including State Route 14 and Soledad Canyon Road would be somewhat difficult to detect and more generally, the loss of views of oak trees from the Project site would not constitute a substantial alteration of a scenic vista associated with either view blockage or view degradation. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.2.2 Scenic Highways

Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

There are no eligible or officially designated state scenic highways located nearby. Interstate 5 (from approximately Interstate 210 (near Tunnel Station) to State Route 126 (near Castaic)), is an eligible state scenic highway and is approximately 8.2 miles away from the project site. State Route 2 in the San Gabriel Mountains is an officially designated state scenic highway but is located approximately 16 miles to the southeast of the project site. Additionally, there are no locally designated scenic roadways in the Project area.

As the project site is not visible from a designated state scenic highway, no impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.

4.2.3 Conflicts with Scenic Quality Regulations

Would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Development of the project including construction and operation of 341 proposed single-family detached dwelling units, a 3.1-acre recreation center, and 2.6 miles of publicly accessible trails, roads, and other public services and amenities across approximately 193.8 gross acres would result in a substantial change to the existing visual appearance/character of the current vacant project site. Visual simulations of the Project from public vantage points in the surrounding area have been prepared and are presented on Figures 10b, 11b, 12b, 13b, 14b, and 15b. As shown in the visual simulations, the severity of visual change and perceived changes to landscape character would be largely dependent on proximity to the project site and/or elevation of viewing location relative to the project site. In addition to developed uses, portions of the project site (specifically, approximately 108 of the site's 193.8 acres (nearly 56 percent of the site) would be retained as open space. Other proposed land uses that would reduce the total bulk and scale of the project include public streets (new driveways and internal roads), landscaping, and utility improvements. While these components would contribute to the developed shift of the currently undeveloped Project site, driveways, internal roads, and utility improvements would be mostly concealed from public view due to the presence of proposed homes along the Project perimeter that would be constructed between viewers and the aforementioned internal Project components.

The existing visual character of the project site and surrounding areas would change as the project would develop approximately 86 acres of vacant land with mostly residential uses and related infrastructure (see Table 3 and Figures 10b through 15b for representative summary (and visual depiction) of landscape and view changes attributed to development of the project). However, proposed age-restricted, detached single-family residential units would be compatible in scale with existing rural residences to the east and south of the project site and more recently developed residential neighborhoods to the south (south of Robinson Ranch Road; located 0.35 mile south of the project site). Further, proposed project density would be comparable to and compatible with residential development located nearby and to the north of State Route 14 (i.e., residences in the Canyon Gardens neighborhood; located approximately 0.25 mile to the north of the northern project boundary). While the proposed residential development would present greater density than nearby large-lot residential development to the west along Lost Canyon Road and to the south along Oak Springs Canyon Road, these uses would be visually buffered from the project by natural and improved open space that would serve as a detectable break in the existing development pattern. Natural and improved open space, and site landscaping including the planting of approximately 910 trees, would also help to soften the visual impact and create a visually appealing transition from existing large-lot residential uses to the denser development pattern proposed on the project site. In addition, the use of varied building designs as proposed by the project, would help to avoid overall visual monotony and reflect (albeit on a decidedly smaller scale) the diversity of residential home design presented in neighborhoods to the immediate west and south of the project site.

Lastly and pursuant to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines to aid in the determination of potential effects to visual character, Table 4 below presents an analysis of consistency between the project and applicable (local) scenic quality regulations. Please note that actual policy consistency determinations associated with specific project developments are made/performed by the City of Santa Clarita staff and the analyses included in Table 4 are provided for informational purposes and as recommendation in support of the necessary findings to be made by the City of Santa Clarita. As shown in the table below and as analyzed in this report, the project would be consistent with applicable regulations. As such, the potential for conflicts with scenic quality regulations is anticipated to be low and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
Santa Clarita General Plan – Conservation and Open Space Element	
<p>Goal CO 6: Preservation of scenic features that keep the Santa Clarita Valley beautiful and enhance quality of life, community identity, and property values.</p> <p>Objective CO 6.2: Protect the scenic character of view corridors.</p> <p>Objective CO 6.3: Protect the scenic character of major water bodies.</p>	<p>Consistent. As detailed in Table 3 and in project visual simulations (see Figures 10b through 15b), proposed development of a portion of the project site with age-restricted, detached single-family residential units, associated infrastructure, and landscaping would result in visible change. The open and undeveloped character of the project site would be visibly transformed as experienced from public vantage points located near the project site (including from Viewpoints 5 and 6; see Figures 14a through 15b); however, scenic hillsides, ridges, and elements of the Santa Clarita would remain visible from these vantage points.</p> <p>With regard to scenic features, site development and in particular, the extension of Lost Canyon Road to the project site and residential construction in the northeastern corner of the project site would require large cuts into existing hillsides. This proposed alteration of existing hillside terrain would be noticeable/visible from public viewpoints including State Route 14 and segment of Soledad Canyon Road and Oak Springs Canyon Road. Mobile viewers on Metrolink trains along the Antelope Valley line (the line runs between the northern and southern portions of the project site) would also experience views of proposed terrain cuts on the project site. However, as viewed from State Route 14, Soledad Canyon Road, and Oaks Springs Canyon Springs Canyon Road, the existing landscape composition of the Santa Clara River and local and regional hillsides and mountains (scenic resources identified in the General Plan) would largely remain intact and visually prominent following project development. Despite proposed alteration of local hillsides on the Project site, site development would result in minimal blockage of existing scenic landscape features (visually prominent terrain and the Santa Clara River). Further, development/alteration of scenic hillsides on the Project site would be isolated to areas within the northwestern and northeast corners of the project site and over time, visual contrasts associated with alteration of terrain would be reduced through revegetation of these areas. See Figure 10b and Figure 11b that include the proposed revegetation of modified hillsides.</p>
<p>Policy CO 6.2.1: Where feasible, encourage development proposals to have varied building heights to maintain view corridor sight lines.</p>	<p>Consistent. As proposed and described in Section 1.3, Project Description above, a combination of one-story and two-story dwelling units would be constructed on the project site and would present varied building heights across the development footprint. In addition, the project site is generally at a lower elevation in comparison to local roads and public vantage points in the surrounding area. In addition to varied building heights, the lower elevation of the project site would aid in the maintenance of view corridor sight lines across the project site from most public vantage points in the surrounding area.</p>
<p>Policy CO 6.3.2: Protect the banks of the Santa Clara River and its major tributaries through open space designations and property acquisitions, where feasible, to</p>	<p>Consistent. As depicted on Figure 3 of this report, the northern portion of the project site (i.e., the portion located closest to the Santa Clara River) would be mostly programmed as open space that would remain undeveloped. The extension of Lost Canyon Road and</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p>protect and enhance the scenic character of the river valley.</p>	<p>limited development associated with pedestrian/equestrian trails, staging, and parking would occur in the northern portion of the project site but would be setback from the banks of the Santa Clara River and would not directly affect the existing scenic character of the Santa Clara River.</p>
<p>Objective CO 6.4: Protect the scenic character of oak woodlands, coastal sage, and other habitats unique to the Santa Clarita Valley.</p> <p>Policy CO 6.4.2: Through the development review process, ensure that new development preserves scenic habitat areas to the extent feasible.</p>	<p>Consistent. While proposed development of the currently vacant site would require the removal of oak trees and coastal sage scrub vegetation, approximately 107 acres of the 193.8 acre project site would be retained as natural or improved open space that would aid in the maintenance of unique habitats within the site’s boundaries. While preservation of all natural habitat on the project site is not feasible (impacts would be required to accommodate the proposed project), development would preserve scenic habitat to the extent feasible and where impacts could not be avoided, effects would be addressed through on- and off-site preservation. Specifically and as described in the Project’s Biological Resources Technical Report (Dudek 2025), project impacts to sensitive vegetation communities including oak woodland and oak chapparal communities would be address through the creation of an on-site conservation area (and related conservation easement; see MM-BIO-4 that provides for the preservation of nearly 50 acres of sensitive vegetation communities/open space) that would be managed via a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP would be prepared and submitted to the City of Santa Clarita for approval and will identify the required resource management activities and the entities that shall be responsible for managing those activities in perpetuity. Additionally, a habitat mitigation and monitoring plan (MM-BIO-5) will be prepared and will detail the specific approach for each type of habitat restoration and establishment area, and special-status species transplant location, and will outline detailed performance standards and monitoring requirements for each habitat.</p> <p>Pursuant to the City’s Oak Tree Protection Ordinance, the appraised value of trees to be removed from a site shall be applied toward planting oak trees in the site’s developed landscape. As such, the Arborist’s Report (Dudek 2025b) recommends planting a mixture of native oak trees of various sizes (15-gallon, 24-inch, 48-inch, and 60-inch boxes) in the developed landscape and adjacent open space area. Specifically, 712 24-inch box mitigation trees may be required based on the appraised value of proposed regulated oak tree removals and major encroachment into oak tree protection zones associated with the development footprint, which would result in a replacement ratio of 31 trees for each removed/major encroachment tree.</p> <p>With implementation of mitigation measures that includes the creation and in-perpetuity management of an onsite conservation area, a habitat mitigation and monitoring plan, and replacement of</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p>Policy CO-6.5.1. In approving new development projects, consider scenic views at major entry points to the Santa Clarita Valley, including gateways located at the Newhall Pass and along Lake Hughes Road, Route 126, Bouquet Canyon Road, Sierra Highway, State Route 14, and other locations as deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority.</p>	<p>oak trees, unavoidable impacts to sensitive vegetation communities that contribute to the existing scenic character of the area would be minimized and appropriately addressed.</p> <p>Consistent. Anticipated effects to existing views from State Route 14 following build out of the project are depicted in Figures 11b and 12b. As experienced from these mobile vantage points, the severity of project impacts to the existing view would be reduced due to distance between the state route and proposed residential development, the proposed two-story scale of proposed homes (and partial blockage of proposed homes by intervening terrain), the color of residential rooftops that would minimize color contrasts, and by the presence of visually prominent (and large scale) terrain that would continue to attract attention of viewers. New residential structures would be located over 1,800 feet away from the state route and visible elements of the project would not block or substantially interrupt existing views of the Santa Clara River or background hills and ridgelines. Further and as viewed from State Route 14, development of the project site would not result in substantial degradation of existing visual character.</p> <p>As previously discussed, site development and in particular, the extension of Lost Canyon Road to the project site and residential construction in the northeastern corner of the project site, would require large cuts into existing hillsides. This proposed alteration of existing hillside terrain would be noticeable/visible from public viewpoints including State Route 14 and segment of Soledad Canyon Road and Oak Springs Canyon Road. However, as viewed from State Route 14, Soledad Canyon Road, and Oaks Springs Canyon Springs Canyon Road, the existing landscape composition of the Santa Clara River and local and regional hillsides and mountains (scenic resources identified in the General Plan) would largely remain intact and visually prominent following project development. Despite proposed alteration of local hillsides on the Project site, site development would result in minimal blockage of existing scenic landscape features (visually prominent terrain and the Santa Clara River). Further, development/alteration of scenic features including local hillsides would be isolated to areas within the northwestern and northeast corners of the project site.</p>
<p>Policy CO-6.6.1. Enhance views of the night sky by reducing light pollution through use of light screens, downward directed lights, minimized reflective paving surfaces, and reduced lighting levels, as deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority.</p>	<p>Consistent. An analysis of Project effects to existing night views is presented below in Section 4.3.4, Light and Glare. As described therein, the proposed project would result in increased utilization of the currently vacant site and would entail the installation of numerous lighting sources to support use of proposed residential structures and roads. While a conceptual lighting plan has yet to be developed for the Project, typical exterior lighting sources within new residential developments include street lights, overhead lighting at recreation areas/facilities, pathway lighting, signage lighting, and lighting associated with common parking areas. All lighting installed on the</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p>Policy CO 8.2.4. Establish maximum lighting levels for public facilities, and encourage reduction of lighting levels to the level needed for security purposes after business hours, in addition to use of downward-directed lighting and use of low-reflective paving surfaces.</p>	<p>project site would comply with Chapter 17.51.050(D), Outdoor Lighting Standards, of the City’s UDC that requires (1) all light sources to be directed downward and shielded such that the lighting sources are not visible from a public right-of-way and (2) all lighting sources not illuminate other (i.e., offsite) properties.</p>
<p>Santa Clarita General Plan – Land Use Element</p>	
<p>Policy LU 1.1.4: Preserve community character by maintaining natural features that act as natural boundaries between developed areas, including significant ridgelines, canyons, rivers and drainage courses, riparian areas, topographical features, habitat preserves, or other similar features, where appropriate.</p> <p>Objective LU 2.2: Protect significant community resources from encroachment by incompatible uses, where feasible and appropriate.</p> <p>Objective LU 6.1: Maintain the natural beauty of the Santa Clarita Valley’s hillsides, significant ridgelines, canyons, oak woodlands, rivers, and streams.</p>	<p>Consistent. Please refer to the analysis presented above for Goal CO 6, Objective CO 6.2 through Objective CO 6.4, and Policy CO 6.4.2 that details potential project effects to existing visual (and scenic) character and the project’s proposed preservation of open space and mitigation of impacts to sensitive vegetation communities through on- and off-site conservation.</p>
<p>Objective LU 1.2: Maintain the distinctive community character of villages and neighborhoods throughout the planning area by establishing uses, densities, and design guidelines appropriate to the particular needs and goals of each area, including but not limited to the following:</p>	<p>Consistent. The existing visual character of the project site and surrounding areas would change as the project would develop approximately 86 acres of vacant land with mostly residential uses and related infrastructure (see Table 3 and Figures 10b through 15b for representative summary (and visual depiction) of landscape and view changes attributed to development of the project). However, proposed age-restricted, detached single-family residential units would be compatible in scale with existing rural residences to the east and south of the project site and more recently developed residential</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p>Policy LU 1.2.5: In Sand Canyon, ensure compatibility of development with existing rural, equestrian lots and the adjacent National Forest land; provide additional recreational trail links; minimize impacts to the Santa Clara River from incompatible development; and maintain community character in accordance with the City’s Sand Canyon Special Standards District.</p>	<p>neighborhoods to the south (south of Robinson Road; located 0.35 mile south of the project site). While the proposed residential development would present greater density than nearby large-lot residential development to the west along Lost Canyon Road and to the south along Oak Springs Canyon Road, these uses would be visually buffered from the project by natural and improved open space (see Figure 4a) that would serve as a detectable break in the existing development pattern. Natural and improved open space, and site landscaping including the planting of approximately 910 trees, would also help to soften the visual impact and create a visually appealing transition from existing large-lot residential uses to the denser development pattern proposed on the project site. In addition, the use of varied building designs as proposed by the project would help to avoid overall visual monotony and reflect (albeit on a decidedly smaller scale) the diversity of residential home design presented in neighborhoods to the immediate west and south of the project site.</p> <p>Lastly, the project includes an on-site trail network and includes the construction of a new 0.58 mile long, 8-foot wide decomposed granite trail along Lost Canyon Road that would generally extend to Oak Springs Canyon Road to the west of the project site. Trail connections existing Oak Springs Canyon trails are also proposed near the project site’s southern boundary (see Figure 4a).</p>

Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines

<p>The intent of the City’s Canyon Country guidelines is to retain and encourage architectural variety, promote quality development, and ensure that both existing and new development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are compatible in size, scale, and appearance with the character of Santa Clarita; • are attractive and an asset to the community; • preserve and enhance natural features of the site; 	<p>Consistent. As proposed, the project entails the development of one- and two-story, age-restricted dwelling units that would range from approximately 1,531 to 3,782 square feet in size. Floor plans include a minimum of two-bedroom, two-bathroom units, and a maximum of five-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom units. Proposed homes would be constructed in the Spanish Hacienda, Adobe Ranch, and Agrarian Farmhouse architectural styles. Consistent with existing planned residential developments in the City including the Wiley Canyon Project (that incorporates Spanish-style architectural design features; Dudek 2024a), the project includes the implementation of a robust landscape plan consisting of large screening and accent, massing, and shade condition shrubs, vines, succulents, grasses, and groundcover and an access plan that would provide ingress and egress from the north and south of the site. In addition, the project will include nine distinct residential floor plans available in three architectural styles that would add visual interest and result in an attractive residential neighborhood comprised of quality design and materials. Through the provision of one- and two-story structures ranging in size from approximately 1,531 to 3,782 square feet, a pedestrian friendly development would be created and supported by</p>
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Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate quality architecture, community character features, multiple building forms, desirable • building details, and other elements that display excellence in design; • provide pedestrian-oriented design to enrich the pedestrian experience; • include pedestrian friendly amenities, such as pedestrian connections, plazas, seating, bike racks, • fountains, and other similar features, for the enjoyment of the community and visitors; • promote the use of high quality materials; • promote well-landscaped parking lots with efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation; and • provide suggestions for ways to improve the environmental performance of projects through the strategic incorporation of green building components. 	<p>a network of trails, street trees, where appropriate, inviting street furniture (and potentially, bike racks at the proposed recreation center).</p> <p>Regarding preservation of the site’s natural features including oak trees and native vegetation, development of the currently vacant site would require the removal of oak trees and coastal sage scrub vegetation; however, approximately 107 acres of the 193.8 acre project site would be retained as natural or improved open space that would aid in the maintenance/preservation of unique habitats within the site’s boundaries. As shown on Figure 3 of the Project’s Vegetation Mapping Update (Dudek 2024b), the sensitive vegetation community associated with the Santa Clara Wash within the Project boundary would be preserve/protected and on the primary Project site where residential development is proposed, disturbance of sensitive vegetation communities in the southwesterly corner of the site would also be avoided (sensitive vegetation communities occurring in the center and southeast corner of the site would be impacted by proposed development). Further and as described in Section 1.3, Project Description, above, the project would result in planting of approximately 910 trees on-site, including, but not limited to, native oak tree species as well as landscape trees including Maidenhair Tree, Crape Myrtle, Bay Laurel, fruitless olive, and Chinese Pistache, among others.</p> <p>To further assist in the preservation of natural oak trees on the Project site, a detailed Arborist Report has been prepared for the Project site and details individual tree impacts associated with site development and identifies appropriate protective and mitigation measures.</p>
<p>Santa Clarita Unified Development Code - Sand Canyon Special Standards District (Chapter 17.39.030)</p>	
<p>Applicable policies from Chapter 17.39.030 include the following:</p> <p>2. Any new development shall adhere to the following standards or provide the following amenities:</p>	<p>Consistent.</p> <p>Regarding trails, the project includes an on-site trail network and includes the construction of a new 0.58 mile long, 8-foot wide decomposed granite trail along Lost Canyon Road that would extend to Oak Springs Canyon Road to the west of the project site. Trail connections to existing Oak Springs Canyon trails are also proposed near the project site’s southern boundary (see Figure 4a). The Lost</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
<p>a.Trails.</p> <p>i. Riding and hiking trails shall be provided as depicted on the latest Sand Canyon Backbone Trails exhibit on file with Parks, Recreation and Community Services to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services;</p> <p>ii.Trails shall be fenced to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, with fences of a rustic wood appearance;</p> <p>iv. There shall be no obstruction including, but not limited to, on-street parking, landscaping, trash receptacles, or other similar structures within a designated trail;</p> <p>d.Street lights, in accordance with City standards, shall be installed only at road-to-road intersections;</p> <p>f. Street paving, curbs, gutters and sidewalks shall not be required of new development. Minimum City standards for all weather access shall be provided. An engineering analysis shall be required to determine how all weather access will be provided for emergency vehicles. Surface material may consist of graded dirt, gravel or asphaltic concrete to achieve the required standards;</p> <p>h. Street trees shall not be required; however, the planting of oaks and other mature trees shall be encouraged;</p> <p>m. Fences. Non-view-obscuring fences, not to exceed five (5) feet in height, shall be permitted to be located within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback. Where a non-view-obscuring fence is constructed within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback, and is five (5) feet in height, the applicant shall be required to</p>	<p>Canyon Road trails, and trail paralleling Oak Springs Canyon Road along the site’s southern boundary, would be fenced in accordance with City requirements (see Figures 4a and 4b). Proposed trails would also be kept free of obstruction in accordance with City requirements.</p> <p>Concerning lighting, street lights would be installed only at road-to-road intersections in accordance with City standards.</p> <p>Refer to Section 1.3.6 and 1.3.7.1 above for information concerning on-site utility improvements and roadway improvements and access. Regarding landscaping, the project includes the planting of street trees and more generally, includes the planting of approximately 910 trees on the project site.</p> <p>Lastly, fences within the front yard setback are not proposed on the project’s residential lots.</p>

Table 4. Scenic Quality Regulation Consistency Analysis

Guidelines/Goals/Objectives/Policies	Consistency Analysis
landscape the frontage of their property along the property line that abuts the adjacent right-of-way. View-obscuring walls or fences that are higher than three (3) feet six (6) inches shall not be permitted to be located within the twenty (20) foot front yard setback;	

4.3.4 Light and Glare

Construction

Short-term light and glare impacts associated with construction activity are likely be limited to nighttime lighting necessary for security purposes. Relative to potential short-term construction impacts and based on the presence of established rural residential uses near the project site, lighting from construction activities may pose a nighttime lighting impact to nearby rural residences. However, any temporary sources of lighting placed on the Project site during construction would be shielded and directed downward onto the construction site to minimize potential for glare and light trespass onto nearby residential properties and open space. Temporary use of night lighting during construction would also be limited to areas on the Project site requiring illumination. Furthermore, existing open space within the project boundary that would be maintained (see Figure 4a), the Metrolink rail corridor, and SR-14 would provide buffers between construction activities and residential land uses to the west, north, and southwest.

Construction activities are not anticipated to create sources of glare that could affect day or night views and visibility. Construction activity are not expected to involve particularly bright light sources that would be visible from off-site locations and light sources would be shielded and directed downward. In addition, construction would not require equipment, vehicles or other materials that could directly or indirectly generate a substantial amount of prolonged glare that could adversely effect day or night views. Accordingly, construction impacts would be less than significant.

Operations

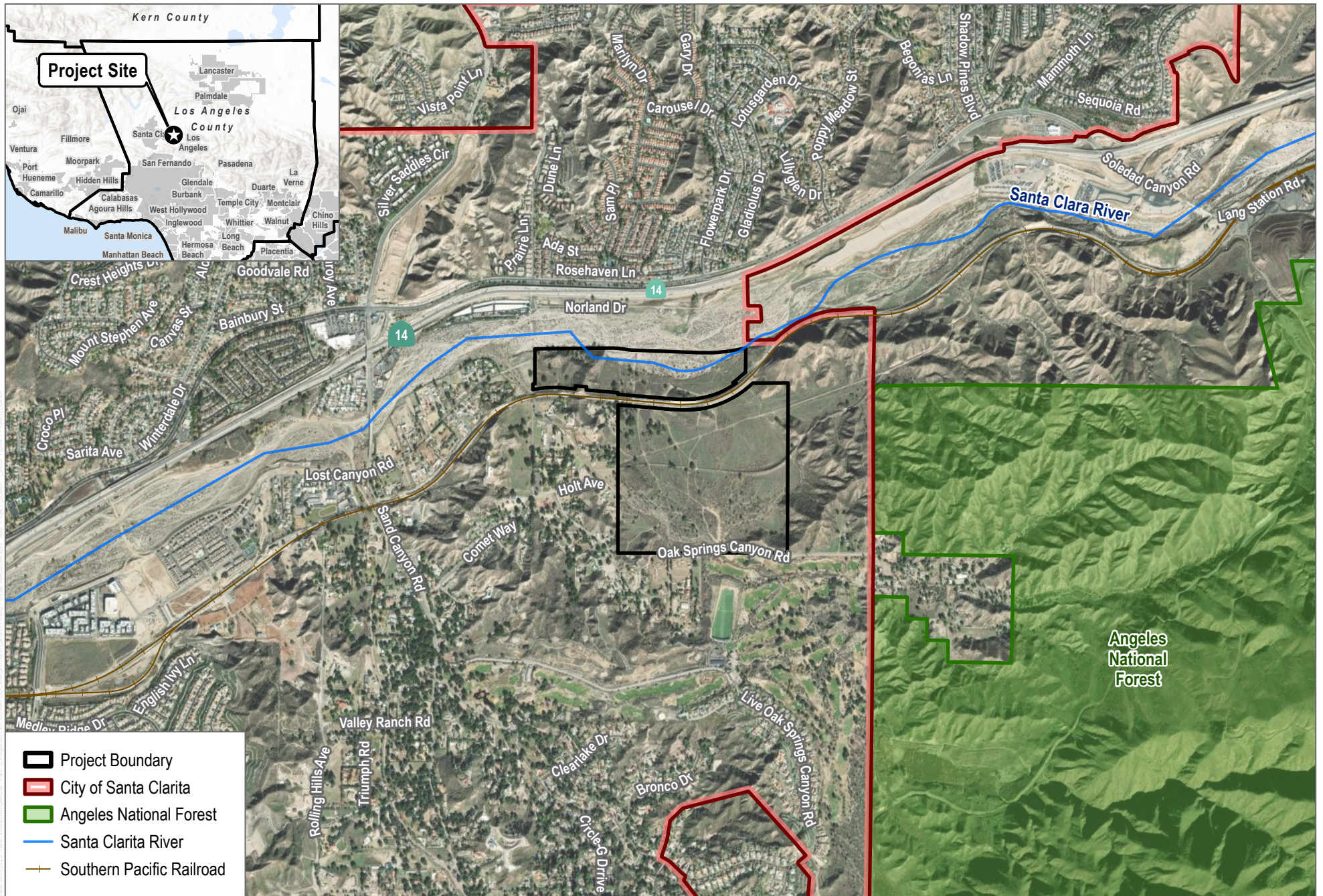
Once constructed, the proposed project would result in increased utilization of the currently vacant site. In addition to interior lighting within residence, exterior lighting sources would be installed on the exterior of individual homes for security and general illumination, along internal site roadways, at recreational facilities, at the project’s recreation area (including at surface parking areas), and on project site entry signage. Despite the presence of existing rural residences to the west and southwest of the Project, the operation of lighting sources on the project site would not result in a significant light and glare impact. In addition to a proposed trail that would meander around the perimeter of the site, existing residences are buffered by proposed residences by pockets of existing vegetation that would remain around the project edge. Further, the recreation area is proposed interior to the site and existing residences would be buffered from lighting sources by proposed residences. While a conceptual lighting plan has yet to be developed for the Project, all lighting installed on the project site would comply with

Chapter 17.51.050, Outdoor Lighting Standards, of the City's UDC that requires (1) all light sources to be directed downward and shielded such that the lighting sources are not visible from a public right-of-way and (2) all lighting sources not illuminate other (i.e., offsite) properties. In addition to limiting occurrences of offsite light trespass, required shielding, and downward directing of new lighting sources would prevent occurrences of offsite glare. As all applicable outdoor lighting would comply with lighting standards established in Chapter 17.51.050, of the City's UDC, potential long-term light and glare impacts would be less than significant.

5 References

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- Caltrans. 2023. “Traffic Census Program – 2023 AADT”. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/census>. Accessed August 1, 2025.
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- City of Santa Clarita. 2001. Santa Clarita Beautification Plan.
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- Dudek. 2024b. Vegetation Mapping Update for the Belcaro Sand Canyon Project. January.
- Dudek. 2025a. Biological Resources Technical Report for the Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project. August.
- Dudek. 2025b. Arborist Report for the Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project. March.
- Kimley-Horn. 2025. Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project Planning Notebook. Prepared for NUWI-Sand Canyon, LLC. September.

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SOURCE: Maxar 2022;

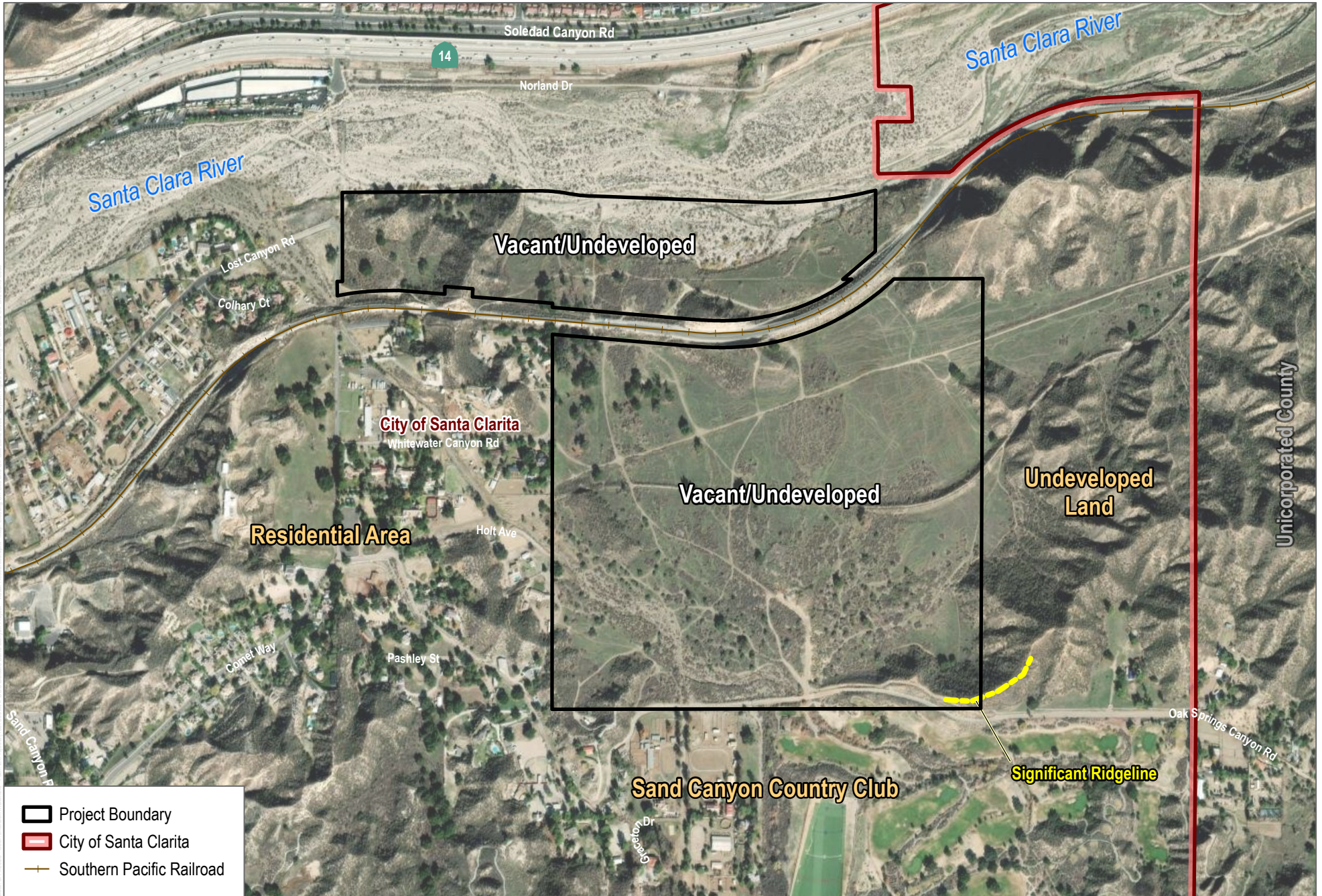


FIGURE 1

Project Location

Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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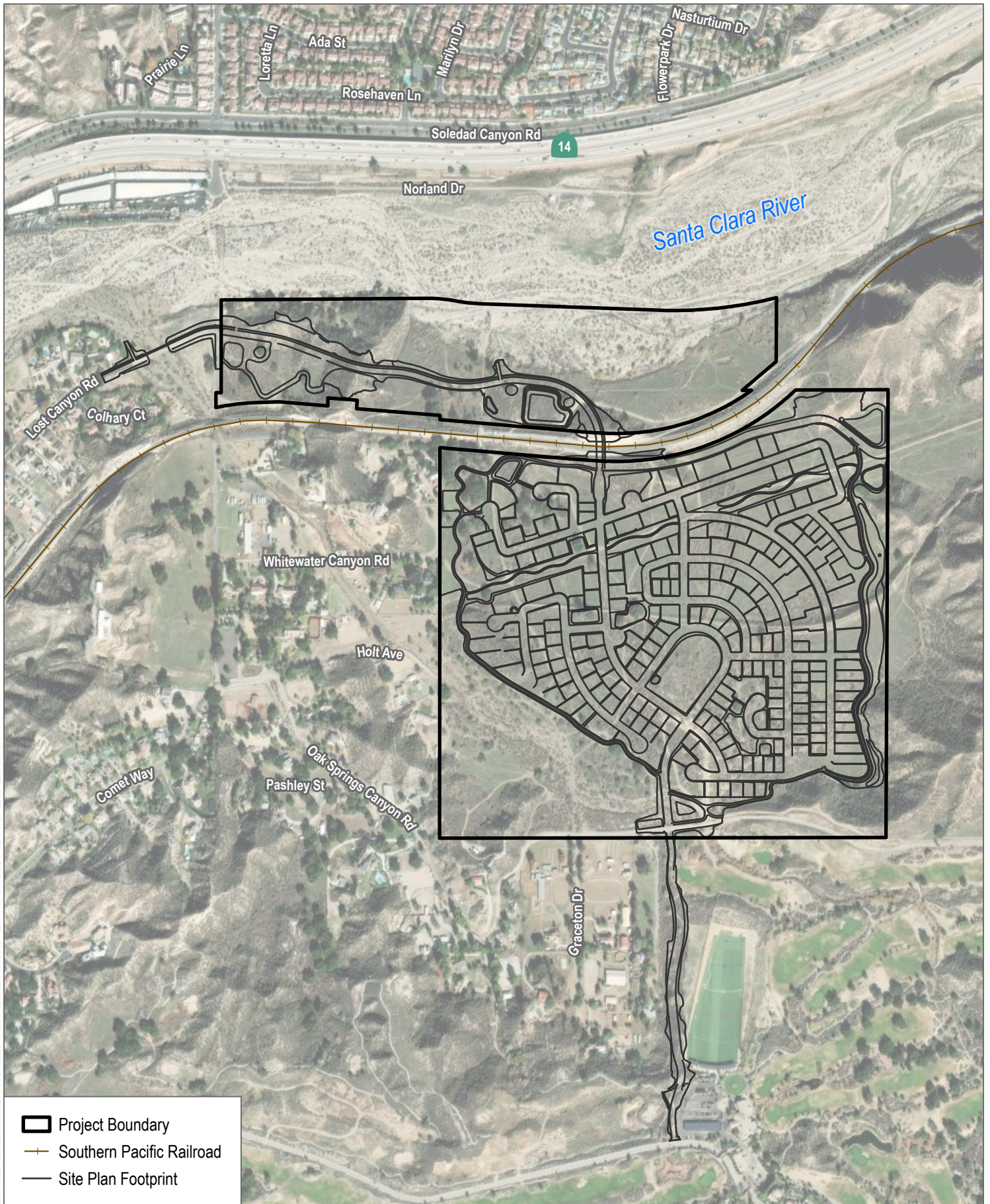


SOURCE: Maxar 2022, City of Santa Clarita 2019

FIGURE 2

Existing On-Site and Off-Site Land Uses

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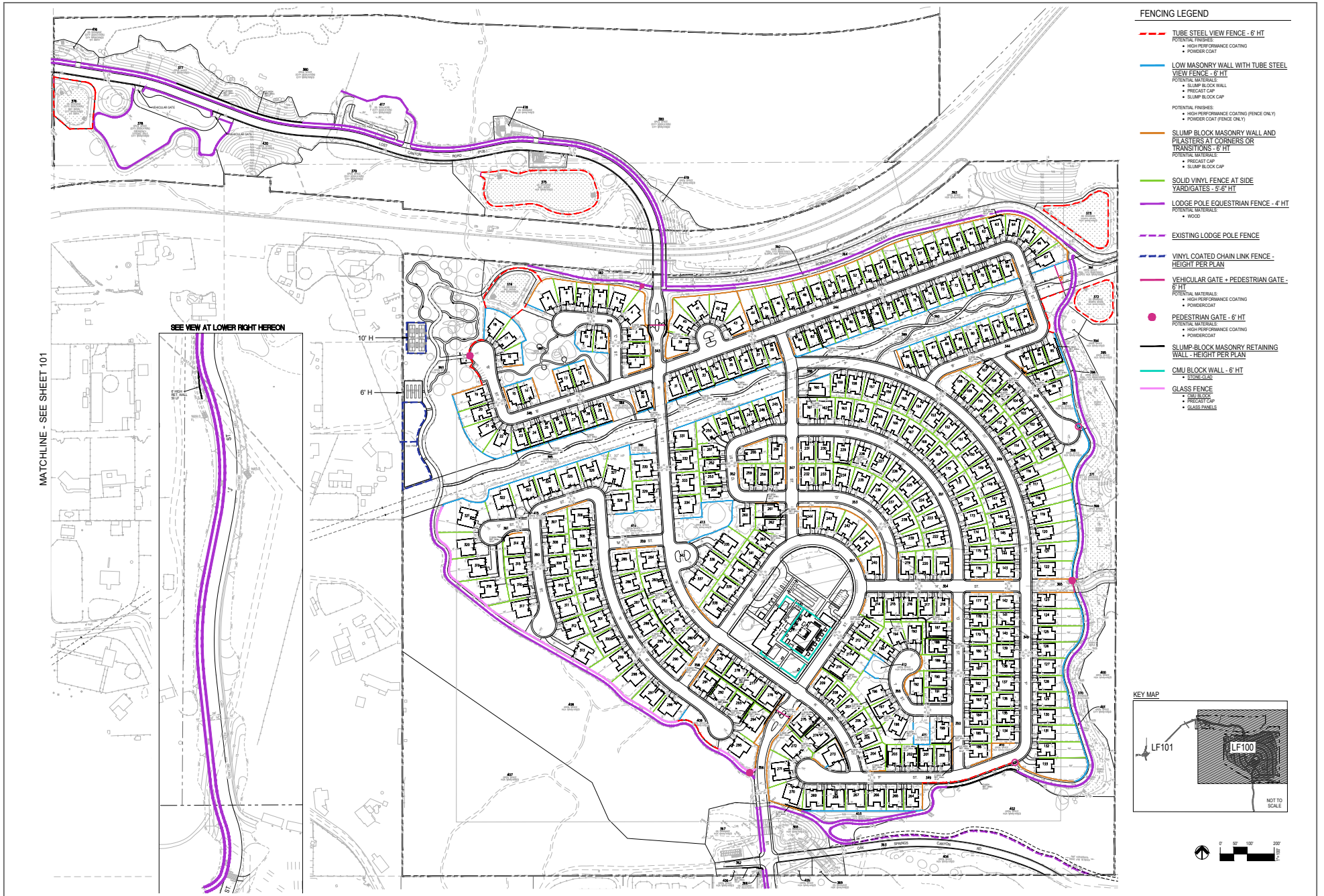
Project Boundary
 Southern Pacific Railroad
 Site Plan Footprint

SOURCE: Maxar 2022;



FIGURE 3
Site Plan

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SOURCE: Groundlevel, 2025

FIGURE 4a
 Walls and Fences Plan - Conceptual (1 of 2)

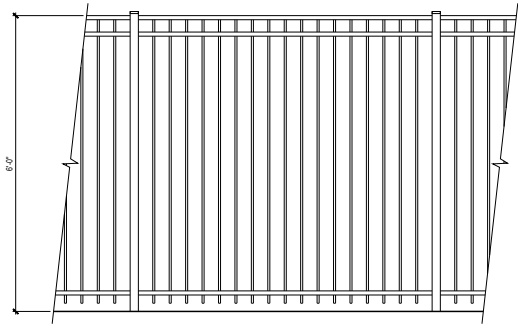
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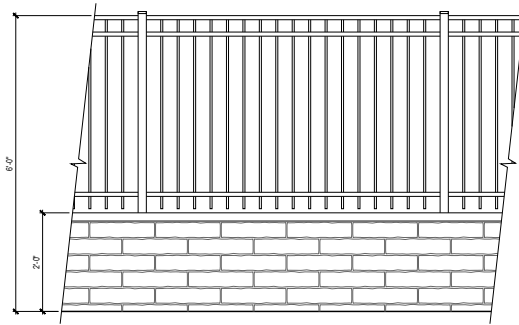
SOURCE: Groundlevel, 2025

FIGURE 4b
 Walls and Fences Plan - Conceptual (2 of 2)

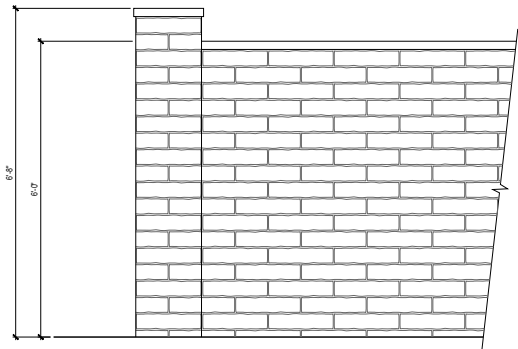
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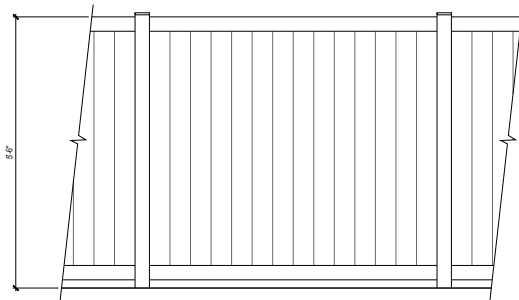
TUBE STEEL VIEW FENCE



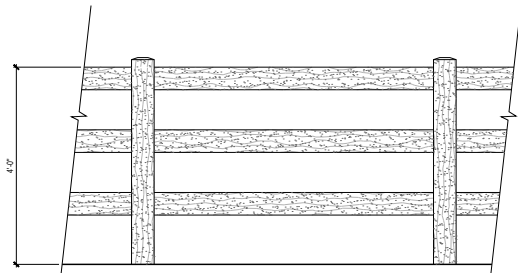
LOW MASONRY WALL TUBE STEEL VIEW FENCE



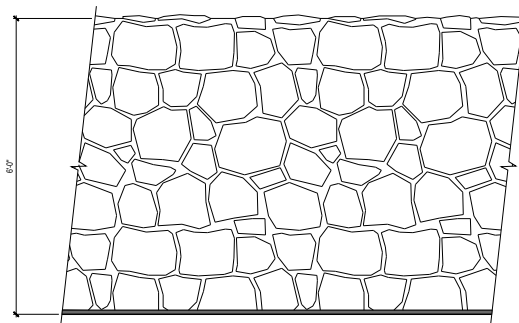
SLUMP BLOCK MASONRY WALL AND PILASTERS



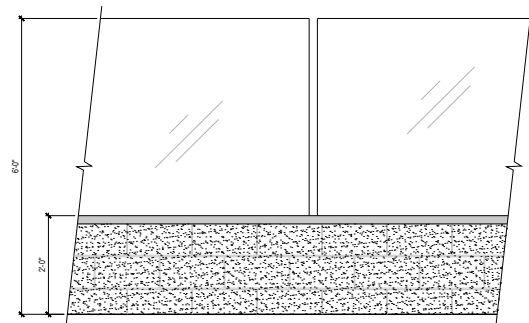
VINYL FENCE



LODGE POLE EQUESTRIAN FENCE



CMU WALL WITH STONE CLADDING



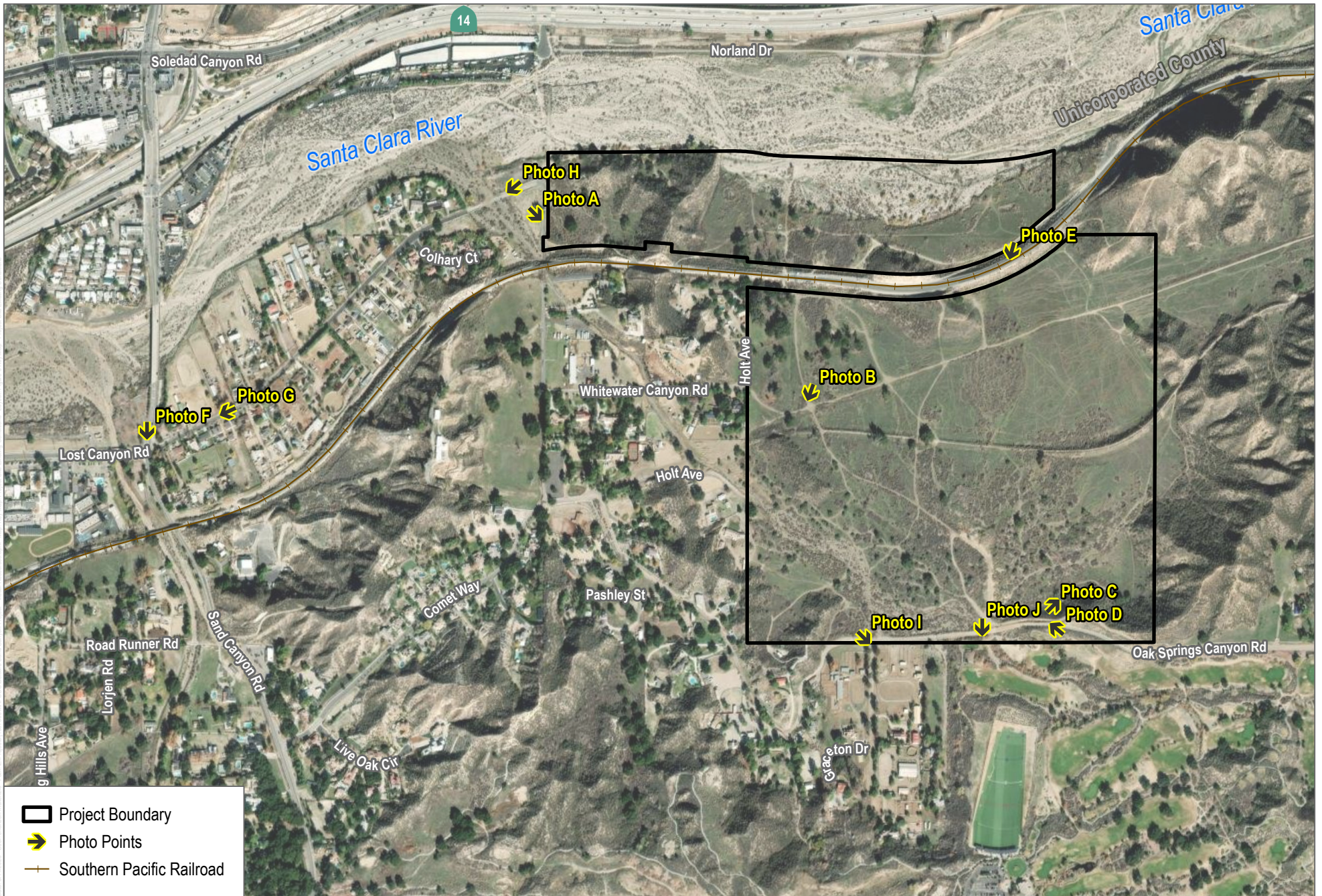
GLASS FENCE



FENCING LEGEND

- - - **TUBE STEEL VIEW FENCE - 6' HT**
 POTENTIAL FINISHES:
 • HIGH PERFORMANCE COATING
 • POWDER COAT
- **LOW MASONRY WALL WITH TUBE STEEL VIEW FENCE - 6' HT**
 POTENTIAL MATERIALS:
 • SLUMP BLOCK WALL
 • PRECAST CAP
 • SLUMP BLOCK CAP
 POTENTIAL FINISHES:
 • HIGH PERFORMANCE COATING (FENCE ONLY)
 • POWDER COAT (FENCE ONLY)
- **SLUMP BLOCK MASONRY WALL AND PILASTERS AT CORNERS OR TRANSITIONS - 6' HT**
 POTENTIAL MATERIALS:
 • PRECAST CAP
 • SLUMP BLOCK CAP
- **SOLID VINYL FENCE AT SIDE YARD/GATES - 5'-6" HT**
- **LODGE POLE EQUESTRIAN FENCE - 4' HT**
 POTENTIAL MATERIALS:
 • WOOD
- **CMU BLOCK WALL - 6' HT**
 • STONE-CLAD
- **GLASS FENCE**
 • CMU BLOCK

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SOURCE: Maxar 2022



FIGURE 5

Key Map: Project Site Existing Conditions

Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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Photo A



Photo B



Photo D



Photo C



Photo E

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FIGURE 6
Project Site Existing Conditions
Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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Photo F



Photo G



Photo H



Photo I

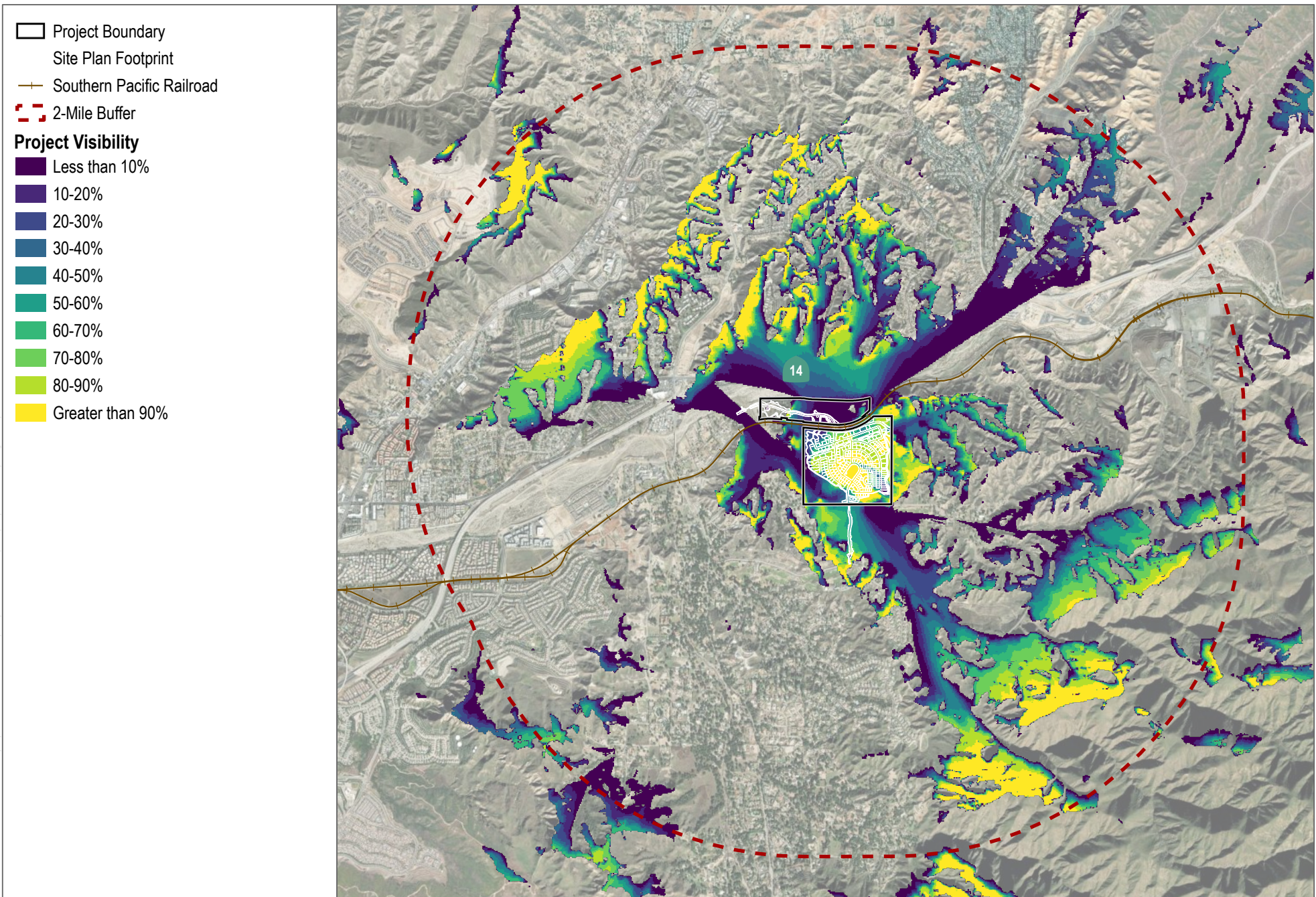


Photo J

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FIGURE 7
Surrounding Area Existing Conditions
Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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SOURCE: USGS 2024

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FIGURE 9
Viewpoints

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Existing view to the east from Lost Canyon Road near Oak Springs Canyon Road

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Landscaping (particularly shrubs and groundcovers)
is an estimation and shown at approximately 10 years of growth

Visual Simulation of Project

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Project components

Landscaping (particularly shrubs and groundcovers) is an estimation and shown at approximately 10 years of growth

Visual Simulation of Project

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Visual Simulation of Project

FIGURE 13b

Viewpoint 4: Soledad Canyon Road (Visual Simulation)

Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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Existing view to the northeast from eastbound Oak Springs Canyon Road

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Landscaping (particularly shrubs and groundcovers) is an estimation and shown at approximately 10 years of growth

Visual Simulation of Project

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Visual Simulation of Project

FIGURE 15b

Viewpoint 6: Westbound Oak Springs Canyon Road (Visual Simulation)

Belcaro at Sand Canyon Project

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