

# COMSTOCK HOMES DEVELOPMENT AND ELLWOOD MESA OPEN SPACE PLAN FEIR

## 4.9 VISUAL RESOURCES

Section 4.9

### 4.9.1 Introduction

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This section addresses the potential for the proposed Comstock Homes Development and Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan project to create visual impacts as described by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and local agency review requirements. Specifically, this visual resources section addresses:

- Potential impairment or obstruction of public scenic view corridors
- Potential changes to the visual character of the area
- Effects on views from existing residential areas located north of the project and from Highway 101
- Glare or night lighting affecting adjoining areas
- Visual compatibility of proposed structures

This visual resources section is subdivided into the following main subsections: 1) Existing Conditions; 2) Regulatory Framework; and 3) Project Impacts and Mitigation.

The proposed Comstock Homes Development project includes the development of 78 single family residences within a 36-acre site located between Hollister Avenue and the Pacific Ocean. The majority of these units would be two-stories with a maximum height of 25 to 28 feet above finished grade based on the October 23, 2003 plan. Floor area of the residences ranges from 2,900 to 4,500 square feet as summarized in Section 4.6, Land Use. The Tuscan-themed residences are designed in four different floor plans available in three fairly similar exterior styles: Rustic, Villa, and Farmhouse. The colors are muted, varying shades of earth tones ranging from off-white to beige. While the exterior walls are primarily constructed of colored stucco, decorative stone is used in most of the styles as an accent on portions of the exterior walls. All three styles include tiled roofs in shades of terra cotta, brown, and tan. Project development incorporates a 6-foot block/stucco privacy wall along Hollister Avenue and the west boundary of the site, a private gated access road, onsite drainage control improvements, and open space. Project plans call for the removal of approximately 75% of the eucalyptus windrow between the western boundary of the project site and Sandpiper Golf Course. The majority of the eucalyptus windrow along Hollister Avenue will remain with the exception of a few trees to be removed which are located in the proposed entry drive and in lots 75 and 77.

This visual resources analysis and the project description presented in this introduction are based on the October 23, 2003 version of the project site plan. While the project consists of several other components, this visual analysis is limited to the residential development of 78 single family units to be developed by Comstock Homes Development and consideration of the proposed Santa Barbara Shores public access area immediately east of the residential development area. No structures are proposed to be constructed on the Phelps Ditch Trail;

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therefore no evaluation is included for this site. The Coronado Butterfly Preserve component of the project is not expected to result in visual effects. The proposed Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan component of the overall Ellwood-Devereux Coast Open Space and Habitat Management Plan proposes closure of some existing trails and development of some new trails; however, the proposed changes are not expected to significantly alter the visual resources of the open space area.

The public access area proposed on Hollister Avenue includes the development of a 40-space parking lot with space for three horse trailers, a restroom, handicap parking, and interpretive signage east of the Comstock Homes Development area. An access drive to the public parking lot will connect to Hollister Avenue opposite the signalized Ellwood Elementary School intersection. Based on design concepts outlined in the Open Space Plan, it is anticipated that the restroom structure would be approximately 10 to 15 feet in height, approximately 600 square feet, and material colors would be muted earth tones. The restroom structure would be located adjacent to Hollister Avenue to facilitate a sewer hookup to the Hollister Avenue sewer trunkline. New landscaping around the structure would provide screening from Hollister Avenue and would augment the partial screening provided by the existing eucalyptus trees along Hollister. An access trail would connect the parking lot to the Anza Trail, which will run north-south along the east side of the public access area.

A brief review of the concepts and terminology that comprise this visual resources analysis follows in Sections 4.9.1.1 and 4.9.1.2.

The visual resources of a given area consist of the landforms, vegetation, and cultural modifications such as structures that impart an overall visual impression of the area landscape. A number of factors are considered in the evaluation of a landscape's visual resources and of the potential for one or more visual impacts to occur. The analysis approach utilized in this visual impact assessment is to first evaluate the area/existing views as they exist prior to any proposed changes. The result of this analysis determines the susceptibility of the visual resources to change. The proposed project is evaluated in relation to the existing project site to determine the severity of the change which will result from the addition of the project. This methodology or evaluation approach incorporates and expands on the City of Goleta's visual impacts thresholds from the Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (as discussed in Section 4.9.4.2.1).

#### **4.9.1.1 Visual Impact Susceptibility**

Visual impact susceptibility is a concluding assessment as to the degree of probability that a given landscape or, in this case, an urban setting, will demonstrate a noticeable visual impact with project implementation. A visual impact susceptibility rating is derived from a combination of existing visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewer exposure. Each of these factors is given a rating of low, moderate, or high. These factors are described below.

**4.9.1.1.1 Visual Quality.** Visual Quality is a measure of the overall impression or appeal of an area or existing view as determined by the particular landscape characteristics. In this case,

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the quality is judged by the views of the (scenic landforms) scenic hills and ridges surrounding Goleta and the aesthetic quality and appeal of the adjacent structures. The attributes of variety, vividness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony, and pattern contribute to the visual quality classifications of indistinctive (low), common (moderate), and distinctive (high). Visual quality is studied as a point of reference to assess whether a given project would appear compatible with the established features of the setting or would contrast noticeably and unfavorably with them. A landscape's ability to accept alteration without diminishment of visual quality (or creation of visual contrast) is often referred to as Visual Absorption Capability. It is possible for new structures to be compatible with the existing structures in their replication of the existing forms, lines, colors, and/or textures where the new structures do not appreciably change the balance of natural and cultural elements.

**4.9.1.1.2 Viewer Sensitivity.** Viewer Sensitivity addresses the level of interest or concern of viewers regarding an area's visual resources and is closely associated with viewers' expectations for the area. Viewer sensitivity reflects the importance placed on a given landscape or urban area based on the human perceptions of the intrinsic beauty or aesthetic quality of the existing landforms and, in this case, the adjacent structures.

**4.9.1.1.3 Viewer Exposure.** Viewer Exposure describes the degree to which viewers are exposed to views of the landscape. Viewer exposure considers the number of viewers, the duration of view, the landscape, and the proximity of viewers to the subject landscape.

### **4.9.1.2 Visual Impact Severity**

Visual impact severity or the degree of visual impacts is based on the following key factors: visual contrast, project dominance, and view impairment. Each of these factors is given a rating of low, moderate, or high. These factors are described below.

**4.9.1.2.1 Visual Contrast.** Visual Contrast evaluates a proposed project's or activity's consistency with the visual elements of form, line, color, and texture already established in the landscape. Other elements that are considered in evaluating visual contrast include the degree of natural screening by vegetation and landforms, placement of structures relative to existing vegetation and landforms, distance from the point of observation, and relative size or scale. Generally, visual contrast inversely correlates with visual absorption capability.

**4.9.1.2.2 Project Dominance.** Project Dominance refers to the project's relationship to other visible landscape components in terms of vertical and horizontal extent. A project's scale and spatial relationship to the existing landscape can be categorized as subordinate, co-dominant, or dominant.

**4.9.1.2.3 View Impairment.** View Impairment refers to the extent to which a project's scale and position result in the blockage of higher quality visual elements by lower quality elements.

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## Section 4.9 4.9.2 Existing Conditions

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#### 4.9.2.1 Visual Character/Quality of Regional Landscape

The subject 36-acre site is located south of Highway 101 at the western edge of the City of Goleta in the County of Santa Barbara (County) and is currently part of the 116.16-acre Santa Barbara Shores Park owned by the City of Goleta directly south of Hollister Avenue. The site is currently vacant, undeveloped land with an existing trail system.

**4.9.2.1.1 Regional Character.** The project site is located in the southwestern portion of the City of Goleta on the coast. This portion of the coast consists of coastal bluffs and terraces rising toward the rocky slopes of the Santa Ynez Mountains, stretches of undeveloped beaches, parklands, open space, and agricultural lands. High quality views of resources are available from Highway 101, city streets, public trails and parks, and beaches. West of the City of Goleta, the coastline is visually accessible to travelers along Highway 101. This portion of the Santa Barbara coast is largely undeveloped coastal scrub and ranch grasslands rolling down from the Santa Ynez Mountains toward the beaches. Public beaches and coastal accessways are interspersed amongst private holdings south of Highway 101. Urban development stretches east along the coast from Goleta toward Santa Barbara and Ventura with intermittent smaller communities such as Summerland and Carpinteria. The Los Padres National Forest and the Santa Ynez Mountains border the City of Goleta to the north and to the south lie the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands.

**4.9.2.1.2 Landforms and Vegetative Cover.** The proposed project site, located on the coastal mesa, has gently undulating topography with the southern edge of the site sloping toward Devereux Creek, which is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. The eastern edge of the site also slopes toward an unnamed drainage channel that is a tributary to Devereux Creek. South of the site the topography of the coastal mesa rises to a high point and then gently drops toward the coastal bluff tops. Vegetative cover on the site is predominantly disturbed non-native grassland with intermittent clumps of native grassland, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral (with some non-native plants). The site is bordered to the north, east, and west by windrows of large specimens of eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus sp.*). A small stand of eucalyptus trees is also located just south of the project site.

**4.9.2.1.3 Surrounding Uses.** The project site is surrounded by a variety of uses with varying visual characteristics. Hollister Avenue lies immediately north of the site with limited commercial uses including a storage facility and ExxonMobil overflow parking. Ellwood Elementary School lies across Hollister Avenue at the northeast corner of the site. Sandpiper Golf Course is located immediately west of the project site and is screened by a fairly dense windrow of eucalyptus. The golf course maintenance yard is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the site. To the east of the site is the Santa Barbara Shores residential development. The Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood is screened from the project site by a dense grove of eucalyptus. South of the project site lies the remainder of the Santa Barbara Shores Park acreage

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and the coastline beyond. The Ellwood Mesa area is located southeast of Santa Barbara Shores Park (see Figure 4.6-1).

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**4.9.2.1.4 Surrounding Views.** Views of the Pacific Ocean are available from many locations on the 116-acre Santa Barbara Shores Park property except at the lowest points. On the northern edge of the Comstock Homes Development site views of the Pacific Ocean are distant. On a clear day the Channel Islands are also visible in the distance from most locations on the site.

Views of the Santa Ynez Mountains can be observed from most of the Santa Barbara Shores Park, including the proposed Comstock Homes Development site, except where obscured by trees. Views north from the existing Santa Barbara Shores Park include the proposed Comstock Homes Development site in the foreground, midground views of City of Goleta residential development, and background views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Adjacent development off Hollister Avenue, including the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood, is also partially visible from certain locations within the existing Santa Barbara Shores Park. The Comstock Homes Development and Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan include incorporation of the undeveloped portion of the existing Santa Barbara Shores Park into the proposed Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area. Scenic views south from Hollister Avenue are glimpsed through the windrow of eucalyptus along the south side of Hollister Avenue and include the project site in the foreground and midground views and the ocean in the background. Eucalyptus windrows to the east and west of the project site frame the view south. Views toward the site from Sandpiper Golf Course and the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood are limited by the dense eucalyptus windrows to the east and west of the Comstock Homes Development site.

**4.9.2.1.5 Nighttime Conditions.** Currently, nighttime conditions on the undeveloped Comstock Homes Development site are minimally affected by surrounding lighting. Ellwood School and the industrial area north of Hollister Avenue cause minor intrusion on the site. Lighting from the adjacent Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood and Sandpiper Golf Course is predominantly screened by the eucalyptus windrows.

### **4.9.2.2 Key Observation Points**

**4.9.2.2.1 Key Observation Points.** These points are locations selected to be representative of the most critical locations from which the project will be seen. A review of baseline project data including project documentation and site background information was conducted in order to gain familiarity with the existing landscape, visual resource issues of concern, viewer sensitivity, and the characteristics of the proposed project and project alternative. Following data review, a field reconnaissance was conducted with City of Goleta Department of Planning and Environmental Services staff. The selection of nine Key Observation Points (KOPs) for the proposed Comstock Homes Development was made in the field in coordination and consultation with City staff (see Figure 4.9-1 for locations of KOPs). The potential for residences in the Winchester Commons area to view the proposed project site is also encompassed by this assessment.

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The intent in KOP selection is to identify those locations in proximity to the project areas which best represent overall views toward the project as seen from public roads and other public places such as recreation areas and trails. KOPs are generally selected for one or two reasons: 1) the location provides representative views of the landscape along a specific route segment or in a general region of interest; and/or 2) the viewpoint effectively captures the presence or absence of a potentially significant project impact in that location. KOPs are typically established in locations that provide high visibility to “relatively” large numbers of viewers and/or sensitive viewing locations such as residential areas, recreation areas, and vista points.

While it is not possible to represent every view toward the project from public areas, the KOPs identified are representative of typical impacts to visual resources generated by the proposed project and facilitate review and discussion of the proposed project. A description of each of the nine KOPs which were selected follows.

**Key Observation Point G-1.** View southeast toward the northern portion of the project site as seen when traveling east along Hollister Avenue. Typical viewers at this location are residents and visitors entering the City of Goleta from Highway 101, workers and customers to the industrial businesses off Viajero Drive, residents of nearby neighborhoods, and staff and families at Ellwood School.

**Key Observation Point G-2.** View southwest toward the project site as seen from the intersection of Viajero Drive and Hollister Avenue. Typical viewers at this location include workers and customers to the industrial businesses off Viajero Drive, residents and visitors entering the City of Goleta from Highway 101, residents of nearby neighborhoods, and staff and families at Ellwood School.

**Key Observation Point G-3.** View south toward the project site as seen from Hollister Avenue at the entrance to Ellwood School. Typical viewers at this location include staff and families at Ellwood School, workers and customers to the industrial businesses off Viajero Drive, residents and visitors entering the City of Goleta from Highway 101, and residents of nearby neighborhoods.

**Key Observation Point G-4.** View east toward the northern portion of the project site as glimpsed through the eucalyptus windrow from putting greens and cart path of Sandpiper Golf Course. Typical viewers are golf course users and employees.

**Key Observation Point G-5.** View north-northeast toward the southern portion of the project site as seen from the West Ellwood Bluff Coastal Trail (Trail No. 24, Figure 4.6-1) at a point closest to the southwest corner of the site. Typical viewers are recreational trail users including hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.

**Key Observation Point G-6.** View north-northwest toward the southern portion of the project site as seen from the intersection of the West Ellwood Bluff Coastal Trail (Trail No. 24,

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**FIGURE 4.9-1**

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Figure 4.6-1) and the DeAnza Trail/Bikeway. Typical viewers are recreational trail users including hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.

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**Key Observation Point G-7.** View north-northwest toward the project site as seen from the intersection of the DeAnza Trail/Bikeway and the West Ellwood Bluff Coastal Trail (Trail No. 24, Figure 4.6-1) at the bottom of the drainage swale. Typical viewers are recreational trail users including hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.

**Key Observation Point G-8.** View north-northwest toward the project site as seen from the highest point in Santa Barbara Shores Park along the West Ellwood Bluff Coastal Trail (Trail No. 24, Figure 4.6-1). Typical viewers are recreational trail users including hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.

**Key Observation Point G-9.** View northwest toward the project site as seen from the North Branch Trail (Trail No. 23, Figure 4.6-1) Trail at the Santa Barbara Shores Park boundary with the Ellwood Mesa property currently owned by Santa Barbara Development Partnership. Typical viewers are recreational trail users including hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.

### 4.9.3 Regulatory Framework

#### 4.9.3.1 Federal Authorities and Administering Agencies

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 applies to this project as administered by the State of California.

#### 4.9.3.2 State Authorities and Administering Agencies

**4.9.3.2.1 CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.** The basic goal of CEQA is to develop and maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future. The CEQA Guidelines provide a framework for the analysis of impacts to visual resources.

**4.9.3.2.2 California Coastal Act §30000 et seq.** The policies within the Coastal Act apply to development projects within the City of Goleta's Coastal Zone, pending certification of the City of Goleta's Local Coastal Plan. The California Coastal Act Coastal Resources Planning and Management Policies include provisions (§30251) for the protection and management of coastal visual resources.

Protection of scenic and visual qualities of coastal resources is an issue of high importance, and thus is discussed in several sections of the Coastal Act. Specifically, the Coastal Act is concerned with protecting the public viewshed, including views from public areas such as highways, roads, beaches, coastal trails, and access ways, rather than views from private residences where no public views are available.

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states: "Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of

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**Section 4.9** natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.” Additionally, **Visual** development in highly scenic areas should be “subordinate to the character of its setting.” **Resources**

Subsection 5 of Section 30253 states that new development shall: “Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods which, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.” Special communities are defined as “areas that add to the visual attractiveness of the coast.”

### **4.9.3.3 Local Authorities and Administering Agencies**

**4.9.3.3.1 City of Goleta Coastal Zoning Ordinance.** As described in Section 1, the County of Santa Barbara’s Coastal Zoning Ordinance and other implementing ordinances (including subdivision, noise, and grading ordinances) are adopted by the City of Goleta but have not been certified by the California Coastal Commission. The Coastal Zoning Ordinance provides guidance for those areas of the City of Goleta within the Coastal Zone. Applicable procedures require consideration of public views from beaches in the determination of bluff top setbacks (35-67.2) and protection of significant view corridors from U.S. 101 be protected (35:96.1).

### **4.9.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation**

#### **4.9.4.1 Impact Assessment Methodology**

Baseline data collection was initiated with a review of existing project documents and relevant publications in order to gain familiarity with the existing landscape setting; visual resource issues of concern, including sensitive land uses adjacent to, or crossed by, project components; and the characteristics of the proposed project and alternatives.

Following a review of available documentation, a field reconnaissance was conducted with agency personnel from the City of Goleta (Mullane, 2003). The purpose of the reconnaissance was to identify specific locations of concern for the establishment of KOPs. Applicable visual resource management policy was also identified through a review of the City’s existing planning documents.

Following completion of the baseline data review, field reconnaissance, and verification of locations for specific study, field studies were initiated. Descriptions of the existing landscape characteristics and sensitivity were compiled and include notes on: existing visual quality, known viewer sensitivity, landscape visibility, visible evidence of historical and cultural influence, and potential viewer exposure. The evaluation of viewer exposure also included qualitative notations on potential numbers of viewers, distance zones, and duration of views. Based on the above factors, an overall visual impact susceptibility rating was determined for each KOP using the guidance presented in Table 4.9-1 (Table 4.9-1 is presented at the end of the project impacts discussion in Section 4.9.4.3).

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At each KOP, the potentially affected landscape was photographed and the following project impact information compiled: visual contrast, probable project dominance, and potential for view impairment. Visual impact severity is determined through an evaluation of visual contrast, project dominance, and view impairment. In effect, visual impact severity addresses the pertinent project characteristics and their likely effect on the landscape. Based on the above factors, an overall visual impact severity rating was determined for each KOP using the general guidance presented in Table 4.9-2 (Table 4.9-2 is presented at the end of the project impacts discussion in Section 4.9.4.3).

In all cases the baseline photographs were taken with a lens that is comparable to the human eye – none of the photographs is either wide angle or telephoto in scope. The baseline photographs were used to construct visual simulations. The baseline photos were compared to the photos with project simulations. This process allowed a determination of impact significance to be made from each KOP.

The simulations show pre-project conditions (labeled as Photo A), and the proposed project (labeled as Photo B). Eighteen-foot pylons placed at surveyed locations and in some cases, existing features with a known height, are used for scale and location reference in the photographs. The project simulations are generated from applicant supplied designs.

#### **4.9.4.2 Thresholds of Significance**

Based on the methodology described above, an adverse visual impact (threshold of significance) occurs within public view when: 1) a project perceptibly changes existing features of the physical environment so that they no longer appear to be characteristic of the subject locality or region; 2) a project introduces new features to the physical environment that are perceptibly uncharacteristic of the region and/or locale; or 3) aesthetic features of the landscape or urban setting become less visible (e.g., partially or totally blocked from view) or are removed. Changes that seem uncharacteristic are those that appear out of place, discordant, or distracting. In this case, the change must be seen as uncharacteristic after several years not just months after a project is complete. The degree of the visual impact depends upon how noticeable the adverse change may be. The noticeability of adverse changes is a function of project features, context, and viewing conditions (angle of view, distance, and primary viewing directions). Additional threshold guidelines are described below.

**4.9.4.2.1 Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual.** The Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (Thresholds Manual) (Santa Barbara County, 2002a) has been adopted by the City for conducting CEQA analysis. Section 19 of the Thresholds Manual, Visual Aesthetics Impact Guidelines, provides guidance for assessing the significance of potential impacts associated with a proposed project. The guidelines present several questions regarding the visual quality of existing visual resources and characteristics of the project and its potential to conflict with visual resources. These questions are consistent with and expand on the CEQA criteria for analyzing visual impacts.

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Section 4.9 Based on the guidelines in the Thresholds Manual, a proposed project would result in a significant visual impact if it would result in one or more of the following conditions:

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- Development would be incompatible in appearance with surrounding uses, structures, or the intensity of existing development
- Create new glare sources that would substantially degrade existing visual conditions, or create light sources that would substantially alter nighttime lighting characteristics of the project area
- An important visual resource or view would be obstructed
- Result in a project-specific condition or view, or cumulatively contribute to an existing condition or view, that could be considered to be objectionable or inconsistent with the character of the project site or region

**4.9.4.2.2 CEQA.** Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the following four circumstances that can lead to a determination of significant visual impact:

- 1) The project has a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- 2) The project substantially damages scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic highway.
- 3) The project substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- 4) The project creates a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

A fifth circumstance potentially leading to a significant visual impact would be:

- 5) The project results in an inconsistency with laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) applicable to the protection of visual resources. See Section 4.9.3 of this EIR assessment for the City's regulations for protection of visual resources.

The first three CEQA criteria above are the focus of the analysis contained in the remainder of the visual resources section and are accommodated in the present methodology through the assessment of a given landscape's visual impact susceptibility and the severity of the visual impact caused by the project.

In the present methodology, a visual impact severity or susceptibility rating of **Low** is achieved if two or more of the contributing factors are rated low. A visual impact severity or susceptibility rating of **High** is achieved if two or more of the contributing factors are rated high. A visual impact severity or susceptibility rating of **Moderate** is achieved for all other combinations of contributing factors.

The degree of impact significance is set as a function of impact susceptibility and impact severity. Table 4.9-3 (presented at the end of Section 4.9.4.3) illustrates the interrelationship

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between impact susceptibility and impact severity, leading to the determination of impact significance.

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As Table 4.9-3 shows, a visual impact is considered significant if: 1) the impact severity rating is high and the impact has an associated impact susceptibility rating of moderate or high; or 2) the impact severity is moderate and the impact susceptibility is high. Second tier impacts occur when impact severity is: 1) rated high and has an associated impact susceptibility rating of low; or 2) rated moderate with associated impact susceptibility ratings of moderate. Such second tier impacts are considered adverse but not significant, meaning that the impact is considered negative, but it does not exceed environmental thresholds for significance as described here. Third tier impacts occur when impact severity is: 1) rated moderate with an associated impact susceptibility rating of low; or 2) rated low with associated impact susceptibility ratings of low, moderate, or high. Third tier impacts are generally insignificant and while they may or may not be perceptible, they are considered minor in the context of existing landscape characteristics and viewing opportunities.

Implicit in this rating methodology is the acknowledgement that, for a visual impact to be considered significant, two conditions must exist: 1) the existing landscape must be of high quality and be highly valued by the public; and 2) the perceived incompatibility of one or more proposed project elements or characteristics must tend toward the high end of the scale, leading to a substantial reduction in visual quality.

**4.9.4.2.3 Impact Classifications.** For those KOPs which have both a high Impact Susceptibility rating and a high Impact Severity rating, addition of the proposed project would result in significant and unmitigable impacts to visual resources identified as Class I impacts. For those KOPs which have a moderate Impact Susceptibility and a high Impact Severity rating, addition of the proposed project would be potentially significant, but can be mitigated (Class II impacts). Addition of the project as viewed from KOPs with all other combinations of Impact Susceptibility and Impact Severity ratings would be adverse but less than significant (Class III).

### **4.9.4.3 Project Impacts**

Impacts from the various KOPs will vary depending on the specific view quality, viewer sensitivity and exposure as well as the impact severity as the applicant's project is placed on the site. These characteristics, as defined in section 4.9.1.1, are applied to the proposed project on a KOP by KOP basis in the following impacts analysis.

It is possible for different views, as represented by the various KOPs, to be affected differently by the proposed project; for example, where impacts at one KOP may be rated as Class I, from another KOP for the same project impacts may be Class III. However, when the KOPs are considered in aggregate, one or more Class I impact ratings would result in an overall project rating of significant and unmitigable (Class I) from a visual resources standpoint.

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### Section 4.9 4.9.4.3.1 **Comstock Homes Development.**

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**Visual Character.** The visual character of a project area is defined as the landforms, water, vegetative patterns, and existing modifications that give an area its distinguishing qualities. This component is relatively objective. It is recorded in the baseline photographs of an area prior to photo simulating the proposed development.

The vertical character of the existing gray-green eucalyptus windrows dominates the proposed Comstock Homes Development site. They contrast strongly with the horizontal plane of the low grasslands and shrubs which cover the majority of the site and the blue tinted Santa Ynez Mountains which form the regional backdrop. The gray-green color of the trees contrasts with the bright green color of the grasses during the winter months and even more so with the golden hues of the grasses during the dry season. When viewing the site from the north, the windrows running north-south along either side of the site tend to draw the viewer's attention south toward the ocean. The site provides a view corridor from Hollister Avenue across the existing Santa Barbara Shores Park and the Ellwood Mesa. The form and texture of the windrows also add to the diversity of the site which would otherwise consist generally of grasses and shrubs and topography which does not include any exceptionally interesting landforms such as rock outcroppings.

**Visual Quality.** The visual quality of an area is a subjective issue. Visual quality is concerned with the overall attractiveness of an area and the ability to preserve this attractiveness when new features are introduced.

The undeveloped state of the project site, the existence of mature trees and scrub vegetation, and the site's proximity to the Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area and the coastline impart an open and spacious feeling on the observer. Views of the Santa Ynez Mountains in the background, continuity of open space, and the large canopy trees on and around the project site are defining characteristics. The patterns of the overall rolling topography of the site and vegetation, limited to grasses, coastal scrub, and mature Eucalyptus trees, impart a strong degree of visual unity and cohesion within the site. The site has similar to views of the coastline north of the City of Goleta available from Highway 101, but is viewed in the context of the Goleta urban fringe.

While the overall visual quality of the site is noteworthy, it is not unique. Nor is the area naturally pristine from the visual aspect, since it is somewhat diminished by surrounding development on three sides. Views of the ocean would rate high as would the view backdrop trees and the Santa Ynez Mountains. However, the grassland and chaparral areas in the foreground of the site as demonstrated in the baseline KOP photographs are not of the same visual quality as ocean and mountain views since they contain little visual diversity and include weeds as well as native vegetation, evidencing past site disturbance. While portions of the site are less scenic disturbed grasslands, views of the Channel Islands and the Santa Ynez Mountains from and around the site result in an overall visual quality rating of **high**. This definition is factored into the discussion of impacts below.

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**Viewer Exposure.** The number of viewers, as well as the duration and dominance of views, is considered in determining viewer exposure. There are three types of viewer exposure considered in this analysis: vehicular travelers along Hollister Avenue, recreational golf course users and recreational trail users (including hikers, bicyclists, runners, and equestrians). The site is visible moderately briefly to travelers along Hollister Avenue and for more extended periods of time to viewers using Sandpiper Golf Course and the Santa Barbara Shores-Ellwood Mesa Park area trails. A duration view of 10 seconds or less is considered brief, while 10 to 60 seconds is considered moderate duration, and 60 seconds or more is considered long duration.

For those viewers traveling in vehicles, less than 1,000 viewers per day is considered low; 1,000 to 10,000 viewers is considered moderate; and more than 10,000 viewers is considered high. Based on traffic count data compiled by Associated Traffic Engineers as part of the preparation of this EIR (see Figure 4.12-2), average daily trips on Hollister Avenue close to the project site are 6,500. Based on visitor count data taken from the existing parking lot on the project site in 2001 (Ellwood-Devereux Joint Review Panel, 2004), the number of visitors to the site vicinity is estimated to range from 50 to 300 daily. Average daily users at Sandpiper Golf Course ranges from 60 to 85 (Vaquera, 2003).

**Sensitivity Level.** The visual sensitivity level deals with the public's expectation of the area, the number of people viewing the area, and their reaction to development within the context of the area's visual quality. Relative sensitivity will vary with each viewer's activities, expectations, and attitudes.

Individuals viewing the site from KOPs G-5 through G-9 are expected to be utilizing park trails for recreational activities. Viewers at KOP G-4, located in the Sandpiper Golf Course, will also be viewing the site from a recreational context. Viewers using Hollister Avenue while traveling to potentially scenic recreation destinations will be more sensitive to views than other travelers.

Applicable planning policies and regulations are also considered as an indicator of viewer sensitivity reflecting the public's interest in the visual environment and desire to protect resources along the coast. The City of Goleta's Coastal Zoning Ordinance and application of the Coastal Act in this area are strong indicators of high viewer sensitivity.

**Impact VIS-I: Long-Term Views of the Residential Development from Key Observation Points.** Long-term project impacts focus on the visual impacts resulting from project operation and the permanent presence of above-ground built facilities in the existing landscape. The information presented below is summarized in Tables 4.9-1 through 4.9-3 for the nine KOPs identified.

**Impact VIS-G1: Key Observation Point G-1 (From Hollister Avenue, viewing east).** The elevation of this KOP is roughly on the same plane as the northwestern portion of the project site as partially glimpsed through the windrow of mature eucalyptus trees on right of the photo (See Photo 1A in Figure 4.9-2). The primary view from this point is down Hollister Avenue with the Sandpiper Golf Course maintenance facility to the south. From the vantage point of this

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KOP, only the northwest corner of the project (at the location of the existing parking lot) site would be visible. The visual quality is rated as **moderate** – no dramatic views of the ocean or Santa Ynez Mountains are visible from this KOP. While not particularly visible in the baseline photograph, there are various forms of development to the north, east, and west of this scene. In addition to the Sandpiper Golf Course, a series of commercial uses, undeveloped lots and the Ellwood Elementary School are just visible at the left side of the photo. In the background of the view from this KOP are urbanized areas of Hollister Avenue with both residential and commercial development. This KOP is most representative for travelers along Hollister Avenue and the evaluation is similar for those traveling west as well as east.

Some viewers from this location will be heading toward the Santa Barbara Shores Park public parking area or departing from the Sandpiper Golf Course. These recreational viewers will typically have higher expectations and sensitivity to the visual aspects of the area than other viewers on Hollister Avenue. A majority of viewers along Hollister Avenue commuting to the more commercial areas of Goleta or heading toward Highway 101 would have a moderate sensitivity. The average viewer sensitivity for viewers along Hollister Avenue is therefore rated as **moderate**. The duration of the view of the site is considered short; the project site would be within the viewers' primary cone of vision for 10 to 20 seconds depending on the speed of the vehicle. The number of travelers is also moderate at 6,000 per day (see Figure 4.12-2 in Section 4.12). Viewer exposure is rated **moderate**.

When the project is added to the scene, it is partially viewed through the existing windrow of eucalyptus trees in the middle ground (Photo 1B, Figure 4.9-2). The walls of the three residences closest to Hollister Avenue (lots 1, 2, and 78) would be partially visible through the eucalyptus. The proposed 6-foot-high sound wall fronting Hollister Avenue will also be visible from this KOP. The project would create a visual change to the middle ground view from open parking lot/grassland and chaparral to that of urban development, which contrasts with the open area, and surrounding vegetation forms. Visual contrast is rated as **moderate**. Given that the eucalyptus trees far surpass the height of the two-story structures, the project is considered to have a subordinate or **low** factor of dominance. Under the CEQA definitions, the scenic backdrop is not impaired. Views of important visual resources are not obstructed; therefore view impairment from this KOP is rated as **low**.

In conclusion, the visual impact susceptibility is classified as **moderate** based on moderate ratings for view quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewer exposure (see Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **low** based on low project dominance and view impairment in combination with moderate visual contrast (see Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts for KOP G-1 are identified as *adverse but not significant (Class III)*. While mitigation measures are not required for Class III impacts, additional landscaping along Hollister Avenue would soften the effect of the privacy wall from KOP G-1. This recommended mitigation is included in Mitigation VIS-1C. Photo 1C, Figure 4.9-3 presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping.

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**FIGURE 4.9-2**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-3**



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**Impact VIS-G-2: Key Observation Point G-2 (From Hollister Avenue, near Viajero Road toward the site).** The visual quality and the general sensitivity of the viewers at KOP G-2 is very similar to that identified above for KOP G-1. The only difference is that this KOP has a more direct view of the site as seen by a traveler moving along Hollister Avenue near the Viajero Road intersection. The view quality with a glimpse toward the ocean is rated as **high**. As with KOP G-1, viewer sensitivity is **moderate**. The duration of travelers' views would be longer than for KOP G-1, but would still be brief. Based on the short view duration and moderate number of viewers, viewer exposure is classified as **moderate**.

When the project is added to the scene, it is partially screened through the existing windrow of eucalyptus trees to the left and right of the photo (Photo 2B, Figure 4.9-4.). The walls of this grouping of residences closest to Hollister Avenue (lots 75-78) and the 6-foot high sound wall would be fully visible through the gap in the eucalyptus; however applicant-proposed street tree planting along Hollister Avenue is dense and will provide good screening of the residences when seen in conjunction with the surrounding eucalyptus trees. As the street trees mature and are limbed up, the sound wall will be visible below the tree canopies. View contrast between the foreground eucalyptus, and background grassland, and the development is rated **moderate**. Given that the eucalyptus trees far surpass the height of the proposed two-story structures, the project is considered to have a subordinate or **low** factor of dominance. In the CEQA definitions, the scenic backdrop is somewhat impaired; therefore view impairment from this KOP is rated as **moderate**.

In conclusion, the visual impact susceptibility is classified as **moderate** based on the combination of moderate ratings for viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure even though view quality is rated high (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **moderate** based on low project dominance and moderate view impairment in combination with moderate visual contrast (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts for KOP G-2 are identified as *adverse but less than significant (Class III)*. While mitigation measures are not required for Class III impacts, additional landscaping along Hollister Avenue is included in Mitigation VIS-1C to further screen the proposed privacy wall from KOP G-2. Photo 2C, Figure 4.9-3, presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping.

**Impact VIS-G-2(A): Key Observation Point G-2(A).** KOP G-2(A) has the same location as KOP G-2 but faces directly toward the site representing views as might be seen by a traveler moving south toward the project site on Viajero Road or by a pedestrian looking toward the project site at this portion of Hollister Avenue. A gap in the eucalyptus windrow along Hollister Avenue provides a viewing window south across the project site. When the site is viewed straight on from Viajero Road (rather than at an oblique angle as travelers on Hollister Road would view the site as they pass) a direct uninterrupted view of the Channel Islands is visible through the gap in the eucalyptus trees on clear days. View quality is rated **high** and viewer sensitivity is rated **moderate**, similar to KOP G-2, but viewer exposure is rated as **high** as a result of the potential for longer duration of views by travelers viewing the site from Viajero

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**Section 4.9** Road or pedestrians passing the site at this location. The combined ratings of high view quality and viewer exposure with moderate sensitivity result in high visual impact susceptibility.

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While no simulations from this aspect of the Viajero/Hollister intersection have been prepared, site review of the project was conducted at this location. Addition of the project would potentially result in blockage of the Channel Island view. When the project is considered through the gap in the surrounding eucalyptus windrow, the proposed mass and height of the two-story structures would dominate the scene. Therefore, project dominance and view impairment as seen from Viajero Road are rated as **high**. Project contrast, similar to KOP G-2 above, is rated **moderate** as project landscaping will somewhat blend the project with the existing background grassland and surrounding eucalyptus trees.

In conclusion, the visual impact susceptibility is classified as **high** (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **high** based on high project dominance and view impairment in combination with moderate visual contrast (Table 4.9-2).

Because both the visual impact susceptibility (see Table 4.9-1) and the visual impact severity are high (see Table 4.9-2), visual impacts from KOP G-2(A) are identified as *significant and unavoidable (Class I)*.

**Key Observation Point G-3 (Hollister Avenue, viewing from Ellwood School drive entry)**. The visual quality and the general sensitivity of the viewers would be very similar to that identified above for KOPs G-1 and G-2. The main difference being that this KOP views directly toward the site from the exit driveway from Ellwood Elementary School. The view quality with a glimpse of the ocean is rated as **high**. The viewer sensitivity would be **moderate** since most viewers are typically passing by the project site on Hollister Avenue or departing from the school parking area rather than using the open space. The view is in the middle of the viewers' cone of vision and the duration lasts for several seconds. This combination of short duration and moderate number of viewers results in a viewer exposure classification of **moderate**.

The project, as viewed from this KOP, is concentrated in the area in the right of the photo and is generally masked by the existing windrow of eucalyptus trees (Photo 3A, Figure 4.9-5). View contrast between the background eucalyptus and foreground grassland and the development is rated **moderate**. Given the much larger proportion of the eucalyptus trees and other scenic elements to the proposed residential development, the project dominance is rated as **low**. The scenic backdrop would be partially blocked by portions of the development and, therefore, view impairment is considered to be just into the classification of **moderate**.

In conclusion, the visual impact susceptibility is classified as **moderate** based on the combination of moderate ratings for viewer sensitivity and viewer exposure, even though view quality is rated high (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **moderate** based on low project dominance in combination with moderate view impairment and moderate visual contrast (Table 4.9-2).

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**FIGURE 4.9-4**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-5**



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Project impacts for KOP G-3 are rated as *adverse, but not significant (Class III)* (Table 4.9-3). While mitigation measures are not required for Class III impacts, additional landscaping along Hollister Avenue is included in Mitigation VIS-1C to further screen the proposed project from KOP G-3. Photo 3C, Figure 4.9-6, presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping.

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### **Impact VIS-G-4: Key Observation Point G-4 (View east from Sandpiper Golf Course).**

The existing view east from Sandpiper Golf Course toward the project site is partially obscured by the existing eucalyptus windrow along the common property line. The view provides only glimpses of the eucalyptus grove adjacent to the Santa Barbara Shores residential development in the background and the undeveloped grasslands of the project site in the midground. There are no other major scenic features in this view. The view quality is rated as **moderate**. Since viewers will be present for recreational purposes at the golf course and the overall scenic quality is an essential component of the recreational experience, viewer sensitivity is rated **high**. The view of the project is only glimpsed through the windrow, but for a relatively long time - perhaps 10 to 15 minutes; however the number of golfers per day is relatively low (60-85), and the primary focus of viewers will be on playing golf. Therefore, viewer exposure is rated as **moderate**.

The proposed site plan shows development would adjoin roughly 75% of the common boundary between the project site and Sandpiper Golf Course. Project plans also call for the removal of approximately 75% of the eucalyptus windrow along this boundary. For CEQA planning purposes, it is assumed that homeowners will eventually remove any remaining eucalyptus trees from their backyards due to the debris generated by the trees, the risk of large limbs falling, and the negative effects these plants have on the growth of other landscape plants. With the removal of the eucalyptus windrow blocking views between the two properties, the view of those residences closest to the common boundary, as well as the proposed privacy wall at the edge of the lots, would be clearly visible. The change from the partially landscaped golf course property to the hard lines of the privacy wall and residences results in **high** project contrast. The large scale of the structures and their close proximity to the golf course results in a **high** project dominance rating. While views onto the project site are typically only glimpsed from this KOP through the existing eucalyptus windrow, with the construction of the proposed project, views onto the site would be blocked by the new residences along roughly 75% of the boundary. The overall effect of the project's view impairment would be **moderate** since no significant vista is being blocked. Photo 4B, Figure 4.9-7, presents the proposed project with eucalyptus removed as indicated in project plans.

The visual impact susceptibility is classified as moderate based on **moderate** ratings for view quality and viewer exposure, and high viewer sensitivity (Table 4.9-1). The visual impact severity is classified as **high** as a result of high visual contrast and project dominance and **moderate** view impairment (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts for KOP G-4 are considered *significant but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*. Mitigation can be implemented by extensive planting as identified in the mitigation section. Photo 4C on Figure 4.9-6 presents the project simulation with applicant and analyst proposed mitigation measures.

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Section 4.9 **Impact VIS-G-5: Key Observation Point G-5 (From the public trail ascending from the drainage swale, viewing north).** This KOP is below the plane of the project site, by approximately 7-10 feet, on the public trail that runs north and south along the Sandpiper Golf Course/project site boundary as it begins to rise out of a drainage depression. From this vantage, the peaks of the Santa Ynez Mountains are just visible above the existing chaparral. While the overall scenic quality in the project area is considered moderate to high given the coastal setting and mountain backdrop, view quality is rated **moderate** from this KOP as clear views of the Santa Ynez Mountains are obscured by topography and vegetation and the foreground view of the trail and surrounding tree trunks dominate. From this KOP, Sandpiper Golf Course, which has minimal structures, but a definite change in the landscape characteristics (from non-irrigated grasses and chaparral to greens, fairways and tees), can be glimpsed through the eucalyptus trees to the left. Photo 5A on Figure 4.9-8 shows the existing view from KOP G-5.

Trail users viewing the project site from this location would most likely be heading back toward the public parking area which is behind the orange pylon panel about 0.25 mile distant. The viewer sensitivity is **high**, as most trail users have chosen to visit this area, and given the recreational activities of most trail users. Views of the project approaching this KOP are somewhat obscured by vegetation and topography, thus duration of views from the immediate area around this KOP are shorter than views toward the project site from other portions of the open space. The number of viewers is considered low; therefore, viewer exposure is rated **moderate**.

When the project is added to the scene as simulated in Photo 5B on Figure 4.9-8, the ridgelines of the structures would silhouette the sky and obscure views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The project would create a major visual modification in the character of the middle ground view with the change being from chaparral and open grassland to that of urban development. From this view, the project would be obtrusive and dominate the view north from the trail as it obscures the scenic backdrop. Thus, visual contrast, project dominance, and view impairment are rated as **high** at this KOP.

The visual impact susceptibility is classified as **moderate** based on moderate ratings for view quality and viewer exposure, and high viewer sensitivity (Table 4.9-1). The visual impact severity is classified as high as a result of **high** visual contrast, high project dominance and high view impairment (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts from KOP G-5 are rated as *significant, but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*. Mitigation can be implemented by extensive planting as identified in mitigation measure VIS-1A and by a reduction in structure heights as identified in VIS-3. Photo 5C on Figure 4.9-9 presents the project simulation with proposed mitigation measures.

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**FIGURE 4.9-6**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-7**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-8**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-9**

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**Impact VIS-G-6: Key Observation Point G-6 (From drainage swale portion of open space viewing north).** This KOP is approximately 3-10 feet below the plane of the nearest portion of the project site (lots 47-51) where the Anza Trail and Western Perimeter Trail intersect at the drainage swale. Panoramic views of the coastline with the mountains and coastal plain juxtaposed are, without dispute, of **high** visual quality. From this vantage, as viewers head north, the Santa Ynez Mountains and drainage swale are clearly visible above the existing chaparral and eucalyptus. Viewers from this location would typically be heading toward the public parking area at Hollister Avenue and would view the project site in the context of the urban setting to the north. As with the other KOPs located along trails, viewers are expected to have **high** sensitivity to views and potential changes to views based on the fact that most viewers have chosen to visit the area typically for recreational uses. View durations will be extended assuming most trail users may view the site for 5-15 minutes depending on how fast they are traveling; therefore viewer exposure is rated as **high**.

When the project is added to the scene (Photo 6B, Figure 4.9-10), the ridgelines of the structures will obscure the eucalyptus windrow along Hollister Avenue but would not intrude on views of the Santa Ynez Mountains or silhouette the sky. The project would create a major visual change to the middle ground view from open grassland and chaparral to that of development. The proposed project consists of large residences on relatively small lots, thus not only does the scale tend to be massive, but the density of the residences provides minimal visual relief otherwise provided through larger yards or green spaces within the neighborhood. The visual contrast would be **high**. From this KOP, the viewer's attention is drawn to the project which occupies the majority of the viewshed at close range. As viewers continue to approach the project site heading toward Hollister Avenue, the project's dominance within the viewshed would continue to increase, thus dominance is rated **high**. Because the Santa Ynez Mountains are not blocked from view, view impairment is rated as **moderate** from this KOP. However, from this point north toward Hollister Avenue, the view impairment of the Santa Ynez Mountains would increase as the viewer approaches the proposed structures.

While the applicant has proposed some landscaping around the residences, the plantings are not dense enough to provide full screening. However, from this KOP, even a dense planting which provides some level of screening of the residences will still result in a secondary visual change and will contrast with the natural appearance of the vegetation in the surrounding open space as viewed from KOPs G-6 through G-9.

Because both the visual impact susceptibility (see Table 4.9-1) and the visual impact severity are **high** (see Table 4.9-2), the visual impacts would be significant and not capable of being mitigated from this location as one moves toward the project. Therefore, impacts from KOP VIS-6 are classified as *significant and unavoidable (Class I)*. While the Class I impact cannot be fully mitigated, the level of impact resulting from the project can be reduced by lowering of perimeter building heights and application of additional screening plantings as identified in mitigation measures VIS-1A and VIS-3 (Photo 6C, Figure 4.9-9).

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### Section 4.9 **Impact VIS-G-7: Key Observation Point G-7 (From middle of hill descending from bluffopen space, viewing north).**

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The elevation of this KOP is roughly on the same plane as the proposed Comstock Homes Development site with the drainage swale just visible at the right of the photo. From the vantage point of this KOP, panoramic views of the coastline with the mountains and ocean juxtaposed are, without dispute, of **high** visual quality. The view north from this KOP as can be seen in Photo 7A on Figure 4.9-11 includes only views toward the Santa Ynez Mountains. While not visible in the baseline photograph, there are various forms of urban development both to the right and left of this scene. To the left of the photo beyond the eucalyptus windrow is Sandpiper Golf Course, with minimal structures but a definite change in the landscape characteristics (from non-irrigated grasses and chaparral to greens, fairways and tees). In the right of the photo, the eucalyptus trees screening the existing Santa Barbara Shores residential development are just visible. While not shown in this photo, several houses in the southerly portion of the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood are briefly visible through gaps in the eucalyptus windrow from the vantage of this KOP (see Context Photo B, Figure 4.9-12). While viewer's expectations are rated high, it is important to note that the setting is not one of an unmixed natural character. Viewers from this location would typically be heading toward the public parking area at Hollister Avenue and would view the project site in the context of the urban setting to the north. As with the other KOPs located along trails, viewers are expected to have **high** sensitivity to views and potential changes to views based on the fact that they have chosen to visit the area typically for recreational uses. View durations will be extended assuming most trail users may view the site for 5-15 minutes depending on how fast they are traveling; therefore viewer exposure is rated as **high**.

Similar to KOP G-6, when the project is added to the scene, the project is juxtaposed with the existing grove of eucalyptus trees in the middle ground (Photo 7B, Figure 4.9-11). The project would create a major visual change to the middle ground view from open grassland and chaparral to that of urban development which contrasts with the open area and surrounding vegetation forms. Visual contrast is rated as **high**. While this KOP is more distant than KOP G-6, the density of the structures and the mass of the entire project still occupies a large portion of the view. Given the urban complexity, bulk, and shadow resulting from the project, dominance is rated as **high**. The ridgelines of the structures do not intrude into the scenic backdrop of the Santa Ynez Mountains, but are rather clustered in the open area surrounded by eucalyptus trees, thus view impairment is rated as **moderate**.

In conclusion, the visual impact susceptibility is classified as **high** based on high ratings for view quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewer exposure (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **high** based on moderate view impairment in combination with high project dominance and visual contrast (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts from KOP G-7 are classified as *significant and unavoidable (Class I)*. Photo 7C, Figure 4.9-13 presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping and reduced building heights. While the Class I impact cannot be fully mitigated, the level of impact resulting from the project can be reduced through the lowering of perimeter building heights and

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**FIGURE 4.9-10**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-11**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-12**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-13**

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application of additional screening plantings as identified in mitigation measures VIS-1A and VIS-3.

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**Impact VIS-G-8: Key Observation Point G-8 (From level portion of bluff open space viewing north).** Similar to KOP G-7, high quality views of the coastline and the mountains are available to viewers, thus, overall scenic quality is rated **high**. The view north from this KOP as can be seen in Photo 8A on Figure 4.9-14 includes only views toward the Santa Ynez Mountains. Viewers from this location facing toward the project site would typically be heading back toward the public parking area which would be located behind the trees in the center of the photo. This KOP is very similar to KOP G-7, thus visual impact susceptibility ratings are the same for this KOP.

Given the relatively high elevation of this KOP, the project site appears nestled into the existing grove of eucalyptus trees in middle ground views. The urban character of the project would change the middle ground view from open grassland and chaparral to that of development. Project contrast is rated as **high** when seen in the context of the eucalyptus trees and existing vegetation. The project is subordinate in height to the eucalyptus trees and does not intrude on views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. While the view of the project site from KOP G-8 is similar to KOPs G-6 and G-7, the project site is more distant and occupies less of the total viewshed. Moving away from the project site at this KOP location, the distance of the project from the viewer minimizes the dominance effect. As the viewer moves toward the site from this location, the project transitions from co-dominant to dominant. The urban complexity and mass of the project when added to the site are still significant enough to dominate the view. Project dominance is rated **high**. When the project is added to the scene as presented in Photo 8B, Figure 4.9-14, the ridgelines of the structures do not intrude into the scenic backdrop of the Santa Ynez Mountains, but are rather surrounded by the eucalyptus trees, resulting in a rating of **moderate** view impairment.

Based on the **high** ratings for view quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewer exposure, the visual impact susceptibility is classified **high** (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **high** based on moderate view impairment, and high visual contrast and project dominance (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts from KOP G-8 are classified as *significant and unavoidable (Class I)*. While the Class I impact cannot be fully mitigated, the level of impact resulting from the project can be reduced through the lowering of perimeter building heights and application of additional screening plantings as identified in mitigation measures VIS-1A and VIS-3. Photo 8C, Figure 4.9-13, presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping and reduced structure heights.

**Impact VIS-G-9: Key Observation Point G-9 (From mid portion of bluff open space viewing northwest).** The view from this KOP toward the project site, located south of the existing Santa Barbara Shores residential area at the intersection of the Mesa Trail with an undesignated trail in the open space, is more oblique than in KOP G-8. However, the visual

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Section 4.9 impact susceptibility discussion and rating presented for KOPs G-7 and G-8 is identical for KOP G-9.

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When the project is added to the scene (Photo 9B, Figure 4.9-15), the ridgelines of the structures do not intrude into the scenic backdrop of the Santa Ynez Mountains but are rather clustered in the depression between the road and the KOP and surrounded by the eucalyptus trees. The urban nature of the project would change the middle ground view from open grassland and chaparral to that of urban development leading to a **high** visual contrast rating. In the CEQA definitions, the scenic backdrop would not be impaired though the scene would change character from that existing today. Building mass is considered subordinate to the surrounding eucalyptus and mountain backdrop given the distance from the project. From KOP G-9 the eastern eucalyptus windrow screens the northern portion of the project site reducing the overall impression of project mass. Project dominance is **moderate** and view impairment is rated **moderate**.

Based on the high ratings for view quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewer exposure, the visual impact susceptibility is classified **high** (Table 4.9-1). Visual impact severity is classified as **moderate** based on moderate project dominance and view impairment, and high visual contrast (Table 4.9-2).

Project impacts from KOP G-9 are classified as *significant, but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*. Mitigation can be implemented with additional landscaping around the lots specified in mitigation measure VIS-1A to further screen the proposed project from the Santa Barbara Shores open space area and by a reduction of structure heights as identified in VIS-3. Photo 9C, Figure 4.9-16, presents a simulation of the project with additional landscaping and reduced structure heights.

**Summary of KOP Analysis.** The individual KOP analysis results are summarized in Tables 4.9-1, 4.9-2, and 4.9-3. In general, when the project is viewed from the open space areas south of the project site, the City of Goleta's visual thresholds would be exceeded 1) because the development would be incompatible in appearance with the surrounding recreational uses; 2) because the Santa Ynez Mountains, an important visual resource, would be partially obstructed from KOP G-5 and that portion of the open space north of KOP G-6; and 3) because the Channel Island view from KOP G-2(A) would be obstructed. The project will generate significant visual impacts from KOPs G-2(A), G-6, G-7, and G-8.

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**FIGURE 4.9-14**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-15**

**AND**

**FIGURE 4.9-16**

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**Table 4.9-1. Visual Impact Susceptibility<sup>1</sup>**

<b>KOP</b>	<b>Visual Quality</b>	<b>Viewer Sensitivity</b>	<b>Viewer Exposure</b>	<b>Visual Impact Susceptibility<sup>1</sup></b>
KOP G-1	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-2	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
KOP-G-2(A)	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-3	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-4	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-5	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-6	High	High	High	High
KOP G-7	High	High	High	High
KOP G-8	High	High	High	High
KOP G-9	High	High	High	High

<sup>1</sup>General Guidance for Determining Visual Impact Susceptibility for Table 4.9-1

**Rating:**

Low  
High  
Moderate

**Guidance:**

Two or more of the contributing factors are rated Low.  
Two or more of the contributing factors are rated High.  
All other combinations of contributing factors.

**Table 4.9-2. Visual Impact Severity<sup>1</sup>**

<b>KOP</b>	<b>Visual Contrast</b>	<b>Project Dominance</b>	<b>View Impairment</b>	<b>Visual Impact Severity<sup>1</sup></b>
KOP G-1	Moderate	Low (subordinate)	Low	Low
KOP G-2	Moderate	Low (subordinate)	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-2(A)	Moderate	High (dominant)	High	High
KOP G-3	Moderate	Low (subordinate)	Moderate	Moderate
KOP G-4	High	High (dominant)	Moderate	High
KOP G-5	High	High (dominant)	High	High
KOP G-6	High	High (dominant)	Moderate	High
KOP G-7	High	High (dominant)	Moderate	High
KOP G-8	High	High (dominant)	Moderate	High
KOP G-9	High	Moderate (co-dominant)	Moderate	Moderate

<sup>1</sup>General Guidance for Determining Visual Impact Severity for Table 4.9-2

**Rating:**

Low  
High  
Moderate

**Guidance:**

Two or more of the contributing factors are rated Low.  
Two or more of the contributing factors are rated High.  
All other combinations of contributing factors.

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**Table 4.9-3. Impact Significance by Key Observation Point (KOP)**

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Impact Susceptibility	Impact Severity		
	Low	Moderate	High
<b>Low</b>	Insignificant <sup>1</sup>	Insignificant	Adverse But Less Than Significant <sup>2</sup>
<b>Moderate</b>	Insignificant (KOP G-1)	Adverse But Less Than Significant (KOPs G-2, and G-3)	Significant <sup>3</sup> (KOPs G-4 and G-5)
<b>High</b>	Insignificant	Significant <sup>3</sup> (KOP G-9)	Significant and Unavoidable <sup>4</sup> (KOP G-2(A), G-6, G-7, and G-8))

<sup>1</sup> Insignificant impacts may or may not be perceptible but are considered minor in the context of existing landscape characteristics and view opportunity (Class III).

<sup>2</sup> Adverse but less than significant impacts are perceived as negative but do not exceed environmental thresholds (Class III).

<sup>3</sup> Significant impacts can be mitigated to a level that is not significant or can be avoided altogether with feasible mitigation. Without mitigation, the impact could exceed environmental thresholds (Class II).

<sup>4</sup> Significant and unavoidable impacts cannot be feasibly mitigated (Class I).

The project as viewed from KOPs G-4 and G-5 results in impacts that while significant, are mitigable (Class II). Mitigation measures identified under VIS-1A and VIS-1B, Landscape screening; VIS-2, Building Colors; and VIS-3, Building Mass; would help reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

At KOPs G-1, G-2, and G-3 impacts are not significant therefore mitigation is not required. However the application of mitigation measures VIS-1, 2, and 3 would reduce project visibility from these KOPs.

Based on the potential Class I impacts at four KOPs, *overall impacts to visual resources as a result of the Comstock Homes Development project are rated as significant and unavoidable (Class I).*

**Impact VIS-2: Views from Winchester Commons.** In addition to the KOPs identified in the public areas immediately adjacent to the project site, potential visual impacts from the Winchester Commons residential community were evaluated. This area lies 0.25 mile north-northwest of the project site and is separated from the site by commercial development along Hollister Avenue, the Union Pacific Railroad, two separate eucalyptus windrows, and Highway 101. Homes in the Winchester Commons development closest to Highway 101 are generally oriented away from the highway and the project site. This analysis evaluates the potential for the project to be seen either from Calle Real which fronts Highway 101 and the Winchester Commons development or from Winchester Place which provides access to Winchester Commons from Calle Real. Field evaluations made along the residential streets surrounding and within the Winchester Commons development included reviewing and photographing views to the project site from Winchester Commons; and analysis of heights of the intervening structures, Highway 101 berms, railroad, and eucalyptus trees. As part of the analysis, view blockage toward Winchester Commons from the project site was also field verified. Terrain elevations between

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the project site and Winchester Commons were then confirmed by evaluation of topographic maps in preparation of the line of sight section included in Diagram 1 of Figure 4.9-17. Potential to view the site was also evaluated with the aid of a line of sight section (see Figure 4.9-17, Diagram 1). The engineering section presented in Diagram 1 depicts the potential line of sight from Winchester Commons south 1,400 feet to the project site. The difference in elevation, along with the existing berm located to the south of Highway 101 and intervening windrows, obscure views of the project site.

It was determined that the primary views south from Winchester Commons are toward the Sandpiper Golf Course and the Barnsdall Gas Station on Hollister Avenue. If Winchester Canyon Road, which bounds Winchester Commons to the east, were extended south across Highway 101, it would line up with the northwest corner of the project site. Thus, the project site is not in direct views south from Winchester Commons. There are two major windrows of eucalyptus trees between Winchester Commons and the project site which effectively screen Winchester Commons' views of the site. The first windrow is located on a berm adjacent to Highway 101; see Photos A and B, Figure 4.9-17. The second windrow is slightly less dense and is located along Hollister Avenue itself; see Photos 1A, 2A, and 3A for KOPs G-1 through G-3. The increase in elevation from the project site to Winchester Commons is less than the height of the intervening eucalyptus windrows, as is illustrated in Diagram 1 of Figure 4.9-17. From the Winchester Commons vantage, both windrows would provide effective screening for buildings up to 80 feet high. Since the highest structures are proposed to be 28 feet in height, the project would not be significantly visible from the Winchester Commons. In fact, it is unlikely that it would be glimpsed from any of the Winchester Commons residential streets or Calle Real. Therefore, potential visual resources impacts to the Winchester Commons neighborhood are considered *adverse but not significant (Class III)*.

***Impact VIS-3: Neighborhood Compatibility.*** Neighborhood compatibility is a potential visual issue. The Comstock Homes Development project proposes 78 residences with floor areas ranging from 2,900 to 4,500 square feet. These are larger units than typical residences in the nearby Santa Barbara Shores residential neighborhood. The relative impact of this size of the proposed residences can be reduced by making most of the perimeter units single story so that they are visually more compatible with other projects in the area. Mitigation measure VIS-3 addresses this issue.

A related issue is the use of an architectural "Tuscan" style. While there is certainly precedent for the stucco and tile roof architectural design theme in the project area, other design styles should also be considered that are compatible with and subordinate to the natural character of the site and compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. While variation in architectural style is desirable, such variation should still create a sense of visual cohesion. Potential impacts resulting from the limited compatibility of the mass and architectural style of the Comstock Homes Development project, as proposed, are *significant but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*. Implementation of mitigation measures VIS-3 (building mass reductions) and VIS-4 (City of Goleta Design Review Board review and approval) would improve the project's compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods.

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### Section 4.9 **Impact VIS-4: Visual Impacts Related to the Santa Barbara Shores Public Access Area.**

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Proposed development of a public access area has minimal potential to affect views either south from Hollister Avenue or north from the Santa Barbara Shores open space area. Only one vertical feature, a public restroom, is proposed in this area. While exact location and size are not specified at this time, it is anticipated that the restroom structure would be located close to Hollister Avenue immediately south of the eucalyptus windrow to facilitate a sewer hook-up. It is also anticipated that the structure would be small (approximately 15 feet in height and 600 square feet) and the materials would be buff colored permeable concrete appropriate to the surrounding vegetation such that the structure will be subordinate to the site with minimal contrast. Development of the public access area is not expected to impair views. Visual impacts related to the Santa Barbara Shores Public Access area are considered *adverse, but not significant (Class III)*.

**Impact VIS-5: Light and Glare from Residential Development and Open Space Improvements.** There is a potential for visual impacts due to night lighting and glare generated by the residential development and the Open Space Plan parking area. Light and glare can substantially degrade existing visual conditions when new development occurs in existing open spaces where nearby uses may be disturbed or the view by those using adjacent public areas is significantly affected.

Potential generation of light and glare may occur from several sources, including street and parking lot lighting, landscape lighting, and lighting from within residences. Street and parking lot lighting have the most potential to create disturbance to neighbors since streetlights and lighting on poles tend to be high, bright, and not easily capable of being screened.

Streetlights are essential for public safety and are generally recognized as such by residents and passersby. If streetlights obscure a view or are exceptionally bright they would have the potential to create significant visual impacts. Streetlights installed as part of the proposed project would not be obscuring the view toward the ocean since it would not be visible in the dark. Additionally, the few persons using the open space after daylight hours would typically be providing some light sources of their own. Therefore, with mitigation measures regulating brightness, shielding of the luminaries, and ensuring that lighting in the parking area, if any, is reduced to minimal security levels after 9:00 p.m., lighting and glare impacts can be mitigated to less than significant levels.

Residential and landscape lighting in the area of Hollister Avenue would be seen as infill between the standard residential lighting levels of the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood, Ellwood Elementary School, the commercial area across Hollister Avenue, and Hollister Avenue street lighting, as well as the minimal lighting of the Sandpiper Golf Course. Therefore, the Comstock Homes Development, when seen by a viewer driving along Hollister Avenue, would not be perceived as a major new source of lighting where none had existed previously (KOPs 1 through 3). With the application of the proposed mitigation measure VIS-4, lighting impacts would be reduced to less than significant. While there would be the potential for significant

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**FIGURE 4.9-17**

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change when seen from KOP 4 along the golf course, there will not be a significant number of people on the golf course at night. The impact from this area will be less than significant.

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There will be a significant change in the nighttime view from KOPs G-5 through G-9 by those using the Santa Barbara Shores open space area just after sundown when the residential lights are turned on.

Without shielding, lighting would become a dominant feature in the landscape. However, after full darkness the number of people using the open space drops to a minimal level, resulting in a reduction in the viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity as expressed in Table 4.9-1. There will be short-term significant lighting and glare impacts until the vegetative screening grows into relative maturity in five years. Once the landscape plantings mature, the lighting impact will be similar to and seen within the context of the existing Santa Barbara Shores residential neighborhood. Therefore, lighting impacts on visual resources are considered *significant but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*.

**Impact VIS-6: Short-Term Construction Impacts.** Evaluation of construction impacts focuses on the short-term visual impacts resulting from project construction and the presence of equipment, materials, and earth moving in the existing landscape. The project would be highly visible during the construction period and for a least three first five years until the landscaping reaches a level adequate to screen the project.

In a visual sense, construction impacts will be obtrusive and out of character with the existing adjacent buildings and related pedestrian activity. This situation would be expected of moving equipment and the erection of raw materials without the mitigation of final colors and landscaping. While this impact would be adverse, it would be short term, and is considered *adverse, but not significant (Class III)*.

#### **4.9.4.4 Cumulative Impacts**

**Impact VIS-7: Loss of Scenic Coastal Vistas and Open Space.** Open space areas are increasingly being converted to urban uses. Few undeveloped coastal open space areas that are comparable to the Comstock development site remain on the South Coast. The Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Plan identifies seven major coastal parcels in the region as being suitable for preservation as open space or purchase as parks. These parcels include Carpinteria Bluffs, Loon Point, Hammonds Meadow, Douglas Family Preserve (formerly, Wilcox property), More Mesa, Haskell's Beach, and Ellwood Beach. Of these seven locations, two have been developed (Hammonds Meadows and Haskell's Beach); two have been purchased to secure open space (Carpinteria Bluffs and Douglas Family Preserve); two are undeveloped and have no proposed or pending development; and one (Ellwood Mesa) is the subject of this EIR because it is proposed to remain in open space if the Comstock development is approved on the adjacent Santa Barbara Shores parcel. The Santa Barbara Shores parcel is in and of itself a significant coastal resource that has already been dedicated as open space by the City of Goleta.

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The project site is part of a larger coastal area that extends from the western boundary of Isla Vista to the urban fringe near the recently-constructed Bacara Resort at Haskell's Beach. Although this area is partially developed with UCSB faculty housing, the Devereux School, the Ellwood Marine Terminal oil tanks, and the Sandpiper Golf Course, most of it is characterized as a natural open space which supports informal beach access ways, trail systems, and recreational activities that serve the densely populated communities in Isla Vista and the neighborhoods east of the project site.

Apart from the proposed project, other development projects within this coastal complex have recently been completed and/or proposed: the proposed faculty and student housing project (University) and the Ocean Meadows Residences project (Santa Barbara County) located at the east end of the Open Space Plan area; the Sandpiper multi-family residential project located immediately northwest of the Comstock site; renovation and redevelopment of the Sandpiper Golf Course facilities, located west of the site; and the recently completed Bacara Resort located west of Sandpiper Golf Course. Additional open space would be converted with implementation of these projects. The project's contribution to this loss of regionally unique coastal open space would also be considered significant and unavoidable.

Implementation of the proposed residential project would contribute to the cumulative loss of coastal open space areas and the associated visual resources. Although implementation of the mitigation measures described in this section would serve to reduce visual impacts, the project would contribute to the cumulative loss of unspoiled coastal visual resources. Such a contribution would again be considered *significant and unavoidable (Class I)*.

#### **4.9.4.5 Mitigation Measures**

Recommended mitigation measures to reduce potential project-related and cumulative impacts to visual resources are provided below. A description of the mitigation measure(s), plan requirements, timing for implementing the measure, and monitoring is also included. The applicant would be responsible for implementing mitigation associated with the residential development project. The City of Goleta would be responsible for implementing mitigation measures associated with construction of the Ellwood Mesa Open Space parking lot improvements.

##### **4.9.4.5.1 Mitigation VIS-1: Landscape screening.**

**IA:** To minimize views of residences in the Comstock Homes Development from surrounding public areas, including the Anza Trail and other trails within the Ellwood Mesa Open Space, and the parking and restroom area east of the Comstock project site, the applicant shall install additional landscape screening to supplement the applicant's proposed landscape plan as follows:

- The rear yards of lots 41-59 and the side yards of lots 74-75 shall be planted by the applicant with screening trees, preferably California native species which will reach at least 20 feet in height or more at maturity, such as *Quercus agrifolia* or *Quercus tomentella*. Tree placement

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should result in the canopies of mature trees overlapping somewhat to provide fairly dense screening. Larger trees, and especially oaks, can take longer to get established in the landscape than trees from smaller containers; therefore, at least 50% of the trees indicated in the landscape plan should be from containers no smaller than 1 gallon or an equivalent size.

- Tree plantings shall be interplanted with fast growing native shrub species which will provide early screening and can be removed in four to five years as trees reach a substantial size. Proposed tree planting should be effective in five years as seen in Photo C for KOPs G-5 through G-9. Adequate irrigation shall be installed and maintained for a minimum of five years.
- The applicant shall prepare CC&Rs for the residential community and make the City of Goleta a participant, regulating the removal/replacement of the screening trees. The owner/tenant of residences on the lots identified above desiring to remove said trees shall be required to consult with the City and prepare a landscape plan for City approval.

**IB:** To minimize views of residences in the Comstock Homes Development from the Sandpiper Golf Course, the applicant shall install additional landscape screening to supplement the plantings proposed in the applicant's landscape plan as follows:

- A planting of California native trees and/or dense shrubs which effectively shield the view of the new structures by 80% or more (equivalent to the existing eucalyptus screen) shall be planted upon implementation of project construction so that the said screening is mature and effective in five years. Selected tree species shall reach at least 20 feet in height. The screening planting will be located at the rear of the following lots: 1-5, 8-9, 34-39; and at the side and rear yard of lot 40 between the proposed residences and the privacy wall. Site planning should provide a minimum setback of 10 feet for side and rear yards of the specified lots to allow adequate space for tree planting.
- The applicant shall prepare CC&Rs for the residential community and make the City of Goleta a participant, regulating the removal/replacement of the screening trees. The owner/tenant of residences on the lots identified above desiring to remove said trees shall be required to consult with the City and prepare a landscape plan for City approval.
- Climbing vines and a planted landscape buffer of tall shrubs shall be planted and maintained along the west side of the privacy wall to soften the appearance of the wall as viewed from Sandpiper Golf Course. The applicant shall provide a 5 foot setback between the proposed privacy wall and the golf course property line to allow adequate space for the landscape buffer. Adequate irrigation shall be installed and maintained for a minimum of five years.

**IC:** To minimize views of residences in the Comstock Homes Development from Hollister Avenue, the applicant shall install additional landscape screening to supplement the plantings proposed in the applicant's landscape plan as follows:

- Proposed street tree plantings along Hollister Avenue shall be interplanted with fast growing native shrubs species which will provide early screening and can be removed in four to five

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years as the larger trees reach a size adequate to provide the screening shown in Photos 1C, 2C, and 3C (Figures 4.9-3 and 4.9-6).

- Climbing vines and/or tall shrubs shall be planted and maintained along the north side of the privacy wall to soften the appearance of the wall as viewed from Hollister Avenue. Adequate irrigation shall be installed and maintained for a minimum of five years.

**Plan Requirement and Timing.** The applicant shall submit revised landscape plans with the locations of screening mounds, supporting irrigation systems and additional screening plantings: shrubs, trees, and vines. Landscape plans, landscape lighting, irrigation, construction documents and specifications shall be submitted to City of Goleta and shall be subject to approval by the Design Review Board (DRB) prior to approval of Land Use Permits. All mounds and planting shall be installed prior to occupancy clearance.

**Monitoring.** The applicant shall submit a landscape maintenance plan to the City for review and approval. The maintenance plan shall identify the program for growing and maintaining the proposed vegetative screens so that they achieve the five-year growth identified as adequate to reduce visual impacts to a level of insignificance. The plan shall also identify a long-range maintenance and vegetation replacement plan to ensure that said screening will be maintained for five years, including replacement of any trees which may die.

**4.9.4.5.2 Mitigation VIS-2: Building colors.** To minimize impacts to visual resources by the Comstock Homes Development the building material colors selected shall be muted tones in substantial conformance with the building character of the photo simulations identified as Photo C for KOPs G-1 through G-9.

**Plan Requirement and Timing.** Applicant has previously submitted color boards for review. The applicant shall submit revised color boards for City of Goleta and DRB review and approval with any potential changes to architectural style or upon requirement of the DRB. Building colors shall be approved prior to approval of Land Use Permits.

**4.9.4.5.3 Mitigation VIS-3: Building Mass.** To minimize views of residences in the Comstock Homes Development from surrounding public areas, including the Anza Trail, other trails within the Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area, and the parking area east of the Comstock project site, the applicant shall construct single level residences on lots 1, 2, 41-57, 74, 75, and 78 as indicated on the site plan reviewed by this EIR. The height of single-level homes shall not exceed 19.5 feet at the roofline.

**Plan Requirement.** The applicant shall submit revised site plans indicating single-level homes on the specified lots, revised elevations for the single-level residence design, and building plans indicating the measure of structure heights. In addition to the refined site plan, the applicant shall also submit grading plans indicating finished floor elevations. In the event that the building site location or elevations change significantly from the preliminary designs submitted for this review, an additional analysis shall be prepared to ensure that the changes do not affect in any

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major way the conclusions drawn from the visual simulations from any of the KOPs identified in this analysis.

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**Timing.** Plans shall be submitted to City of Goleta and shall be subject to approval by the DRB prior to approval of Land Use Permits.

**4.9.4.5.4 Mitigation VIS-4: Neighborhood Compatibility.** The project shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Goleta DRB. The DRB shall review the project and recommend changes to the architectural design so as to minimize incompatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. The applicant shall modify and vary its architectural design in accordance with the recommendations of the DRB.

**Plan Requirements and Timing.** The applicant shall submit revised floor plans and architectural elevations for City of Goleta and DRB review and approval prior to issuance of Land Use Permits for the individual homes.

**Monitoring.** The City of Goleta shall monitor construction for compliance with approved plans.

### **4.9.4.5.5 Mitigation VIS-5: Lighting and Glare.**

**5A:** To prevent night time glare, any exterior lighting installed on the project site shall be of low intensity, low glare design, and shall be hooded to direct light downward onto the subject parcel and prevent spill over onto adjacent parcels. All light fixtures shall be shielded so that neither the lamp nor the related reflective interior surface is visible from any of the KOPs. All light poles, fixtures, and hoods shall be dark colored (non-reflective). Security and street lighting shall be shielded so as not to create glare when viewed from the KOPs. The light poles and fixtures shall not be obtrusive to travelers along Hollister Avenue or the public open space areas.

**5B:** To prevent night time light and glare from the proposed Santa Barbara Shores public parking area, all public parking lot and restroom lighting shall be set on a timer to shut off no more than 90 minutes after sundown.

**Plan Requirements and Timing.** The plan shall include the height, location, and intensity of all exterior lighting. An arrow should be included for each light fixture which indicates the direction of light being cast by such fixture. Parking lot and restroom lighting as designed and detailed in construction documents shall include a timer system. An exterior lighting plan shall be submitted to City of Goleta Planning and shall be subject to approval by the DRB prior to approval of Land Use Permits.

### **4.9.4.6 Residual Impacts**

With the incorporation of mitigation measures VIS-1 through VIS-5, Impacts VIS-3 and VIS-5 would be mitigated to levels that are less than significant. Impacts VIS-1 and VIS-7 cannot be

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**Section 4.9** feasibly mitigated to a less than significant level. These impacts would remain *Class I* after mitigation. Impacts VIS-2, VIS-4, and VIS-6 would remain *adverse but not significant (Class III)*.

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