

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section addresses the effects of building and landscape development with the implementation of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component of the 2018 LRDP, as well as overall effects of development, including potential loss of existing visual resources, effects on views, and impacts of increased night lighting on sensitive receptors.

In response to the NOP, comments were received that identified concerns with potential building heights, fencing, and the aesthetic changes from loss of open space, primarily associated with potential changes to Russell Field. As they pertain to implementation of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component of the 2018 LRDP, these impacts are described and addressed within this section.

3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

Plans, policies, regulations, and laws (applicable to and/or considered for the Orchard Park Redevelopment component) are provided in Volume 1 of this EIR. As the regulatory setting provided in Volume 1 considers potential development, including the Orchard Park Redevelopment component, within the entirety of the UC Davis campus as envisioned through the 2018 LRDP, no additional regulatory setting is provided for the Orchard Park Redevelopment component.

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," in Volume 1 presents the aesthetics setting for the entire UC Davis campus, including the Orchard Park site. This section of the EIR examines the visual and aesthetic effects of development under the Orchard Park Redevelopment in greater detail.

The Orchard Park site was previously developed with student housing, however existing on-site structures were removed due to safety/security concerns. Their removal was evaluated in an Initial Study/Negative Declaration prepared in November 2017. As of the writing of this analysis, demolition of on-site structures is largely complete, and the site will be restored to a natural/undeveloped condition in Spring 2018. The environmental setting for aesthetics considers the site to be undeveloped. Several mature trees are located within the site, including several trees along the site boundaries (Russell Boulevard, Orchard Park Drive, and Orchard Park Circle). The Orchard Park site is bordered by La Casa de Flores Apartments, Pinon Apartments, and Cuarto housing to the north across Russell Boulevard, the Atrium and Russell Park apartments to the east, the Baggins End Domes Cooperative Living Community lodging and Experimental College Community Garden (EC Garden) to the south, and SR 113 to the west. The Russell Boulevard corridor is bordered on both sides by single rows of mature walnut trees and other landscaping that precludes unimpeded views across Russell Boulevard. Bicycle lanes are provided along the northern site boundary (i.e., south side of Russell Boulevard) and on the north side of Russell Boulevard.

Views from and of the Orchard Park site are limited to short-range views of existing development and landscaping. Views of the Coast Range to the west are impaired because of the mature trees that border the western edge of the site. The neighborhood located north of the site currently has limited views of the Orchard Park site due to the intervening rows of trees that line Orchard Park Circle and Russell Boulevard. The EC Garden and agricultural land to the south also has limited view of the

Orchard Park site due to tree cover. While there are a variety of trees lined along Orchard Park Drive, the Atriums and Russell Park apartments, located east of the proposed site, experience direct views of the site.

There is currently no lighting of the Orchard Park site. Night lighting in the vicinity of the site is limited to lighting along roadways, exterior lights on the adjacent apartment buildings, and concentrated lighting at neighboring campus support facilities and academic and administrative buildings.

3.1.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Refer to Section 3.1, “Aesthetics” in Volume 1 of this EIR for a discussion of applicable Significance Criteria.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Refer to Section 3.1, “Aesthetics,” in Volume 1 for a discussion of applicable analytical methods.

ISSUES NOT EVALUATED FURTHER

The following impacts were identified as part of the analysis of the 2018 LRDP, and are either (1) adequately evaluated at the program level of analysis of the LRDP or (2) not applicable to the Orchard Park Redevelopment component.

State Scenic Highway

As discussed in Section 3.1, “Aesthetics,” of Volume 1, no state-designated scenic highways are present within or near UC Davis, including the Orchard Park site. As a result, implementation of the 2018 LRDP would not affect scenic resources within a scenic highway corridor. Therefore, no further project-level analysis of this impact is required.

Effects on a Scenic Vista

As noted in Section 3.1, “Aesthetics,” of Volume 1, a scenic vista is defined as a publicly accessible viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape. The Orchard Park site is located within an urbanized area that is landscaped to a degree such that long-distance views of or through the Orchard Park site are precluded. Therefore, no scenic vistas are considered present in the vicinity of the site that could be affected by implementation of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component. As a result, the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would not result in any new or substantial adverse changes to scenic view in the surrounding area. No further project-level analysis of this impact is required.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.1-1: Degrade existing visual character or quality.

While the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would alter the visual character of the site from an undeveloped to developed use, the proposed Orchard Park Redevelopment would be consistent and similar in design to existing and surrounding housing development, as well as the previous developed condition of the site. Impacts to visual character or quality would be **less than significant**.

The Orchard Park site is currently undeveloped, although it was previously (until 2017) developed with student housing. Implementation of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would include the construction and operation of several student housing structures, up to six stories in height. The site would also include landscaping and would maintain existing landscaping (especially mature trees) along the periphery of the site. As noted above, the presence of existing landscaping precludes unimpeded views of existing uses, both along Russell Boulevard and Orchard Park Drive. Further, the type of use that would occur at the Orchard Park site is consistent with the previous use at the site and other existing uses in the area, including those located across Russell Boulevard and within the City of Davis, with respect to type of use and height (two to four stories). For these reasons, the development of the Orchard Park site is not anticipated to be visually inconsistent with the current aesthetic character or quality of adjacent uses in the area. Further, all new development is required to comply with the UC Davis Physical Design Framework and Campus Design Guide Manual, which establishes requirements intended to maintain important aesthetic features and compatibility with existing visual conditions, including the installation of landscaping (both in terms of bulk and color) and exterior features consistent with adjacent development (e.g., exterior lighting and finishings). The UC Davis design review process would ensure that on-site aesthetic conditions resulting from the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would not be incongruous with existing development. As such, although the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would represent a change from the existing condition of the site, the visual character/quality of the Orchard Park site with implementation of the proposed development would be consistent with the surrounding area and would not be substantially degrade or otherwise adversely affect aesthetic conditions. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

Impact 3.1-2: Create a new source of light or glare.

Implementation of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would introduce new sources of light and glare as a result of new buildings and facilities. New lighting would be similar in character of existing light sources, however, may introduce new sources of light and/or glare. This impact is considered **potentially significant**.

The Orchard Park site currently consists of an undeveloped site with no lighting, although it was previously developed with student housing uses. Lighting visible from the Orchard Park site includes that of the neighboring apartments to the east and street lighting from Orchard Park Circle and Russell Boulevard but is limited by the presence of existing mature trees and other landscaping both at the Orchard Park site and in the vicinity of the Orchard Park site. Nonetheless, development of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component would introduce new sources of artificial light in an area that currently experiences offsite lighting. New sources of lighting would include exterior building lights and potential night lighting of paved pathways throughout the student housing complex. While new sources of lighting are not likely to interfere with surrounding uses and development, the trees that surround the north, west, and south of the Orchard Park site boundary, would largely prevent spillover lighting. Additionally, new sources of lighting would be similar to existing uses, such as the Atrium and Russell Park apartments, located directly east of the proposed site, and would complement existing light sources in both character and design. Nonetheless, it is possible, as specific architectural features and building materials have yet to be determined, that light and/or glare from development of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component could adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact is considered **potentially significant**.

OPR Mitigation Measure 3.1-2a: Building surfaces.

Implement 2018 LRDP Mitigation Measure 3.1-3a.

OPR Mitigation Measure 3.1-2b: Lighting fixtures.

Implement 2018 LRDP Mitigation Measure 3.1-3b.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of OPR Mitigation Measures 3.1-2a and 3.1-2b would require the use of non-reflective materials and shielding such that spillover onto adjacent uses would be minimized. Further, the UC Davis Design Review Committee, as part of the design review process, shall verify implementation of this measure as part of the Orchard Park Redevelopment component's design review. With the implementation of OPR Mitigation Measures 3.1-2a and 3.1-2b, the impact would be reduced to a **less-than-significant** level.
