

## **3.3 AESTHETICS**

### **3.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this section is to identify aesthetic and scenic resources within the City of Lake Elsinore and its SOI and to evaluate potential impacts to such resources that could result from implementation of the proposed project. Aesthetic and scenic resources include natural or historical features that constitute a pleasing view to a person, usually from a vantage point, though a view corridor, or along a scenic road or highway.

Aesthetics and visual resources are subjective by nature. Consequently, the level of a project's visual impact is difficult to quantify. In addition, it is difficult to estimate the impact development would have on the City's aesthetic resources, since some individual projects can enhance the aesthetic quality of an area. Therefore, the assessment of impacts to aesthetics and scenic resources is a qualitative review of the existing aesthetic and scenic resources within the City and its SOI and a determination of whether the proposed project includes adequate provisions to ensure the protection of identified scenic resources and to minimize the degradation of the area's visual quality. Given the programmatic nature of the PEIR, specific impacts to individual properties or areas are not identified or known at this time.

### **3.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

The information contained in this Environmental Setting section is primarily from information contained in the City of Lake Elsinore General Plan Background Reports (see Chapter 9 - Aesthetic and Visual Resources). This document is attached as Appendix B to this PEIR.

The City of Lake Elsinore is approximately 39 square miles with a population of approximately 52,500 people. The City's most prized resource is Lake Elsinore itself, a 3,000-acre natural lake. The City's aesthetic setting is characterized by urbanized development of various densities occurring within varied topographical features and interspersed with undeveloped natural areas. Trees and scrub bushes surround the lake and nearby mountains and hillsides, screening small patches of development. Scattered structures are visible surrounding the lake, including residences, commercial/retail buildings, and light industrial uses. Southeast of the lake, large areas of undeveloped land are interspersed with older housing and newer subdivisions. The mountains on the southwest shore are visible as a backdrop for the lake.

The City is located in a valley with panoramic views of the Santa Ana Mountains that extend from the southwestern edge of the lake, rolling hills along the northeastern borders, and a valley that sweeps to the north and south. The varied topography of the surrounding area assures views of the lake from many public and private vantage points.

Compared to other cities and urban areas in southern California, the general atmosphere of the City and its surrounding areas is generally nonurban. A city center, known as historic Lake Elsinore, was developed on the northeastern lakeshore. More recent development is dispersed around other parts of the lake's shore. As the City grows, development patterns spread up the

valley toward the north. Development within the current city boundaries is limited due to various topographical barriers, including the Santa Ana Mountains to the west and rolling hills to the east.

## SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources within and surrounding the City include the lake, portions of the Cleveland National Forest, rugged hillside land, distant mountains and ridgelines, rocky outcroppings, streams, vacant land with native vegetation, parkland, and buildings of historical and cultural significance such as the cultural center, bathhouse, and military academy. Examples of these scenic resources can be seen in the photos in **Figures 3.3-1 through 3.3-4, Scenic Resources Photos**.

## SENSITIVE VIEWER GROUPS

Sensitive viewer groups include people who permanently or temporarily reside, pass through, or otherwise appear in an area (e.g., tourists, residents, or commuters) and are affected by the area's scenic features, visual quality, and the character of viewsheds and scenic vistas.

Sensitive viewer groups for the planning area include, but are not limited to, residents of the City and SOI, people who live in the surrounding region but work in Lake Elsinore, tourists, commuters, and motorists on I-15 and SR-74. Public vantage points for the various viewer groups include the highways, recreational facilities around the lake and on the surface of the lake, hang gliders, and small planes that pass by. Private vantage points include views from individual residences.

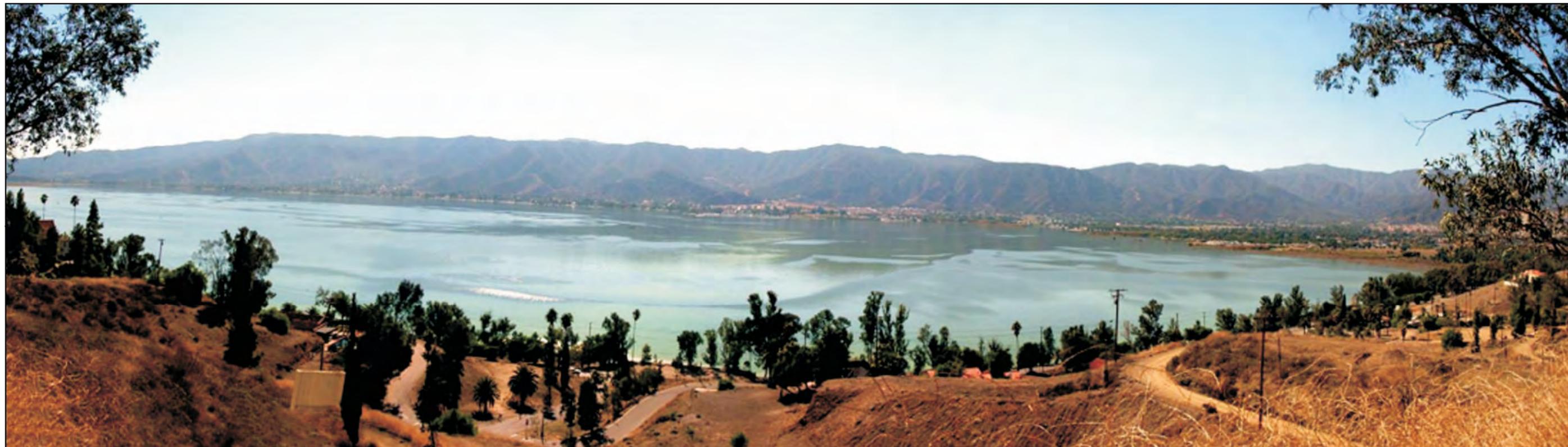
## VIEWSHEDS

A viewshed is an area composed of land, water, and cultural elements that may be wholly viewed and mapped from one or more viewpoints and has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic values as determined by those who view it.

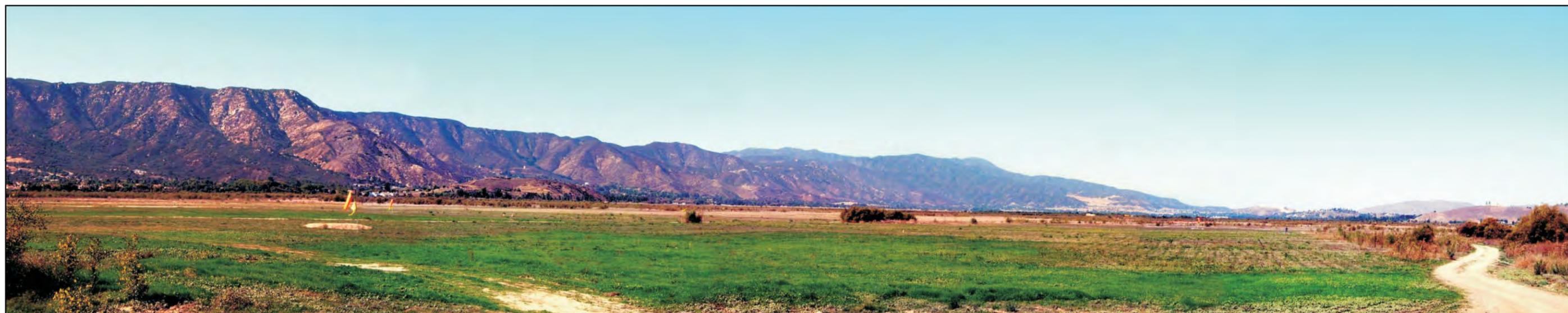
Viewsheds or landscape viewshed units of scenic vistas within the planning area include Lake Elsinore, urban areas surrounding the lake, and the rugged vacant hills in the northern and eastern portion of the City. For purposes of project analysis, 15 landscape viewshed units have been identified in the Lake Elsinore area, as seen in **Figure 3.3-5, Landscape Viewshed Units**. Each of these areas has distinct viewsheds defined by man-made structures and physiographical features such as landform, water, or cultural features.

The following is a brief summary of each landscape viewshed unit shown in **Figure 3.3 5**:

1. Mainly vacant land with steep hillsides interspersed with development. Unit is both within the City and SOI.

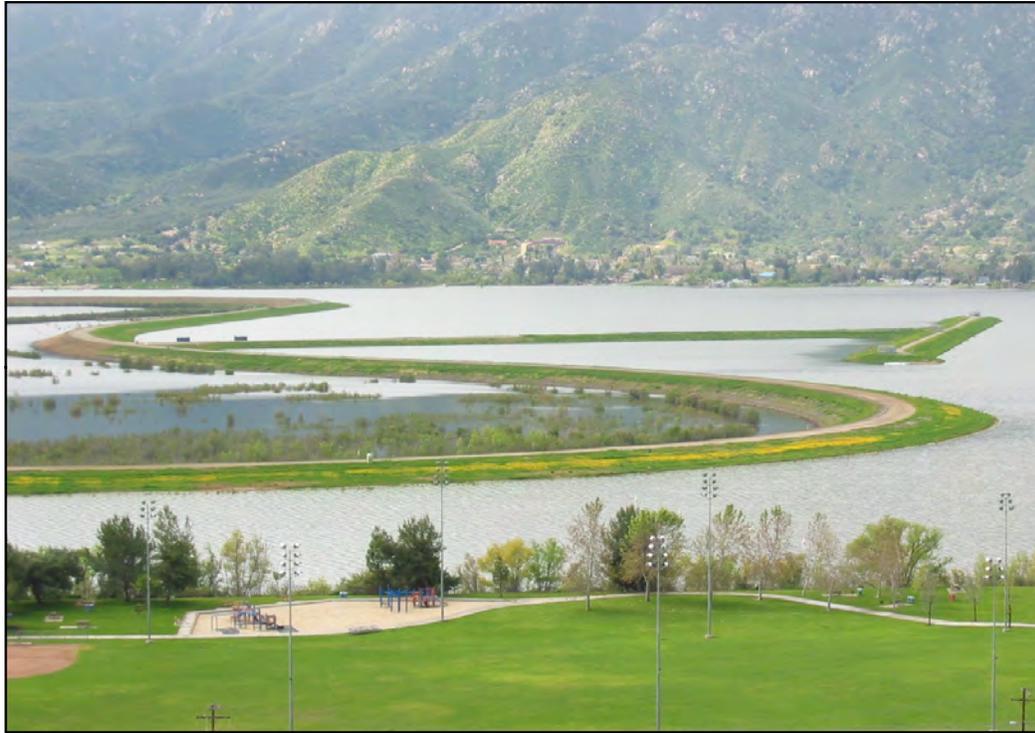


Panoramic Photograph of Lake Elsinore and the Santa Ana Mountains from Country Club Heights



Panoramic Photograph of Open Space and the Cleveland National Forest from South End of Lake

This page intentionally left blank.



Oblique Aerial View of the Southern End of the Lake, Wildlife Refuge, and Santa Ana Mountains



White Pelicans and Waterfowl on Lake Elsinore with Open Space in the Background

This page intentionally left blank.

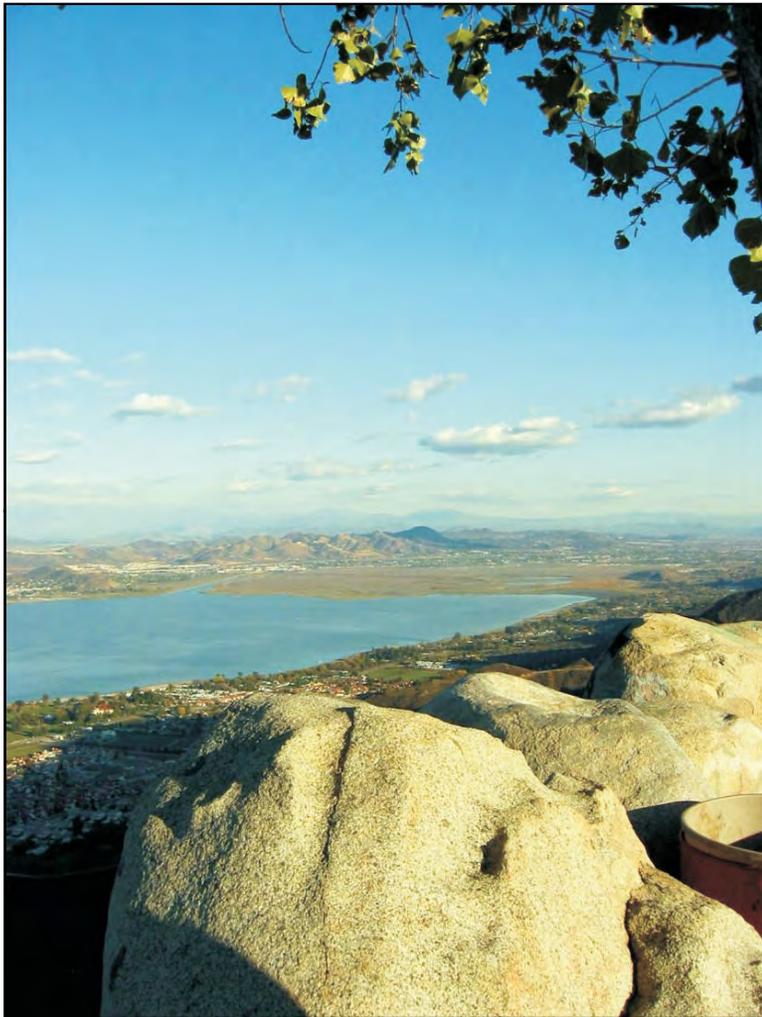


Campground and Beach at North End of Lake Elsinore

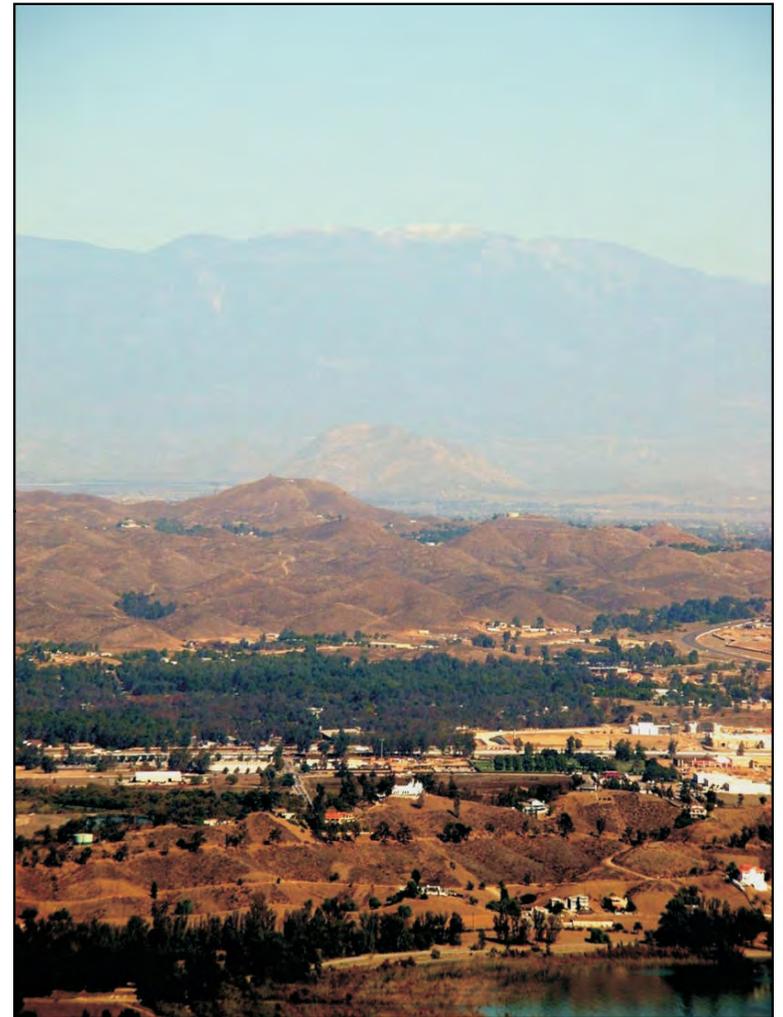


View of the Lake, Santa Ana Mountains, and Cleveland National Forest from Whiskers Beach

This page intentionally left blank.



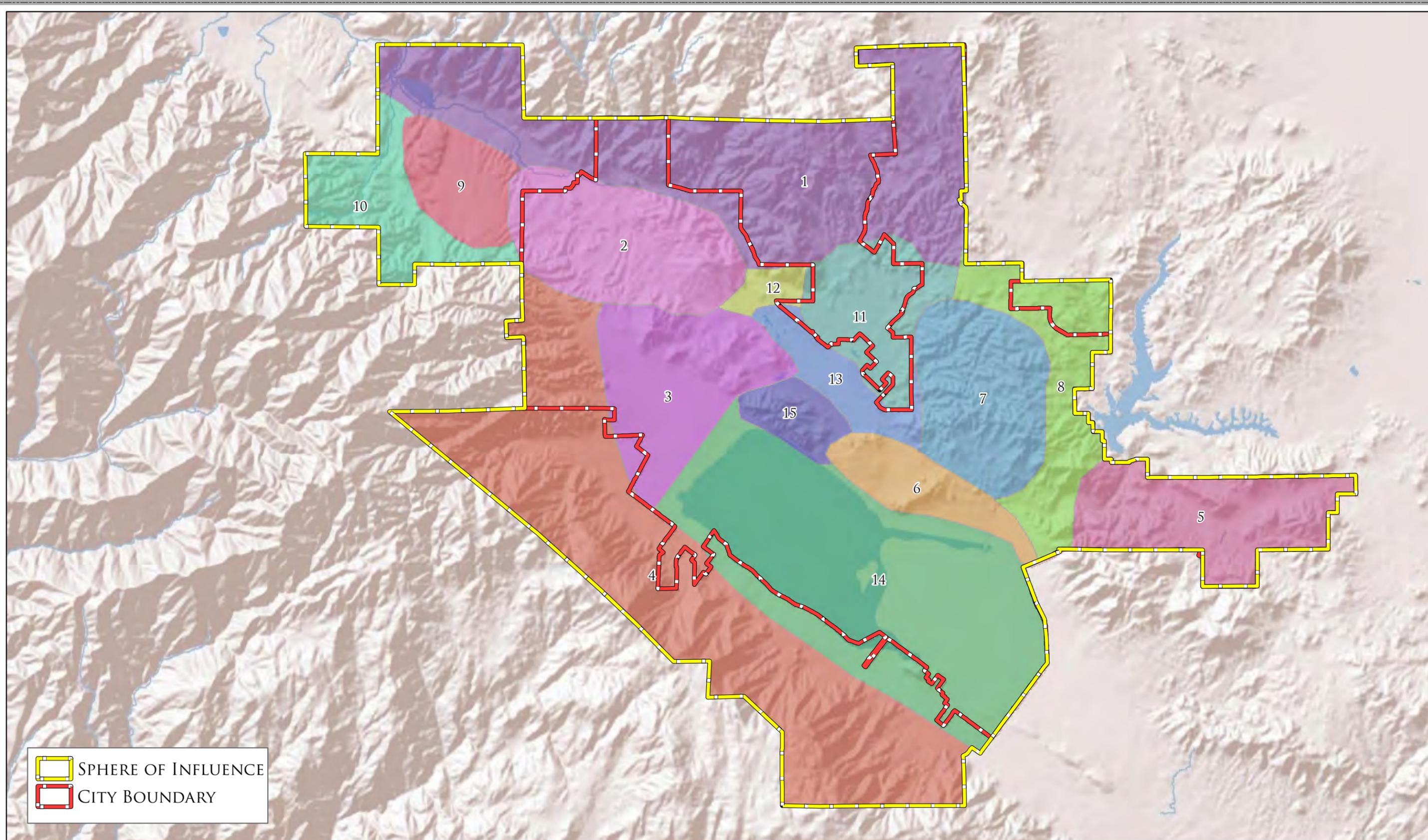
Rock Outcrop and Lake Elsinore from Lookout Roadhouse



View of Gorgonio Mountain from the Cleveland National Forest (Country Club Heights in Foreground)

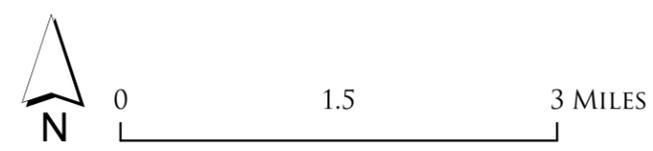


This page intentionally left blank.



 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE  
 CITY BOUNDARY

SOURCES: CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



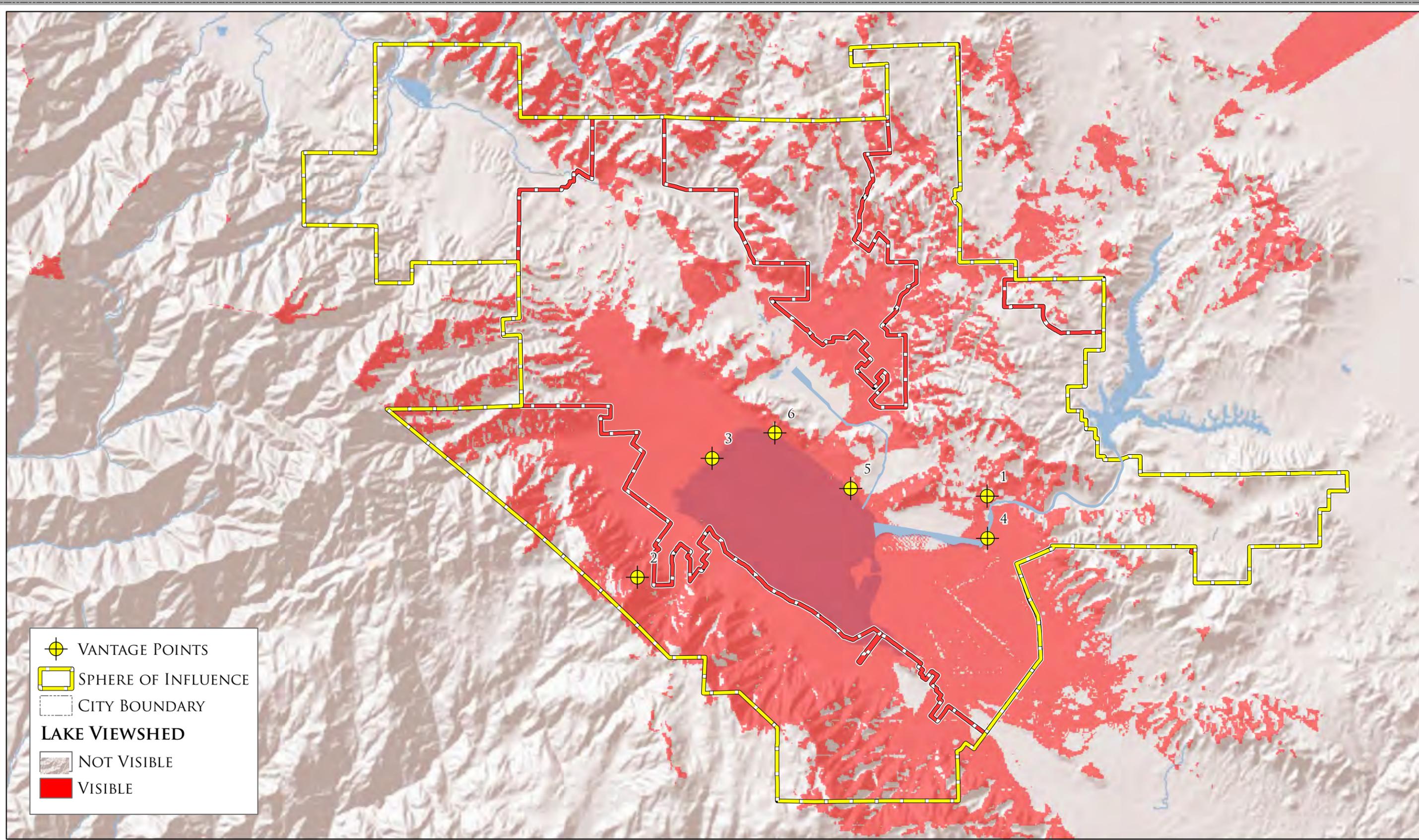
CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE  
 LANDSCAPE VIEWSHED UNITS  
 FIGURE 3.3-5

This page intentionally left blank.

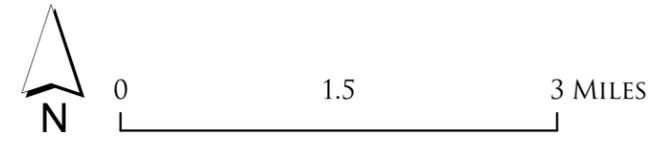
2. Partially graded land due to mineral extraction. Unit is half in the City and half in the SOI.
3. Mainly developed with residential, commercial, and recreational land uses.
4. Steep slopes mainly outside City boundaries but within the SOI. Includes portions of the Cleveland National Forest. This unit is mainly undeveloped but has patches of residential, commercial, and recreational development.
5. Rolling hillsides characterize this unit. It is mainly residential with limited commercial use.
6. Unit is adjacent to the lake with a mix of residential, commercial, and public facilities. This unit is also the location of historic downtown Lake Elsinore.
7. Mainly within City boundaries, the unit is characterized by varying topography and rural development.
8. Majority of this unit is outside City boundaries but within the SOI. Area is developed with residential and commercial uses.
9. Unit is outside of the City but within SOI. Residential community located along I-15.
10. Located outside the City and on the edge of the SOI. Characterized by rolling hills and limited residential development.
11. Located in the center of the SOI. Developed mainly with residential and commercial uses.
12. Location of the Lake Elsinore Outlet Stores. Large portion to the east is vacant for future expansion.
13. Mainly manufacturing land use located along I-15. Relatively flat topography.
14. This unit includes Lake Elsinore and surrounding floodplain.
15. Characterized by steep slopes and limited development due to small lots and inadequate utilities.

**Figure 3.3-6, Lake Elsinore Viewshed and Photograph Vantage Points**, illustrates the areas within the City, the SOI, and outlying areas where the lake is visible and areas where the lake cannot be seen. The lake is visible from areas marked in green on the map. The lake is not visible from areas marked in red.

This page intentionally left blank.



SOURCES: CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE  
 VIEWSHED AND PHOTOGRAPH VANTAGE POINTS  
 FIGURE 3.3-6

This page intentionally left blank.

## VANTAGE POINTS

The visual character of the City is dominated by Lake Elsinore, which is the largest natural lake in southern California. Due to the lake's importance to the aesthetic setting, scenic resources were addressed by identifying five key public vantage points of the lake throughout the City. Sites chosen included the view of the lake from I-15, SR-74, the Lake Elsinore Recreation Area and Campground, the baseball stadium, the boat launch on the eastern edge of the lake and the Aloha Pier Look-out. These points were chosen because they are key public vantage points that can be accessed by every viewer group. **Figure 3.3-6** shows where the vantage points are located, and **Figure 3.3-7, Location Photographs**, displays photos of each of the locations. The following is a description of each vantage point.

### *Public Vantage Point 1: Interstate 15*

Commuters and other motorists traveling on I-15 have views of the lake. As motorists pass through the City, a full view of the lake appears in the distance, sitting in a valley surrounded by mountains, hills, and development. Without pulling off the freeway, the lake is visible to northbound and southbound motorists for a short period. Most travelers on I-15 are passing through at high speeds, making it difficult to concentrate on views of the lake. From other public vantage points in the area, viewers have prolonged views of the lake, either due to slower speed limits on roadways or because the viewer is not traveling and has time to stop and look at the lake for an extended period of time.

### *Public Vantage Point 2: State Route 74/Ortega Highway*

From SR-74, also known as the Ortega Highway, there are several vantage points where sightseers and residents can stop and enjoy the view of Lake Elsinore. Ortega Highway traverses up and over the Santa Ana Mountains via switchback turns. From the highest viewpoint, the lake fills the view. As seen in **Figure 3.3-7**, the surrounding hills and distant mountains serve as a backdrop for displaying the lake.

Looking down from Ortega Highway, a development of newer homes with red roofs stands out on the southeastern side of the lake, creating a visual distraction. Toward the west, the topography gets steep very quickly. There are very few shrubs and trees on the hillside to obstruct views of the lake from the roadway. Rocky outcroppings at the vantage point provide additional visual interest.

This page intentionally left blank.



Vantage Point 1 - Northbound I-15



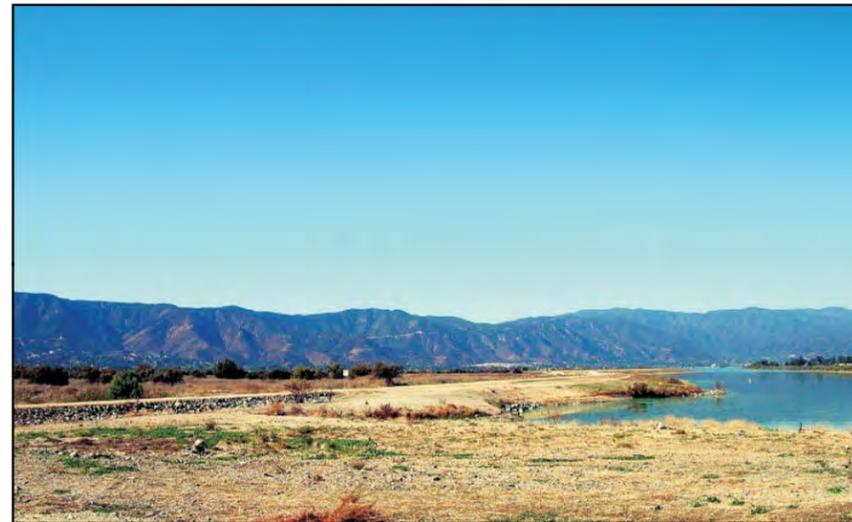
Vantage Point 3 - Campground



Vantage Point 5 - Beach



Vantage Point 2 - Lookout Roadhouse (day & night view)



Vantage Point 4 - Ballpark



Vantage Point 6 - Aloha Pier Look-out

This page intentionally left blank.

*Public Vantage Point 3: Lake Elsinore Recreation Area and Campground*

Another key public vantage point is from the Lake Elsinore Recreation Area, which includes a campground, boat launch, and swimming area. The vantage point originates adjacent to the water on the northwestern edge of the lake. The view of the lake fills the southern sightline of the viewer, as seen in **Figure 3.3-7**. In the summer of 2005, several dozen submerged palm trees were viewed from distances of 15 to 50 feet from the shore, an indicator of the high water level at that time.

Mountains to the west can be seen from the recreation area as well as new homes sited along the edge of the mountains. Development around the lake is nearly hidden from view by trees surrounding the water's edge. Trees also nearly hide the hills to the east, but houses on the tops of the hills are partially visible between the foliage. The aesthetic quality of the water in the lake is not inviting from close range due to floating vegetation that contributes to the water's murky appearance.

*Public Vantage Point 4: Baseball Stadium*

The baseball stadium is located close to the water in the southeastern part of the City. From this vantage point, an inlet of the lake created by a levee is visible. A distant view of the lake is available from just outside the stadium but does not dominate the landscape due to the distance from the lake. Most of the views across from the ballpark are of an area with dry, brown grasses and scattered trees, a portion of which has been set aside as a wildlife habitat area. From this vantage point, a newer housing development can be seen on the hills located to the west of the freeway. Older homes, small buildings, and a newer housing development can be seen immediately across the lake to the north. Trees and heavy vegetation make it difficult to see any development clearly. A wide dirt trail, which is available for pedestrians wanting to walk to the edge of the lake, is visible from the stadium.

*Public Vantage Point 5: Boat Launch/Recreation Area*

A second boat launch and day-use public recreation area is located on the eastern edge of Lake Elsinore. The lake can be seen from north to south, with the Santa Ana Mountains forming a backdrop at this vantage point. The lake fills a large portion of the viewpoint, making it the dominant feature. Residential developments can be seen west of the lake from the boat launch. Unobstructed views of the residential development on the north end of the lake are clearly visible from the boat launch. As of the summer of 2005, the visual character of land, which has been recently graded, contrasts with the forest green shrubs and trees surrounding the new project. Other development to the east of the boat launch is visible but partially obscured by trees.

The area immediately surrounding the boat launch is covered by dark sand, and a short distance to the north there is a small patch of grass and recreation-oriented facilities. Large shade trees on the grassy patch provide relief from the sun for visitors. The area is characterized by more recreational activities and facilities than other vantage points. The recreational activities include: a visitor parking lot, boat launch, established swimming area, and restrooms.

*Public Vantage Point 6: Aloha Pier Look-out*

From the Country Club Heights subdivision there's a view of Lake Elsinore where the Aloha Pier, Yacht Club and Pavilion once stood. The Aloha Pier was put up in 1926 and was meant as an amenity for the Country Club Heights subdivision but was also open to the public. In the late 1920's it was a gathering place along the shore, and orchestras played in the pavilion and dances were held on weekend nights. There were also boat races on the lake and swings and play equipment for children. The structures were demolished in 1950. A turnout from Lakeshore Drive remains at this location.

### **SCENIC HIGHWAYS**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) currently identifies both I-15 and SR-74 as eligible for listing as state scenic highways, but they are not officially designated as such.

### **SOURCES OF LIGHT AND GLARE**

In assessing current conditions, light and glare from existing development is minimal. While not substantial, light and glare during the day and night is created from various residential, commercial, and industrial uses throughout the City. Examples of these sources include night lighting, such as streetlamps, accent and security lighting on buildings, parking lot lighting, and vehicle headlights at night. Substantial sources of night lighting include the existing ballpark and public parks. Alliance Skate Park of Lake Elsinore, located in McVicker Park, is open until 9 p.m. most evenings, and other public parks with lighted facilities are open until 10 p.m. for recreational purposes. Sources of glare during the day result primarily from parked cars located in large parking lots and from sunlight reflected off of window glazing on buildings.

### **3.3.3 REGULATORY SETTING**

For the most part, aesthetic resources are regulated by local jurisdictions. However, one State regulatory program that could pertain to the planning area is the California Scenic Highway Program.

### **STATE**

#### **California Scenic Highway Program**

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the legislature in 1963 to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors. Sections 260 et seq. of the California Street and Highways Code govern the Scenic Highway Program. The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or are currently designated. These highways are identified in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code.

A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. Scenic corridors consist of land that is visible from the highway right of way and is comprised primarily of scenic and natural features.

As stated above, the California Scenic Highway Program identifies both I-15 and SR-74 as eligible for listing as state scenic highways, but they are not officially designated. The status of a state scenic highway changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a scenic highway. Benefits include creating a positive image for a community, preserving and protecting environmental assets, and encouraging tourism.

As an alternative to applying for state scenic highway designation, the City has the opportunity to petition Caltrans to take control of portions of the SR-74 corridor. This would give the City control over signage, landscaping, and traffic control. While the downside is that the City would be responsible for the maintenance cost of the highway, the benefits would be having control over beautification and other improvements for the corridor.

## LOCAL

### **City of Lake Elsinore General Plan**

The City will use the proposed project as a blueprint for the City's growth. The General Plan guides the pattern of development, including residential, commercial, and industrial uses. It plans for the growth of the City and is the mechanism by which the City's community character is preserved and enhanced. The current General Plan Land Use Plan characterizes the City by several Specific Plan areas, with industrial and institutional designations along I-15, and commercial development surrounding the lake to the northwest, northeast, and south. The existing General Plan has a very small amount of land designated as open space/recreation. There are patches of low- to medium-density residential designations throughout the City.

### **City of Lake Elsinore Specific Plans**

There are 15 approved specific plans in the City of Lake Elsinore. The purpose of the specific plans is to provide a more flexible and detailed regulatory procedure than comes from the City Zoning Code. The specific plans are intended to encourage a creative approach to the use of land by mixing certain land uses, activities, and dwelling types; they are intended to enhance the appearance and livability of the community and maximize choices of environments.

---

**City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code - Title 17 (Zoning Code)**

The City of Lake Elsinore’s Zoning Code (Title 17 of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code) regulates the character and use of property throughout the various zones in the City. In addition to the standards set forth for each district, the zoning code designates overlay zones for specific purposes. Overlay zones that affect aesthetic and visual qualities include the Scenic Overlay Zone (Chapter 17.16), Lakeshore Overlay Zone (Chapter 17.20), Hillside Planned Development Overlay (Chapter 17.36), and Historic Downtown Elsinore Overlay District (Chapter 17.40).

Section 17.112.040 of the City’s Zoning Code provides that within non-residential development “[a]ll outdoor lighting fixtures in excess of 60 watts shall be oriented and shielded to prevent direct illumination above the horizontal plane passing through the luminaire and prevent any glare or direct illumination on adjacent properties or streets. Due to the City’s proximity to the Mount Palomar Observatory, the use of low pressure sodium lighting shall be encouraged”.

Section 17.148.110 of the City’s Zoning Code addresses potential light and glare issues within the City by providing that “Lighting shall be located and designed so as to preclude the direct glare of light shining onto adjacent property, streets, or into the sky above a horizontal plane passing through the luminaire.”

**Southern California Edison Rule 20**

Southern California Edison’s Rule 20 (Replacement of Overhead with Underground Electric Facilities) provides that Southern California Edison (SCE) will under defined conditions, at its expense, replace its existing overhead electric facilities with underground electric facilities along public streets and roads, and on public lands and private property across which SCE has obtained rights-of-way. SCE requires that the governing body of the affected city or county consult with SCE, hold public hearings, and determine that such undergrounding is in the public interest for one or more of four identified reasons. One of these four reasons is that the “street or road or right-of-way adjoins or passes through a civic area or public recreation area or an area of unusual scenic interest to the general public.” The governing body is also required to adopt an ordinance creating an underground district in which all existing overhead communication and electric distribution facilities shall be removed and placed underground and requiring that all future facilities be placed underground. Rule 20 also establishes the basis for determining SCE’s total annual budget for undergrounding within any city or the unincorporated area of any county.

**3.3.4 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE GOALS AND POLICIES**

The City of Lake Elsinore General Plan Update addresses aesthetics and scenic resources in Chapter 4.0 (Resource Protection and Preservation, Section 4.7 - Aesthetics). The goals, policies and implementation programs listed in **Table 3.3-1, General Plan Aesthetics and Scenic Resources Goals, Policies and Implementation Programs**, apply to these resources. The intent of the GPU goals and policies pertaining to aesthetic and scenic resources is in part to ensure

that development in the City and SOI protect the citywide visual character from potentially significant impacts of buildout of the GPU.

**Table 3.3-1, General Plan Aesthetics and Scenic Resources Goals, Policies and Implementation Programs**

<b>GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>Chapter 4.0 - Resource Protection and Preservation (Section 4.3 - Open Space)</b>	
Goal 3 Provide an open space layout within the City that will enhance the recreational and visual experiences of all City residents and visitors.	
Policy 3.1	Maximize the MSHCP conservation areas and other open space that is available for public use.
Policy 3.2	The City shall ensure that passive and active open space uses are incorporated into development areas.
Policy 3.3	Development on steep slopes in public or private property shall require contour grading.
Policy 3.4	Preserve the City's visual character, in particular the surrounding hillsides, which topographically define the lake region.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	The City shall consider modifying the existing grading ordinance to include contour grading or other methods and concepts that protect and enhance steep slopes, including enforcement procedures and appropriate access.
<b>Chapter 4.0 - Resource Protection and Preservation (Section 4.7 - Aesthetics)</b>	
Goal 10 Provide and maintain a natural and built environment that is visually pleasing to City residents and visitors.	
Policy 10.1	For new developments and redevelopment, encourage the maintenance and incorporation of existing mature trees and other substantial vegetation on the site, whether naturally-occurring or planted, into the landscape design.
Policy 10.2	Maintain and improve the quality of existing landscaping in parkways, parks, civic facilities, rights-of-ways, and other public open areas.
Policy 10.3	Where appropriate, encourage new planting of native and/or non-invasive ornamental plants to enhance the scenic setting of public and private lands.
Policy 10.4	Incorporate the City's identification symbol into street signage, planters, benches, public buildings, City vehicles, streetscape furnishings, and other appropriate applications.
Policy 10.5	Support a high level of Code Enforcement to encourage neighborhood beautification and to maintain property values and quality of life.
Policy 10.6	Coordinate with agencies to screen, landscape and otherwise obscure or integrate public utility facilities, including electric power substations, domestic water and irrigation wells, switching and control facilities.
Policy 10.7	Promote and facilitate the placement of public art that creates a unique setting and



<b>GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS</b>	
	enhances a cultural and aesthetic character throughout the City.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	The City shall encourage open space buffers and other appropriate transitions between lower density, single family neighborhoods and higher density development, as well as community gathering spaces and pedestrian amenities within private development.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	The City shall work with the County of Riverside to protect surrounding hillside areas from inappropriate grading on the west and south edges of the City.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	The City shall prepare and adopt a Street Tree Master Plan that promotes distinct and identifiable street corridors which reflect cohesive design, functionality and safety.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	The City shall consider the preparation and adoption of a City-Wide Design Guideline for architecture and landscape design, appropriate themes and design features, signage, outdoor furniture, bus shelters, gateway enhancements, and other distinctive improvements.
Goal 11	Preserve valued public views throughout the City.
Policy 11.1	Encourage development designs and concepts that provide public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines through proper siting, building design, and landscape design.
Policy 11.2	Encourage the dedication of open space land in hillside development proposals to preserve and enhance view opportunities from transportation corridors and surrounding development.
Policy 11.3	Encourage new development and redevelopment to incorporate views of Lake Elsinore from roadways and other public spaces that provide residents and tourists with scenic vistas to the water, marinas, and lakeshore activities.
Policy 11.4	Establish a series of City and community gateways and entry statements to promote the visual character of the Districts.
Policy 11.5	Consider petitioning Caltrans to take control of portions of the SR-74 corridor, in order to promote signage and landscaping that enhance and preserve the corridor's aesthetic setting.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	Through the project review and CEQA processes the City shall preserve public views throughout the City using effective siting and design concepts and the establishment of City and District gateways.
Goal 12	Minimize activities, development, and landform modification that could distract viewers from the City's visual character.
Policy 12.1	Discourage extractive activity from being conducted in highly visible areas and require reclamation of these mining areas. If such uses must occur in visible areas, the City shall require extensive visual screening with landscaping and/or fencing.
Policy 12.2	Discourage extractive uses or development that entails excessive light and glare visible from private and public viewpoints.
Policy 12.3	Require grading plans for any hillside development to include specifications for revegetation and new planting to minimize hillside scarring.
<u>Implementation Program</u>	Through the CEQA process, the City shall minimize significant

<b>GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS</b>
---

landform alterations that could detract from the visual character of the City. Key areas of visual character include surrounding hillsides, lake views, and the Historic District.
--

### 3.3.5 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

The City of Lake Elsinore has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the State CEQA Guidelines. However, Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines indicates that impacts related to aesthetics may be considered potentially significant if the project would:

- have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

### 3.3.6 IMPACT ANALYSIS

**Threshold: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

*Analysis*

*Views of Lake Elsinore*

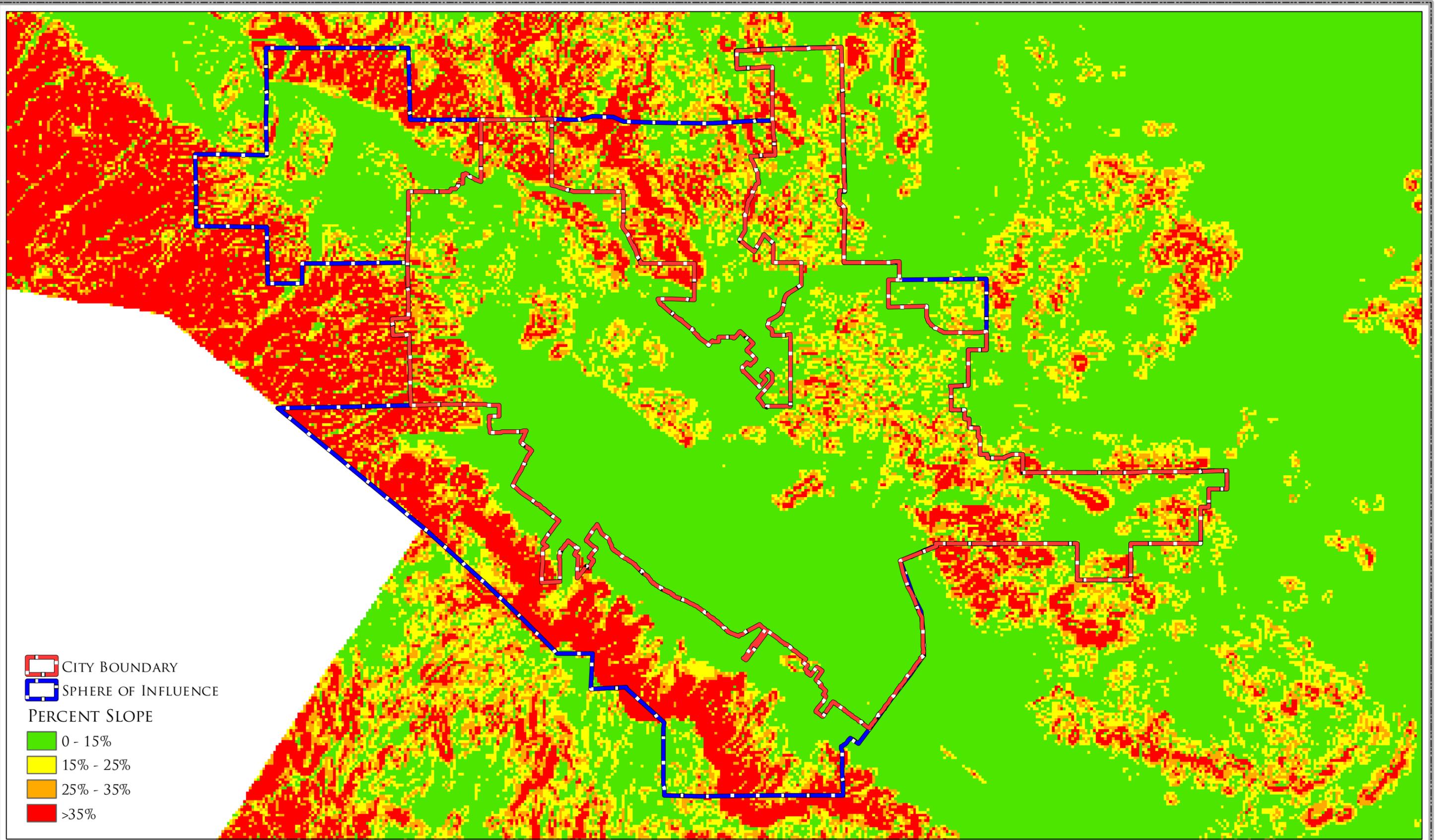
Because of the topography of the City, most views of the lake are from a high elevation and not easily obscured by development (see **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**). As illustrated in **Figure 3.3-9, Vacant Land Inventory (2005)**, there is undeveloped land adjacent to the lake to the east and south. **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, shows that the vacant land to the south is designated low- to medium-density residential and hillside residential. The vacant land to the east of the lake is planned for open space as well as low- to medium-density and medium-density residential. The addition of the residential development surrounding the lake would significantly alter visual character as the viewer looks toward the lake and sees residential development where undeveloped land once existed.

However, the character of the lake itself would be preserved through Goals 10 and 11 of the Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, which provide and maintain a natural and built environment that is visually pleasing to City residents and visitors. Policies 10.1-10.6 and 11.1-11.3 discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines, protect views of the lake, require new development and redevelopment to incorporate public views of Lake Elsinore, and require design guidelines and

landscaping. With implementation of these policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views of the area surrounding the lake will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

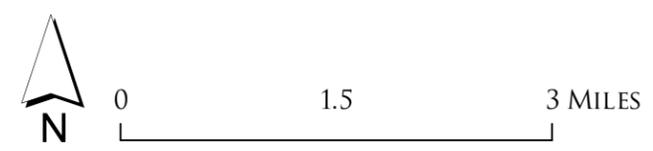
*Views of Hillsides and Mountains*

Buildout of the proposed project would have potentially significant adverse impacts on views of hillsides and mountains. As illustrated in **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, the City is surrounded by small hills as well as larger mountains to the south and west. The Santa Ana Mountains in the southwest are visible from much of the City and especially from the lake. The hillside associated with the Santa Ana Mountains is best viewed from the Lake View, Lake Edge, and Lakeland Village Districts. However the hillside can also be viewed from across the lake in the Historic and Country Club Heights Districts. **Figure 2-0-4, Land Use Plan**, illustrates where the important hillside areas are by designating these areas as hillside residential, a special designation for the purpose of effectively integrating residential development into sloped hillsides.



-  CITY BOUNDARY
-  SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- PERCENT SLOPE
-  0 - 15%
-  15% - 25%
-  25% - 35%
-  >35%

SOURCES: CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE  
 PERCENT SLOPE  
 FIGURE 3.3-8

This page intentionally left blank.



This page intentionally left blank.

Views of the larger Santa Ana Mountains in the distance would not be affected by the proposed project. However the hillsides to the south and west are planned for hillside residential uses and this development would result in a significant impact on views of hillsides. According to the GPU, the hillside designation is intended for low-density single-family residential development and minor agricultural uses in areas of steep slopes. Parcel sizes of 0.5, 1, 2, 4, or 20 (gross) acres are required, depending on the predominant slope and if the parcel has access to an adequate sewer or package treatment plant. Development is conditional based upon the ability of the soil to percolate and prohibited in areas with an average slope of 40 percent or greater. Clustering is permitted on areas of level topography to encourage preservation of steep slopes only if an adequate sewer is available; however, no parcel shall be less than 6,000 square feet and contain more than one dwelling unit, along with permitted accessory structures and uses. In both cluster and non-cluster projects, the actual parcel size may be increased and the number of dwelling units decreased for reasons of environmental protection or for neighborhood compatibility or for other reasons necessary to protect the public health, safety, or welfare. As seen by comparing **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, and **Figure 2-0-4, Land Use Plan**, the views of the hillsides would be altered from a natural hillside view to one with hillside residential, low- to medium-density residential, and low-density residential, resulting in a significant impact on the visual character of the City.

The following policies are included in the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, to protect and mitigate these impacts on the visual character of the mountains and hillsides. Policies 11.1, 11.2, 11.3 and 12.3 preserve the City's nonurban visual character, in particular the surrounding hillsides, which topographically define the lake region; discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines; and require hillside development to include private and public viewpoints. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Open Space Section, Policies 3.3 and 3.4 require contour grading on steep slopes and set forth the policy to preserve the City's visual character in the surrounding hillsides. With implementation of the goals, policies and implementation programs of the GPU, potentially significant impacts on the visual character of mountains and hillsides will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### *Public Vantage Points*

#### Public Vantage Point 1; I-15

The character of the I-15 corridor as it is developed with commercial and industrial uses would be protected through the designation of similar uses as an extension of the existing uses. Views from I-15 would potentially be affected by hillside residential development.

As shown in **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, the land uses planned along I-15 include commercial, residential, industrial, and open space. Views of the lake, when one is traveling north or south, would be altered because the currently vacant lots that can be seen from the highway would be developed with full buildout of the GPU. This development would include low-, medium-, and high-density residential uses and mixed-use, commercial, and industrial development. As illustrated by comparing **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, and **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, there

would also be views of hillside residential development on the southwest side of the lake and to the northwest from I-15.

The impacts on views from I-15 looking toward the lake and hillsides are potentially significant. CEQA requires that a project-level determination as to whether there are potential visual impacts be made. Such determination may require that a visual assessment be prepared for any future development along I-15. The visual assessment would address consistency of the project with the goals of the GPU and impacts of the development on aesthetics and views from public vantage points. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, Policies 10.1-10.6, 11.1-11.3, and 12.1-12.3 protect views and specify design requirements for new development to minimize visual impacts. Specifically, the policies require the creation of a program to identify specific visual resources and valued views within the City, discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines, encourage the dedication of open space in hillside development, encourage new development and redevelopment to incorporate views of Lake Elsinore, and encourage application to Caltrans for official designation of I-15 and SR-74 as state scenic highways. With implementation of the policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from I-15 will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

#### Public Vantage Point 2: SR-74/Ortega Highway

As shown in **Figure 3.3-7**, the views from Ortega Highway include the lake, mountains in the distance, depending where on the highway the viewer is, and development surrounding the north and west sides of the lake. Planned land use designations along Ortega Highway include residential, commercial, and industrial. Views of currently vacant land that would be developed with full buildout of the GPU would be altered. By comparing **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, and **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, it can be seen that hillside development in the Meadowbrook Sphere would affect views from SR-74 as well as hillside development in the North Central Sphere.

Views of the lake would not be obstructed but would include an increased amount of development surrounding the lake on all sides, including hillside development on the southwest side of the lake, which would result in an impact on views. Design standards within the GPU and the district plans avoid aesthetic impacts on residential development. Development of a business park in the Meadowbrook District would potentially obstruct views along Ortega Highway to the west and north. These impacts would be potentially significant. However, the goals and policies of the GPU protect aesthetic resources and mitigate impacts. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, Policies 9.1-9.6, 10.1-10.4, and 11.1-11.3 protect views and specify design requirements for new development to minimize visual impacts. These policies require a program to identify visual resources and valued views within the City, discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines, encourage the dedication of open space in hillside development, encourage new development and redevelopment to incorporate views of Lake Elsinore, and encourage application to Caltrans for official designation of I-15 and SR-74 as state

scenic highways. With implementation of the policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from SR-74 will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

#### Public Vantage Point 3: Lake Elsinore Recreation Area and Campground

As shown in **Figure 3.3-7**, the views from the Lake Elsinore Recreation Area and Campground are dominated by the lake. Views to the west are of mostly residential and commercial development. Development around the lake, however, is nearly hidden by trees. The land use plan designates additional residential, mixed-use, and commercial development.

**Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, and **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, illustrate that views to the south would be altered with additional hillside development. Vacant land around the west side of the lake and on the hillside to the south would be developed with full buildout of the GPU. The land to the west is obscured by trees, but views to the south of the hillsides can be seen. New development would potentially affect these views significantly. The following policies of the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, protect aesthetic resources and would mitigate any significant impacts: 10.1-10.6, 11.1-11.4, and 12.1-12.3. These policies require landscape design requirements for new developments and redevelopment, as well as guidelines for architectural, landscape, and streetscape design that preserve the City's nonurban, semi-rural character; incorporate views of Lake Elsinore into new developments and ridgelines; and identify the City's visual resources. They also discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Open Space Section, Policies 3.3 and 3.4 address development on steep slopes and contour grading in areas containing steep slopes. With implementation of the policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from the recreation area/campground will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

#### Public Vantage Point 4; Baseball Stadium

As shown in **Figure 2-0-4, Land Use Plan**, with the implementation of the GPU, views from the baseball stadium would include the lake, open space to the south, and development to the north, west, and south. Recreation is also planned for south of the stadium. Immediately surrounding the baseball stadium, commercial and residential mixed-use designations are planned.

Views of the lake may be obstructed by this adjacent development; however, because of its distance from the baseball stadium, views of the lake are not dominant. The goals and policies of the GPU are intended to preserve views of the lake and would mitigate these impacts. Any currently vacant land in the vicinity, if not designated open space, would be developed with buildout of the GPU, altering the view from that of undeveloped land to low- to medium-density and medium-density residences and commercial structures. The conversion of vacant land is considered a potentially significant impact and will be reduced to a less-than-significant level by goals and policies of the GPU.

Project-level determination of impacts upon scenic resources shall be prepared for any future development, as required by CEQA. Such determination may include a visual assessment which shall address consistency of the project with the goals of the GPU and impacts of the development on aesthetics and views from public vantage points. The following policies of the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, protect aesthetic resources and would mitigate any significant impacts on views from the baseball stadium: 10.1-10.6, 11.1-11.4, and 12.1-12.3. Specifically, the policies require new developments and redevelopment to incorporate specific architectural, landscape, and streetscape design to preserve the City's nonurban, semi-rural character and incorporate public views of Lake Elsinore; identify visual resources within the City; and discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines.

With implementation of these policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from the baseball stadium will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Public Vantage Point 5: Boat Launch/Recreation Area

The lake in the foreground looking south dominates the view from the boat launch and recreation area, as shown in **Figure 3.3-7**.

Views looking across the lake would be altered with buildout of hillside development on the south side of the lake. Additional development on the north end of the lake and to the east would be visible from the vantage point. However, this would be an extension of existing development in that area and would not be considered a significant impact on aesthetics. The following policies of the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, would protect views and aesthetic resources visible from the boat launch and recreation area: 10.1-10.6, 11.1-11.4, and 12.1-12.3. Specifically, the policies require new developments and redevelopment to incorporate specific architectural, landscape, and streetscape design to preserve the City's nonurban, semi-rural character and public views of Lake Elsinore; identify visual resources within the City; and discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Open Space Section, Policies 3.3 and 3.4 address development on steep slopes and contour grading in areas containing steep slopes. With implementation of these policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from the boat launch/recreation area will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Public Vantage Point 6: Aloha Pier Look-out

The lake in the foreground looking southwest dominates the view from the Aloha Pier Look-out, as shown in **Figure 3.3-7**. Ortega Highway is visible in the background. Planned land use designations along the south side of the lake and along Ortega Highway include additional residential, mixed-use, and commercial development.

Views looking across the lake would be altered with buildout of hillside development on the south side of the lake. However, this would be an extension of existing development in that

area and would not be considered a significant impact on aesthetics. The following policies of the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, would protect views and aesthetic resources visible from the Aloha Pier Look-out area: 10.1-10.6, 11.1-11.4, and 12.1-12.3. Specifically, the policies require new developments and redevelopment to incorporate specific architectural, landscape, and streetscape design to preserve the City's nonurban, semi-rural character and public views of Lake Elsinore; identify visual resources within the City; and discourage development that blocks or substantially alters public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Open Space Section, Policies 3.3 and 3.4 address development on steep slopes and contour grading in areas containing steep slopes. With implementation of these policies of the GPU, potential impacts on the visual quality of views from the Aloha Pier Look-out will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### *District Plans*

As shown in **Table 3.3-2, District Plan Impacts on Views from Public Vantage Points**, goals and policies have been incorporated into each of the General Plan's District Plans to minimize impacts on scenic vistas. Residential development in the East Lake District would affect views from I-15 and the ballpark vantage points. In the North Central Sphere District, hillside residential development would affect viewers from the open space lands looking west. In the Lake View Sphere District, views of the low-lying areas of the district would be altered with increased residential development, and views of hillsides would be affected with increased hillside residential development. In the Lakeland Village District, views of the hillsides from the lake edge would be affected by hillside development. From the Country Club Heights District, public views of hillsides would be affected by increased hillside development. In the Meadowbrook Sphere District, hillside development would alter views from lower elevations and from SR-74. With the implementation of the goals, policies and implementation programs of the proposed project, including the goals and policies of the individual district plans, impacts on views will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

**Table 3.3-2, District Plan Impacts on Views from Public Vantage Points**

DISTRICT PLANS	IMPACTS ON VIEWS FROM PUBLIC VANTAGE POINTS
East Lake	Views from I-15 and the ballpark looking south to the East Lake District would be affected by increased residential development. A goal is to protect 25% of the district as open space and use another 25% for recreation, preserving existing views of natural open space land. Development would be subject to design standards to avoid aesthetic impacts.
Historic	Views from the recreation area toward the Historic District would not be affected. Additional development would be an extension of existing development. Land use designations include an open space buffer along Temescal Wash. Views from downtown toward the lake and mountains would be preserved by view corridors required by the district plan where possible.



DISTRICT PLANS	IMPACTS ON VIEWS FROM PUBLIC VANTAGE POINTS
Riverview	Views along I-15 toward the lake would not be obstructed, only altered, by increased development. Significant visual impacts would be avoided because the district plan encourages the redevelopment and rehabilitation of aging structures and establishes policies that ensure compatibility between uses within the district. The policies require development to incorporate a pedestrian-oriented and waterfront-facing design that preserves public views of the lake and river within the district.
Ballpark	The district is transitioning from a primarily vacant area to a residential community as a result of the approval of several specific plans. Public views would be preserved by the development of guidelines that maintain and enhance public views of the lake and canyons and through design standards that maintain a high-quality design for new developments.
Lake Elsinore Hills	Public views in the district would be maintained through the development of guidelines, maximizing view corridors through site planning. Architectural guidelines would help maintain the visual character of each community.
North Peak	Public views in the North Peak District would be preserved, with the majority of land designated as open space or recreational. There would be limited hillside development, which the specific plan would ensure is harmonious with the surrounding environment through site characteristics, existing landforms, topography, and vegetation.
North Central Sphere	Much of this district is planned for open space. About 75% is planned for residential uses, 60% of which is hillside residential. This development would affect views from the open space lands looking west. The district plan encourages view corridors and the incorporation of views into development.
Alberhill	As shown in Figure 2.0-6, the district plan and specific plan proposes open space adjacent to I-15. These open space areas contain steep hillsides that extend from I-15 and would obscure views of a majority of the proposed development within the district for northbound and southbound travelers on I-15.
North West Sphere	District plan proposes open space north of I-15, which would protect northern views from I-15. However, hillside residential development is planned on slopes south of I-15. Additional residential development to the immediate south of I-15 would be subject to design guidelines so as not to affect views of northbound and southbound travelers on I-15.
Lake View	Views of Lake View District from I-15 and other vantage points at a higher elevation would alter with additional residential development planned in the western portion of the district. The district plan goal of strengthening and integrating existing and planned communities would help improve and maintain the visual quality of the district. Visual resources would not be significantly affected because future development would be an extension of existing development.

DISTRICT PLANS	IMPACTS ON VIEWS FROM PUBLIC VANTAGE POINTS
Lake View Sphere	Views from SR-74/Ortega Highway of the lake would be preserved. Views of low-lying areas of the district would be altered with increased residential development. Views of hillsides would be affected with increased hillside residential development. However, this development would be subject to design standards to preserve the visual quality of the district.
Lake Edge	Views from the campground of the lake would not be affected. Development on west side of district would be an extension of existing development and would have a rich design motif to enhance the visual quality.
Lakeland Village	Much of this district is situated on slopes where views of the lake would be unobstructed. Views of the lake from lower elevations would be protected by height limits on new construction, remodels, and additions. However, views of the hillsides from the lake edge would be affected by hillside development. Architectural design standards would reduce visual impacts of residential development.
Business	Views from I-15 through the Business District are mostly of industrial and commercial development and would be enhanced through implementation of the district plan.
Country Club Heights	Public views of the lake would be preserved by the district plan policies. Public views of hillsides would be affected by increased hillside development.
Meadowbrook	Hillside development would alter views from lower elevations and from SR-74. The district plan encourages the establishment of design guidelines for new development to preserve aesthetics and community character.

### ***3rd Street Annexation***

The hillsides in the southern portion of the 3rd Street Annexation area are part of a major ridgeline system that is highly visible from the I-15 corridor. **Figure 3.3-8, Percent Slope**, illustrates that the slopes within the 3rd Street Annexation area exceed an average slope of 25 percent and are part of an undeveloped ridgeline system that extends southerly along the east side of I-15. The Hillside Residential land use designation has been applied to the steep slopes to limit landform alteration to these highly visible hillsides.

The intent of the GPU's Hillside Residential land use designation is to minimize the alteration of steep hillsides resulting from residential development and preserve hillsides with an average slope exceeding 40 percent. Minimum parcel sizes for this land use designation are dependent on the predominant slope of the area. Densities for the Hillside Residential land use designation range from one dwelling unit per acre to one dwelling unit per 10 acres, depending on the average slope. With implementation of the requirements of the Hillside Residential land use designation as a part of future projects within the 3rd Street Annexation area, impacts on views from I-15 would be less than significant.

Views of hillsides from this parcel would be altered due to increased hillside development to the east, north, west, and south. Much of the land is vacant and is proposed for residential development. However, as discussed above, implementation of the measures and policies of the GPU will reduce these potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

**MM Aesthetics 1:** Future development projects will be required to prepare visual simulations demonstrating compliance with the applicable GPU goals and policies. Preparation of visual simulations demonstrating compliance with the GPU goals and policies would be required for future development projects located in scenic viewsheds along the I-15 corridor and other areas at the discretion of the Director of Community Development.

#### *Level of Significance*

Implementation of the proposed project, including the Land Use Plan, the District Plans and within the 3rd Street Annexation area, and mitigation measure MM Aesthetics 1 will reduce potential impacts to scenic vistas to a less-than-significant level.

**Threshold: Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.**

#### *Analysis*

With implementation of the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), valuable open space land that currently exists within the City and SOI has been set aside to be protected. Additional land is also set aside and designated as open space, which is consistent with the rural character of the City. As indicated in **Figure 2-0-4, Land Use Plan**, the northern and western portions of the Northwest Sphere District are designated as open space. In the North Central Sphere District, the western half of central portion of the district is designated as open space. The southern half and the eastern border of the North Peak District are designated as open space. In Lake Elsinore Hills, there are open space areas located in the eastern “panhandle” as well as dispersed throughout existing developments; a large tract of land in the northern section of the district is designated open space. In the Alberhill District, the northeastern side of the district is designated mostly open space. Lake View District’s portions of the northwestern area and the southwestern border are designated open space. In addition, the East Lake District has a large portion of the southwestern border designated as open space.

The following policies of the GPU Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, protect views of the City’s natural open space areas. Policies 11.2, 11.3, and 12.3 encourage the dedication of open space in hillside development to preserve view opportunities from transportation corridors and surrounding development as well as improve the quality of existing landscaping in parkways, parks, civic facilities, rights-of-ways, and other public open areas. There are goals and policies that specifically address open space within the City and also preserve the visual character of these areas. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Open Space Section, Policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 maximizes the City’s MSHCP conservation areas,

ensures that passive and active open space uses are incorporated into development areas and preserves the City's visual character in the surrounding hillsides. These policies ensure that the City will implement the MSCHP and preserve valuable open space, which thereby preserves the visual character of open space in the City.

No features of the proposed project would result in any adverse impacts on City landmarks. No landmarks are proposed for removal or modification in association with the proposed project. In addition, the goals, policies and implementation programs related to Goal 8 and Goal 9 of Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Historic Preservation (see Section 3.2 of this PEIR) states that the City shall encourage the preservation of identified historic landmarks and refurbishment of any dilapidated structures that would promote the City's visual character. These policies serve to protect any recognized landmark within the City.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

No mitigation measures are required.

#### *Level of Significance*

Implementation of the proposed project, including the Land Use Plan, the District Plans and within the 3rd Street Annexation area will result in less than significant impacts to scenic resources.

### **Threshold: Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

#### *Analysis*

The lake and its surrounding area make up the main part of the overall citywide visual character. The Historic District is also a central feature that has potential for high visual value with its historical character. The character of the I-15 corridor includes two aspects: the views from the highway of the lake and the commercial and industrial character. As illustrated in **Figures 2.0-4 through 2.0-21**, the major changes to citywide visual character involve districts such as Lake View, Lakeland Village, Meadowbrook Sphere, Northwest Sphere, and Lake Elsinore Hills, which are proposed to be developed with mainly low, low-medium, and hillside residential uses. North Central Sphere, East Lake, Northpeak, and Alberhill are planned to have a large amount of open space land. The Business District is proposed for commercial and industrial uses. Additional commercial and industrial development is planned along the I-15 and SR-74 corridors. Currently, there is vacant land on the outskirts of the City, away from the lake. This vacant land gives the City a nonurban character; however, much of the vacant land is planned for residential development, as seen by comparing **Figure 3.1-1, Existing Land Use** with **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**.

As shown in **Table 3.3-3**, goals and policies have been incorporated into each district plan to minimize impacts on the visual character of the City and its SOI. With the implementation of the goals, policies and implementing programs of the proposed project, including the goals and



policies of the individual district plans, impacts visual character will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

**Table 3.3-3, District Plan Goals and Policies that Address Visual Character**

DISTRICT PLANS	FEATURES OF GENERAL PLAN THAT WOULD IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN VISUAL CHARACTER
East Lake	Goal: To preserve the open space and recreational character of the area while developing the master-planned community character according to the goals and policies of the East Lake Specific Plan and this district plan. Approximately 50% of the district is planned for open space and recreation. District policies require development to create a comprehensive community image that is reflected in its land use, architectural, and landscape elements.
Historic	Goal: To enhance public views of the lake and Santa Ana Mountains by establishing view corridors with appropriate development standards and capture new public views where possible as lakefront sites are redeveloped. The district plan policy is for developments immediately adjacent to the Temescal Wash floodway, the future civic center, and recreational areas to create an integrated and memorable relationship among architecture, public space, and open space. Urban design guidelines emphasize that view corridors of the lake and Santa Ana Mountains should be incorporated and preserved where possible.
Riverview	Goal: To stimulate a mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of land uses that incorporates the area’s natural amenities and surrounding uses. Objective: To encourage rehabilitation, redevelopment, and new development to have an orientation toward Riverview’s community amenities and natural features. Policies: For urban design guidelines to be established to support a rich and diverse mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of commercial activities that incorporate the area’s amenities, community facilities, and topography; create a safe and attractive pedestrian connecting route along Lakeshore Drive; and establish additional pedestrian routes with views of the river in a north-south direction to build a strong connection between uses north and south of Lakeshore Drive.
Ballpark	Goal: To create a cohesive theme, incorporating the historic Lake Elsinore design elements as a means to remember and re-create aspects of the City’s historic past and tie the activity centers of the City together. Objectives: To establish design guidelines for the district that encourage pedestrian-oriented development. Policy: For the City to require open space to be integrated as part of all residential and commercial development.
Lake Elsinore Hills	Goal: To support and maintain a network of connected and distinguishable neighborhoods that incorporate consistent and high-quality design standards and a balance with the natural environment. Objective: To maximize and maintain view corridors through site planning that is adaptive to topographic conditions, as exemplified in the district’s City-approved specific plans. Policy: That development guidelines to maintain and enhance public views, particularly of the City’s lake and canyons, shall be established.

DISTRICT PLANS	FEATURES OF GENERAL PLAN THAT WOULD IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN VISUAL CHARACTER
North Peak	Goal: To support the amended specific plan and ensure that it is harmonious with the surrounding environment through sensitivity to site characteristics, existing landforms, topography, and vegetation and provide a strong visual and recreational element with the amended specific plan. Policy: That the natural topography shall be integrated into development pursuant to the amended specific plan in order to take advantage of the district's rich and varied terrain.
North Central Sphere	Goal: To support development within the district that incorporates the district's topography and views. Objective: To enhance visual linkages of the City environs, the lake, and surrounding landscape by protecting and establishing view corridors. Policy: The City shall encourage view corridors of the City environs, including the lake and canyons, and incorporate visual resources into a set of design standards for new construction.
Alberhill	Goal: To transition from extractive uses to a mixed-use development. Objectives: Preservation of a healthy amount of vacant land in order to help provide an adequate amount of conserved lands and open space. Policies: 1) require that design standards be established for all planned development and 2) require that trees along Lake Street be preserved.
North West Sphere	Goal: To support development within the district that includes identifiable neighborhoods that incorporate the district's topography and views. Objective: To enhance visual linkages of surrounding landscape by protecting and establishing view corridors in hillside development. Policies: To encourage view corridors of the surrounding landscape and incorporate visual resources and appropriate topographical considerations into a set of design standards for new residential construction.
Lake View	Objectives: Encourage public facilities and spaces in locations that do not contain steep slopes but do contain views of the lake and surrounding mountains. Policies: View corridors of the lake and neighboring mountains from the higher elevations as well as from low-lying elevations elsewhere in the district shall be protected and enhanced.
Lake View Sphere	Goal: To support a residential district that includes a variety of identifiable neighborhoods that incorporate the district's topography and views and provides linkages to neighboring communities. Objective: To enhance visual linkages of the lake and surrounding landscape by protecting and establishing view corridors. Policy: View corridors of the surrounding topography, including the lake and canyons, shall be protected and incorporated into an established set of design standards for new residential construction.
Lake Edge	Goal: To support a destination that provides a consistent and rich design motif. Objective: To establish a consistent design motif for recreational, residential, residential mixed use, and commercial uses along or close to Lake Edge's shorelines.



DISTRICT PLANS	FEATURES OF GENERAL PLAN THAT WOULD IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN VISUAL CHARACTER
Lakeland Village	Goal: To promote the revitalization of the district with a stronger orientation toward the lake and Grand Avenue while incorporating the area’s beautiful topography. Policy: Structures within the medium-density and residential mixed-use zones along Grand Avenue shall not exceed three stories. Policy: Grand Avenue shall be designated as a scenic roadway.
Business	Goal: To support a vibrant commercial and industrial hub with high-quality developments that have a strong orientation toward major corridors. Objective: To enhance the visual quality of new development and major transportation corridors. Policies: The City shall require superior architectural and functional site design features for new development along major transportation corridors, and attractive signage, streetscape, and parking improvements shall be required as new development occurs.
Country Club Heights	Goal: To develop as an estate-style residential neighborhood, maximizing the lake views and historical character of the area while preserving the integrity of the natural features. Policy: The City shall develop a minimum of one park at a key scenic viewshed site to provide an opportunity to feature the views of the lake.
Meadowbrook	Goal: To promote a village-like residential district with a strong orientation toward a mixed-use corridor. Objective: To create strong and attractive linkages between the mixed-use corridor and surrounding housing, recreational uses, open space uses, and conserved lands. Policy: Design standards and motifs shall be established to provide a consistent and village-like character along the mixed-use corridor that is compatible with neighboring uses.

The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, Goals 10, 11, and 12 of the GPU protects visual character by minimizing activities, development, and landform modification that could distract viewers from the City’s visual character. In addition, Policy 11.4 states that the City shall establish a series of community gateways for individual communities to promote the visual character of the area. These goals and policies of the GPU protect the citywide visual character from potentially significant impacts of buildout of the GPU.

The character of the Historic District will be protected through the Historic District Plan and the other district plans, and the Downtown Master Plan. In addition, the goals, policies and implementation programs related to Goal 8 and Goal 9 of Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Historic Preservation (see Section 3.2 of this PEIR) address historic landmarks and encourages their preservation.

**Figure 3.3-9, Vacant Land Inventory (2005)**, shows the large amount of vacant land in the City and SOI. **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, shows which vacant land is designated for development. The increased development on currently vacant lands within the City is a potentially significant

impact. However, Policies 11.2 and 11.3 of the Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, preserves the City's visual character, in particular the surrounding hillsides, which topographically define the lake region. In addition, the following policies regarding design requirements ensure maintenance of the visual quality of planned development: Policies 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 11.1 and 12.3 require design and landscaping for new development and redevelopment, including architectural and streetscape, in order to preserve the City's visual character. In addition, by comparing **Figure 3.3-9, Vacant Land Inventory (2005)** with **Figure 2.0-4, Land Use Plan**, much of the vacant lands in the Northwest Sphere, Alberhill District, North Central Sphere, Lake Elsinore Hills, Country Club Heights, and Lakeland Village that are designated for residential uses would be developed as an extension of existing residential development. With implementation of the measures and policies of the GPU, potentially significant impacts on visual character through converting vacant land to developed land will be reduced to a less than significant level.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

No mitigation measures are required.

#### *Level of Significance*

Implementation of the proposed project, including the Land Use Plan, the District Plans and within the 3rd Street Annexation area will result in less than significant impacts to the existing visual character of the City ~~at~~and its SOI.

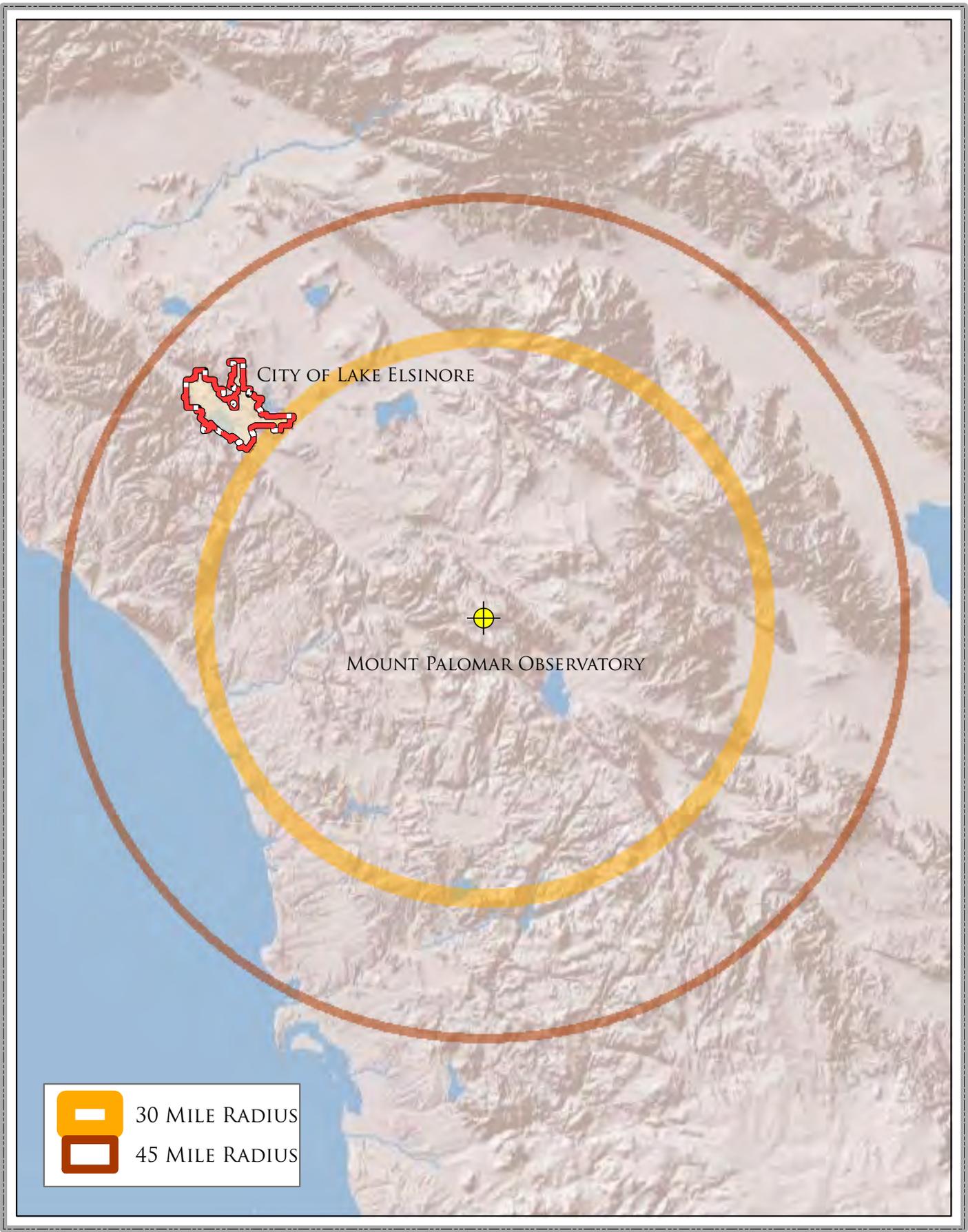
#### **Threshold: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

#### *Analysis*

By introducing new industrial, commercial, and residential structures, as well as automobiles, to Lake Elsinore, implementation of the proposed project would create new sources of light and glare. Some vacant lands that are currently unlit at night are slated for development, which will create additional night lighting. Commercial, residential, and multifamily structures are often lit, or partially lit, at night, and industrial sites and parking lots often maintain all-night security lighting. Because the development of new structures in Lake Elsinore could result in increased use of some locations, the potential increase in night lighting could be noticeable from surrounding elevated viewpoints. Where commercial or industrial uses would be adjacent to or mixed with residential uses, night lighting from new uses or buildings could create some lighting disturbances for nearby residences.

There is also a potential impact on the Palomar Observatory and its ability to conduct astronomy studies in dark skies. Based on data provided by Palomar Observatory, areas of light pollution impacts have been identified based upon distance from the observatory as seen in **Figure 3.3-10, Palomar Lighting Impact Analysis Areas**. Primary impacts to the observatory's ability to study in dark sky's fall within a 30-mile radius, while secondary impacts are up to 45 miles. The majority of the city lies within the radius of secondary impacts on the observatory.

This page intentionally left blank.



SOURCES: CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, ESRI



CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE  
PALOMAR LIGHTING IMPACT ANALYSIS AREAS  
FIGURE 3.3-10

This page intentionally left blank.

Daytime glare would also increase above existing levels by the introduction of new buildings, automobiles, and other vehicles. The increase in glare from reflective automobile surfaces could be noticeably higher than existing levels. Commercial buildings with reflective windows, glass fountains, or reflective signage could create glare from vantage points in various parts of the City. The Resource Protection and Preservation Chapter, Aesthetics Section, Policy 12.2 states that the City shall discourage uses or development that entails excessive light and glare visible from private and public viewpoints. Additionally, compliance with Section 17.112.040 and Section 17.148.110 of the City's Zoning Code require that lighting shall be designed to preclude light shining into the sky above a horizontal plane passing through the luminaire and encourage the use of low pressure sodium lighting in non-residential development. Thus compliance with Policy 12.2 and the zoning code will reduce any potential impacts from light and glare to a less-than-significant level.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

No mitigation measures are required.

#### *Level of Significance*

Implementation of the proposed project, including the Land Use Plan, the District Plans and within the 3rd Street Annexation area and compliance with the regulatory requirements of the City's Zoning Code will result in less than significant impacts from light and glare.

### **3.3.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

With implementation of the goals, policies and implementation programs of the GPU, compliance with regulatory requirements and implementation of mitigation measure MM Aesthetics 1, potential impacts on aesthetic resources within the City and SOI will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### **3.3.8 REFERENCES**

In addition to other reference documents, the following references were used in the preparation of this section of the EIR:

Ammenheuser, Maura, "A Look Back: Aloha pier", The Press-Enterprise, May 28, 2011. (Available at [www.pe.com/localnews/lakeelsinore/stories/PE\\_News\\_Local\\_S\\_history29.3ee48cc.html](http://www.pe.com/localnews/lakeelsinore/stories/PE_News_Local_S_history29.3ee48cc.html); accessed on August 12, 2011.)

City of Lake Elsinore, *General Plan Background Reports*, prepared by Mooney Jones & Stokes, January 2006. (Appendix B)

City of Lake Elsinore, *Municipal Code* (Available at [www.lake-elsinore.org/index.aspx?page=346](http://www.lake-elsinore.org/index.aspx?page=346); accessed June 20, 2011.)

### Section 3.3 - Aesthetics



---

County of Riverside, *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan*, Adopted June 17, 2003. (Available at the County of Riverside Planning Department or at <http://www.rctlma.org/mshcp/index.html>, accessed on June 21, 2011.)

State of California, Department of Transportation, *California Scenic Highway Program web site*. (Available at [www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic\\_highways/scenic\\_hwy.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm); accessed on June 20, 2011.)

State of California, *Street and Highways Code, Sections 260 et seq.* (Available at [www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html); accessed June 20, 2011.)