5. Environmental Analysis

5.1 AESTHETICS

5.1.1 Environmental Setting

Regulatory Framework

City of San Bernardino Development Code

Property Development Standards (Chapter 19.20)

This chapter of the Development Code contains specific standards to ensure that development would produce an urban environment of desirable character that is harmonious with the existing and future development, consistent with the General Plan. Specific provisions related to aesthetics include:

- Design Considerations (Section 19.20.030.4): The following standards are in addition to the specific design guidelines for single family residential development projects found in the City's Development Code Section G 19.04.050:

  A. The proposed development shall be of a quality and character which is consistent with the community design goals and policies including but not limited to scale, height, bulk, materials, cohesiveness, colors, roof pitch, roof eaves and the preservation of privacy.

  B. The design shall improve community appearance by avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition.

  C. Proposed signage and landscaping shall be an integral architectural feature which does not overwhelm or dominate the structure or property.

  D. Lighting shall be stationary and deflected away form all adjacent properties

  E. Mechanical equipment, storage, trash areas, and utilities shall be architecturally screened from public view.

  F. With the intent of protecting sensitive land uses, the proposed design shall promote a harmonious and compatible transition in terms of scale and character between areas of different land uses.

- Glare (Section 19.20.030.11): No glare incidental to any use shall be visible beyond any boundary line of the parcel.

- Lighting (Section 19.20.030.14): Exterior lighting shall be energy efficient and shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are contained within the boundaries of the parcel, and shall be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way. No lighting shall blink, flash, or be unusually high intensity or brightness. All lighting fixtures shall be appropriate in scale, intensity, and height to the use it is serving. Security lighting shall be provided at all entrances/exits.

Hillside Management Overlay District (Chapter 19.17)

The purpose of the Hillside Management Overlay District (HMOD) is to provide for low-density residential development in City hillside areas. The intent is to encourage environmentally sensitive residential development that complements the natural and visual character of the hillsides. The HMOD specifies maximum density based on topography and a slope-density formula.

- Development Performance Standards (19.17.070.1.B): Grading shall be designed to:

  1. Conserve natural topographic features and appearances by means of land sculpturing to blend graded slopes and benches with natural topography.

  2. Retain major natural topographic features such as canyons and prominent landmarks

- Development Performance Standards (19.17.070.4.G): Introduction of landscaping within the hillside areas should make maximum use of texture, color, and be capable of blending in with the natural landscape, and help to soften the effects of buildings, walls, pavement, and grading.

- Development Performance Standards (19.17.070.5)

  A. Dwelling units and structures shall be compatible with the natural surroundings of the area and shall not dominate the natural environment.

  B. Exterior finishes of dwelling units and structures should blend in with the natural surroundings by using earth tone colors and avoiding reflective materials or finishes.

  C. Site design should utilize varying setbacks, building heights, innovative building techniques, and building and wall forms which serve to blend buildings into the terrain.

  D. Dwelling units and structures shall be sited in a manner that will:

    1. Retain outward views from each unit;

    2. Preserve or enhance vistas, particularly those seen from public places;

    3. Preserve visually significant rock outcroppings, natural hydrology, native plant materials, and areas of visual or historical significance.

  E. The highest point of any structure shall not be located above the ridgeline. A ridgeline is a long, narrow, conspicuous elevation which is visible north of Highland Avenue, from a freeway, major arterial, secondary arterial, or collector street, which forms part of the skyline or is seen as a distant edge against a backdrop of land at least 300 feet horizontally behind it.

    1. Use the natural ridgeline as a backdrop for structures;

    2. Use landscape plant materials as a backdrop; and

    3. Use the structure to maximize concealment of cut slopes.

Foothill Fire Zone Overlay District (Chapter 19.15)

This chapter contains standards to mitigate the spread of fire, to help minimize property damage, and to reduce risks to public health and safety. The Foothill Fire Zone Overlay District (FF) specifies development standards relating to access and circulation, site and street identification, roadside vegetation, water supply, erosion control, construction, property transfers, and maintenance of firebreak fuel modification zones.

The FF identifies three fire zones with different degrees of hazard based on slope, type of fuel, and natural barriers. The foothill fire zones are:

- Fire Zone A, Extreme Hazard. Areas with slopes of 30 percent or greater.
- Fire Zone B, High Hazard. Areas with slopes of 15–30 percent
- Fire Zone C, Moderate Hazard. Areas with slopes of 0–15 percent

Approximately one-third of the site is in Fire Zone A, one-third of the site is in Fire Zone B, and the remaining third is in Fire Zone C. Areas in the Foothill Fire Zones are required to be developed with proper building separation, landscaping, and building materials; adequate emergency access and evacuation routes; and sufficient water resources.

Visual Character

The project site is on the northern edge of the City of San Bernardino in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains. The site is approximately 1.5 miles east of the unincorporated community of Devore and the junction of Interstate 215 (I-215) and I-15. Spring Trails is bounded by the San Bernardino National Forest on three sides and Verdemont on the southern side. The northern portion of the project site is in the San Bernardino National Forest, which is typically undisturbed natural open space. See Chapter 4, *Environmental Setting*, Figures 4-1 through 4-5.

The project site is vacant with the exception of one single-family residence in the western portion, south of Cable Canyon. Vegetation on the site has substantially recovered from several fires and again supports a diversity of habitat types. The adjacent 26.4-acre annexation area consists of six rural residential parcels, four of which are occupied with residences and related structures. Access to four of the parcels is from Meyers Road, with the remaining two obtaining access from Martin Ranch Road prior to entering the project site. There is no planned development for this adjacent area.

Three 115-kilovolt Southern California Edison (SCE) overhead electric lines traverse the western portion of the site from north to south. SCE also has an access easement over the project site to service these electric lines.

Visual Resources

Visual resources on the project site include a variety of vegetation communities, trees, and other natural characteristics. The hilly terrain of the proposed project site is covered with 17 different plant communities and up to 4,000 trees (MBA 2007; PBS&J 2009). Rocky washes and outcroppings intermix with the vegetation and tree communities throughout the project site. The vegetation types include chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and wetlands (see Chapter 5.3, *Biological Resources,* for more information on vegetation details). The majority of the onsite trees are nonnative eucalyptus; however, a number of native and nonnative trees, including canyon live oak, California sycamore, and white alder, are also present onsite. The vegetation communities, the variety of trees, and rocky washes visually enhance the landscape and are characteristic of the San Bernardino foothills.

Landform

Spring Trails is on the western flank of the San Bernardino Mountains, which run for approximately 60 miles east from the Cajon Pass to the Coachella Valley. The highest peak in the range is Mount San Gorgonio, which has an elevation of 11,501.6 feet and is the highest peak in southern California. Most of the range is in the San Bernardino National Forest.

The project site is relatively undisturbed and consists of canyons and steep hillsides with gently sloping alluvial benches in between. The topography of the site varies from steep (over 30 percent slopes) in the north and southeast portions to gentle (0–15 percent slopes) in the central portion. The elevation of the site ranges from approximately 2,010 feet above sea level at its southern boundary to approximately 3,540 feet at the northern boundary, a difference of 1,530 feet. The site slopes to the southwest at approximately 10 to 15 percent.

The southern portion of the site is traversed by two faults: the main trace of the San Andreas Fault and, to its north, a secondary extension of the main trace fault. The fault zone of the main trace ranges from approximately 50 feet to 150 feet wide, and the fault zone of the secondary trace is approximately 40 feet wide. The site has been shaped by the San Andreas Fault and the Cable Canyon and Meyers Canyon drainage ways and includes gently sloping alluvial benches, canyons, and steep hillsides.

Scenic Vistas and Corridors

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System of the California Department of Transportation, the project site is not on or near a major state-designated scenic highway (Caltrans 2009). Goal OS 5, Policy OS 5.3, of the County of San Bernardino General Plan designates I-15 from the junction with I-215 northeast to the Nevada state line, excepting all incorporated areas, as a County Scenic Route. The project site is not visible when traveling northbound on the I-15.

5.1.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

AE-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

AE-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

AE-3 Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

AE-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

5.1.3 Environmental Impacts

A comparison of existing conditions to graphics depicting anticipated physical changes resulting from project development provides the necessary framework for evaluating visual impacts. In addition, the intent, policies, and relationship among the Hillside Management Overlay District, the Foothill Fire Zones Overlay District, relevant landscaping, and design standards in the Spring Trails Specific Plan must be considered in evaluating the significance of aesthetic impacts.

The proposal also includes the annexation of an adjacent 26.4-acre area consisting of six parcels owned by various property owners. A land use proposal has not been submitted for this 26.4-acre area and it is not owned or otherwise under the control of the applicant. For these reasons, no development is expected to occur on these parcels. Therefore the annexation would not contribute to impacts related to aesthetics.

Development Plan

The Spring Trails plan accommodates 307 single-family detached units (306 new units and 1 existing residence), which are set among neighborhoods separated by open space corridors, drainage ways, roadways, and sloped areas. A system of pathways connects the residences with neighborhood parks and natural open spaces. Development is focused onto approximately 241.5 acres, or about 68 percent of the total site, and includes 9 acres of parks and 125.1 acres of internal slopes and fuel modification zones. The remaining 32 percent of Spring Trails (111.3 acres) is preserved as natural open space.

The Spring Trails development plan assumes that the SCE overhead electric lines will be located underground. In the event that the overhead electric lines cannot be located underground, an alternative development plan that accommodates the electric lines aboveground has been prepared for Spring Trails (as shown in Figure 3-3A, *Alternative (Overhead Electric Lines) Development Plan*, in Section 3, *Project Description)*. The alternative plan has the same development footprint as the preferred development plan and is the same as the preferred plan in every respect except for the treatment of the land beneath the electric lines and the number of residential lots. The alternative plan contains 304 single-family detached units (303 new units and 1 existing residence) compared to 307 units proposed in the preferred development plan.

Approximately 193 acres of the total site would be graded and improved for the onsite development of residential lots, roadways, trails, detention basins, fuel modification zones, and parks. An additional 23.7 acres would be graded and improved for offsite access, including 4.2 acres for the primary access road and 19.5 acres for the secondary access road. Primary access to Spring Trails would be provided by a new road extending from the southeastern corner of the site and connecting to Little League Drive. Secondary access is planned via a new road extending from the southwestern corner of the site to the frontage road along I-215. Figure 3-5, *Circulation Plan,* depicts the planned roadway system, and detail for the roadway cross-sections is shown in Figure 3-6, *Roadway Cross-Sections.* Necessary public streets, both on- and offsite, would be improved by the developer and dedicated to the City. All roadways would be two-way travel with one lane in each direction and with varying treatments for parkways, sidewalks, and parking, as depicted in Figure 3-6. The project's development footprint and its relationship to onsite topography are shown in Figure 5.1-1, *Development Footprint*.

Spring Trails Specific Plan Development Standards

Spring Trails Specific Plan development standards are intended to shape the physical form of Spring Trails. The purpose of the Specific Plan is to provide unique development standards and guidelines to allow the creation of a high-quality residential community.

Development Standards

Section 3, Development Standards, of the Specific Plan, includes land use designations, permitted uses, and development standards that are intended to shape the physical form of Spring Trails. Unless expressly stated, the Spring Trails Specific Plan development standards shall supersede the relevant provisions of the City of San Bernardino's Development Code. Any development regulation and guideline not addressed in the Specific Plan would be subject to the City's adopted regulations at the time of the individual request.

Landscape Plan

The Spring Trails Specific Plan includes a Landscape Plan. Project landscape has been designed to reflect the surrounding environment. Plant materials have been chosen based on the area's environmental conditions and fire protection needs, as well as the aesthetics they would bring to the community. The landscape design guidelines for Spring Trails are intended to guide the project developer by describing the design intent for the landscape features and amenities of Spring Trails. There are four landscape zones, whose intent is to seamlessly and naturally blend the community landscape with the surrounding natural environment.

- **Natural Open Space Zone.** The natural open space zone contains a mixture of Riversidean sage scrub, chaparral, nonnative grassland, and several riparian and woodland communities. This area is generally located in the perimeter areas of Spring Trails outside of the fuel modification zones and would be preserved. If any intentional or unintentional grading occurs within this zone, the development contractor would restore this zone to its original state.

- **Transition Open Space Zone.** The transition open space zone is primarily located on the perimeter, ungraded slopes of the development footprint and provides an interface between natural open space areas and the more formal landscape of the residential neighborhoods. The transition open space zone is intended to be planted in such a manner as to blend into the ungraded natural areas. This zone is in fuel modification zone C, and plant materials in the transition open space zone would be on the approved fuel modification plant palette found in Table 3.6 of the Specific Plan.

- **Refined Open Space Zone.** The refined open space zone generally consists of open space areas within Spring Trails and includes natural and manufactured slopes. Portions of the refined open space zone are in fuel modification zones A and B, and plant materials in the refined open space zone would be on the approved Landscape Zones Plant Palette in Table 3.6 of the Specific Plan.

- **Theme Zone.** The theme zone occurs in parks and along streets in Spring Trails. The streetscape plant palette should provide a unifying theme and a sense of permanence. The landscape features within this zone, such as entry monuments, also provide character supportive to the landscape theme of Spring Trails, setting the tone and establishing the uniqueness of the community.

The Specific Plan details other landscape components, including parks, community entry, and street cross-section detail, to demonstrate methods to achieve a community that is sensitively integrated into its physical surroundings. The Spring Trails Specific Plan provides parks and open space that serve multiple functions: recreational opportunities, an interconnecting system of trails, and visual buffers and landmarks.

All setback areas fronting on or visible from a public street and all recreation/common open space areas would be landscaped and permanently maintained in an attractive manner. Such landscaping would primarily consist of turf, lawn, groundcovers, trees, shrubs, and other living plants, and may also include some use of artificial turf. Permanent, 100 percent automatic irrigation facilities would be provided in all landscaped areas as appropriate for the landscape type. Landscaping would comply with the Landscape Zones Plant Palette (Table 3.6 of the Specific Plan) and the Fire Protection Plan.

Fuel Modification Zones

The Spring Trails Specific Plan Design Standards also include a Fire Protection Plan. Spring Trails is in an area that is designated a very high fire hazard area. To protect lives and property, an extensive fire protection plan has been developed as part of the Spring Trails Specific Plan. One of the most basic components of fire protection is to change and reduce fuel. In Spring Trails, there are three fuel modification zones where the type, spacing, irrigation, and maintenance of landscaping are strictly controlled. The zones would keep

flames far enough away from structures that, in combination with other efforts, the buildings would not ignite. The locations of fuel modification zones are shown in Chapter 5.6, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*. The project's fuel modification zones also serve as a transition from natural landscape to the developed community and provide erosion control. Fuel Modification Zone A provides a 20- to 35-foot defensible space for fire suppression forces and protects structures from radiant and convective heat. Fuel Modification Zone B provides 50 to 200 feet of irrigated landscaped areas to help reduce combustible fuels. Fuel Modification Zone C provides a nonirrigated 50 percent thinning zone with removal of all dead and dying vegetation and undesirable species. Zone C is 40 to 185 feet in width surrounding the developed areas. Thinning zones are utilized to reduce the fuel load of wildland fires. Permitted and prohibited plant palettes are included in the Specific Plan.

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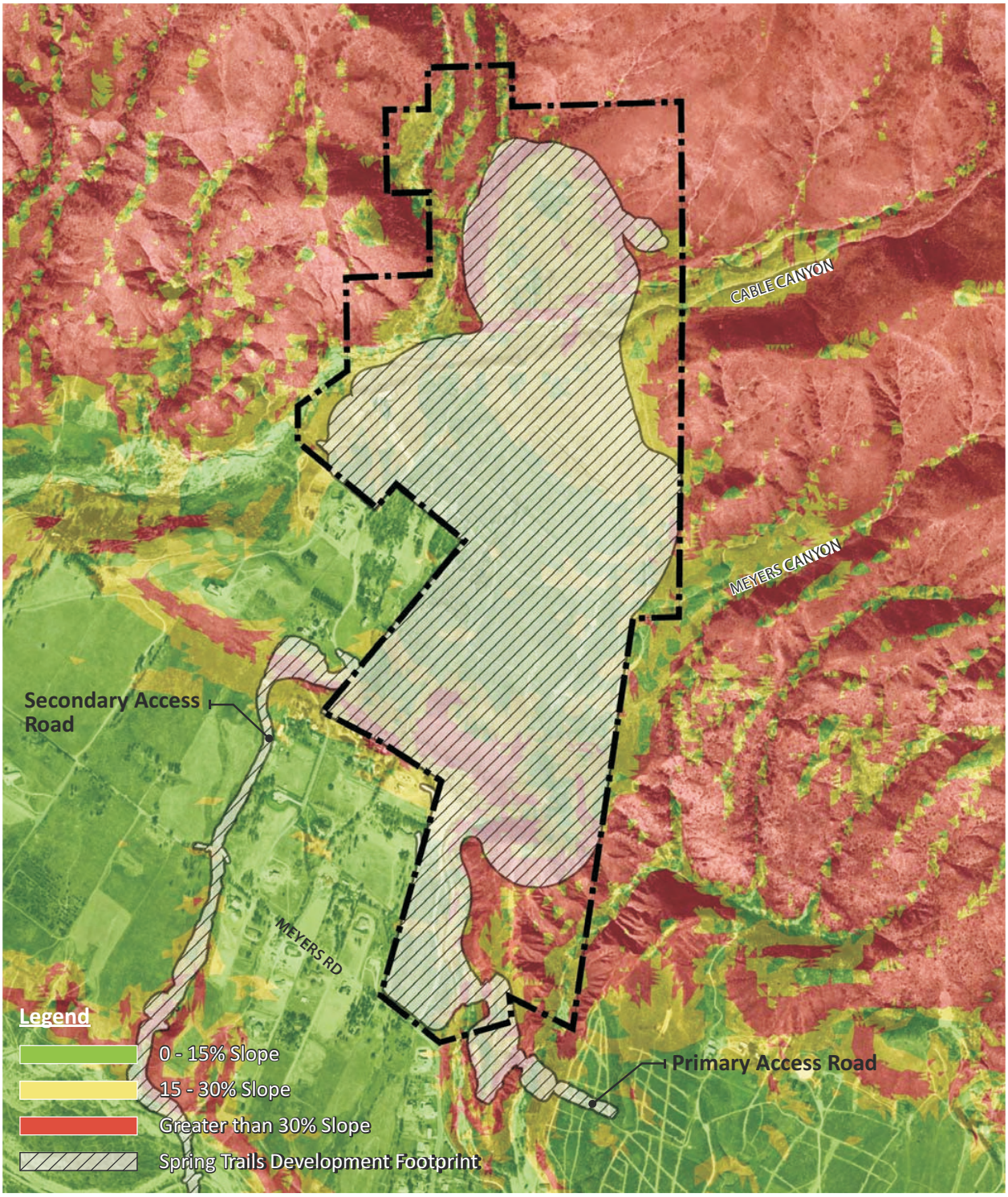
Development Footprint



Site Boundary

NOT TO SCALE

Source: Google Earth

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Lighting

The use of lighting within the community would be consistent with the dark sky guidelines suggested by the International Dark Sky Association (www.darksky.org) and with the City of San Bernardino development code. A detailed lighting plan, including specifications and design standards, would be submitted as part of the construction documents. The following policies apply to lighting in Spring Trails.

- Lighting shall be directed on the driveways and walkways and away from adjacent property.
- Walkway lighting shall be low-level fixtures (e.g., bollards), spaced to provide adequate walkway illumination, and shall not intrude into the residential dwelling units.
- Light standards shall be energy-efficient and in scale with the height and use of the structures onsite.
- Light standards shall not exceed 15 feet above finish grade. The 15-foot height limit may be waived as deemed necessary by the City Engineer.
- Lighting shall be decorative, in keeping with the architectural theme of the facility served, and shall be located within landscape planter areas.
- All lighting, including security lighting, shall be directed away from adjoining properties and the public right-of-way.
- The level of lighting shall not exceed 0.5 foot-candle at any residential property line or at the perimeter of the developed areas adjacent to the areas designated as Open Space-Natural.
- A lighting plan shall be prepared for all public areas within Spring Trails. The lighting plan shall establish uniform lighting standards with regard to style, materials, and colors in order to ensure consistent design. The lighting plan shall be submitted to the City for review and approval.
- Game-court lighting is permitted on a case-by-case basis. Prior to installation, all game-court lighting shall be reviewed and approved by the City of San Bernardino and any other responsible governing agency. Court lighting fixtures shall not exceed 30 feet in height.
- Exterior lighting may be used to illuminate significant exterior features and landscaping.

Hillside Management Overlay District

The Spring Trails hillside design and development standards have been prepared to be site-specific for the proposed project and are consistent with the General Plan. The HMOD design guidelines would not be necessary. Since the alternative and preferred development plans would require development of similar magnitude, About 233 acres (66 percent) of the project site would be on slopes of 15 percent or more. Of these, 178 acres, or 76 percent, would be preserved as open space on the project site.

Design Guidelines

Section 4, Design Guidelines, of the Specific Plan lays out guidelines that define the aesthetic character of Spring Trails.

Community-Wide Design Guidelines

Community-wide guidelines apply to Spring Trails as a whole. They are intended to create a strong community identity through the use of consistent streetscape, entry monumentation, landscaping, and lighting elements.

Landscaping

Landscape within Spring Trails would be planted with combinations of evergreen and deciduous canopy trees with flowering evergreen shrubs and groundcovers. It is intended that the landscape provide a theme and continuity throughout Spring Trails, enhance desirable views, screen undesirable views, beautify and control erosion of graded slopes exposed to public views, preserve existing landscape material (whenever possible), and enhance interfaces between graded and natural open space areas. Landscaping for streets within Spring Trails is discussed in the Landscape Plan section of Section 3 of the Specific Plan.

- Streetscape elements, such as landscaping, lighting, street furniture, and signage, should create an attractive, consistent, and cohesive community image.
- Streetscape elements, such as lighting, landscaping, and street furniture, should complement the surrounding architectural styles.
- Special patterned paving should be provided at important intersections and trail crossings within the Specific Plan area.
- All landscaping shall comply with the approved trees, shrubs, and ground covers listed in Table 3.6, Landscape Zones Plant Palette, of the Specific Plan.
- Landscaping along major streets and at project entries should be tasteful and consistent to create an attractive and cohesive community identity. Formal plantings of nonnative species may be used at key entries and intersections to highlight these areas.

Lighting

Lighting within Spring Trails is intended to help define vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, provide safe pedestrian movement, distinguish community entries and activity areas, and contribute to the overall landscape theme of the community. The goal is to provide a sense of place by varying fixtures and illumination levels.

- Attractive and consistent lighting elements should be provided along streets within the neighborhood. The height, brightness, and spacing of the lighting elements should be appropriate to the scale and speed of the street.
- Lighting fixtures should be compatible with the architectural styles of surrounding buildings and yet consistent throughout the community.
- Entry areas (both pedestrian and vehicular) and highly used recreation areas shall be creatively lit to develop a sense of place and arrival.
- All exterior lights shall be shielded and focused to minimize spill light into the night sky or adjacent properties.

- The lighting concept of the entry monuments is to illuminate the sign graphics and gently wash the site elements, walls, and pilasters with light.
- Lighting standards should be consistent with City safety and illumination requirements for rural areas.
- Wall-mounted lighting fixtures shall be selected according to the individual style of the building.
- Exterior lighting on homes should be set to automatic timers.
- Provide low-contrast lighting and use low-voltage fixtures and energy-efficient bulbs, such as compact fluorescent and light-emitting diode bulbs.
- Refer to Section 5, Sustainability, of the Specific Plan for additional standards and guidelines pertaining to lighting within Spring Trails.
- Refer to the Residential Design Guidelines for design guidelines pertaining to lighting fixtures placed on homes.

Graded Slopes

- Where feasible, grading shall be minimized by following the natural ground contours.
- Humanmade landforms shall be graded to avoid unnaturally sharp or straight edges and planes. The top and toe of graded slopes shall be rounded to avoid a harsh, machine-made appearance.
- Significant natural vegetation should be retained and incorporated into the project whenever feasible.
- All graded slopes shall be stabilized and planted with the approved trees, shrubs, and groundcovers listed in Table 3.6 of the Specific Plan, Landscape Zones Plant Palette.

Residential Design Guidelines

Creating street scenes that function aesthetically and have visual interest is a primary community objective. The Specific Plan includes basic elements and criteria that are intended to develop variations in appearance and a sense of individuality for each home. Neighborhoods that have nearly identical homes and streets without variation in product placement and form are not allowed. Building level guidelines include some of the following criteria:

Exterior Lighting Fixtures

- Where fixtures are not an important focal point, light sources shall be concealed and concentrated.
- Lighting fixtures used on walls and walkways shall focus light downward and provide appropriate down-casting hardware to minimize glare.
- Ambient light shall be cast downward to reduce the impact on the neighborhood.

Screening

- Storage and maintenance areas and other ancillary uses shall be screened from public view whenever reasonably possible.

- Accessory structures, such as storage areas, refuse receptacles, mechanical equipment, backflow preventers, security fences, and similar uses can seriously detract from the visual quality of an area. Therefore, care must be taken to minimize the visual impact of these uses through site design and visual shielding. When possible, these uses should be located away from roadways and public views, behind buildings, or in enclosed structures.

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the Initial Study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

IMPACT 5.1-1: THE PROPOSED SPRING TRAILS PROJECT WOULD ALTER THE VISUAL APPEARANCE OF THE CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO. [THRESHOLDS AE-1 AND AE-3]

Impact Analysis: Implementation of the project would alter existing landform and involve substantial grading. The visual character of the majority of the project site would be changed from undeveloped open space to a low-density residential development. The development footprint encompasses approximately 241.5 acres, or 68 percent of the total site, and includes areas for the onsite development of residential lots, roadways, trails, detention basins, fuel modification zones, and parks. Approximately 193.0 acres of the total site would be graded and improved. An additional 23.7 acres would be graded and improved for offsite access, including 4.2 acres for the primary access road and 19.5 acres for the secondary access road. The development footprint and amount of graded acres is the same for both the preferred development plan and the SCE alternative development plan.

The project is designed to preserve significant watersheds, severely sloped areas, and seismic hazard areas and incorporate them into the land plan as open space. The project's design accounts for the potential impacts of the hazards posed by seismic activity, flooding, and wildland fires. As a result, the project includes 245.4 acres of open space, consisting of 9 acres of parks, 125.1 acres of internal slopes and fuel modification zones, and 111.3 acres of preserved natural open space. The SCE alternative development plan includes 246.3 acres of open space, consisting of 9 acres of parks, 126 acres of internal slopes and fuel modification zones, and 111.3 acres of preserved natural open space.

Photos of the existing site were taken from several vantage points in the City of San Bernardino and simulation software was used to show how the project site may look during two stages of site construction and after project construction. Figure 5.1-2 shows the three viewpoints from which the simulations were constructed.

Changes to the landscape would occur during mass grading, completion of the first phases of home construction, and at full buildout. The project is anticipated to be built out by 2013. Onsite grading and home construction would be most visible from commercial properties and to north- and southbound travelers along I-215 between Palm Avenue and Glen Helen Parkway. Figure 5.1-3 shows a simulation of how the site may look during site grading while traveling north on I-215 at the Palm Avenue off-ramp. Figure 5.1-4 simulates how it may look during the first phase of home construction and Figure 5.1-5 simulates how it may look after project completion. Other prominent views of the site are from the southwest. Figure 5.1-6 depicts how the Spring Trails site may look during the initial grading phase from the southwest, at Glen Helen Parkway and the railroad tracks south of Cajon Boulevard. Figures 5.1-7 and 5.1-8 simulate the project site from this viewpoint during the first phase of housing construction and after project completion, respectively.

Figure 5.1-9 shows how the view toward the site from the east-southeast would be virtually unchanged after project completion. As can be seen from the simulation, the view of the project site from this location is blocked by the hilly terrain.

Mass grading and single-family homes without landscaping would be plainly visible from these vantage points. However, due to the residential units' low scale, especially in comparison to steep hillsides, they would not interfere with the dominant view and backdrop of the San Bernardino Mountains. The project would not be out of scale with the existing viewshed and would not dominate the landscape. Rooflines would not encroach into the skyline or the dominant ridgelines. Due to the project's low density, the Specific Plan's design guidelines and design concepts, the large amount of open space preservation, and proposed landscaping, the homes would not dominate the views.

The Spring Trails hillside design and development standards have been prepared to be site-specific for the proposed project and are consistent with the General Plan. The HMOD design guidelines would not be necessary. Since the alternative and preferred development plans would require development of similar magnitude,The majority (76 percent) of the project site on slopes of 15 percent or greater grade would be preserved as open space, and the remaining acres would follow the Specific Plan's hillside development standards.

This analysis is applicable to both the preferred development plan and the alternative (overhead electric lines) development plan. The main difference between the preferred and alternative development scenarios is that the SCE electric lines would be visible from areas adjacent to the project site, as they currently are.

IMPACT 5.1-2: THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT ALTER SCENIC RESOURCES WITHIN A STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY. [THRESHOLD AE-2]

Impact Analysis: The County of San Bernardino General Plan designates I-15 as a County Scenic Route, from the junction with I-215 northeast to the Nevada state line, excepting all incorporated areas. Due to area topography, the freeway interchange elevation, and speed of travel, the project site is not visible to motorists once they pass the I-215 interchange and head northbound on the I-15. The interchange itself is approximately one mile long. Motorists heading northbound at 65 miles per hour would be on the interchange for less than a minute. They might have a view of the project site looking east for a few seconds before the site is behind them. Traveling southbound on the I-15, motorists do not see the northern portion of the site due to prominent ridgelines. They also do not see the southern portion of the site from the I-215 junction because road contours and the northbound lanes of the I-15 and I-215 interchange and associated traffic interfere with views. The site is only visible from the northbound I-15 before the I-215 junction. This portion of I-15 is not designated a scenic highway.

This analysis is applicable to both the preferred development plan and the alternative (overhead electric lines) development plan. In the alternative development scenario the SCE electric lines would be visible from areas adjacent to the project site, as they currently are.

IMPACT 5.1-3: THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD GENERATE ADDITIONAL LIGHT AND GLARE. [THRESHOLD AE-4]

Impact Analysis: Additional lighting would be required to provide nighttime street, trail, and building illumination for the proposed project. Other sources of light include security lighting, nighttime traffic, and light associated with the nighttime use of the residences.

In addition to the adjacent residential land uses, other light-sensitive land uses includes the California State University at San Bernardino (CSUSB) observatory, currently being constructed on Little Badger Hill on the CSUSB campus, between three and four miles east of the project site. Nighttime lighting has the potential to create light pollution, which occurs when lighting is directed upward and gets scattered by the atmosphere. Once the light is scattered, it reflects back to Earth. To observatories this light competes with starlight and interferes with the ability to see the night sky clearly. Observatories require atmospheric darkness so that the night sky can be viewed clearly.

Pursuant to the City's Development Code and design criteria in the Spring Trails Specific Plan, lights associated with the project development would be directed toward the interior of the site. Exterior lighting would be designed, arranged, directed, or shielded in such a manner as to contain direct illumination onsite, thereby preventing excess illumination and light spillover onto adjoining land uses and/or roadways and without adversely affecting day or nighttime views in the project area. Lighting would be installed to accommodate safety and security, while minimizing impacts on surrounding residential areas and the CSUSB observatory.

The above analysis is applicable to both the preferred development plan and the alternative (overhead electric lines) development plan.

5.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The adjacent developed communities and undeveloped parcels to the south and southwest are designated Residential Estate (RE) in the City of San Bernardino's General Plan. Continued conversion of rural and undeveloped lands to low-density residential suburban land uses would change the aesthetic character of the area. This project would incrementally contribute to both direct and indirect light and glare affecting the nighttime aesthetic character of the region. The entire project site is currently prezoned by the City of San Bernardino as RE. In the context of the City's General Plan, the Verdemont area is residential in nature. The project's features and detailed design criteria per the Specific Plan meet the City's goal to provide a variety of housing stock, including upscale homes. The project clusters development to maintain undeveloped open space on approximately 30 percent of the site. Eventually, as residential development occurs in the remaining undeveloped areas south and southwest of the project site, the character of the Verdemont area would be changed into a more suburban community, as intended by the General Plan. By maintaining open space and preserving the dominant view and backdrop of the San Bernardino Mountains, the project would protect the natural components that contribute to the scenic value of the area, including existing terrain, vegetation, and major ridgelines. This analysis of cumulative impacts is applicable to both the preferred development plan and the alternative (overhead electric lines) development plan.

5.1.5 Existing Regulations and Standard Conditions

City of San Bernardino Development Code

- Foothill Fire Zone Overlay District (Chapter 19.15)
- Hillside Management Overlay District (Chapter 19.17)
- Property Development Standards (Chapter 19.20)

5.1.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.1-1, 5.1-2, and 5.1-3.

5.1.7 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts have been identified and no mitigation is required.

5.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant impacts have been identified.

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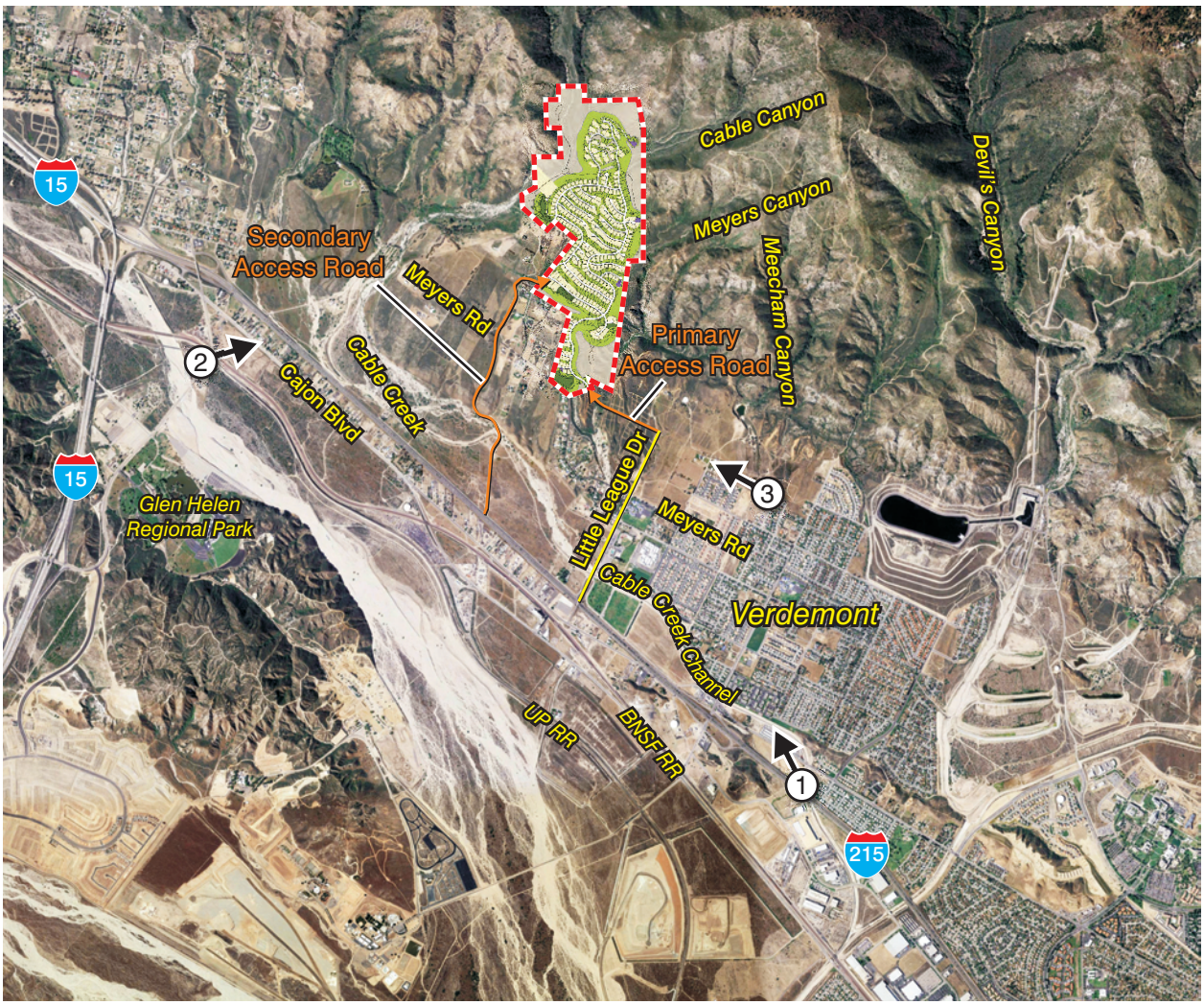
Photo Simulation Viewpoints



Site Boundary

Photo Viewpoints

0 4,600
Scale (Feet)

Source: Google Earth Pro 2009, Lilburn Corporation

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Project Simulation from Viewpoint 1: Existing Conditions and Proposed Mass Grading

Existing Conditions: View while traveling north on Interstate 215 at the Palm Avenue off-ramp. Site is approximately five miles from Palm Avenue off-ramp.

Mass Grading Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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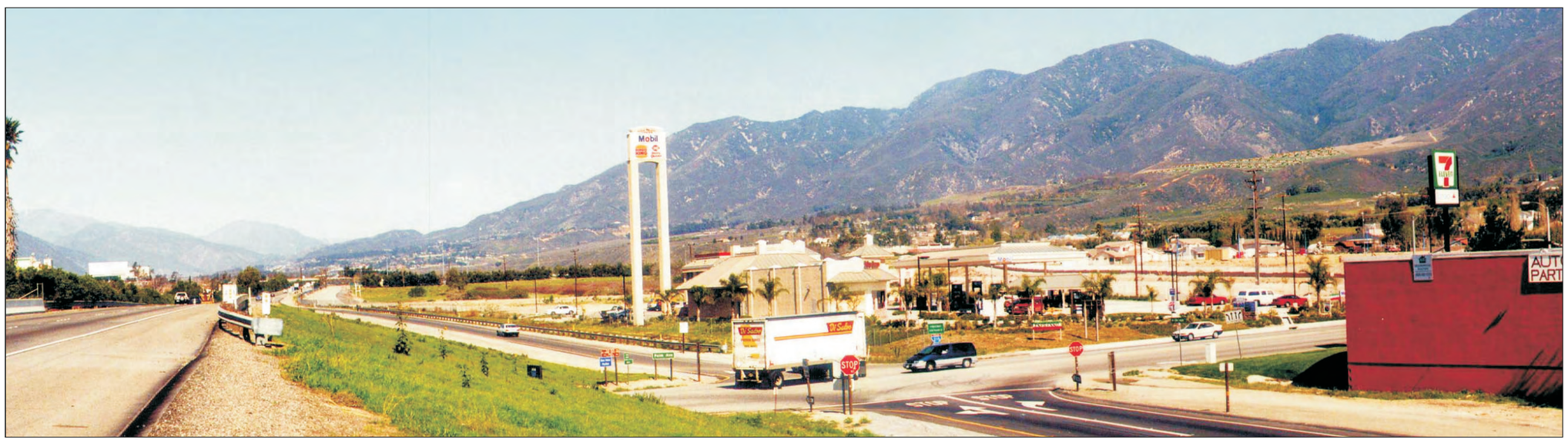
Project Simulation from Viewpoint 1: Mass Grading and First Phases of Home Construction

Mass Grading Conditions: View while traveling north on Interstate 215 at the Palm Avenue off-ramp. Site is approximately five miles from Palm Avenue off-ramp.



First Phase of Construction Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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Project Simulation from Viewpoint 1: First Phases of Home Construction and Completed Construction

First Phase of Construction Conditions: View while traveling north on Interstate 215 at the Palm Avenue off-ramp. Site is approximately five miles from Palm Avenue off-ramp.

Completed Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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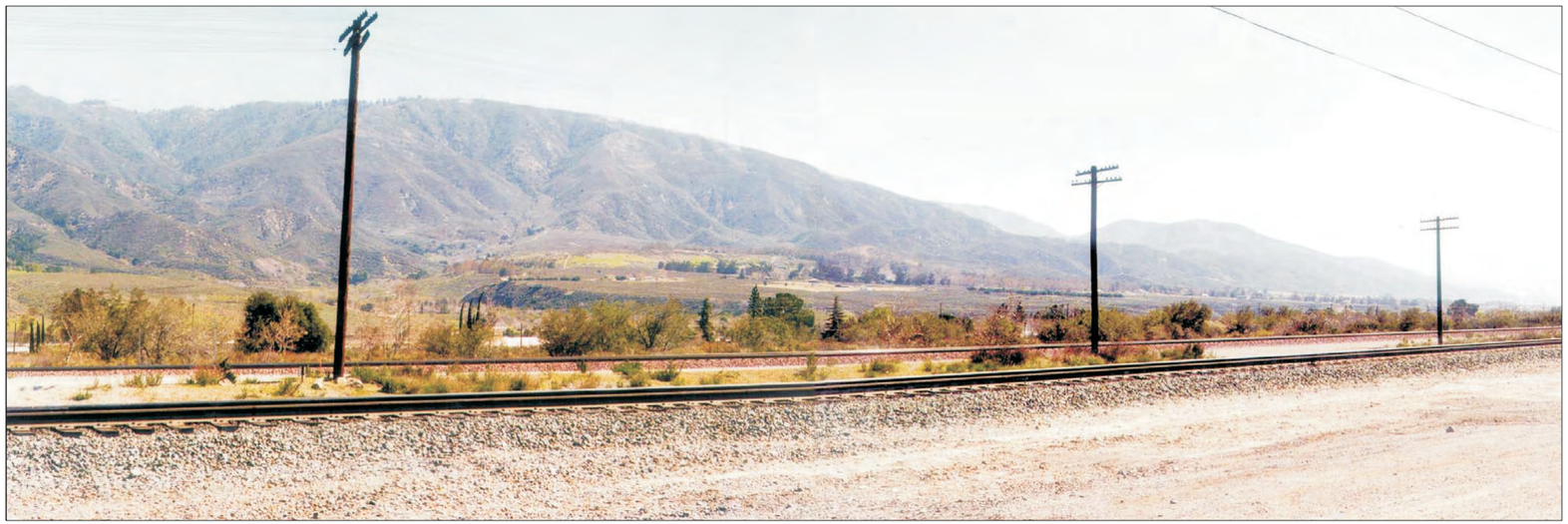
Project Simulation from Viewpoint 2: Existing Conditions and Proposed Mass Grading



Existing Conditions: View looking east-northeast from Glen Helen Parkway at railroad tracks. Site is approximately four miles east-northeast.

Mass Grading Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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Project Simulation from Viewpoint 2: Mass Grading and First Phases of Home Construction

Mass Grading Conditions: View looking east-northeast from Glen Helen Parkway at railroad tracks. Site is approximately four miles east-northeast.

First Phases of Construction Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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Project Simulation from Viewpoint 2: First Phases of Home Construction and Completed Construction

First Phases of Construction Conditions: View looking east-northeast from Glen Helen Parkway at railroad tracks. Site is approximately four miles east-northeast.

Completed Conditions: Simulation showing proposed Spring Trails (landscaping not shown).

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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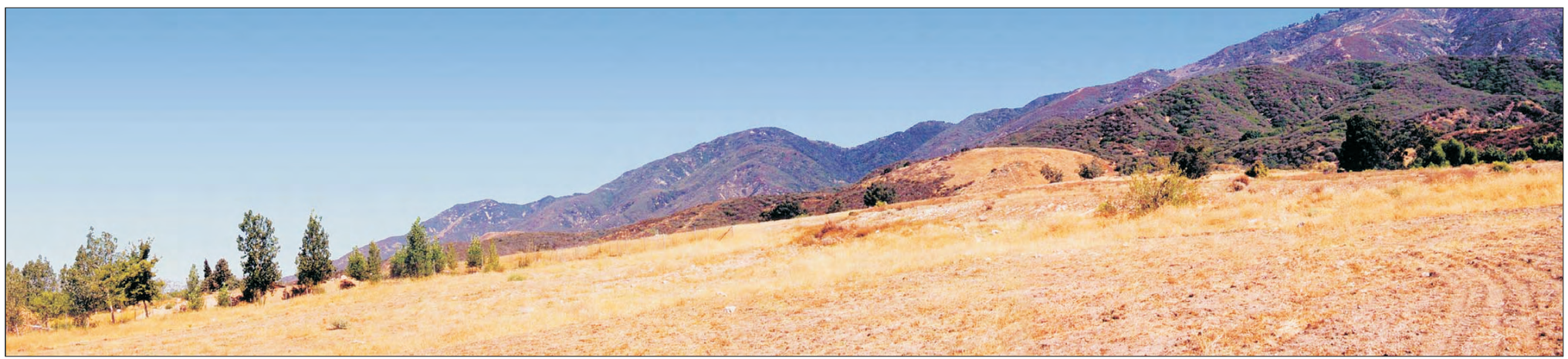
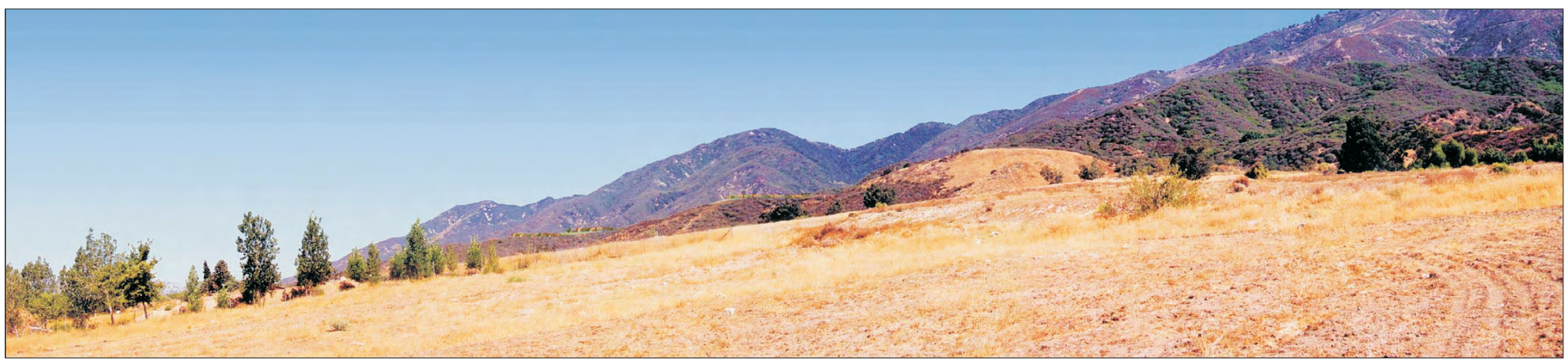
Project Simulation from Viewpoint 3



Existing Conditions: View looking northwest from Meecham Canyon. Site is approximately one mile southeast of Spring Trails.



Proposed Conditions: Simulation showing the same sightline after Spring Trails project completion.

Source: Lilburn Corporation

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