

## 6.6 VISUAL RESOURCES

### 6.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the visual characteristics of the Proposed Project and project alternatives and their relationship to the project area, adjacent land uses, and existing site conditions. In addition, this chapter also addresses the lighting effects of the Proposed Project and alternatives.

### 6.6.2 SETTING

#### PROJECT SITE AND VICINITY

As described in Chapter 5.0, Land Use, Zoning, and Adopted Plans, the Proposed Project and project alternatives are located within the Land Park Community Plan Area. The Land Park Community Plan Area consists primarily of residential neighborhoods. A main feature of the Land Park area is William Land Park, a 167-acre Regional Park in which the Proposed Project and alternatives are located.

William Land Park, which was established in the early 1920's, provides open space and facilities for a variety of uses. The park contains the following attractions: The Sacramento Zoo; Funderland, a children's amusement park; Fairytale Town, a children's fantasyland; a nine-hole golf course; an outdoor amphitheater; picnic areas; softball, baseball and soccer fields and a playground. The extensive grounds, with a variety of mature deciduous and evergreen trees provide an aesthetically pleasing setting for passive recreation as well.

**North:** Surrounding land uses to the north of the project site consist of William Land Park and the adjacent residential neighborhood. Immediately north of the Zoo on the south side of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a formal garden feature of the park. In the park, on the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, lies a pond and grass ball fields surrounded by trees. To the west of the park is an established residential neighborhood along West Land Park Drive and Bartley Drive.

**South:** Surrounding land uses to the south of the project site consist of commercial and residential uses. Commercial uses include two service stations, office buildings and a shopping center. Residential uses include apartment buildings along Sutterville and Del Rio Roads and single family homes in the surrounding area south of Sutterville Road.

**East:** Surrounding land uses to the east of the project site include William Land Park and Sacramento City College, located east of the park across Freeport Boulevard. Features of this portion of William Land Park include Fairytale Town, Funderland, a golf course, picnic areas and soccer fields.

**West:** Surrounding land uses to the west of the project site consist of the Holy Spirit School and the abandoned Southern Pacific railroad. To the west of the railroad is a residential neighborhood.

## **VIEW CORRIDOR**

The view-corridor traveling south along Land Park Drive is characterized by one and two story residences within the Land Park neighborhood. As the traveler passes 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue residences give way to the open lawns, ball fields and mature trees of William Land Park on the west side of the Drive. Continuing south, as the traveler passes 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, William Land Park extends to the east side of the drive. The features of William Land Park along this corridor consist of ball fields, golf course fairways, and a lake, all surrounded by large deciduous and evergreen trees. As the traveler passes 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue the Zoo grounds begin on the west side. The Zoo is not immediately obvious due to the significant setback from the streets and the existence of trees, shrubs and lawns in keeping with the surrounding park. The view of the Zoo opens immediately outside of the Zoo entrance, and the Zoo's entrance booth and associated structures are clearly visible from the road. The view-corridor along Land Park Drive ends at the intersection with Sutterville Road.

The view-corridor for travelers heading west along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue is characterized by the surrounding park. Features of the park along this corridor include a formal garden to the south of the street and a pond to the north.

Continuing west onto William Land Park Drive the park setting continues on the southeast side with the Zoo's perimeter fence coming into view through breaks in the vegetation. On the northwest side of the street near the end of the street, the Holy Spirit School is visible. At the cul-de-sac of the street, the Zoo's service entrance is visible.

The view-corridor for travelers heading west along Sutterville Road from Freeport Boulevard consists of single-family homes to the south and William Land Park to the north. Approaching the intersection with Del Rio Road and Land Park Drive, two-story apartment buildings are visible on the south side of the road followed by two service stations on the southern corners and then several office buildings. The view of the Zoo along this corridor is limited to vegetation and an existing chain link fence.

### **6.6.3 REGULATORY SETTING**

Design guidelines and plans have been developed for specific areas of the City of Sacramento. These documents are intended to be used during the planning and design review process of project approvals to guide development from an architectural and aesthetic standpoint. Design guidelines and plans have not been developed for the area of the City of Sacramento in which the Proposed Project and project alternatives are located. The analysis of the regulatory setting therefore defers to the Proposed Project's and project alternatives' consistency with the Zoning Ordinance, which provides height, bulk and scale standards.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE**

The Zoning Ordinance provides Development Standards for the height, bulk and scale of buildings in each zone. The bulk and scale of a building is determined by the size of the lot in conjunction with setback, height, and lot coverage restrictions. As discussed in Section 5.2.2, and shown in **Figure 5-3**, the Sacramento Zoo and the majority of surrounding areas are within the Standard Single-Family Zone (R-1).

The Development Standards for the R-1 zone provide a maximum building height of 35 feet above grade, a rear yard setback of 15 feet, an interior side yard setback of 5 feet and a maximum lot coverage (building size) of 40 percent.

## 6.6.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

**Visual Character:** The Proposed Project and alternatives have been evaluated against the visual characteristics of the existing setting. The physical characteristics of height, scale, and bulk (unbroken mass) are compared to the existing physical and regulatory setting. When the Proposed Project or alternatives introduce a new predominating height, scale, or bulk into the existing setting, this is considered a significant impact.

**Lighting:** The Proposed Project and alternatives would result in a significant impact if the project casts direct light or hazardous glare onto oncoming traffic or residential land uses.

### METHODOLOGY

The Proposed Project and project alternatives were evaluated for visual compatibility with the surrounding land uses. The Proposed Project and project alternatives are also compared with the Zoning Ordinance's Development Standards as summarized above.

## MASTER PLAN IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Master Plan Impact 6.6-1 Visual Character

PP Development of the Proposed Project will be noticeable to both southbound and northbound traffic on Land Park Drive. The entrance buildings will be replaced with a new building designed to be consistent in scale and materials with the surrounding residential area. The entrance building would join the existing gift shop and offices on the south side. **Figure 6.6-1** displays a cross-section view of the proposed entrance building. A staggered floor plan will break up the façade of the building thus reducing the visual impact of the building. The building is proposed to be a one-story structure of approximately 4,000 square feet of space. The building will conform to the Zoning Ordinance standards.

Joined to the entrance building on the south side will be the proposed Sensory Exhibit Center. At this stage in the planning process, details of the building's dimensions are not known. However, the building will conform to Zoning Ordinance standards. Continuing south along Land Park Drive the view of the Zoo will consist of an existing chain link fence that would be visible through breaks in the vegetation surrounding the

Zoo. Buildings and structures on the interior of the Zoo are not expected to be obvious from the street, although some rooflines may be visible from some locations.

Development of the Proposed Project would replace the existing service entrance and administration building with two entrances, a two-story education/marketing building, and a one-story administration building. **Figure 6.6-1** displays a view of the proposed buildings from the east side of the proposed structures. From the north side of the proposed structures, that is, from the cul-de-sac of William Land Park Drive, large trees (casurinas and oaks) and other vegetation will screen the view of the administration building.

Development of the Proposed Project would not be considered a significant change to the visual character of the project area. Most of the exhibits will not be visible from outside of the Zoo. While the entrance and sensory exhibit buildings will be visible, these buildings will comply with the Zoning Ordinance and will be partially screened by existing vegetation. The administration building will likewise be screened by substantial vegetation existing in the area. A **less-than-significant visual impact** would result.

- AA Under the No Project Alternative, developments would be limited to a 5,300 square foot veterinary clinic. The proposed facility, as identified in *Zoo – 2002*, would be located directly southeast of the current administration building. This area is adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad to the west and the Holy Spirit School to the northwest. The railroad is approximately 12 feet above grade, substantially shielding the western view of the area. The Holy Spirit School consists of several facilities including an approximately 28 foot high auditorium situated adjacent to the Zoo service area. These factors, as well as substantial vegetation in the area reduce the visibility of existing buildings in this area. Development under this alternative would not be considered a significant change to the visual character of the project area. A **less-than-significant visual impact** would result.
- AB The Reduced Intensity Alternative would result in the development of an administration building and a veterinary hospital. This building would be constructed in the area of the existing administration building. This area, as described under the No Project Alternative, is shielded by the railroad, the Holy Spirit School, and existing vegetation, limiting the visual impact of development in this area. Development under this alternative would not be considered a significant change to the visual character of the project area. A **less-than-significant visual impact** would result.

### Master Plan Mitigation 6.6-1 Visual Character

No mitigation is required.

### Master Plan Impact 6.6-2 Light Impacts

- PP Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in the construction and operation of a new entry building, a new restaurant, six garages, a new administration office complex and numerous animal exhibits. The majority of improvements will be developed in the interior portion of the Zoo. Additionally, the Zoo is primarily used during daylight hours, thus minimizing the need for additional lighting. However, security lighting will

**Insert Figure 6.6-1**

be relocated or improved in the areas of the new entry building and the new administration office complex. Lighting in these areas will be subject to review by the City Planning and Building Department. The Planning and Building Department requires lighting to reflect away from residential areas and public streets. Due to the provisions of shielding lights and directing lights away from residential areas and public streets, a **less-than-significant impact** is expected.

- AA Implementation of the No Action Alternative would result in the construction and operation of a 5,300 square foot veterinary hospital. Security lighting in the area of the hospital would need to be relocated or improved. This lighting would be subject to the requirements of the Planning and Building Department for shielding lights and directing lights away from residential areas and public streets. A **less-than-significant impact** is expected.
- AB Implementation of the Reduced Intensity Alternative would result in the construction and operation of improvement of facilities required to maintain AZA and USDA standards. Likely improvements include replacing or renovating dilapidated exhibits and holding areas. An administration building would also be constructed. Security lighting in the area of the administration would need to be relocated or improved. This lighting would be subject to the requirements of the Planning and Building Department for shielding lights and directing lights away from residential areas and public streets. A **less-than-significant impact** is expected.

### Master Plan Mitigation 6.6-2 Light Impacts

No mitigation is required.

## PHASE I IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Phase I Impact 6.6-3 Multi-use Pavilion – Visual Character

- PP Development of the Proposed Project will include the construction of a multi-use pavilion on the lawn area in the northern portion of the Zoo grounds. The proposed pavilion site is located south of the formal gardens. The pavilion will be 38 feet wide by 80 feet long, and will be approximately 21 feet in height at the ridgeline. A dark green composite shingle has been chosen for the roof of the pavilion to blend in with the surrounding vegetation. The pavilion will have drop down canvas sides to use in colder weather. The sides will be rolled up and hidden under the eaves when not needed.

The proposed structure would be visible from the upper level of the formal garden and from the section of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue directly north of the formal gardens. **Figure 6.6-2** displays the existing view from the upper level of the formal gardens as well as a photo-simulation of the proposed structure. An eight-foot tall hedge that forms a backdrop to the formal gardens and the statue at the upper level has a gap in it that reveals a view to the lawn area in the Zoo where the proposed pavilion would be located. The gap has recently been planted with shrubs, although these plants are not obvious in the photos. **Figure 6.6-3** displays the existing view from the area of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue directly north of the formal gardens as well as a photo-simulation of the proposed structure. As can be seen

**Insert Figure 6.6-2**

**Insert Figure 6.6-3**

in the views presented in **Figure 6.6-2** and **Figure 6.6-3**, the drop down canvas sides would be visible from the upper level of the formal gardens, but from the adjacent section of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the view of the canvas sides would not be very limited. The canvas sides will be used for events to protect visitors from cold and rainy weather conditions. During such weather conditions, use of the surrounding park will be minimized, thus limiting the visual impact to park visitors.

Several features of the project will reduce its visual impact. First, there is extensive vegetation surrounding the pavilion site, including trees, shrubs, and a hedge. Second, the pavilion will be set back from the knoll overlooking the formal gardens on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Thus features on the edge of the knoll including, a hedge, shrubs, trees, and the pioneer monument seen in **Figure 6.6-3** break the line of sight from viewers within the lower garden area, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and adjacent areas of William Land Park. As the viewer moves further into William Land Park to the north, large trees within the park block the view of the pavilion site. Lastly, the dark green roof will assist in blending the building into the surrounding vegetation. For these reasons, the development of the multi-use pavilion would not be considered a significant change to the visual character of the project area. A **less-than-significant visual impact** would result.

AA, AB Under the No Project and Reduced Intensity Alternatives, the multi-use pavilion would not be constructed. Instead, the occasional use of the Zoo's 40 x 80 foot tent will be maintained. The use of the tent is an existing condition, and as such is not considered a change to the visual character of the project area. **No impact** would result.

### **Phase I Mitigation 6.6-3 Multi-use Pavilion – Visual Character**

No mitigation is required.

### **Phase I Impact 6.6-4 Light Impacts**

PP The proposed multi-use pavilion located on the lawn area in the northern portion of the Zoo grounds would be equipped with interior lighting. Pavilion lighting will be mounted on the ceiling of the pavilion and will illuminate the floor area of the pavilion. Lighting in the area surrounding the pavilion would be limited to light bollards – approximately three foot high posts fitted with lights – to illuminate walkways. No lights would be mounted to the exterior of the pavilion to illuminate the surrounding area. In general, lighting would only be provided during evening events that continue after dusk. The majority of events that will utilize the pavilion and lawn area will occur during daylight hours, thus minimizing the impact of the lighting. Additionally, the lights associated with the use of the pavilion and adjacent lawn area will not cast direct light to areas outside the Zoo.

Other Phase I components include development the Medical/Service Complex, including veterinary clinic, kitchens/commons, food storage, and storage and shop buildings; and Kampala Center improvements.

Security lighting will be relocated or improved in the area of the Medical/Service Complex. Lighting in these areas will be subject to review by the City Planning and Building Department. The Planning and Building Department requires lighting to reflect

away from residential areas and public streets.

Improvements to the Kampala Center will be located in the interior portion of the Zoo, as such; surrounding land uses are unlikely to be affected. Additionally, the Zoo is primarily used during daylight hours, thus minimizing the need for additional lighting.

Due to limited development of additional lighting and the Planning and Building Department requirements for shielding lights and directing lights away from residential areas and public streets, a **less-than-significant** impact is expected.

- AA The occasional use of the Zoo's 40 x 80 foot tent will be maintained. The tent is provided with interior lighting during events that continue after dusk. This lighting does not cast direct light to areas outside the Zoo. **No impact** would result.
- AB Phase I developments under the Reduced Intensity Alternative would be limited to the development of Medical/Service Complex components including the Veterinary Clinic, Kitchen/Commons, Food Storage, and Storage and Shop buildings. Security lighting will be relocated or improved in the area of the Medical/Service Complex. Lighting in these areas will be subject to review by the City Planning and Building Department. The Planning and Building Department requires lighting to reflect away from residential areas and public streets. Due to the provisions of shielding lights and directing lights away from residential areas and public streets, a **less-than-significant impact** is expected.

#### **Phase I Mitigation 6.6-4 Light Impacts**

No mitigation is required.