

FINAL INITIAL STUDY/
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

WESTFIELD NORTH COUNTY
LED FREEWAY-ORIENTED SIGN PROJECT

CITY OF ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA

CITY FILE No. PHG 13-0023



JANUARY 2014

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Prepared for:

**City of Escondido
Community Development Department
Planning Division
201 N. Broadway, First Floor
Escondido, California 92025**

Prepared by:

**PCR Services Corporation
201 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 500
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JANUARY 2014

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

1. Project Title: Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
City File No. PHG 13-0023
2. Lead agency name and address: City of Escondido
Community Development Department
Planning Division
201 N. Broadway, First Floor
Escondido, CA 92025
3. Contact person and phone number: Jay Paul, Planner
(760) 839-4537
4. Project location: Westfield North County
272 East Via Rancho Parkway
Escondido, CA 92025
APN 2710302000
5. Project applicant's name and address: EWH Escondido Associates L.P., a Delaware Limited
Partnership, and
North County Fair L.P., a Delaware Limited Partnership
255 Broadway, Suite 1700
San Diego, CA 92101
6. General plan designation: Planned Commercial
7. Zoning: PD-C (Planned Development - Commercial)

8. Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

The project applicant, EWH Escondido Associates L.P. and North County Fair L.P., proposes to install the Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project (the "proposed project"), a freeway-oriented sign within an embankment between the southwestern edge of the surface parking lot between Westfield North County shopping center and the northbound I-15 Freeway, in the City of Escondido (the "City"), California. Westfield proposes an 87.5-foot tall freeway-oriented sign, which would consist of a pole mounted tenant sign cabinet advertising the shopping center's anchor tenants topped by a 14-foot tall by 48-foot wide light emitting diode (LED) reader board on both sides of a supporting frame, with one facing north and one facing south. The proposed project includes a modification to the Master and Precise Development Plan for the project. (City File No. PHG 13-0023)

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:

The proposed project's installation site is an embankment between the I-15 Freeway and the surface parking lot serving Westfield North County, located at 272 East Via Rancho Parkway, in Escondido. The proposed project site is adjacent to the northbound lanes of the I-15 Freeway, at its intersection with East

Via Rancho Parkway. Westfield North County and the proposed project site are located approximately 3.5 miles south of downtown Escondido, along the southern border of the City, and approximately 13 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Regional access to the site is provided by the I-15 Freeway, which has five lanes of traffic in each direction at this location, as well as overhead ramps and bridges which provide access and exits. Local access is provided by East Via Rancho Parkway, a prime arterial, along the southern side of the property. The main access road to Westfield North County is from Westfield Way, off of East Via Rancho Parkway.

The proposed project site is located within a suburban, commercial area in Escondido. To the north of the proposed project site is the Westfield North County surface parking lot and the shopping center itself. Further north is a single-family residential area, and the northern portions of Kit Carson Park. To the east is a North County Transit District Rapid Bus Transit station, Kit Carson Park, and the Vineyard at Escondido golf course. To the south is the Hodges Golf Improvement Center (a golf driving range), a self-storage facility and San Dieguito River Park. Farther to the southeast are single-family residential areas. To the west, and running parallel to the surface parking lot, is the I-15 Freeway, a commercial/retail strip-mall, gas station, and the Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit station for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System and the North County Transit District, including a supporting park and ride lot. The areas further west are single family residential communities.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):

City of Escondido (Modification of the Master Signage Program and Master Development Plan)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- Aesthetics
- Biological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use/Planning
- Population/Housing
- Transportation/Traffic
- Agriculture Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Mineral Resources
- Public Services
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Air Quality
- Geology/Soils
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

I find that proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



 Signature

 JAY PAUL

 Printed Name

 10-22-13

 Date

 PHG 13-0023

 For

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

- b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue identify:
- a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<u>I. AESTHETICS</u> – Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES – In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</p>				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>III. AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</p>				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<u>VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS --</u>				
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -</u>				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<u>IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</u> –				
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>X. LAND USE AND PLANNING</u> – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XII. NOISE – Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise level in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XV. RECREATION

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC – Would the project:

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Issues:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<u>XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ATTACHMENT A - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT LOCATION

The project applicants, EWH Escondido Associates L.P. and North County Fair L.P., propose to install an approximately 87.5-foot tall light emitting diode (LED) freeway-oriented sign (the “proposed project” or “freeway-oriented sign”) at Westfield North County shopping center (formerly North County Fair), towards the southwestern corner of the property adjacent to the northbound Interstate 15 Freeway, north of the Via Rancho Parkway overpass, in the City of Escondido (the “City”). The proposed sign would be installed within a landscaped embankment area between the edge of the Westfield North County parking lot and the Interstate 15 Freeway. The proposed sign would consist of a pole mounted, two-sided tenant sign cabinet that would be topped by two 14-foot-tall by 48-foot-wide LED reader boards affixed to a supporting frame, with one facing north and one facing south. **Figure A-1, Regional and Local Vicinity Map**, shows the regional and site location. **Figure A-2, Aerial Photograph**, provides an aerial photograph of the site and surrounding land uses.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDING USES

The approximately 83-acre Westfield North County regional shopping center began operation in 1986, and includes an approximately 1.2 million-square foot enclosed multi-level shopping mall (up to 70 feet in height) with Sears, JCPenney, Macy’s, Nordstrom and Target as major anchors. The shopping mall is surrounded by various surface parking lots and three free-standing restaurants, with an approved pad for a fourth. The shopping center contains a variety of security and site lighting, including parking lot and project entry lighting on poles of varying height, primary shopping center lighting, tenant signs and perimeter street lighting. The edge of the property that borders Interstate 15 and Via Rancho Parkway is lined with non-native vegetation, which includes mature trees, shrubs and ground cover. There are additional landscape planter areas located throughout the parking lot areas, as well as landscaping along the perimeter of the shopping center. There is an existing 50-foot-tall freeway-oriented pylon sign located along the western boundary of the shopping center, adjacent to northbound lanes of Interstate 15, which is proposed to be removed. The existing pylon sign is located approximately 680 feet north of the proposed new freeway-oriented LED sign. The mall is bordered by Interstate 15 on the west, Via Rancho Parkway on the east which transitions to Bear Valley Parkway along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site, and Beethoven Drive along the northern boundary. Access to the commercial center is provided from a number of driveways along Via Rancho Parkway, Bear Valley Parkway and Beethoven Drive. The main access driveway (Westfield Way) is located directly opposite the Interstate 15/Via Rancho Parkway northbound off-ramp.

Uses surrounding Westfield North County shopping center include the following:

North: OS-P (Open Space - Park) / City of Escondido Kit Carson Park is located north of the Westfield mall complex, north of Beethoven Drive. Single-family residences are located further north of the park. Beethoven Drive and the Interstate 15 northbound HOV on- and off-ramps at Beethoven Drive are located at a higher elevation than the western portion of the mall and generally obscure views of the mall from the residents to the north. Land uses immediately north of the proposed sign include open parking spaces, perimeter ornamental landscaping associated with the shopping center and a landscaped slope adjacent to Beethoven Drive.

South: PD-C, SP and City of San Diego zoning (Planned Development Commercial and Specific Plan) / A variety of commercial uses and open space areas are located south of the shopping center and the proposed project areas south of Via Rancho Parkway. Two gas stations, northbound on- and off-ramps for Interstate 15, and a mini-warehouse/self-storage facility are located directly south Via Rancho Parkway. The Hodges Golf Center (driving range) is located southeast of the proposed project area, south of Via Rancho Parkway. The driving range contains stadium type outdoor lighting to allow nighttime activities. The lighting is directed towards the south. Open space areas are located further south of the commercial activities within the San Pasqual Valley/San Dieguito River Park. Single-family residential homes are located 1,000+ feet further southwest of the shopping center west of Interstate 15.

East: PD-R, SP and OS-P zoning (Planned Development Residential, Specific Plan and Open Space-Park) / The Vineyard municipal 18-hole golf course and open space area within the City of San Diego are located east of the shopping center east of Via Rancho Parkway/Bear Valley Parkway. The softball fields with tall stadium type lighting are located northeast of the shopping center across Beethoven Drive. A single-family residential planned development is located approximately 1,300 feet to the east of the shopping center, east of the golf course. Immediately east of the proposed sign is paved parking associated with the shopping center and two free-standing restaurants. The main mall building is located further to the east.

West: SP and Interstate 15 (Specific Plan) / Interstate 15 is located immediately west of the Westfield North County shopping center and runs parallel to the malls western perimeter. The freeway generally is located at a similar or slightly lower elevation than the adjacent mall parking lot toward the southern area of the property, and at a higher elevation towards the northern area of the property. A smaller commercial center, gasoline station and park-and-ride facility are located along the western side of Interstate 15, at a higher elevation than the freeway and the Westfield shopping center. A single-family residential development is located further to the west, approximately 700 feet west of the mall.

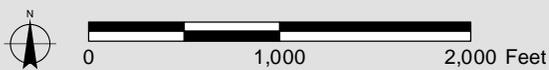
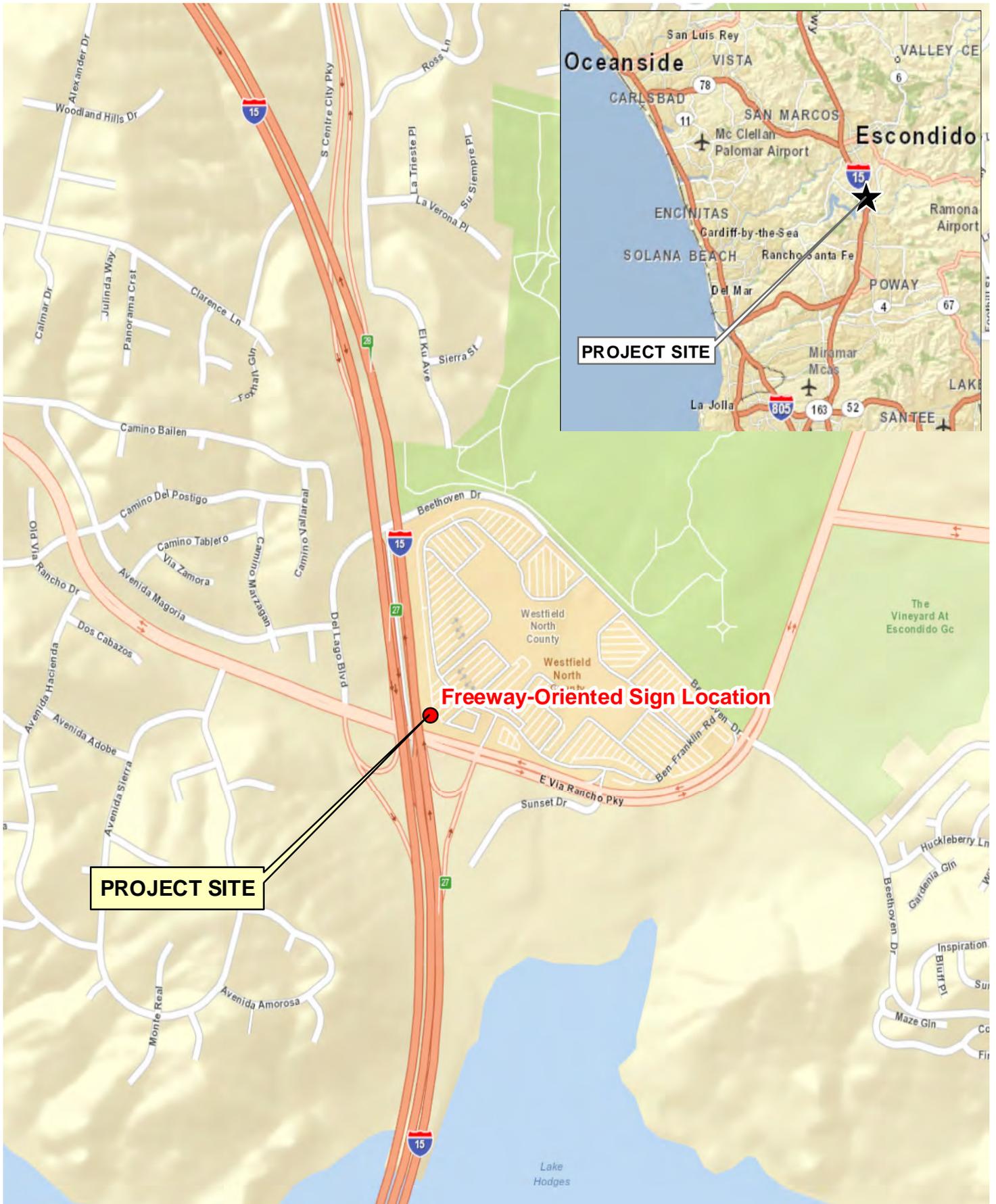
C. LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The project site is zoned Planned Development – Commercial (PD-C)¹ with a General Plan land use designation of Planned Commercial.² The General Plan describes Westfield North County Regional Shopping Center as a planned commercial multi-story regional shopping center with several anchor tenants, smaller in-line shops and free-standing up-scale dining establishments. The project site is owned by the City of Escondido under a long-term lease to Westfield. In Planned Development zones, permitted uses are identified in each planned development master plan approval.³ The shopping center also is located within the Kit Carson Park Overlay, which contains guidelines for the architectural design of buildings/structures surrounding Kit Carson Park.

¹ Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 33, Article 16, Section 33-331.

² City of Escondido General Plan, Chapter II, Land Use and Community Form, Figure II-1 "Land Uses", May 2012; <http://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/PDFs/Planning/GPUupdate/GeneralPlanChapterII.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

³ Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 33, Article 16, Section 33-332.

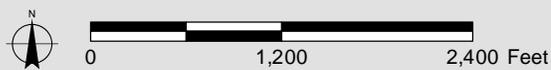


Regional and Local Vicinity Map

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: ESRI Street Map, 2009; PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

FIGURE

A-1



Aerial Photograph

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Microsoft, 2010 (Aerial); PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

FIGURE
A-2

D. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project involves the installation of a freeway-oriented sign with a combined height of 87.5 feet, topped by a 14-foot tall by 48-foot wide LED reader board on both sides of a supporting frame, with one facing north and the other facing south. The freeway-oriented sign will be mounted upon a structural steel support pipe which will also support the internally illuminated cabinet signs for the shopping center's anchor tenants. Components of the proposed project will be fabricated off-site and delivered to the site for installation.

The proposed project will be located within an embankment between Westfield North County's southern parking lot and the I-15 Freeway, as shown in **Figure A-3, Project Site Plan**. **Figure A-4, Project Site Plan – Detail**, shows that the proposed project will be placed approximately 13 feet from the western edge of the property line along the northbound lanes of the I-15 Freeway and 20 feet from the southern edge of the property line along Via Rancho Parkway, all within Westfield's private lease-hold adjacent to Caltrans' public right-of-way. As shown in Figure A-4, the base of the sign will measure approximately 13.5 feet by 24 feet, for a total of 324 square feet, consisting of poured concrete approximately four feet above grade.

Figure A-5, Site Sections – Existing Landscaping, depicts how the proposed freeway-oriented sign would look like in the context of the existing landscaping in the surrounding area. **Figure A-6, Site Sections – Proposed Landscaping**, depicts how the proposed project will look after alterations to site landscaping are completed. As shown in Figure A-3, in order to accommodate the base of the proposed project, five ornamental trees will be removed from the construction site and bushes on the property will be trimmed. Four trees along the western edge of Westfield property, adjacent to the northbound lanes of the I-15 Freeway, will also be removed. After construction of the proposed project is completed, 13 new bushes will be planted in the area around the base of the freeway-oriented sign and six new bushes will be planted along the western edge of the property. In addition, nine new specimen-sized trees will be planted in and around the area where the existing 50-foot monument sign (that will be demolished) is located.

As part of the currently ongoing renovation of Westfield North County, a Master Signage Program previously was approved by the Escondido City Council, in May 2012. The approved Master Signage Program includes a 93-foot tall sign at the location of the existing 50-foot tall sign, also adjoining the shopping center's surface parking lot and I-15 Freeway, but further to the north of the proposed project site. This existing sign would be demolished, as provided in the approved Master Signage Program. An amendment to the approved Master Signage Program will be required, which would request approval for a shorter sign (87.5 feet instead of 93 feet) located further south along the parking lot than originally planned, with the addition of the LED reader boards, as depicted in **Figure A-7, Proposed LED Freeway-Oriented Sign**.

1. LED Reader Board Design and Project Features

The proposed hours of operation for the new LED reader board sign are from 5:00 A.M. to midnight. Both 14-foot tall by 48-foot wide LED reader boards will be equipped with multi-direction light sensing equipment which will adjust the brightness of the proposed LED reader boards according to current lighting and weather conditions. As such, in order to insure visibility during the day-time, the proposed LED reader boards will have more lighting intensity. It would have reduced lighting intensity during night-time, when much less illumination is required for it to be visible. An adjustable 12-foot long metal arm supporting a

camera monitoring system will also be installed facing each LED reader board, in order to provide additional monitoring of the surrounding conditions and images projected. The light control standards comply with local, federal and industry light output standards. The maximum brightness output of the LED reader board would be 8,500 nits (or approximately 790 foot candles (or lumens) per square foot), and such illumination would only be employed during daylight conditions, while as little as three percent of this lighting intensity would be employed after dark.⁴

The message content on the proposed LED reader boards would advertise establishments, businesses or services located on, or offered from, Westfield North County, and products or any goods displayed, produced or available for purchase at the shopping center, or any events that will occur at the shopping center, in accordance with the 2013 Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations. The messages will remain on the screen for a minimum of eight seconds before switching to another static screen image. There will be no moving or flashing images; the image will simply change every eight seconds without fading or changing effects on the screen.

The LED reader boards are fully-sealed modules with enclosed power supplies. The proposed project will have an average annual electrical consumption of approximately 30,000 kilowatt hours, which is approximately 0.7 percent of the Westfield North County's current and anticipated annual electrical consumption.⁵

2. Installation

Some minor site clearing would be required to prepare the proposed project site for its base foundation. A structural support column would then be anchor-bolted to the top of this concrete base foundation. A painted steel rectangular tube tower will be attached to the structural support column, upon which the anchor tenant signage cabinet will be attached. The proposed LED reader boards will be mounted atop the sign by a crane and will be held in place by the main structural support column. In order to supply electricity to the proposed project, minor trenching across the adjoining Westfield North County parking lot to access a power supply within the main shopping center will be required. The proposed project will comply with applicable building standards.

3. Schedule

It is anticipated that installation of the proposed project would commence in the fourth quarter of 2013, and the total elapsed time for these activities would not exceed two months, during which activity would be intermittent as phases are staged, equipment scheduled, and concrete cures, etc.

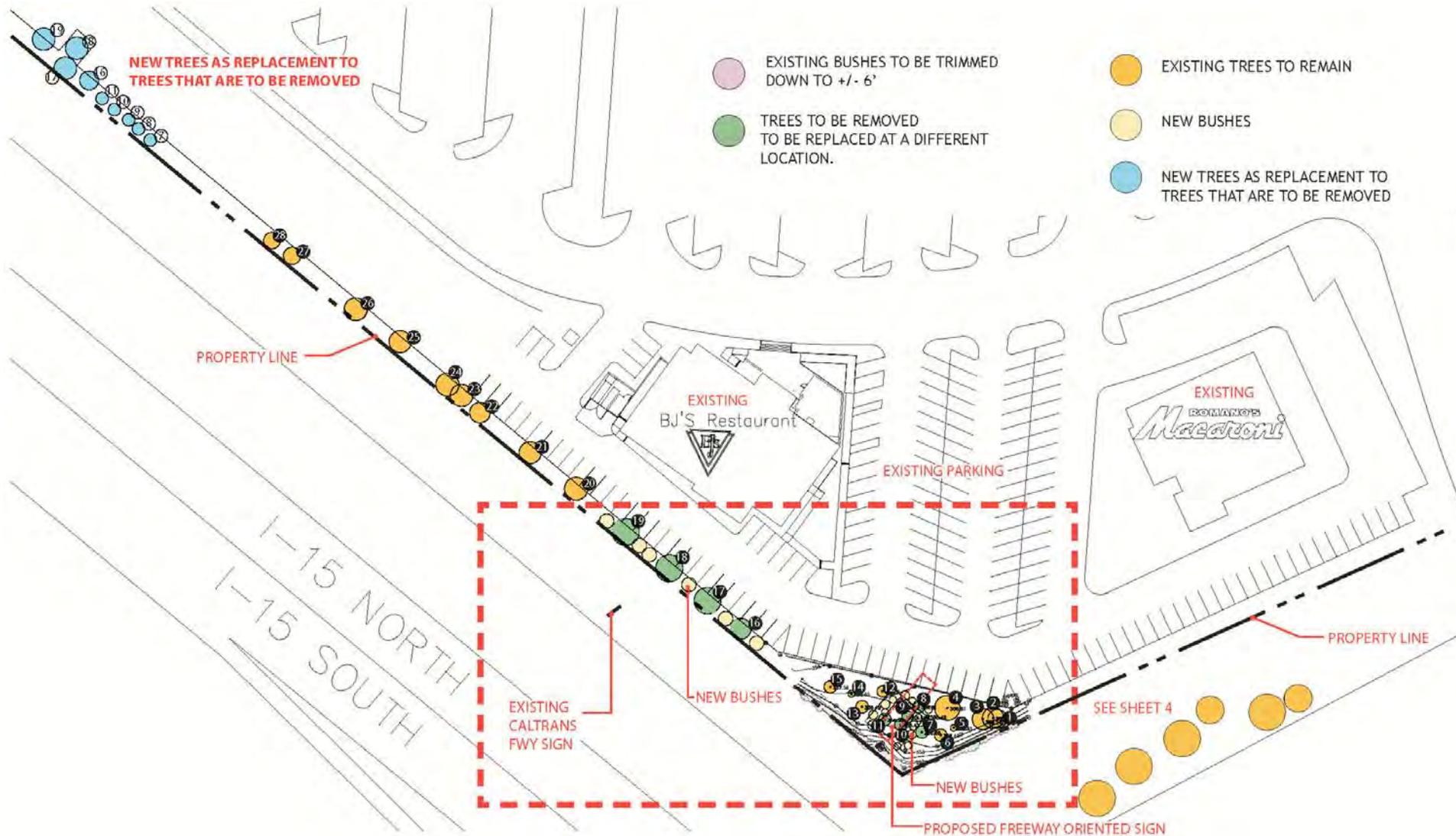
E. NECESSARY APPROVALS

Approvals required for development of the project include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- City of Escondido (Amendment required for both the Master Signage Program and the Master Development Plan)

⁴ DB-4200 Digital Billboard Illumination Study, March 7, 2013, prepared by Daktronics.

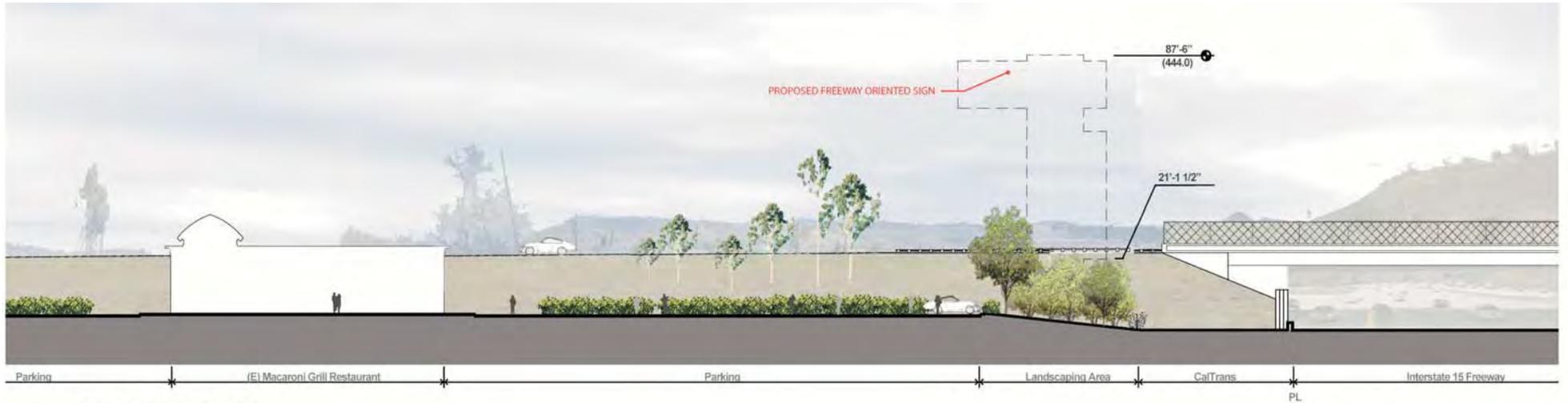
⁵ Based on communication from Westfield North County, the average annual electrical consumption for the entire shopping center is 4,300,000 kilowatt hours. The LED pylon sign will have an average annual electrical consumption of 30,000 kilowatt hours. $30,000$ kilowatt hours divided by $4,300,000$ kilowatt hours = 0.0069 , or about 0.7 percent.



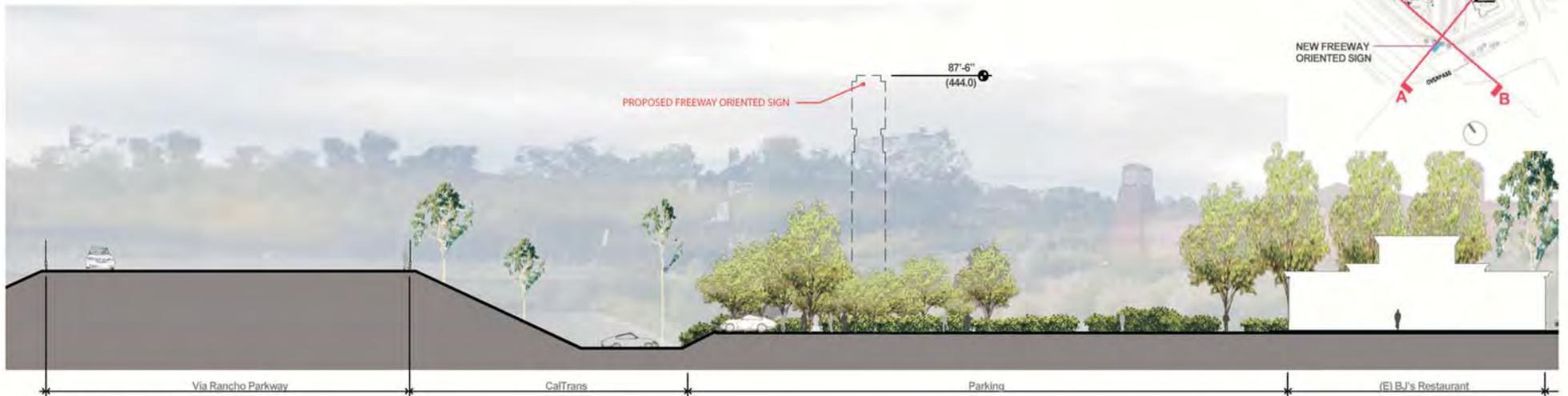
Project Site Plan

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: Architects Orange, August 2013.

FIGURE
A-3



SITE SECTION - AA



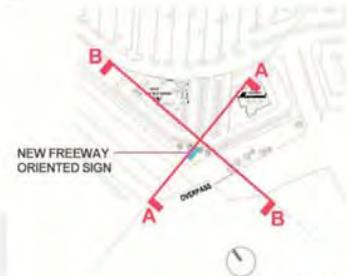
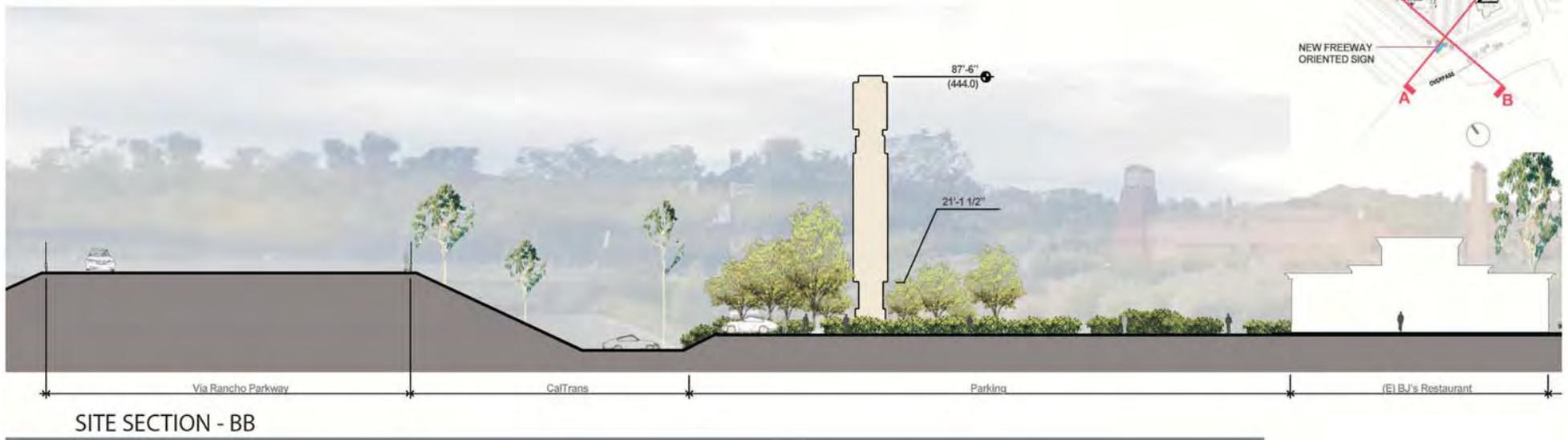
SITE SECTION - BB



Site Sections -Existing Landscaping

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: Architects Orange, August 2013.

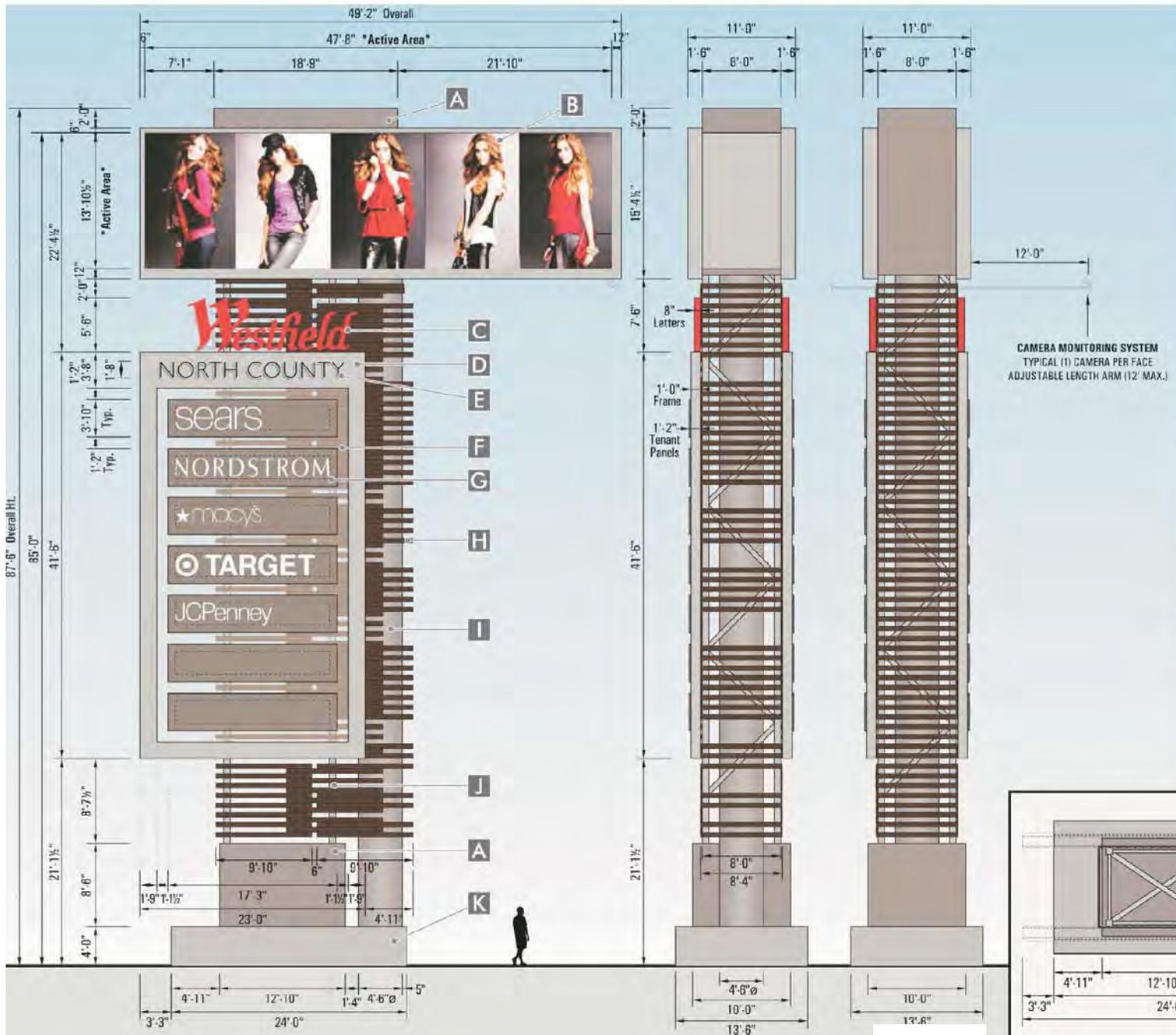
FIGURE
A-5



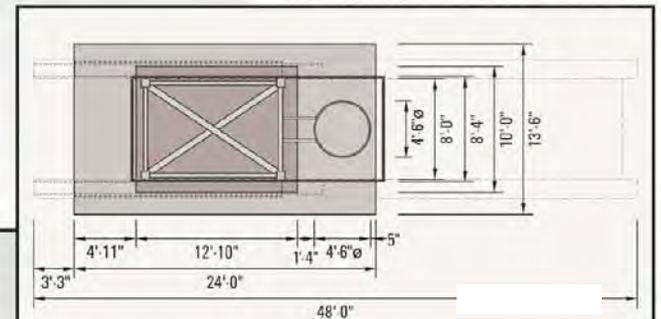
Site Sections - Proposed Landscaping

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: Architects Orange, August 2013.

FIGURE
A-6



SIGN SPECS		
A	TOP	TYPE: D/F NON ILLUMINATED PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. TEXTURE: SMOOTH SATIN FINISH
B	EMC	PIXEL SPACING: 16mm (2 SINGLE FACE) MATRIX SIZE: 256 x 880 LED COLOR: FULL COLOR CABINET SIZE: 14'-5.4" X 48'-2.3" ACTIVE AREA: 13'-10.4" X 47'-8"
C	PAN CHANNEL	LIGHTING: WHITE LED FACE COLOR: WHITE ACRYLIC VINYL: RED 3M #3630 TRIM CAP COLOR: RED RETURN COLOR: PAINTED WESTFIELD RED
D	TENANT FRAME	TYPE: 2 S/F NON-ILLUMINATED PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. TEXTURE: SMOOTH SATIN FINISH
E	LETTERS	TYPE: ROUTED ALUMINUM FACE LETTER COLOR: 1/2" THICK WHITE PUSH-THRU VINYL: PERFORATED BLACK LIGHTING: WHITE LED
F	PERF. SCREEN	TYPE: PERFORATED MATERIAL: ALUMINUM GAUGE: .125" OPENING: 1/4" ROUND 1" STAGGERED CNTRS COLOR: PAINTED GRAY
G	TENANT PANEL	TYPE: 2 S/F ILLUMINATED ALUMINUM LIGHTING: WHITE LED PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. TEXTURE: SMOOTH SATIN FINISH COPY: ROUTED OUT OF ALUM. FACE 1/4" THICK WHITE ACRYLIC PUSH THROUGH PANEL SIZE: 3'-10" X 17'-3" COPY AREA: 2'-4" X 15'-8" MAXIMUM
H	BANDS	MATERIAL: 2" X 6" STEEL RECT. TUBE PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. TEXTURE: SMOOTH SATIN FINISH
I	SUPPORT PIPE DIAMETER	54" PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. TEXTURE: SMOOTH SATIN FINISH *EXACT PIPE SIZE SUBJECT TO ENGINEERING*
J	STRUCTURE	MATERIAL: 8" STEEL TYPE: SQUARE TUBE PAINT COLOR: T.B.D. *EXACT SIZES SUBJECT TO ENGINEERING*
K	BASE	MATERIAL: CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, August 2013.

FIGURE
A-7

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ATTACHMENT B - EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST DETERMINATIONS

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:

- a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, or other locally recognized desirable aesthetic natural feature within a city-designated scenic highway?
- c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less Than Significant Impact. A scenic vista can be defined as a view of valued scenic resources, particularly broad, panoramic views from public or private vantage points of natural features, such as the ocean, hillsides, mountains or urban landscapes, like city skylines. Visual character is the composite of what can be seen in a locale, including such scenic resources as may exist and the vantage points from which they may be seen. The determination of a project's impacts on scenic vistas, scenic resources and visual character should be based on the degree to which project features and/or operations could directly modify existing valued resources or obstruct existing vistas of valued resources, and the extent to which a project alters the overall character of what can be seen in the locale.

Existing Conditions

The proposed project site is planned to be located in the southern area of the City of Escondido (City), in northern San Diego County. It is proposed to be located in an active, suburban, commercial area of Escondido, with a variety of development uses and open spaces situated in the lower parts of a broad basin surrounded by low hills. The proposed project site is located at the Westfield North County, an 83-acre retail shopping center which includes a 1.2 million-square foot enclosed mall surrounded by surface parking lots and three free-standing restaurants. The proposed project is a light emitting diode (LED) freeway-oriented sign, which would be located on approximately 324 square feet of an embankment between the Interstate 15 (I-15) Freeway and the edge of Westfield North County's southern surface parking lot.

Escondido has a natural setting which provides many viewing opportunities, particularly from higher elevations, and the surrounding hillsides and ridgelines are visual resources with aesthetic value. The I-15 Freeway corridor is routed through this basin on a more or less north and south axis. Residential neighborhoods occupy the ridges and less steep hillsides throughout the hills surrounding the basin, and more intensive uses, such as Westfield North County, tend to be aligned along the I-15 Freeway corridor. Much of the lowest part of the basin is occupied by large fields of natural open space, extending northerly as far north as Via Rancho Parkway. South of Via Rancho Parkway, panoramic vistas are available across this open space from the I-15 Freeway approaching Lake Hodges and from neighboring land uses.

Scenic Resources/Scenic Highways: The low basin within which the proposed project site is located is the setting of an assortment of scenic resources. Foremost among these is the expansive area of open bottom lands that occupy the floor of the basin and are largely contained in San Dieguito River Park. This open area

extends southwesterly beneath the I-15 Freeway to Lake Hodges. Also important are the ridges and hillside that define the basin a mile and more to the east, as well as the hills that form the western edge of the basin starting just westerly of the freeway in the proposed project vicinity. Some of these hillsides remain in a natural state while others have been developed with residential neighborhoods that align the ridges and nestle into the canyons and valleys. This assemblage of varied near and far open spaces and sensitively developed neighborhoods are the primary scenic resources in the proposed project locale. Opportunities to view such scenic resources are only possible during day-time, as surrounding natural features are not visible during night-time. The commercial areas, including Westfield North County, and an array of uses located just west of the I-15 Freeway, are well designed and maintained, but are not among the listing of local scenic resources.

The proposed project site and immediate vicinity is not within a State-designated Scenic Highway, the nearest of which is State Route 78 as it runs through the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, over 37 miles away.¹ However, the proposed project would be located within the City-designated I-15 Freeway scenic corridor, as it would be located within 1,750 feet of the I-15 Freeway.² Northbound views along the scenic corridor change after passing Lake Hodges and surrounding natural, open areas, becoming quite suburban/commercial with the large freeway interchange at Via Rancho Parkway, the commercial development along both sides of the corridor and residential neighborhoods atop the surrounding hills and hillsides. The proposed project site does not contain unique or locally recognized natural or historic features. The proposed project site is not improved with any existing structures, so there are no historic structures on or near this site which could function as scenic resources or contribute to visual character.

Scenic Vistas: Scenic vistas are the vantage points from which local scenic resources may be seen. Such vistas abound in the locale. Due to the absence of higher intervening ground, and limited higher vegetation, San Dieguito River Park affords vistas across the lowlands to most of the surrounding ridges and hills. Panoramic vistas across the basin are also available from the undeveloped hillsides around the basin, and from the hillside neighborhoods, that are not otherwise obstructed by intervening topography or manmade improvements. Vistas are also routinely available from vehicles on the I-15 Freeway corridor, particularly from the segment south of the Via Rancho Parkway interchange. North of this segment, vistas provide much more suburban/commercial content.

In the immediate vicinity of the proposed project, vistas from east facing sections of the residential neighborhoods west of the I-15 Freeway are most proximate to the proposed project site. Those that are closest to the proposed project site, namely the several homes along the east side Via Cabo Verde, may have the most compromised vistas, as these homes are at the lowest elevations and large ornamental vegetation, as well as large scale commercial improvements, may interfere with vistas therefrom. However the east-facing homes in the higher parts of these neighborhoods would have expansive panoramic views across the basin to the east and south.

Visual Character: The visual character in the areas surrounding the proposed project site is quite developed and suburban/commercial in nature, and it includes a variety of commercial and residential development situated along the I-15 Freeway corridor. More natural and open areas, as well as hillsides and ridgelines, are visible farther out in the distance, only during the light of day. The proposed project site lies low in the

¹ California Department of Transportation, *California Scenic Highway Mapping System, database search for designated Scenic Highways in San Diego County*; http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/, accessed February 2013.

² City of Escondido *General Plan, Resource Conservation Element, May 2012; Chapter VII, Section E, Visual Resources.*

valley, and views of the site are partially obscured by ornamental vegetation along the perimeter of the Westfield North County surface parking lot.

The large undeveloped area occupying the bottom of the basin, in southern Escondido, generates little if any nighttime illumination due to the absence of development there. However, varying amounts of night lighting is associated with virtually all suburban/commercial and more active uses. For the most part, the hillside residential neighborhoods produce light visible at a distance, but at such limited light strength that illumination of surrounding areas is not observed. On the other hand, the I-15 Freeway corridor, with a combination of pole mounted lights along the rights of way and the lights from over 200,000 daily vehicles cause this facility to be a major source of local illumination in all night-time hours. The scale of Westfield North County with parking lot lighting necessitated by safety and security interests, as well as its illuminated promotional signage, is also quite visible from nearby and higher surrounding areas. In addition to these two primary local light sources, two other facilities produce very prominent night-time lighting. The first are the illuminated ball fields at Kit Carson Park, to the east of Westfield North County, which can illuminate up to four baseball games simultaneously, for year-round night-time play. The second local light source is from the Lake Hodges Golf Improvement Center, a golf driving range illuminated until 10:00 P.M. While both of these facilities may occupy less area than the shopping center, and as such may not be as noticeable during the day, they are at least as prominent when illuminated due to the brightness of such lighting. Both facilities have the intent to turn darkness into daylight sufficient to play baseball safely at night and to see a small white golf ball several hundred yards away. That intensity is substantially more than that for promotional signs at the shopping center, for example, the purpose of which is merely to be seen.

Regulatory Setting

Escondido has recognized the value of access to visual resources through City General Plan policies which designate, preserve, and enhance vistas. Escondido has a number of visually distinctive hillsides and ridgelines, as viewed from the valley floor.³ These landforms have been identified by the City as steep slopes, primary and secondary ridgelines, and prominent natural landforms, in order to guide open space and viewshed preservation.⁴ The City of Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation Element includes applicable goals and policies aimed at the preservation of visual resources.⁵

Assessment of Project Effects

Scenic Resources: The proposed project site would not have an effect on any scenic resources, as none are present on the site. No hillsides, ridges, natural formations, rock outcroppings or other features that could be considered scenic/visual resources exist at this location, nor surrounding properties.

Scenic Vistas: **Figure B-1, Potential Visibility Areas**, identifies residential areas in the vicinity which are expected to have some or partial views of the proposed project, as they look out upon available scenic resources in Escondido. As shown in Figure B-1, the closest residential areas to the proposed project site are located to the west, with the nearest east-facing residences located no closer than 800 feet away, along Via Cabo Verde. Via Cabo Verde is located in the Bernardo Santa Fe gated residential community, across the I-15

³ *City of Escondido General Plan, Resource Conservation Element, May 2012; Chapter VII, Section E, Visual Resources.*

⁴ *Ibid, at Figure VII-5, Steep Slopes.*

⁵ *Ibid, at page VII-23 to VII-25.*

Freeway and other retail uses along Del Lago Boulevard. Views of the proposed project are directly related to the angle at which the viewer perceives it, and as such, residences along Via Cabo Verde situated farther south (closer to Via Rancho Parkway) are at a more oblique viewing angle with respect to the proposed project and would see less of it. The residential viewers along Via Cabo Verde may see a narrow portion of the proposed project, as they look out to available visual resources during the day-time; however, their views are currently impeded by surrounding mature trees and intervening commercial development. Adjoining streets with elevations similar to those along Via Cabo Verde also have vistas that are partially obstructed by the existing intervening residences. Thus, during the day-time, the proposed project would have a very limited effect on easterly scenic vistas from Via Cabo Verde and the adjoining streets, due to installation of the proposed project.

Moving west along Avenida Magoria, in the Bernardo Santa Fe community, the elevation quickly rises to a point where potential residential viewers are at higher elevations higher than the top of the proposed project, and their current vistas over the basin would remain largely unchanged. The neighborhoods farther to the north within the Bernardo Santa Fe area are also situated at a higher elevation, and are somewhat more perpendicular to the proposed project. However, lines of sight to the proposed project would not be clear, due to the distance from the proposed project site, trees, roadway bridges/interchanges, and the intervening I-15 Freeway below.

To the south of Via Rancho Parkway, the closest northeast-facing residential viewers are over 1,100 feet away, in the areas along Lomas Sirenas Drive. These residences are also situated at higher elevations than the top of the proposed project, and therefore, currently available scenic vistas would remain largely unchanged. Residential areas farther to the south of Pomerado Road are over one mile away from the proposed project site and situated at higher elevations than the top of the freeway-oriented sign. Therefore, available scenic vistas would remain largely unchanged with installation of the proposed project.

To the east and southeast of the proposed project site, some of the west-facing residential areas along Beethoven Drive, in the Del Lago on the Greens gated residential community, may be situated at a slightly lower elevation than the top of the proposed project; however, clear lines of site to the existing scenic vistas towards the proposed project site are not available at these lower elevations, due to the presence of intervening tall trees. Farther up into the residential areas along Beethoven Drive, including Huckleberry Lane, Inspiration Lane and the gated Allegro residential community, elevations are higher than the top of the proposed project, and as such, scenic vistas would remain unchanged. In addition, in this residential area, the closest distance to the proposed project site is approximately two-thirds of a mile away. At such distances and oblique viewing angles, if it would be visible, the proposed project would be barely perceptible and would not impede existing scenic vistas.

Drivers along the I-15 Freeway would be the primary viewers of the proposed project. The proposed project would come into drivers' view about one-half mile away for both northbound and southbound drivers. Beyond these points, the I-15 Freeway alignment curves away, and the proposed project would not be visible. Northbound travelers would pass the natural open areas around Lake Hodges before the proposed project comes into view. When it does come into view, the proposed project would be seen in the context of major existing commercial development adjacent to the I-15 Freeway, including overhead freeway signs, a self-storage center, commercial/retail uses, the elevated Via Rancho Parkway roadway, the Beethoven Drive on-ramp, and Westfield North County. Southbound travelers would view the proposed project in the



- Potential Residential Visibility Areas
- Freeway Visibility Area



Potential Visibility Areas

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

FIGURE
B-1

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context of existing overhead illuminated freeway signs, elevated interchanges, adjoining commercial development, and some open hillsides, before open vistas and Lake Hodges, further south, come into view. Scenic vistas along this segment of the I-15 corridor would not be significantly affected by the presence of the proposed project.

Visual Character: Installation of the proposed project would introduce visual elements (i.e., some construction equipment and related activities) that are not out of character with the existing developed nature of the site, as Westfield North County is currently undergoing significant renovation. Installation of the proposed project would last a total of two months, involving the use of limited construction equipment which would be removed following installation. Such temporary construction activity would be consistent with the visual character of the proposed project vicinity. Installation would consist of the pouring of a 13.5-foot by 24-foot concrete base pad and the mounting of a structural steel supporting column which would hold the tenant sign cabinet, topped by the two LED reader boards. The proposed project site would be approximately 0.007 acre within a landscaped embankment which possesses no unique natural or urban features. This existing condition does not substantially enhance the visual quality of the area. The proposed project would not be out of scale on this site, within the context of the surrounding development. The main structure of the shopping center itself is approximately 70 feet in height, and over 1,700 feet in length and contains some 1.2 million square feet; while the proposed project is planned to be approximately 87.5 feet in height. The elevated roadway portion of Via Rancho Parkway is immediately south of the proposed project site, and trees around the freeway-oriented sign would be somewhat lower than the proposed project.

Photosimulations: A series of photosimulations have been prepared based on photographs taken from various representative vantage points in the vicinity. The photosimulations are digital representations of the proposed project superimposed upon actual digitized photographs of the existing proposed project site. These photosimulations are representations of the character of the proposed project in relation to the existing environmental setting, demonstrating its appearance in the context of surrounding views and terrain. The photosimulations are prepared based on daylight conditions, as it is not possible to accurately depict the relative brightness of the proposed project in digitized simulations against a night-time background.

As depicted in **Figure B-2**, *Photosimulation Locations Map*, the view locations identified on the map represent a variety of vantage points, selected from several locations in the surrounding vicinity which could have a view of the proposed project. The views are taken from where the proposed project could be visible on local roadways and from the closest publicly accessible residential areas (without private gated access) around the site. The closest sensitive use is Kit Carson Park, to the east of the proposed project site. The views of the site from each of the 11 locations are described below, in relation to the potential impacts upon the visual character of the proposed project vicinity.

Figure B-3, *View A*, is from the southbound I-15 Freeway, across from the project site to the west. At such a close distance, the proposed freeway-oriented sign would be clearly visible at the driver's left side, in the overall context of existing freeway ramps and bridges and other overhead freeway signage. Ornamental landscaping and taller trees are located around the base of the proposed freeway-oriented sign. At night, the proposed LED reader boards and tenant sign cabinet would also be clearly visible from this vantage point; however, in the context of the already illuminated shopping center, parking lot and roadway lighting along the 1-15 Freeway and Via Rancho Parkway above, the proposed project would not substantially alter the visual character of this commercial area. As such, from View A, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of its surroundings.

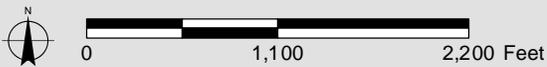
Figure B-4, View B, is from the northbound I-15 Freeway, before passing Via Rancho Parkway. The proposed project would be clearly visible at the driver's right side. The proposed project would be clearly visible to the driver, in the context of the existing freeway ramps and bridges, other overhead freeway signage, and Via Rancho Parkway above. There is ornamental landscaping, taller trees and other vegetation in the vicinity and around the project site. At night, the proposed LED reader boards and tenant sign cabinet would also be clearly visible from this vantage point. As such, in the existing context and built-up commercial setting, at View B, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of its surroundings.

Figure B-5, View C, is from the I-15 Freeway southbound on-ramp, at Beethoven Drive. The proposed project would be clearly visible to the southbound driver in the overall context of Westfield North County, an existing sign, and a restaurant. There is ornamental landscaping and taller trees around the proposed project, helping it fit into its surroundings. Other man-made structures are in the foreground, including the I-15 Freeway itself, roadway bridges and the built-up environment in this suburban, commercial area. Night-time views of the proposed project would be more visible, as it would be more readily apparent to drivers in the immediate area; however, in the context of the already lit shopping center, parking lot, adjacent restaurant, and roadway lighting along the I-15 Freeway and Via Rancho Parkway, the proposed project would not substantially alter the visual character of this commercial area. As such, from View C, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of its surroundings.

Figure B-6, View D, is from the southbound I-15 Freeway, with the Beethoven Drive southbound on-ramp coming in from the left. The proposed project would be clearly visible to the driver, in the context of the existing freeway ramps and bridges, and other overhead freeway signage. Night-time views of the proposed project would be more noticeable, as it would be more apparent to drivers in the immediate area, but would not be directly in their line of sight. As such, in the existing context and built-up commercial setting, at View D, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.

Figure B-7, View E, is from the northbound I-15 Freeway, at the Via Rancho Parkway exit (Exit 27). The proposed project would be visible at the drivers' right side, as viewed in the context of the existing commercial setting. There are existing elevated roadways, signage, street lighting, and trees which would cause the proposed project to fit into its setting. Night-time views of the proposed project would be apparent, as it would be clearly visible to drivers along the I-15 Freeway and Via Rancho Parkway. As such, in the existing context and built-up commercial setting, at View E, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.

Figure B-8, View F, is from the west across the I-15 Freeway, at the recently renovated Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit Station, at Del Lago Boulevard. The proposed project would be visible across the park and ride lot, through the parking lot pole lights and other nearby commercial development. Although the proposed project would be visible from this vantage point, it would be not out of character within this commercial setting. Vistas to the hills in the south and east are prominent, and the presence of proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of this view in this context, as there are other commercial structures with a similar profile present from this vantage point. Night-time views of the proposed project would be more visible; however, in the context of the existing lighting present at the Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit Station and the other nearby businesses, the proposed project would not be out of character. As such, at View F, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.



Photosimulation Locations Map

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: Microsoft, 2010 (Aerial); PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

FIGURE

B-2

Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign



View A - Southbound I-15 Freeway Across From Project Site



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View B - Northbound I-15 Freeway at Via Rancho Parkway Overpass

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-4



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View C - Southbound I-15 Freeway On-Ramp at Beethoven Drive

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-5



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View E - Northbound I-15 Freeway at Via Rancho Parkway Exit

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-7



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View F - Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit Station

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-8

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Figure B-9, View G, is from Pomerado Road, the nearest major roadway and I-15 Freeway exit, located approximately one mile south of the proposed project site and Via Rancho Parkway. This view is looking north directly towards the proposed project across an expansive natural setting. The proposed project would be barely discernible from this vantage point and would not have a negative impact on the visual character of the area. Night-time views of the proposed project would be minimal from this distance, as it would appear as a small point of light in the distance. Existing night-time lighting at Kit Carson Park ball fields and the Hodges Golf Improvement Center would be more visible from this view than the proposed project. As such, at View G, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.

Figure B-10, View H, is from Lomas Serenas Drive, between Calle Florecita and Avenida Amorosa, located approximately one-third mile southwest of the proposed project. This view is looking out to the northeast across the residential areas and the I-15 Freeway towards the proposed project site. The proposed project would be barely discernible from this vantage point. Night-time views of the proposed project would be minimal from this distance. Due to the viewing angle of the proposed project and other intervening sources of light from the I-15 Freeway, Kit Carson Park ball fields, Hodges Golf Improvement Center and other commercial development, the proposed project would not significantly alter the visual character of this area. As such, at View H, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.

Figure B-11, View I, is from Sierra Linda Drive, between Beethoven Drive and San Pasqual Road, over one mile to the southeast of the proposed project. This view is looking to the northwest toward the proposed project from a higher elevation, across intervening residential areas, as well as the ball fields at Kit Carson Park (which are illuminated for night-time play year-round) and the Hodges Golf Improvement Center, (which is illuminated until 10:00 P.M.). Day-time views of the proposed project would be minimal from this distance, and night-time views would also be minimal, as it would appear as a small point of light in the distance, especially in the context of the already-lit environment. As such, at View I, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the character of its surroundings.

Figure B-12, View J, is from the bike path along the western edge of Kit Carson Park and Beethoven Drive, looking towards the proposed project site across the primary mall structure of Westfield North County. From this vantage point, the proposed project site would be approximately one-third mile to the southwest, on the other side of the primary mall structure. The proposed project would not be visible from View J during the day-time or night-time, due to the presence of the intervening mall structure. As such, there would be no change and, therefore, no degradation of the visual character of the surroundings.

Figure B-13, View K, is from the residential area closest to the north of the proposed project site, along El Ku Avenue, looking south towards the site over the embankment for the Beethoven Drive on-ramp. From this vantage point, the proposed project would be over one-third mile to the south, on the other side of the embankment and portions of the Westfield North County mall structure. The proposed project would not be visible from View K during the day-time or night-time. As such, there would be no change and, therefore, no degradation of the visual character of the surroundings.

As shown in Figures B-3 through B-13, during the daytime, the proposed project would be compatible with the surrounding commercial context of the area, and views from residential areas would not be significantly out of character, especially due to the ambient brightness and distances involved. With respect to the proposed project's night-time effects on visual character, most residential viewers may perceive the proposed project as a distant source of light along with other existing sources of light in the area. While the proposed project is meant to be seen at night, it is not designed, nor is it intended to, provide illumination to the surrounding area, such as parking lot or ball field lights. As shown in Figure B-1, generally speaking, residences in the Bernardo Santa Fe community, to the west of the proposed project site have the closest viewers, with the nearest east-facing residences located over 800 feet away, across the I-15 Freeway and other commercial development. Lines of sight to the proposed project are not clear, due to the distance from the proposed project, trees, roadway bridges/interchanges, and the intervening I-15 Freeway below. To the south of Via Rancho Parkway, in the areas along Lomas Sirenas Drive, due to the distances from the proposed project, the elevated roadways along Via Rancho Parkway, other commercial development, and the intervening I-15 Freeway, including the southbound off-ramp, these viewers may perceive the proposed project as a distant source of light, in an existing context of other sources of light.

Further to the south, south of Pomerado Road, the nearest north-facing residences are more than one mile away. At this distance, the proposed project would be a distant spot of light across the open vista, if it would be perceived at all. To the east and southeast, the nearest north- and northwest-facing residential areas are over two-thirds of a mile from the site. Although these residences are situated at a higher elevation, the distances to the proposed project are considerable, and if visible, it would be a distant source of light along with other existing sources of light. From this distance, the lights from the Hodges Golf Improvement Center driving range and the ball field lights at Kit Carson Park are existing sources of illumination well into the evening hours. To the northeast, the nearest potential residential viewers are over one mile away, with San Pasqual High School, Kit Carson Park, and Westfield North County lying between this area and the proposed project. If the proposed project can be seen at all, it would be barely visible, in comparison to these other sources of existing light. Residential areas to the north, along El Ku Avenue, would not be able to see the proposed project, due to the intervening higher roadways blocking existing views into the site. As such, visual character for residential viewers would not be significantly affected.

Project Consistency with Applicable Regulations: The discussion of potential impacts to visual resources, as a result of the proposed project's installation, is also evaluated within the context of consistency with the City of Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation Element. The evaluation reviews the Escondido's General Plan goals and policies to determine if the proposed project would produce conflicts, and whether any such conflicts or non-compliance might be considered significant. Goal 1 of the Resource Conservation Element is related to biological and open space resources, and Goal 2 is related to trail networks, neither of which are applicable to the proposed project. The following consistency analysis begins with the evaluation of Goal 3, regarding visual resources. **Table B-1**, *Comparison of the Project to Applicable Visual Resources Policies of the City of Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation Element*, provides a consistency analysis of the proposed project, as compared to the stated applicable visual resources goals and policies.

In summary, installation of the proposed project is considered consistent with Visual Resources Goal 3, as it is consistent with the applicable underlying policies. Views of significant visual resources that serve as a scenic amenity and contribute to the quality of life for Escondido residents would not be significantly impaired by the proposed project. Visual resources, such as ridgelines, hillsides, viewsheds and the I-15 Freeway scenic corridor that serve as a scenic amenity would be preserved. This is due to the fact that the proposed project would not be installed upon or within any significant visual resources, skyline ridges, or



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View H - Facing Northeast from Lomas Sirenas Drive

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-10



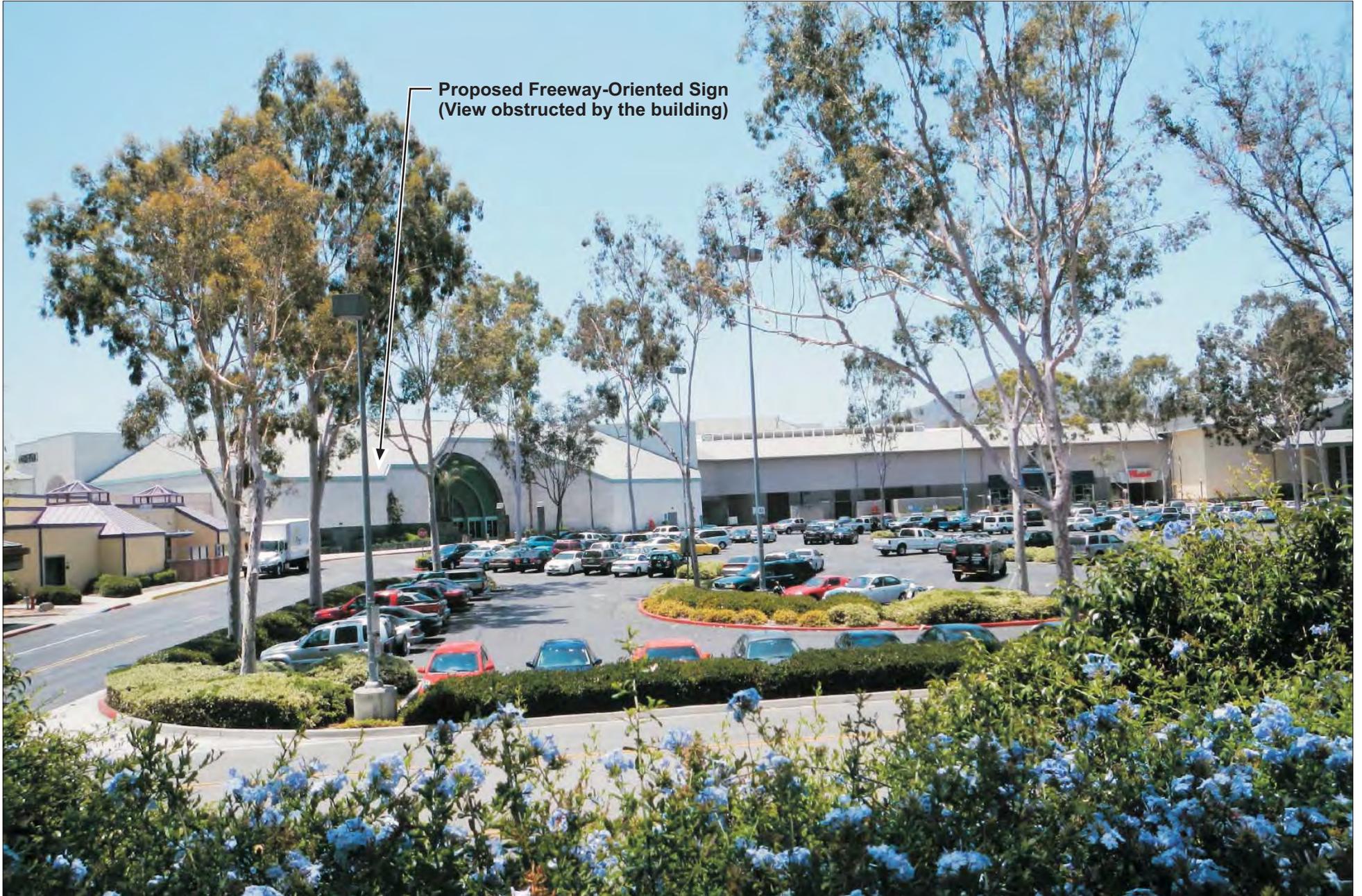
Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign

View I - Facing Northwest from Sierra Linda Drive

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-11



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign
(View obstructed by the building)

View J - Facing West from the Bike Path at Kit Carson Park

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: Architects Orange, 2013.

FIGURE

B-12



Proposed Freeway-Oriented Sign
(View obstructed by topography)

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Table B-1

Comparison of the Project to Applicable Visual Resources Policies of the City of Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation Element

Policy	Analysis of Project Consistency
Chapter VII. Applicable Visual Resource Conservation Goals, Policies and Guiding Principles	
Goal 3: Preservation of significant visual resources such as ridgelines, hillsides, and viewsheds that serve as a scenic amenity and contribute to the quality of life for residents.	Consistent. Since there are no visual resources located on or near the proposed project site, it would not alter any ridgelines, hillsides and viewsheds that serve as a scenic amenity. In addition, the proposed project would not obstruct views of scenic resources over the low-lying, commercial proposed project site.
Policy 3.1: Preserve significant visual resources that include unique landforms (e.g., skyline ridges, intermediate ridges, hilltops, and rock outcrop-pings), creeks, lakes, and open space areas in a natural state, to the extent possible.	Consistent. The proposed project would be not located upon or within a significant visual resource, including unique landforms, creeks, lakes and open space areas in a natural state.
Policy 3.2: Require new development to avoid obstructing views of, and to minimize impacts to, significant visual resources through the following: creative site planning; integration of natural features into the project; appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape; clustering of development to preserve open space vistas and natural features; minimal disturbance of topography; and creation of contiguous open space networks.	Consistent. The proposed project would not substantially obstruct views of significant visual resources due to its location in an existing developed area, thereby fitting within the context of the surrounding commercial areas. Open space vistas and natural features would be largely preserved, and the disturbance of topography would be negligible.
Policy 3.3: Maintain density and development standards designed to protect significant visual resources such as existing terrain, steep slopes, floodways, habitat areas, and ridgelines, and to minimize visual impacts of grading and structures.	Consistent: The proposed project would not conflict with density and development standards designed to protect significant visual resources. It would not be constructed in existing natural terrain, steep slopes, floodways, habitat areas, or ridgelines, as identified by the City. Minimal grading to prepare the concrete base would be required (approximately 324 square feet), and no other structures are proposed which would require the modification of natural features.
Policy 3.4: Prohibit development on skyline ridges and seek to obtain scenic easement dedications for these areas from property owners in conjunction with development on other suitable locations of the property. Require property owners of such scenic easements to retain, maintain, preserve, and protect the public view of these areas in their natural state, without obstruction by structures, and prohibit clearing of brush or planting of vegetation except as necessary to reduce fire hazards.	Consistent: The proposed project would not be installed on a skyline ridge.
Policy 3.5-2(a): Locate development to avoid potentially hazardous areas and environmentally sensitive areas, as well as to avoid dislocation of any unusual rock formations or any other unique or unusual geographic features.	Consistent: The proposed project would not be located within a potentially hazardous or environmentally sensitive area. No unusual rock formations or other unique or unusual geographic features would be dislocated under the proposed project, as no such formations or features are located at the proposed project site.

Table B-1 (Continued)

**Comparison of the Project to Applicable Visual Resources Policies of the
City of Escondido General Plan Resource Conservation Element**

Policy	Analysis of Project Consistency
<p>Policy 3.5-2(b): Design development to minimize grading requirements by incorporating terracing, padding, and cut-and-fill grading that conforms to the natural contours of the site and protects the visual continuity of the hillsides.</p>	<p>Consistent: The proposed project site does not contain natural contours requiring special grading precautions and is not a hillside which currently provides natural continuity requiring protection. Installation of the proposed project would require minimal site preparation to clear a small space (approximately 324 square feet) for the concrete base upon which it would be anchored.</p>
<p>Policy 3.5-2(c): Cluster the overall development pattern in accordance with General Plan provisions to preserve the maximum amount of open spaces and natural setting and to reduce grading, erosion, and runoff potential.</p>	<p>Consistent: The proposed project is planned to be located within an area in which overall development is already clustered. Grading to prepare the site for its concrete base would be minimal, and potential for erosion and runoff would be negligible.</p>
<p>Policy 3.5-2(d): Landscape the site with existing trees and other natural vegetation, as much as possible, to stabilize slopes, reduce erosion, and enhance the visual impact of the development.</p>	<p>Consistent: Appropriate landscaping would be planted around the freeway-oriented sign following installation of the proposed project.</p>
<p>Policy 3.5-2(e): Minimize the visual impact of development in adjoining residential areas to the extent feasible.</p>	<p>Consistent: There are no residential areas adjoining the proposed project site. The closest residential area is over 800 feet away, across the I-15 Freeway and other intervening commercial uses. The proposed project would have minimal visual impact on residential areas.</p>
<p>Policy 3.6: Require that development within the Interstate 15 corridor be located and designed in consideration of its potential visual impacts and preservation of prominent views along the corridor that include: outstanding continuous, panoramic views of the valley floor, surrounding ridges and Lake Hodges, and focal views where the eye is channeled toward a visually dominant feature such as an undisturbed hillside or steep slopes with rock outcroppings. Require development proposals within the I-15 scenic corridor (defined as the area within 1,750 feet of the freeway) to include a visual assessment and conform to the community design policies which address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The siting of new structures outside of significant viewshed corridors; b) The protection of hillsides and ridgelines; and c) The need to blend developments with their setting in terms of height and scale. 	<p>Consistent: While proposed to be located within the City-designated I-15 Freeway scenic corridor, the proposed project would not alter any scenic resources in this segment of the corridor, as it would be installed in an existing, developed, commercial area, amidst freeway interchanges, commercial complexes, and other structures. Around the proposed project installation site, panoramic views of the valley floor are already partially obstructed by intervening development and topography in the area. Surrounding scenic hillsides and ridgelines are much farther off in the distance, and installation of the proposed project would not significantly impede views of valued natural features.</p> <p>The sign has a slim profile that would fit into the character of the commercially developed project area and would not be out of scale with other development in the vicinity.</p>

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

natural landforms. It would be installed within an embankment along the I-15 Freeway, in a relatively low-lying commercial area, with no residential areas adjoining the proposed project site. Along the I-15 scenic corridor, the proposed project would be viewed in the context of other existing development adjacent to the I-15 Freeway, including overhead freeway signs, overpasses and freeway interchanges.

Based on the above, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact with respect to views of the horizon or distant mountains across the proposed project site. Impacts would also be less than significant with regards to scenic resources or other locally recognized desirable aesthetic natural features within a designated scenic highway. While the proposed project would provide a new visual element on the proposed project site, it would not introduce elements that would substantially detract from the existing visual character of the surrounding area during day-time or night-time, and especially in the context of its developed commercial setting. Furthermore, the proposed project is consistent with the applicable City of Escondido General Plan goals and policies regarding the preservation of visual resources. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic resources, scenic vistas and visual character would be less than significant. Further study of these issues is not necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

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

Less Than Significant Impact.

Existing Conditions

The proposed project site would be located in a suburban/commercial area, surrounded by a mix of building types and land uses. The immediate proposed project vicinity exhibits considerable ambient nighttime illumination levels due to its developed nature, including lighting for the surface parking areas, various buildings and illuminated facilities. Artificial light sources from surrounding uses include interior and exterior lighting for security, parking, architectural highlighting, incidental landscape lighting, illuminated signage, ball fields and recreational facilities. Automobile headlights, streetlights and stoplights for visibility and safety purposes along the surrounding surface streets and I-15 Freeway contribute to overall ambient lighting levels as well. Besides the I-15 Freeway, the most prominent sources of existing ambient light in the area are from the ball fields at Kit Carson Park, which are illuminated for year-round night-time games, and the driving range at the Hodges Golf Improvement Center, which is illuminated until 10:00 P.M. Existing lighting in the proposed project vicinity is visible during dusk and night-time hours; however such lighting would not be bright enough to cast illumination onto light-sensitive properties, such as residences.

The nearest light sensitive uses to the proposed project location are single-family residential neighborhoods located to the west of the proposed project site across Del Lago Boulevard and the I-15 Freeway, the nearest of which is over 800 feet from the proposed project site. Other residential uses to the southwest of the proposed project site, also across the I-15 Freeway and Via Rancho Parkway, are located along Lomas Serenas Drive, which are approximately 1,100 feet from the proposed project site. There are no light sensitive receptors in immediate proximity to the proposed project site.

Trees, topographic obstructions, intervening structures and the distance and angle to the sources of illumination are major factors in how light is perceived in the vicinity. Lighting from the I-15 Freeway, Via Rancho Parkway, the Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit Station, the commercial/retail area along Del Lago Boulevard, Kit Carson Park, and the Hodges Golf Improvement Center all contribute ambient lighting in the proposed project area.

Project Characteristics

The proposed project would contribute to the Westfield North County's role as a "target area", further encouraging the idea of providing opportunities to live, work and play in a revitalized community.⁶ Most of the lighting around the proposed project site, within the shopping center property, is typical of lighting anticipated with retail shopping centers. Although the Proposed project would add a new source of illumination to the area, causing an incremental increase to the lighting levels of the existing setting, it is important to note that its purpose is simply to be seen. This intent is different from that of lighting which is intended to illuminate, such as street or ball field lighting.

The actual lighting level experienced from off-site locations varies depending on whether one views the proposed project directly or from a horizontal or vertical angle. The reduction in illuminance from LED displays drops rapidly as the viewing angle and distance increases. The actually perceived surface area that is providing the light source decreases, as the angle away from perpendicular increases. Viewers directly facing the proposed project have a much greater view of it, and perceive much more illumination, than a viewer who is located more parallel to, or along the same horizontal axis as, the freeway-oriented sign. The proposed project would be viewed in the context of its lower-elevation position in this area of Escondido, and there are a number of topographical changes in the vicinity. As residential viewers would generally perceive the proposed project from higher elevations, the amount of light that would be visible to the viewer is greatly affected by the height and angle from which it is viewed.

Brightness is the perceptual response to a source of light. A light source emits luminous power which is measured in candlepower, and illumination is the amount of light coming from a light source which lands upon that surface. The unit of measurement for illumination is the foot-candle, which is the illumination cast by a one-candlepower light source on one square foot, measured at one foot away from the light source. For example, the brightness of a full moon is 0.01 to 0.03 foot-candle, depending on variation in the height of the moon and other atmospheric conditions. Typical municipal standards for development in the vicinity of residential neighborhoods seek to avoid light spillover in excess of 0.5 foot-candle. In no case would this standard be exceeded in surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Assessment of Project Effects

Figure B-14, *Project Light Intensity Levels*, depicts the level of light which could reach viewers at specified distances surrounding the proposed project site. Intervening structures, topography, trees and existing ambient light from adjacent commercial uses, the I-15 Freeway and surrounding roadways play a major factor in how illumination and the size of the proposed project would be perceived. These varying factors cannot be depicted in Figure B-14, as it is simply a conservative two-dimensional representation of how light would travel from the proposed project at the various viewing angles (away from perpendicular to the proposed project) and does not take any of these situational circumstances into consideration. As shown in Figure B-14, the closest residential viewer would perceive extremely low to low light (0.001 to 0.007 foot-candle) from the proposed project. This is akin to the light emanating from a quarter-moon (half the moon's face lit) to a moonless night. Importantly, from the distances and angles that the nearest residential uses are located, the perceived size of the proposed project would be so small as to be negligible.

⁶ City of Escondido General Plan, Land Use and Community Form, May 2012, at page II-61 and Figure II-18, Opportunity Areas.



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The proposed project lighting would be considered adverse if it caused notable changes in the lighting conditions of the residential neighborhoods to the west and southwest of the proposed project site, or cause a distraction to drivers along the roadways. In order to avoid such adverse impacts, the LED display will be designed to ensure that visual impairment of drivers does not occur, in compliance Section 21466.5 of the California Vehicle Code, regarding roadway standards to avoid drivers' visual impairment. Automatic sensors will monitor ambient lighting conditions and adjust the lighting intensity from the sign accordingly. The daytime intensity of the LED reader boards would be generally at the maximum (100 percent) intensity, in order to be visible in the bright sunlight environment. The night-time intensity would be generally at the minimum (three percent), unless the night-time environment has considerable ambient light from other light sources. As such, the illumination from the proposed project would not be considered vision-impairing due to brilliance, and the measured brightness would not exceed the stated standard.

The increased illumination due to the proposed project would be similar to lighting found at retail shopping centers in the region, would be consistent with acceptable lighting conditions for major roadways, and would not cause direct lighting at off-site locations, nor increase ambient lighting so as to adversely affect activities at adjacent uses. Given the degree of ambient lighting that currently exists in the area, the proposed project would not substantially alter ambient night light levels in residential areas.

Photosimulations: The photosimulations which have been prepared represent the character of the proposed project in relation to the existing environmental setting and demonstrate the appearance of the freeway-oriented sign in the context of the surrounding views and terrain. Since it is not possible to accurately portray the relative brightness of the proposed project in digitized simulations against a night-time background, the photosimulations are based on daylight conditions. Factors such as intervening structures, topography, trees and existing ambient light from adjacent commercial uses cannot be taken into account, based on the conservative two-dimensional representation in Figure B-14. When considering Figure B-2 in relation to Figure B-14, the viewers which would perceive the highest light intensity of illumination from the proposed project are at Views A and B. Views A and B are the closest vantage points associated with the I-15 Freeway. At both vantages, the viewer would perceive high light intensity (0.015 to 0.049 foot-candle) due to the close proximity from the proposed freeway-oriented sign. The illumination perceived from Views A and B is also viewed in the context of existing light sources from Westfield North County's surface parking lots, surrounding commercial uses, the I-15 Freeway itself and roadway lighting.

The illumination perceived from Views C, D, E and F (Figures B-5, B-6, B-7 and B-8, respectively) would be less intense than from Views A and B. At these four vantages, the viewer would perceive medium to low light (0.004 to 0.015 foot-candle) from the proposed project. This is akin to the light emanating from a quarter-moon to a full moon. Views C, D and E are views associated with the I-15 Freeway and are more perpendicular to the proposed project. Due to the planned height of 87.5 feet high to the top of the LED reader boards, the perceived illumination drops quickly, due to this height and viewing angle. View F is taken from the Del Lago Bus Rapid Transit Station, and there is much existing light from the park and ride lot and adjacent commercial development, as well as the I-15 Freeway.

The illumination perceived from Views G, H, I, J and K (Figures B-9, B-10, B-11, B-12 and B-13, respectively) would be negligible and barely perceptible, due to the distances and viewing angles from the proposed project, as well as intervening topography, structures and existing light sources (i.e., the I-15 Freeway, Via Rancho Parkway, ball field lights at Kit Carson Park, the driving range at Hodges Golf Improvement Center, and the lighting across Westfield North County's surface parking lots and the mall itself).

Based on the appearance of light at the vantages from which the 11 photosimulations were taken, the proposed project would not cause a significant light impact from these views.

Glare: Glare occurs from sunlight reflected from reflective materials utilized in existing buildings and from vehicle windows and surfaces. Glare-sensitive receptors also include motorists on the roadways surrounding the site. As glare is a temporary phenomenon that changes with the movement of the sun, receptors other than motorists are generally less sensitive to glare impacts than to light impacts.

The proposed project would be constructed of non-reflective materials. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a substantial new source of glare which would adversely affect day- or night-time views in the area, and impacts would be less than significant.

Shading: According to the CEQA Guidelines, shading of sensitive uses such as routinely usable outdoor spaces associated with residential, recreational, or institutional (e.g., schools, convalescent homes) land uses can be considered a significant impact, because sunlight is important to function and physical comfort. Due to the narrow size and shape of the proposed project, and the fact that there are no shadow sensitive uses which could be adversely affected by shadows caused by it, the proposed project would not result in shading impacts to shade sensitive uses.

Based on the above, and with incorporation of project design features, the proposed project would not create a new substantial source of light or glare which would affect day or night-time views in the area, and impacts would be less than significant in this regard. In addition, shade generated by the proposed project would be less than significant. Further analysis of this issue is not necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurements methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The proposed project would be installed in an embankment between the shopping center's surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway, and no agricultural uses or related operations are present within the site or surrounding area. The proposed project site is not located on designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. According to the 2008 Important Farmland Map, the

proposed project site is located in an area designated as “D – Urban and Built-Up Land.”⁷ Therefore, the proposed project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Conflict with the existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

No Impact. The proposed project site is zoned as Planned Development – Commercial (PD-C), and it is currently an embankment between the shopping center’s surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. No agricultural zoning is present in the surrounding area, and no nearby lands are enrolled under the Williamson Act.⁸ As such, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 1220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

No Impact. The proposed project site is zoned as Planned Development – Commercial (PD-C). No forest land or timberland zoning is present on the site or in the surrounding area. As such, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The proposed project site is the embankment between the shopping center’s surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. No forest land exists on the proposed project site. As such, the proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. There are no agricultural uses or related operations on or near the proposed project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not involve the conversion of farmland to other uses, either directly or indirectly. No impacts to agricultural land or uses would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

⁷ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, San Diego County Important Farmland Data Availability, “San Diego County Important Farmland 2010, Sheet 1 of 2”; ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2010/sdg10_w.pdf.

⁸ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Williamson Act Program, “San Diego County Williamson Act 2012/2013, Sheet 1 of 2”; ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/san_diego_w_12_13_WA.pdf.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project site is located within the 4,255-square mile San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD). SDAPCD is required, pursuant to the Clean Air Act, to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants for which the San Diego Air Basin is in non-attainment (i.e., ozone precursors and particulate matter). State law bestows primary responsibility for controlling emissions from non-mobile (stationary) sources to the SDAPCD. The stationary source control measures identified in the 2009 Regional Air Quality Strategy Plans and State Implementation Plan have been developed by the SDAPCD into regulations through a formal rule-making process. Rules are developed and set limits on the amount of emissions from various types of sources and/or by requiring specific emission control technologies.

The proposed project has the potential to generate air pollution emissions during a brief installation period and thereafter via consumption of electric power. Installation of the proposed project would require a small construction crew to clear and prepare the site (during installation expected to involve less than 0.1 acre and thereafter only 324 square feet, or 0.007 acre), place the forms for the concrete base, pour the concrete, set the steel support pole and mount the tenant sign cabinet and LED reader boards. Total elapsed time for these activities would not exceed two months, during which activity would be intermittent as phases are staged, equipment scheduled, and concrete cures, etc. Vehicular emissions would be associated with construction workers' trips, an excavator, occasional trucks to haul excavated materials and deliver concrete, and to finish, a crane to lift the freeway-oriented sign elements into place. Total emissions from this entire operation would be on the order of the emissions generated from the regular activities and operations from five single-family homes in the proposed project locale for the same two-month period. Considering the very small scale of needed installation activities and the very short duration, the indicated emissions would be considered negligible, and therefore, would not be expected to exceed any air quality screening level significance thresholds.

Following installation, the proposed project would be powered by electricity drawn from the grid of power plants and distribution systems throughout the western North America. Most of this power is generated out of the San Diego Air Basin. Based on communication from Westfield North County, the average annual electrical consumption for the proposed project would be about 30,000 kilowatt hours, which is only about 0.7 percent of the total annual electrical consumption for the entire Westfield North County shopping center. In turn, Westfield North County's annual electrical consumption is a small fraction of total power consumption in the City of Escondido. This comparison demonstrates that the proposed project's electrical consumption would be statistically insignificant in the context of either the City of Escondido, or even less so, in all of the San Diego Air Basin.

As such, installation and operation of the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact with respect to conflicts with or obstructing implementation of the SDAPCD's 2009 Regional Air Quality Strategy Plans and State Implementation Plan, the applicable air quality plan. Further analysis of this issue is not necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less Than Significant Impact. As demonstrated in the explanation to Checklist Question III.a., above, the proposed project would not significantly contribute to local and regional air pollutant emissions during installation (short-term) or operation (long-term), and would not violate any air quality standard nor contribute substantially to an existing or projected violation. Further analysis of this issue is not necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the air basin is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less Than Significant Impact. As demonstrated in the explanation to Checklist Question III.a, installation and operation of the proposed project would result in negligible increases in any criteria pollutant emissions, including ozone precursors and particulate matter, for which the basin is presently in non-attainment, and which would have only negligible effects on cumulative emissions in the San Diego Air Basin. No federal or state standards or thresholds would be exceeded. Therefore, emissions of non-attainment pollutants generated by installation and operation of the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact. The nearest sensitive receptors to the proposed project site are the single family residences located to the west of the proposed project site along Del Lago Boulevard, across the I-15 Freeway which carries some 200,000 vehicles per day in the proposed project locale. These residences are over 800 feet from the proposed project site. As demonstrated in the explanation to Checklist Question III.a, installation and operation of the proposed project would result in only negligible emissions, most of which, following installation, would occur outside of the San Diego Air Basin. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact. Land uses associated with odor complaints typically include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting, refineries, landfills, dairies, fiberglass molding and occasionally restaurants. The proposed project would not involve any aspects or elements related to these types of uses. In compliance with SDAPCD rules, no construction activities or materials are proposed which would create objectionable odors. The proposed project would have no impacts regarding objectionable odors. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- a. **Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

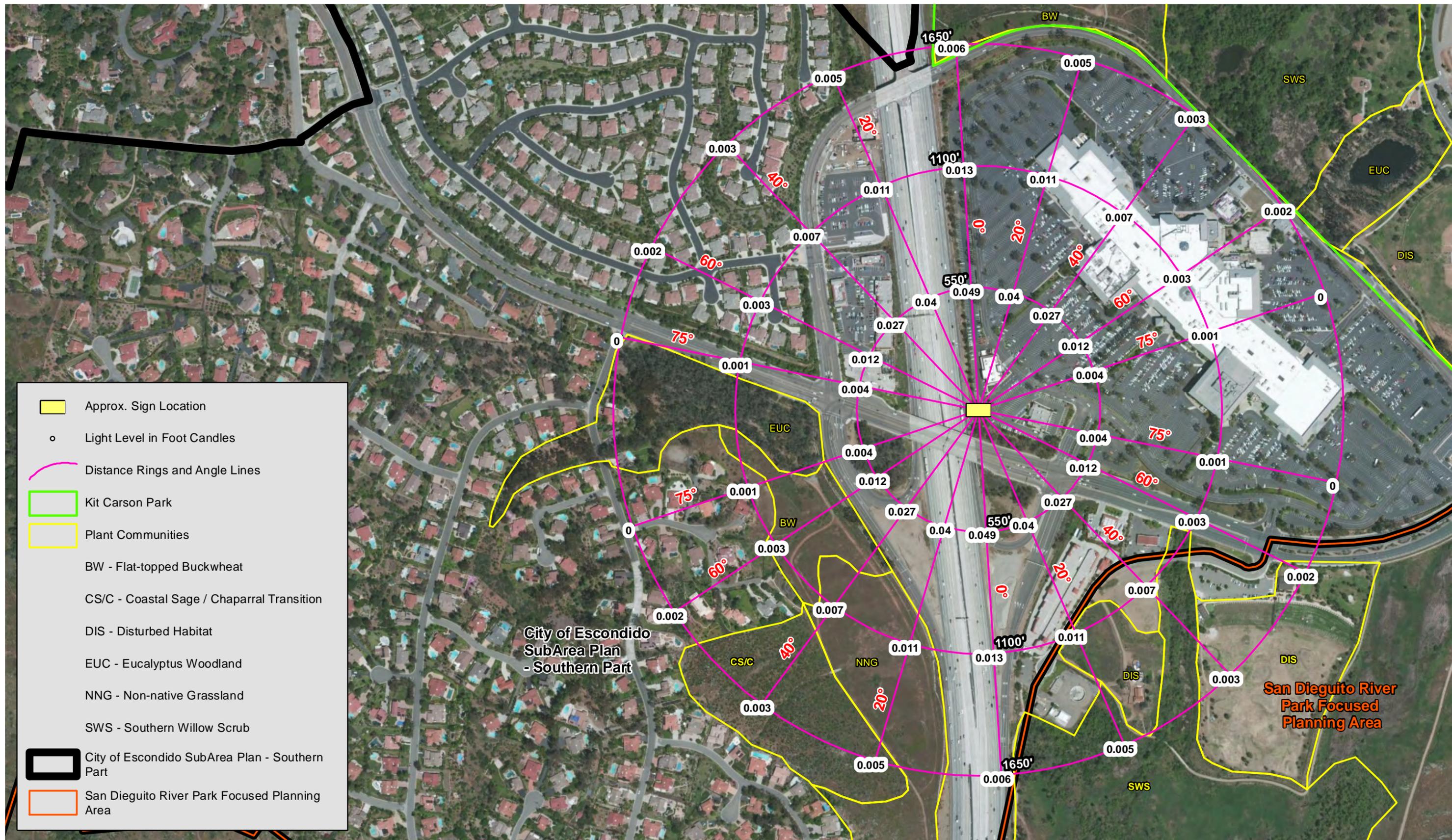
Less Than Significant Impact. There are several natural habitats in the vicinity of the proposed project. The additional incident light levels due to the proposed project which would fall at night on these habitats is depicted in **Figure B-15, Surrounding Habitats and Project Light Levels.**⁹ As shown in the figure, light levels are greatest in the direction the panels face and diminish as the angle away from this line increases. At its edge, the panel frame blocks all light from leaving its sides. It should be noted that light intensity decreases by the square root of the distance, or exponentially, not geometrically, causing the intensity to decrease quickly over short distances. For a comparison of illumination levels due to natural and artificial light sources refer to **Table B-2, Comparative Light Levels.** The brightness of the full moon can vary between 0.01 foot-candle and 0.03 foot-candle. This range is due to a number of factors including the height of the moon above the horizon, particles in the atmosphere, elevation at the site, and other astronomical factors.¹⁰ However, due to its relatively low elevation and the influence of marine air, this location would not likely experience the brightest possible lunar illumination of 0.03 foot-candle at any time during the year. From Figure B-15, it can be seen that the light emanating from the proposed project would be in the lower range of a full moon's brightness in a few areas to the south and north along the freeway axis. At a distance of some 1,100 feet, declining illumination levels are closer to a quarter-moon in more westerly and easterly direction.

Sensitive plant and wildlife species were considered. Plant life would not be affected because they are dependent on the sun and respond to variations in the number of hours of sunlight. The naturally occurring light of the moon has not been shown to affect plants significantly; its intensity is low and its periodicity of 29.5 days between full moons does not align with the seasons. The effects of low light levels, on the order of a full moon or less, on sensitive wildlife species with the potential to occur in the area was considered and only one sensitive species appeared to have a potential for being indirectly impacted.

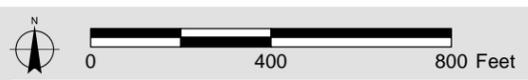
The riparian, or streamside, plant community known as southern willow scrub provides habitat to support nests and forage for the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*), a federal and State listed as endangered bird species. Southern willow scrub is found approximately 1,700-feet to the northeast of the proposed project in the natural areas of Kit Carson Park and approximately 1,100-feet to the southeast in San Dieguito River Park. The least Bell's vireo has been recorded in San Dieguito River Park. Where this habitat is closest to the proposed project in San Dieguito River Park to the southeast, adjacent to the Hodges Golf Improvement Center, an existing golf driving range (illuminated for night play), the light reaching the vegetation would be comparable to that of the quarter moon. Additionally, at this location, the willow habitat follows a gully approximately 25-feet deep, deeper than the height of many of the trees and little light reaches the ground here. The majority of willow habitat in Kit Carson Park would be shaded from the proposed project by the large mall structure and what light does reach there would fall only on the tallest trees. Due to the distance between the proposed project and this habitat (some 1,700 feet away at the closest), the additional light

⁹ Light data provided by LED manufacturer Daktronics, Brookings, SD.

¹⁰ Krisciunas, K, and Schaefer, B.E. 1991. *A Model of the Brightness of Moonlight.* Publication of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific 103 (667), 1033-1039.



- Approx. Sign Location
- Light Level in Foot Candles
- Distance Rings and Angle Lines
- Kit Carson Park
- Plant Communities
- BW - Flat-topped Buckwheat
- CS/C - Coastal Sage / Chaparral Transition
- DIS - Disturbed Habitat
- EUC - Eucalyptus Woodland
- NNG - Non-native Grassland
- SWS - Southern Willow Scrub
- City of Escondido SubArea Plan - Southern Part
- San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area



Surrounding Habitats and Project Light Levels

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
 Source: Daktronics, 2013; PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

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Table B-2

Comparative Light Levels^{a, b}

Source	Foot-Candles
Partly Sunny Day	5,000
Overcast Day	100 – 1,000
Gymnasium Lighting	100
Casual Reading Light	50
Typical Field Lighting at Stadium	25
Dusk	10
Typical Sign Illumination	10
Medium Activity Parking Lot	2.5
Twilight	1
Full Moon	0.01 - 0.03 ^c
Quarter Moon (Half of Moon's face lit)	0.001 – 0.003
Moonless Night	0.0001

^a Longcore, T., Rich, C. 2006. *Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting*. Island Press, Washington DC.

^b Krisciunas, K, and Schaefer, B.E. 1991. *A Model of the Brightness of Moonlight*. *Publication of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* 103 (667), 1033-1039

^c Range due to variances of the height of the moon above the horizon, aerosol particles in atmosphere, elevation of the observation site, and other astronomical factors.

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

from the proposed project would be even less than that of a quarter moon. Therefore, impacts on candidate, sensitive or special status species would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be warranted.

b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project site is located in a suburban, commercial area and is within a landscaped embankment between a shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. The proposed project site is not located within a sensitive natural community, as designated by the City of Escondido, the County of San Diego, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. No riparian habitat exists on or close to the site. Riparian habitat located approximately 1,700-feet to the northeast of the proposed project site, in Kit Carson Park, would be mostly shaded from illumination by the intervening Westfield North County shopping mall complex. Where light could fall in the habitat from the proposed project, it would be biologically insignificant. Riparian habitat approximately 1,100-feet to the southeast in San Dieguito River Park would not experience biologically significant amounts of incidental light from the proposed project, especially in the context of the existing night-time illumination

from the Hodges Golf Improvement Center and the ball fields at Kit Carson Park. Therefore, installation of the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. The proposed project site does not contain any federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404. Incidental light which could fall onto wetland habitats in the vicinity would be biologically insignificant, especially in the context of existing night-time illumination from the I-15 Freeway, Hodges Golf Improvement Center driving range and the ball fields at Kit Carson Park. Therefore, installation of the proposed project would not result in an adverse effect on federally protected wetlands. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.

Impacts During Construction

The area within the Westfield property boundary, and in particular the construction site, was determined not to function as a regional wildlife corridor for any species, and no wildlife nursery sites were identified within the study area. However, the ornamental trees and shrubs within the construction area which will be trimmed or removed support potential nesting habitat for migratory songbirds and raptors. Disturbing or destroying active nests of migratory birds is a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition, nests and eggs are protected under Fish and Game Code Section 3503. Nesting activity typically occurs from February 15 to August 31 for songbirds, and January 15 to August 31 for raptors. To avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds, construction activities should be conducted outside of the nesting season, if feasible. However, if construction activities must occur during the nesting season, the removal of vegetation during the breeding season is considered a potentially significant impact without mitigation. **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** should be implemented to ensure impacts to nesting songbirds and raptors are avoided. With the implementation of this mitigation measure, potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Avoid Migratory Bird Nesting Season or Complete Surveys Before Construction Activities.

Removal of suitable vegetation for migratory birds shall occur outside the nesting season (i.e., September 1 through January 14) to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, if feasible. If vegetation removal is required during the nesting season, within 10 days of the commencement of construction activity, a qualified biologist shall survey the area once within 100 feet of the proposed freeway-oriented sign base for the presence of nesting birds. It should be noted that due to its location a short distance from a busy I-15 Freeway, the Via Rancho Parkway overpass, and Westfield North County parking lots and restaurants, the site is currently subject to a great deal of noise and vibration. Birds found nesting in these conditions have a high tolerance to such disturbances when compared to other birds living in less noisy areas. Consequently the commonly accepted avoidance buffer

distances for nesting songbirds of 300 feet (500 feet for raptors) do not apply. If any active nests are detected it shall be determined by the biologist at what distance, if any, an avoidance buffer needs to be observed. If the biologist determines that an avoidance buffer is necessary to protect the nest, that area shall be delineated, flagged, and avoided until the nesting cycle is complete, or as determined appropriate by the biologist. Biological monitoring shall also occur until the nesting cycle is complete.

Impacts After Construction

Due to the illuminating nature of the proposed project upon completion and its location within a developed area, the only wildlife for which the potential to impact movement exists, are migrating birds. Lights at night can influence wildlife primarily for two reasons: firstly, it can illuminate the environment so wildlife can more easily see, or be seen; and secondly, the light source itself is seen and can be used for orientation or navigation purposes. It has long been recognized that many species of bird migrate at night. It is believed smaller birds and songbirds, including the least Bell's vireo, favor nighttime travel over daytime, because they are less likely to be detected by predators. For the second reason, it is also known artificial lights can attract birds during migration.¹¹ Birds do not appear to rely on the moon for navigation in the larger sense, for example, to determine which direction is north; the moon's position changes nightly and frequently is not visible. Birds may use the moon in a lesser sense when it is visible, to remain on a consistent course throughout one night's travel. Once attracted to artificial lights birds can become disoriented and some have shown a reluctance to leave the sphere of light influence.¹² Spending an inordinate length of time in a lighted area can fatigue the bird and increase its exposure to predation. Some birds, such as homing pigeons and chickens, can have their migration compass disrupted by certain light conditions, but can reorient their paths to a fixed line based on the earth's magnetic field.¹³

Most studies regarding the effects of light on migrating behaviors, however, involve a single or limited number of light sources in an otherwise dark area, such as the moon, a lighthouse or communication towers, which draw birds from wide areas. The proposed project would not be similarly locally prominent, because there are already many sources of existing light, some of them quite substantial, in the surrounding area, such as many tall lampposts with bright lights along I-15 Freeway and in the parking lot of the shopping mall close by. Ball games can begin after dark at Kit Carson Park, for year-round night-time play, and the high intensity field lights remain on for several hours after games begin. Additionally, a bank of high intensity lights illuminating the Hodges Golf Improvement Center, a golf driving range approximately 1,500 feet to the southeast, will dominate the view of any bird approaching from that direction until 10:00 P.M., when they turn off.

Birds can also collide with the lights or their supporting structures, resulting in injury or death, or suffer other consequences relating to the reduction in energy stores such as being unable to complete their migration or delay their arrival to breeding or wintering grounds. The World Wildlife Fund Canada and the Fatal Light Awareness Program concluded that collision of migratory birds with man-made structures

¹¹ Kramer, G. 1949. *On the Directional Tendencies of Nocturnal Zugunruhe of Caged Birds, Ornithologie als biologische Wissenschaft.* Pages 269-283. Carl Winter. Heidelberg, Germany.

¹² Aver, M.P., et al. 1976. *The Effects of a Tall Tower on Nocturnal Bird Migration: A Portable Ceilometer Study.* Auk. Vol. 93 Pages 281-291.

¹³ Wiltchko, R.; Wiltchko, W. 2013. *The Magnetite-Based Receptors in the Beak of Birds and their Role in Avian Navigation.* Journal of Comparative Physiology. Volume 19., Issue 2. Pages 89-98. February 2013.

results in millions of bird deaths in North America alone every year.¹⁴ Most collision related studies involve isolated, tall structures, such as electrical power generating windmills or communication towers. These structures frequently have supporting hardware, such as guy wires that are not illuminated and difficult to see and it is with these components that birds collide. When the proposed LED reader boards are turned on, the supporting pylon would also be illuminated, allowing it to be seen and avoided by birds. After midnight, the entire freeway-oriented sign would be turned off and would not be as attractive, and the nearby lights from the I-15 Freeway and other light sources would allow migrating birds to see and avoid it. Therefore, the potential for adverse impacts in this regard is less than significant, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance (e.g., oak trees or California walnut woodlands)?

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project would require the removal of nine mature trees; five from the construction site and four along the western edge of the Westfield property, as shown in Figure A-3. The City's vegetation and protection and replacement standards, as stated in City of Escondido Ordinance Section 33-1069(a)(4), will be observed. As shown in **Figure B-16, View of Trees to be Removed and Replaced**, the trees to be removed will be replaced at the City standard 1:1 ratio by nine similar species of trees, also illustrated in Figure B-16. There are no "protected" trees, as defined by the City or other agencies, within the construction or replacement areas. Therefore, there would be no conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources, and impacts would be less than significant in this regard. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project and most of the area over which incident light created by it would fall lies within two planning areas: the Draft Escondido Subarea Plan's Southern Area and the San Dieguito River Park (SDRP) Focused Planning Area (FPA). The portion of the study area in the Escondido City limits falls within the Southern Habitat Area of the Draft Escondido Subarea Plan, a Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), which describes the Escondido's proposed measures to conserve natural biotic communities and sensitive plant and wildlife species if the plan is adopted. The San Dieguito River Park, formed in 1989, is the agency responsible for creating a natural open space park in the San Dieguito River Valley and includes the area south of the city border. Its members include the County of San Diego and the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego and Solana Beach. It is empowered to acquire, plan, design, improve, operate and maintain the San Dieguito River Park. The FPA is the area of focus for the agency's efforts. As described, additional light created by the proposed project would be less than biologically significant and as such, the proposed project does not conflict with any provisions of either plan. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

¹⁴ Evens Ogden, L. J. 1996. *Collision Course: The Hazards of Lighted Structures Windows to Migrating Birds*. World Wildlife Fund Canada and the Fatal Light Awareness Program, Toronto, Canada.



Trees to be Removed



Replacement Trees

View of Trees to be Removed and Replaced

Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project
Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2013.

FIGURE

B-16

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V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a. Cause a substantial adverse change in significance of a historical resource as defined in State CEQA §15064.5?

No Impact. A historical resource is defined in Section 15064.5(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines as any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript determined to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California. The proposed project site is not listed on the Historic Resources Inventory database maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation, nor is it listed as a cultural site by the City of Escondido.^{15,16} The proposed project site is an embankment. This embankment was created with soils imported through some combination of the construction of the I-15 Freeway, construction of the Via Rancho Parkway interchange, and/or the shopping center and related improvements. There are no historical resources evident on the site or nearby it, and sub-surface resources can be ruled out due to the presence of imported soils. Therefore, the installation and operation of the proposed project would have no impact upon historical resources. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Cause a substantial adverse change in significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to State CEQA §15064.5?

No Impact. An archaeological resource is defined in Section 15064.5(c) of the CEQA Guidelines as a site, area or place determined to be historically significant as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, or as a unique archaeological resource defined in Section 21083.2 of the Public Resources Code as an artifact, object, or site that contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions of public interest, or that has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest or best example of its type, or that is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person. The proposed project would not include excavation into previously undisturbed native soils, as the 324-square foot concrete pad would be located on an embankment consisting of imported fill material with no historical or archaeological context. There would be no impact to archaeological resources. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact. The proposed project would not include excavation into previously undisturbed native soils, as it would be installed on an embankment comprised of imported fill soils. There would be no impact to paleontological resources or unique geological features. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

¹⁵ *City of Escondido General Plan, Resource Conservation Element, Figure VII-6, Cultural and Agricultural Sites, May 2012.*

¹⁶ *California State Parks, Office of Historic Preservation, database search of California Historical Resources in San Diego County; <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=37>, accessed August 2012.*

d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

No Impact. The proposed project would not include excavation into previously undisturbed areas, as it would be installed on an embankment consisting of imported fill material. Thus, there is no potential for discovery of unknown human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

a. Exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving:**i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

No Impact. Fault rupture is the displacement that occurs along the surface of a fault during an earthquake. Based on criteria established by the California Geological Survey (CGS), faults can be classified as active, potentially active, or inactive. The seismically active region of Southern California is crossed by numerous active and potentially active faults. The CGS has established earthquake fault zones known as Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones around the surface traces of active faults to assist cities and counties in planning, zoning, and building regulation functions. These zones identify areas where potential surface rupture along an active fault could prove hazardous and identify where special studies are required to characterize hazards to habitable structures. According to the CGS, the proposed project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone for surface fault rupture hazards.¹⁷ The closest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is approximately 11 miles to the northeast.¹⁸

Based on current available geologic information, no active faults are known to exist on or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site or in the City.¹⁹ The closest known potentially active fault is the Rose Canyon fault, which lies approximately 20 miles to the west of the City, under the Pacific Ocean.^{20,21} Because there are no known active faults or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones located on the proposed project site or within Escondido, no impacts with regard to fault rupture should be expected on the proposed project site. Furthermore, the proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable building standards and requirements to minimize seismic-related hazards. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

¹⁷ California Geological Survey, *Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps*; http://www.quake.ca.gov/gmaps/ap/ap_maps.htm, accessed August 2012.

¹⁸ California Geological Survey, *Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps*; http://www.quake.ca.gov/gmaps/ap/ap_maps.htm, accessed August 2012.

¹⁹ California Emergency Management Agency, *My Hazards Mapping Program*; <http://myhazards.calema.ca.gov/>, accessed August 2012.

²⁰ County of San Diego General Plan, Chapter 7, *Safety Element, Geological Hazards*, August 2011.

²¹ City of Escondido General Plan, *Community Protection Element, Seismicity and Soils*, May 2012.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. As with all other development in the seismically active region of Southern California, the proposed project could be subject to strong seismic ground shaking during a seismic event. The closest known potentially active fault is the Rose Canyon fault, located approximately 20 miles away. Southern California is located within Seismic Zone 4 which is the most restrictive zone in the U.S. with regard to building design and structural requirements to minimize potential damage during earthquakes.²² The proposed project would be designed and built in conformance with applicable building standards and seismic safety requirements. With adherence to applicable seismic safety requirements, installation and operation of the proposed project would reduce the exposure of people or structures to substantial adverse effects of a seismic event to a less-than-significant level. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. According to CGS and Escondido's General Plan, the proposed project site is not located in an area susceptible to liquefaction.^{23,24} The soil underlying the proposed project site consists of older alluvial river deposits, moderately consolidated sediments, and silty sand with gravel and clay.²⁵ These soils have generally low susceptibility to seismic-induced settlement. Furthermore, the proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable building standards and seismic safety requirements to minimize seismic-related hazards. Based on the above, impacts due to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. The CGS has delineated seismic hazard zones in areas where the potential for strong ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, and other ground failures due to seismic events are likely to occur. In addition, Escondido's General Plan Community Element has mapped areas susceptible to landslides, as well as the approximate location of slopes greater than 25 percent.²⁶

The proposed project site and surrounding area are relatively flat. There are no known landslides at the site, nor is the site in the path of any known or potential landslides. According to the CGS, the proposed project site is not located in a delineated landslide zone, nor is it located in a City-designated landslide area.²⁷ Based on the existing geologic conditions, the proposed project site is not susceptible to landslides. Thus, no impacts regarding landslides would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

²² *County of San Diego General Plan, Chapter 7, Safety Element, Geological Hazards, August 2011.*

²³ *California Emergency Management Agency, My Hazards Mapping Program; <http://myhazards.calema.ca.gov/>, accessed August 2012.*

²⁴ *City of Escondido General Plan, Community Protection Element, Figure VI-9, Seismic and Geologic Hazards, May 2012.*

²⁵ *California Division of Mines and Geology, in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, Geologic Map of the Escondido 7.5' Quadrangle, San Diego County, California: A Digital Database, 1999; ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/rgmp/Prelim_geo_pdf/escondido.pdf, accessed August 2012.*

²⁶ *City of Escondido General Plan, Community Protection Element, Figure VI-9, Seismic and Geologic Hazards, May 2012.*

²⁷ *California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey, Landslide Inventory Maps; http://www.quake.ca.gov/gmaps/LSIM/lisim_maps.htm; accessed August 2012.*

b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project involves the installation of the proposed project on a very small site (less than 0.1 acre), within an embankment between a shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. There would be minimal soil erosion resulting from installation or operation of the Proposed Project, as the area upon which the freeway-oriented sign would be installed is approximately 324 square feet. In order to access electrical power from the main shopping mall structure for the proposed project, some minor, shallow trenching to run electrical connections within the surface parking lot may be required. Therefore, impacts related to soil erosion or loss of topsoil would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potential result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

No Impact. According to the California Division of Mines and Geology, the proposed project site is underlain by Pleistocene age alluvial river deposits and is not susceptible to either lateral spreading or landslides.²⁸ Subsidence is a localized mass movement that involves the gradual downward settling or sinking of the ground, occurring occasionally from the extraction of mineral resources, subsurface oil, groundwater, or other subsurface liquids, such as natural gas. The proposed project site is not located within an area of known subsidence associated with oil or ground water withdrawal, peat oxidation or hydro-compaction. Furthermore, the proposed project does not include the extraction of oil or groundwater from aquifers under the proposed project site. As such, the potential for subsidence to occur on site is low.

Overall, the proposed project site does not exhibit characteristics that would result in the potential for significant geotechnical hazards. Therefore, by complying with State and local regulations, the proposed project would have adequate structural protection from potential impacts associated with an unstable geologic unit or soils, and there would be no associated impacts. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

No Impact. Expansive soils are typically associated with fine-grained clayey soils that have the potential to shrink and swell with repeated cycles of wetting and drying. The soils beneath the proposed project site are not identified as expansive soils.²⁹ Therefore, installation of the proposed project would result in no impacts associated with expansive soils, and substantial risks to life or property would not occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

²⁸ California Division of Mines and Geology, in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, *Geologic Map of the Escondido 7.5' Quadrangle, San Diego County, California: A Digital Database, 1999*; ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/rgmp/Prelim_geo_pdf/escondido.pdf, accessed August 2012.

²⁹ *County of San Diego General Plan, Chapter 7, Safety Element, Figure S-4, Expansive Clays, August 2011.*

e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. The proposed project site is located in an urbanized area served by an existing sewer infrastructure; however, it would not necessitate the use of wastewater disposal systems or be connected to any water utility lines. Therefore, there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment, based on any applicable threshold of significance?

Less Than Significant Impact. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions may be attributable to installation activities as well as ongoing operations. Installation of the proposed project would not exceed two months, during which activity would be intermittent as phases are staged, equipment scheduled, and concrete cures, etc. Related installation emissions are generally associated with fossil fuel-powered on-site construction equipment and off-site vehicles used to transport construction workers and supplies. Installation of the proposed project would require a small construction crew to clear and prepare the site (during construction expected to involve less than 0.1 acre and thereafter only 324 square feet, or 0.007 acre), place the forms for the concrete base, pour the concrete, set the steel support pole and mount the tenant sign cabinet and LED reader boards. Vehicular emissions would be associated with construction workers' trips, an excavator, occasional trucks to haul excavated materials and deliver concrete, and to finish, a crane to lift the freeway-oriented sign elements into place. GHG emissions from this entire operation would be on the order of the GHG emissions generated from the regular activities and operations from five single-family homes in the proposed project locale for the same two-month period. Considering the very small scale of needed installation activities and the very short duration, the indicated emissions would be considered negligible relative to any threshold or standard. As such, GHG emissions due to installation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

Following installation, the proposed project would be powered by electric power drawn from the grid of power plants and distribution systems throughout western North America. Most of this power is generated out of the San Diego Air Basin. Such power consumption would be the proposed project's only source of GHG emissions. Based on communication from Westfield North County, the average annual electrical consumption for the proposed project would be about 30,000 kilowatt hours, which is only about 0.7 percent of the total annual electrical consumption for the entire Westfield North County shopping center. In turn, Westfield North County's annual electrical consumption is a small fraction of total power consumption in the City of Escondido. This comparison demonstrates that the proposed project's electrical consumption, and its GHG emissions as a derivative, would be statistically insignificant in the context of either the City of Escondido, or even less so, in all of the San Diego Air Basin.

Based on the foregoing assessment, impacts from GHG emissions, as a result of installation and operation of the proposed project, would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact. Escondido has not yet developed a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan that meets the requirements set forth in the latest OPR guidelines, although a Draft Climate Action Plan has been prepared.³⁰ Through incorporation of project design features, such as energy efficient LED technology and automatic timers, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation to reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, there would be no impacts in this regard. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact. Installation of the proposed project would involve the use of minor amounts of vehicle fuels, oils, and transmission fluids, etc. Operation of the proposed project would involve the use and storage of small quantities of cleaning and other maintenance-related supplies. Any of these materials can become hazardous under certain circumstances. All such materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations. Any associated risk would be routinely reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with these standards and regulations. As such, installation and operation of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact with regard to routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials relative to the safety of the public or the environment. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project would not be assembled with or from materials that can be hazardous, nor would it store any. Therefore, no reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions creating significant hazard to the public or environment would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact. There are no existing or proposed schools within one-quarter mile of the proposed project site. The closest school is San Pasqual High School, which is approximately 0.7 mile east of the site. The proposed project would neither emit hazardous emissions nor cause the handling of acutely hazardous materials, substances or wastes. As such, the proposed project would result in no impacts regarding hazardous

³⁰ *City of Escondido Draft Climate Action Plan, January 12, 2012; prepared for the City of Escondido Community Development Department by Atkins; <http://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/PDFs/Planning/GPUupdate/DraftClimateActionPlan.pdf>, accessed March 2013.*

materials at any existing or proposed schools. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. Government Code Section 65962.5, amended in 1992, requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to develop and update annually the Cortese List, which is a list of hazardous waste sites and other contaminated sites. While Government Code Section 65962.5 makes reference to the preparation of a list, many changes have occurred related to web-based information access since 1992 and information regarding the Cortese List is now compiled on the websites of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the State Water Board, and CalEPA. The DTSC maintains the EnviroStor database, which includes sites on the Cortese List and also identifies potentially hazardous sites where cleanup actions (such as a removal action) or extensive investigations are planned or have occurred. The database provides a listing of Federal Superfund sites [National Priorities List (NPL)]; State Response sites; Voluntary Cleanup sites; and School Cleanup sites.

Based on a review of the EnviroStor database, the proposed project site and any of its former uses are not identified on any of the above lists.³¹ In addition, the proposed project site is not on the State Water Board's Geotracker Database, which provides a list of leaking underground storage tank sites that are included on the Cortese List.³² Lastly, the proposed project site is not listed on CalEPA's list of sites with active Cease and Desist Orders (CDO) or Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAO) or list of contaminated solid waste disposal sites.³³ As such, no impacts would occur in this regard. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of an airport. The nearest public airport to the proposed project site is Ramona Airport, a general aviation airport located approximately 9.25 miles east of the site, in the City of Ramona. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in an airport-related safety hazard for people residing or working in the area, and no impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for the people residing or working in the area?

No Impact. There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the proposed project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in airport-related safety hazards for the people residing or working in the

³¹ Department of Toxic Substances Control, Envirostor Database; <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>, accessed August 2012.

³² State Water Board Geotracker Database; <http://www.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/search/>, accessed August 2012.

³³ CalEPA's List of Active CDO and CAO sites; <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/CorteseList/CDOCAOList.xls>, accessed August 2012.

area. No impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project site is proposed to be located on an embankment between a large shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. It would neither impair the implementation, nor physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plans. No impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project site is currently within the embankment between a shopping center's surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. This site is part of a landscaped buffer along Westfield North County's frontage along the I-15 Freeway. This buffer is improved with ornamental landscaping and could not be mistaken for wildlands. According to the State of California, the proposed project site is not located in a "very high fire hazard severity zone"; but is adjacent to an area of risk.³⁴ The proposed project site is located in an area designated as having a high fire hazard rating, according to the Escondido's General Plan.³⁵ The proposed project would not have flammable elements. Thus, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, and impacts would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project site is a small section, less than 0.1 acre, of an embankment between a shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. The site is gently sloped but levels off as it approaches the surface parking lot. Stormwater runoff from the site is directed to surrounding streets (Westfield Way, Beethoven Drive and Bear Valley Parkway) and Escondido's storm drain system. Due to the proposed project's very limited land coverage, altering some 324 square feet of this site with the introduction of a concrete base (on which the freeway-oriented sign would be mounted), there would be virtually no effect on surface water runoff therefrom.

Construction projects with a disturbed area of less than one acre are not included under the State General Construction Activities Storm Water Permit (General Permit) and therefore, are not required by the State

³⁴ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, *Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA as Recommended by CAL FIRE*; ftp://frap.cdf.ca.gov/fhszlocalmaps/san_diego/Escondido.pdf, accessed August 2012.

³⁵ City of Escondido General Plan, *Community Protection Element, Figure VI-6, Wildfire Risk, May 2012.*

Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to develop a State Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). As the site being disturbed is less than one acre in size (the base pad would be approximately 324 square feet, or about 0.007 acre), a SWPPP is not required. Installation of the proposed project would comply with applicable regulations.³⁶ Impacts would be less than significant in this regard. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

- b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned land uses for which permits have been granted)?**

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is planned to be sited within the embankment between the shopping center's surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. The proposed project would be mounted atop a 324-square-foot concrete base pad which would increase the amount of impervious surface area by a statistically insignificant amount, relative to the whole of such impervious surfaces overlying the local aquifers. The proposed project would not require the use of any groundwater resources, as it would not require the use of water during its operation or be connected to any water utilities. As such, the proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge, and this impact would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

- c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?**

No Impact. The proposed project would alter a small existing area of soil surface to a small concrete base, but otherwise would have no further effect on any existing drainage pattern, regardless of its form. As such, no impacts would occur with regard to siltation or erosion. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

- d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off site?**

No Impact. Given the post-installation size of the project site at 0.007 acre, the proposed project would not result in any change in any existing drainage pattern and could not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface water runoff. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

- e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?**

No Impact. Given the post-installation size of the project site at 0.007 acre, the proposed project could not have a meaningful change in the runoff volumes from the site or the local drainage area to which it is

³⁶ City of Escondido, Storm Water Program; <http://www.escondido.org/storm-water-program.aspx>, accessed August 2012.

tributary. As such, the proposed project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, and no impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

No Impact. The proposed project would not have an effect on waste discharge, drainage patterns, increased surface runoff or flows, deplete groundwater, increase impervious surfaces, or otherwise substantially degrade water quality, due to its design, location and very small size. As such, the proposed project would have no impact on water quality. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

g. Place housing within a 100-year flood plain as mapped on federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within a 100-year flood plain as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and does not propose to develop housing.^{37,38} As such, installation of the proposed project would not place housing within a 100-year flood plain, and no impacts would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

h. Place within a 100-year flood plain structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within a FEMA-designated 100-year flood plain. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

No Impact. The proposed project is not located within a designated inundation area associated with the failure of a levee or dam.³⁹ As such, impacts associated with the exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding would not occur, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. The proposed project site is located approximately 13 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and is not in close proximity to an enclosed body of water. The nearest body of water is Lake Hodges, which lies at a lower elevation than the proposed project site, approximately 0.75 mile to the south. As such, there is no potential for exposure of people to a seiche or a tsunami. In addition, the site is not positioned in an area of

³⁷ City of Escondido General Plan, Community Protection Element, Figure VI-7, 100 Year Flood Hazard Zones, May 2012.

³⁸ Federal Emergency Management Agency, Map Service Center, Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRMette) prepared for the City of Escondido; <https://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/FemaWelcomeView?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&userType=G>, accessed August 2012.

³⁹ City of Escondido General Plan, Community Protection Element, Figure VI-8, Dam Failure Inundation Areas, May 2012.

potential mudflow. Thus, no impacts associated with inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflows would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a. Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. Installation of the proposed project would not divide an established community, as the proposed project would be placed within the embankment between the I-15 Freeway and Westfield North County's surface parking lot. The proposed project site is located in a developed commercial center, and its installation would not change the current land use of the site. As such, there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less Than Significant Impact. Local and regional plans guide development within the proposed project area. Each of these plans is discussed below and policy compliance is evaluated in tabular summaries where appropriate. Other programs and plans that typically apply to proposed development in southern California, such as those developed by San Diego Association of Governments, do not apply to the proposed project, due to its limited scope and size, and are not discussed further.

City of Escondido General Plan

The City of Escondido General Plan, adopted in May 2012, provides general guidance on land use matters for the entire City. The Land Use and Community Form Element guides land use and development of the proposed project site and other areas in the City.⁴⁰ The proposed project site is located in southern Escondido, and it is zoned Planned Development – Commercial (PD-C), with a corresponding General Plan land use designation of Planned Commercial.^{41,42} The General Plan describes Westfield North County as a planned commercial multistory regional shopping center with several anchor tenants, smaller in-line shops and free-standing up-scale dining establishments. The site is owned by the City of Escondido and is under long-term lease to Westfield. In Planned Development zones, permitted uses are identified in each planned development master plan approval.⁴³

The proposed project would be consistent with the Planned Commercial designation. Planned Commercial sites allow a variety of commercial activities within a self-contained, comprehensively planned center, including office and professional uses, tourist serving facilities, specialty retail, and other retail/service

⁴⁰ *City of Escondido General Plan, Land Use and Community Form, May 2012.*

⁴¹ *Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 33, Article 16, Section 33-331.*

⁴² *City of Escondido General Plan, Chapter II, Land Use and Community Form, May 2012, Figure II-1 "Land Uses".*

⁴³ *Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 33, Article 16, Section 33-332.*

businesses.⁴⁴ Planned Commercial areas are located along major thoroughfares, at major roadway intersections and in higher density urban nodes served by transit.⁴⁵ The proposed project would be consistent with such a designation.

The larger Westfield North County property, including the proposed project site, is identified as a General Plan Opportunity Target Area, where land use changes are anticipated and encouraged to implement the core themes of a) opportunities to live, work and play; b) protect, preserve and revitalize neighborhoods; and c) conserve and sustain resources.⁴⁶ In General Plan Opportunity Areas, Escondido is to focus infrastructure improvements to promote development and redevelopment, enhance job growth, increase housing options, and revitalize the community.⁴⁷

The proposed project would be consistent with these core themes, and would provide information to the public by advertising establishments, businesses or services located on, or offered from, Westfield North County, and/or will advertise any sponsors of any portion of the site, products or any goods displayed, produced or available for purchase at the shopping center, or any events that will occur at the shopping center. The proposed project would also preserve neighborhoods and would conserve and sustain resources by siting the freeway-oriented sign within an already built-up commercial area. The proposed project would add a new element to this important intersection and Escondido gateway, continuing the ongoing updating of Westfield North County.

The proposed project would include uses which would be compatible with its designated zoning and land use, as well as the other commercial/retail uses in the surrounding area, it would not result in significant physical land use impacts.

Escondido Municipal Code

The Escondido Municipal Code outdoor lighting ordinance was enacted with the purpose and intent of minimizing unnecessary glare for the benefit of the citizens of Escondido and astronomical research at Palomar Observatory, located approximately 23 miles to the northeast.⁴⁸ Escondido Municipal Code Section 33-711(f) requires that certain outdoor light fixtures be turned off between 11:00 P.M. and sunrise; however, Section 33-713 allows signs and billboards of business facilities which are open to the public between the 11:00 P.M. and sunrise to remain illuminated, but only for so long as the facility is open.

The proposed project is proposed to operate from 5:00 A.M. to midnight; operation of the proposed project after 11:00 P.M. is permitted, because businesses on the site are open after 11:00 P.M. In addition, the existing parking lot pole lights are currently permitted to remain illuminated until midnight, and other parking lot security light is illuminated from sunset to sunrise.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy or regulation, as it would be in compliance with the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form

⁴⁴ *City of Escondido General Plan, Chapter II, Land Use and Community Form, May 2012, at page II-30 and Figure II-7, Planned Commercial Areas.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid, Figure II-6, General Plan Land Use Designations, at page II-24.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid, at page II-61 and Figure II-18, Opportunity Areas.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid, at page II-72, Target Area 7 Guiding Principles.*

⁴⁸ *Escondido Municipal Code, Article 35, Outdoor Lighting, Section 33-711 (Zoning Code Chapter 107, Section 1072.11).*

Element and the Escondido Municipal Code sections regarding outdoor lighting. Furthermore, City approval of the proposed project's content and operating hours still would need to be obtained prior to its installation. As such, impacts would be considered less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project site is designated as a Planned Development – Commercial land use. No habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan applies to the proposed project site; however, the area over which incidental light created by the proposed project may fall, lies within two plan areas: the SDRP FPA and the MSCP. Additional light created by the proposed project would be less than biologically significant and, as such, it does not conflict with any provisions of either plan. In addition, the proposed project site is not located within a sensitive natural community, as designated by the City of Escondido or the County of San Diego. The proposed project location is within an embankment between the shopping center's surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. As such, the proposed project would not conflict with a habitat conservation plan, and impacts would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**
- b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?**

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within a City-designated Mineral Resource Zone, where significant mineral deposits are known to be present, nor is the site classified as a mineral producing area by the California or U.S. Geological Surveys.⁴⁹ No permitted mineral extraction operations occur on the proposed project site or in Escondido.⁵⁰ The likelihood of uncovering mineral resources during installation of the proposed project is negligible, due to its location within an embankment and the 324-square-foot base pad size. The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or a mineral resource recovery site, and no impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

⁴⁹ State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, U.S. Geological Survey (2000), *Map of California Principal Mineral-Producing Localities*; <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/state/980601mp.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

⁵⁰ California Department of Conservation, *Mine Reclamation – AB 3098 List*; http://www.conservation.ca.gov/omr/ab_3098_list/Documents/July2012AB3098.pdf, accessed August 2012.

XII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

a. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not be equipped with speakers, and no sound would emanate from it. As such, there would be no noise as a result of its operation. Escondido identifies noise sensitive receptors, and the nearest identified sensitive receptor is Kit Carson Park, which lies approximately 1,700 feet (or approximately 0.3 mile) from the proposed project site.⁵¹ Installation of the proposed project would require the intermittent use of minimal construction equipment; however, this would be for a short duration (approximately two months). The nearest sensitive receptor is over one-quarter mile away, with the primary structure of the shopping center and parking lot intervening. The closest residential uses are over 800 feet from the proposed project site, and across the I-15 Freeway. Noise from installation of the proposed project would not be perceptible in residential areas, due to the existing ambient noise from over 200,000 average daily vehicles travelling on the I-15 Freeway. As such, noise impacts from the installation and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact. Installation of the proposed project would not produce significant levels of groundborne vibration, as installation is not likely to involve activities which would produce significant levels of vibration. Operation of the proposed project would produce no vibration or noise, as it consists of LED reader boards installed upon a tenant sign cabinet, with no external audio components. As such, ground-borne vibration and noise levels associated with the proposed project would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

No Impact. The existing noise environment in the proposed project area is dominated by traffic noise from nearby roadways, including the I-15 Freeway, Via Rancho Parkway, Beethoven Drive, and from shopping center activities. Long-term operation of the proposed project would not have an effect on the community noise environment in proximity to the site, as the proposed project does not emit any noise. As such, the proposed project would cause no substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity above levels existing without it, and there would be no impact. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

⁵¹ *City of Escondido General Plan, Community Protection Element, Figure VI-10, Sensitive Receptors/Noise Generators, May 2012.*

d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would result in a minimal increase in noise for a short duration during its installation, due to the presence of minimal construction equipment operating in the surface parking lot of the shopping center. There would be no substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels, and impacts would be less than significant. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within an airport land use plan area or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. Therefore, installation and operation of the proposed project would not expose people to excessive airport related noise levels. No impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, heliport or helistop, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, heliport or helistop. Therefore, it would not expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels from such uses. No impact would occur. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

a. Induce substantial population growth in an area either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation of the freeway-oriented sign for an existing shopping center, for the purpose of providing information to the public by advertising establishments, businesses or services located on, or offered from, Westfield North County, and/or will advertise any sponsors of any portion of the site, products or any goods displayed, produced or available for purchase at the shopping center, or any events that will occur at the shopping center. No new residential, commercial, or other uses are proposed. Therefore, the proposed project would have no direct or indirect impacts on population growth. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project site is currently an embankment between a shopping center surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. As there are no residential units on this site, installation of the proposed project would not displace existing residences, and no impact would occur to existing housing. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

c. Displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project site is currently an embankment between a shopping center surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. As there are no residential units on this site, installation of the proposed project would not displace existing residences, and no impact would occur to existing housing. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

a. Fire protection.**b. Police protection.**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of the freeway-oriented sign on an embankment between Westfield North County's southern surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. No related modifications to the parking lot or shopping center are proposed, other than those necessary to install the proposed project and to provide electrical connectivity. Installation of the proposed project would not adversely affect service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire or police protection, or require new or expanded facilities for the provision of those services. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

c. Schools.**d. Parks.****e. Other governmental services (including roads).**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of the freeway-oriented sign. Installation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly create demand for schools or parks, since such demand is typically generated by a substantial increase in the residential or employee population on a project site or in a project area. The proposed project would not generate new students, would not cause an increase in the local population, and would have no impacts related to other governmental services or infrastructure. No further analysis of these issues is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

XV. RECREATION

- a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of the freeway-oriented sign on an embankment between Westfield North County's southern surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. Installation of the proposed project would not increase demand for parks or recreational facilities, since such demand is typically generated by a substantial increase in the residential or employee population on a project site or in a project area that requires such amenities. The proposed project would not cause an increase in the local population. No further analysis of these issues is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

- b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of the freeway-oriented sign on an embankment between Westfield North County's southern surface parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. No recreational amenities are proposed as part of the project, and therefore no related impacts on the environment would occur. No further analysis of these issues is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Would the project:

- a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?**

No Impact. The proposed project would not introduce new land uses or generate traffic trips that would increase congestion on roadways or at intersections in the proposed project area. Implementation of the proposed project would be confined to installation of the freeway-oriented sign on the existing embankment between a shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. As such, there would be no conflict with any plans, ordinances, or policies governing vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian circulation or mass transit. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

- b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?**

No Impact. The Congestion Management Program (CMP) is a state-mandated program enacted by the State legislature to address impacts that urban congestion has on local communities and the region as a whole.

Due to the limited nature of the proposed project, there would be no new land uses or generation of traffic trips that would increase congestion at designated CMP intersections or on CMP roadways. Installation of the proposed project would not conflict with or preclude implementation of the CMP, and no impacts related to the CMP are anticipated. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. The proposed project site is not located near an existing airport and does not include any aviation-related uses. Accordingly, there would be no resulting safety risks related to air traffic. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less Than Significant Impact. There are no existing hazardous design features such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections within the proposed project vicinity, and there are no incompatible uses being proposed. In addition, installation of the proposed project would not involve modifications beyond the embankment upon which it would be placed. Thus, no impacts affecting the physical alignments of existing roadways or freeways would be caused by the proposed project.

Project Design Features

The proposed project includes the installation of 48-foot wide by 14-foot tall LED reader boards atop a freeway-oriented sign. The LED reader boards would be affixed to a supporting frame, with the display panels oriented to the north and the south, along the I-15 Freeway alignment. The freeway-oriented sign would be 87.5 feet tall and would support the LED reader boards, below which would be internally illuminated channel letters bearing the "Westfield" name and the tenant sign cabinet, listing the on-site anchor retailers. As such, the proposed project is intended to be, and would be, visible to motorists along both the northbound and southbound I-15 Freeway.

The proposed hours of operation for the LED reader boards, which also defines their period of illumination, would be from 5:00 A.M. to midnight daily. The LED reader boards would be equipped with multi-direction light sensing equipment which would adjust the brightness of the proposed project according to current lighting and weather conditions. As such, the LED reader boards would be more brightly illuminated during day light hours, which is necessary for the content to be clearly visible during the day-time. Its lighting intensity at night would be reduced by some 97 percent, as compared with the proposed project's lighting intensity during daylight. The tenant sign cabinet would be internally illuminated from sunset to midnight. The freeway-oriented sign's light control provisions comply with local, federal and industry light output standards.

The message content on the proposed LED reader boards would advertise establishments, businesses or services located on, or offered from, Westfield North County, and/or will advertise any sponsors of any portion of the site, products or any goods displayed, produced or available for purchase at the shopping center, or any events that will occur at the shopping center. Signs can be considered safety-neutral when

they look and behave like a conventional billboard, and when their illumination is attenuated at night.⁵² Operation of the proposed project is considered safety-neutral, as the messages would remain on the screen for eight seconds before switching to another static screen image. There would be no moving or flashing images. Each image would simply change every eight seconds without fading or changing effects on the screen. By the time the proposed project comes into view, a motorist driving at 60 miles per hour along the I-15 Freeway from a distance of one-half mile away, would only get a glance at three to four images on the screen before they drive past it.

Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations

Outdoor signage in the State of California is regulated by the Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations (the Act), which was most recently amended in January 2013.⁵³ Administered by Caltrans, the Act governs billboards and other roadway-oriented signage that is located within 660 feet of the rights-of-way of an interstate or primary highway and is visible from the highway; and signage located along and visible from other primary highways within unincorporated areas. The intent of the Act is to preserve the primacy of traffic safety signs and prevent their confusion with advertising; insure that advertising displays do not interfere with motorist visibility or vision; and safeguard the public interest in natural features along the State's highways, while still preserving the right to advertise as a reasonable use of commercial property.

The Act prohibits displays that obstruct the motorists' visibility of traffic signs; displays that appear to simulate or imitate traffic safety signs giving warning to motorists; displays that include red or blinking or intermittent light unlikely to be mistaken for a warning or danger signals; displays with illumination that could be considered vision-impairing due to brilliance; or displays placed upon trees or painted upon rocks or other natural features. The Act also limits sign animation or message/image sequencing (flashing) on digital or electronic signs to changes in content frequency of not less than every four seconds.

The proposed project would comply with the above provisions of the Act, as it would not obstruct motorists' visibility of traffic signs as a result of its placement in the embankment at the edge of the Westfield North County parking lot, and neither its design nor its content would be perceived to simulate traffic safety signs to motorists. The proposed project is limited to the installation of the freeway-oriented sign for an existing shopping center, for the purpose of providing information to the public by advertising establishments, businesses or services located on, or offered from, Westfield North County, and products or any goods displayed, produced or available for purchase at the shopping center, or any events that will occur at the shopping center. No element of the proposed project would contain a red, blinking or intermittent light or signal that could be mistaken for a warning sign. The proposed intensity of the illuminated tenant sign cabinet or the LED reader boards would not be sufficient to cause vision impairment during the day or at night.⁵⁴ Finally, the digitally sequenced imaging of the proposed project would not change more frequently than every four seconds, but rather every eight seconds, without fading or other animated effects.

⁵² Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Center for Automotive Safety Research, "Driving Performance and Digital Billboards – Final Report", March 22, 2007.

⁵³ State of California, *Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations, 2013 Edition*, http://www.dot.ca.gov/oda/download/ODA_Act_&_Regulations.pdf, accessed August 2013.

⁵⁴ *The LED pylon sign would be consistent with California Vehicle Code Section 21466.5, as the illumination would not be considered vision-impairing due to brilliance, as the measured brightness would not exceed the stated standard.*

Review of Driver Distraction Studies

The LED reader boards would be at a reduced level of illumination at night, at approximately three percent of its maximum luminance. The brightness of the proposed project is also greatly affected by the angle of the viewer as they are more perpendicular to it. Motorists along the I-15 Freeway alignment would have the most direct view of the LED reader boards when they are most perpendicular to them. The topic of driver distraction has been the subject of many scholarly research articles, and conclusions for several of these studies, as they relate to the effect of LED reader boards (also called electronic or digital billboards), are described below.

A study entitled *“Driving Performance and Digital Billboards,”* prepared by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Center for Automotive Safety Research, in 2007, examined driver performance in the presence of digital billboards, as compared to other driving locations without them.⁵⁵ The overall conclusion of this study is that digital billboards seem to attract more attention than conventional billboards, so there seems to be some aspect of digital billboards that holds the drivers’ attention, once the driver has glanced that way. This is most likely the result of the intrinsic lighting of these signs, which is noticeable even during the daytime. Although exploratory in nature, the night-time results were very similar to the daytime results.

The digital billboards in this study were considered safety-neutral in their design and operation from a human factors perspective, because they changed only once every eight seconds, and they changed instantaneously, with no special effects or video. They looked very much like a conventional billboard and their luminance was attenuated at night. Due to the lack of crash causation data, no conclusions were drawn regarding the ultimate safety of digital billboards in this study. Although there were some measurable changes in driver performance in the presence of digital billboards, in many cases these differences were akin to those associated with everyday driving, such as other on-premises signs located at businesses.

A second study entitled *“A Study of the Relationship between Digital Billboards and Traffic Safety in Cuyahoga County, Ohio,”* prepared by Tantala Associates Consulting Engineers, in 2007, examined the statistical relationship between certain digital billboards and traffic safety to determine if any correlation existed.⁵⁶ The overall conclusion of this study states that digital billboards have no statistical relationship with the occurrence of accidents. The analysis and statistics in this study demonstrate that accidents are no more likely to occur along sections of interstate routes near digital billboards than those without them. The frequency of traffic accidents may be more attributable to, and correlated with, other factors such as driving under the influence, adverse weather conditions, excessive speeding, or other driver initiated tasks.

A third study entitled *“Driving Performance in the Presence and Absence of Billboards,”* prepared by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Center for Crash Causation and Human Factors, in 2003, examined whether there is any change in driving behavior in the presence or absence of billboards.⁵⁷ The overall conclusion of this study is that the presence of billboards does not cause a change in driver behavior, in terms of visual behavior, speed maintenance, or lane keeping. A rigorous examination of individual billboards considered to be more visually attention-getting, demonstrated no relationship between glance

⁵⁵ Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Center for Automotive Safety Research, *“Driving Performance and Digital Billboards – Final Report,”* March 22, 2007.

⁵⁶ Tantala Associates Consulting Engineers, *“A Study of the Relationship Between Digital Billboards and Traffic Safety in Cuyahoga County, Ohio,”* July 7, 2007.

⁵⁷ Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Center for Crash Causation and Human Factors, *“Driving Performance in the Presence and Absence of Billboards,”* Executive Summary, December 15, 2003.

location and billboard location. Driving performance measures in the presence of these specific billboards generally showed less speed variation and lane deviation. Neither visual behavior nor driving behavior was shown to change, even in the presence of the most visually attention-getting billboards.

A final study entitled, *Research Review of Potential Safety Effects of Electronic Billboards on Driver Attention and Distraction*,⁵⁸ prepared by the Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety Research and Development, in 2001, examined the potential safety implications of electronic billboards on driving safety.⁵⁸ In most instances examined in this review, researchers were unable to verify that an electronic billboard was a major factor in causing an accident. Research regarding driver familiarity with their routes demonstrated that visual fixations on roadway signs decreases as route familiarity increases, thereby indicating that there may be a difference between commuters and visiting drivers. There is research that commuters may not even look at an electronic billboard.

The conclusions of these studies demonstrate that the presence of LED, electronic or digital billboards does not cause an increase in accidents due to driver distraction.

Based on the above, including incorporation of project design features for the proposed project, the “safety-neutral” operation of the LED reader boards, compliance with applicable regulations, and the consensus of several scholarly research articles on the subject of driver distraction due to electronic or digital billboards, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant in this regard. Further analysis of this issue is not necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

e. Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact. Emergency access to the site is provided by a prime arterial, Via Rancho Parkway.⁵⁹ Access to the proposed project site and Westfield North County is provided by a driveway on Westfield Way which provides primary site ingress and egress. Secondary access is provided from driveways along Beethoven Drive at the eastern side of Westfield North County. No change to these facilities is proposed in conjunction with the proposed project. Accordingly, the proposed project would have no adverse impacts on emergency access to the proposed project site or in its vicinity. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project site is located in an area that is highly accessible by public transit, including North County Transit District (NCTD) and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System buses, and a NCTD “Breeze Rapid” bus station is located on Beethoven Drive at the east side of the shopping center. This purpose would not adversely affect the performance of, or conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycles, or pedestrian use. The proposed project will have no impact on adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease

⁵⁸ Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety Research and Development, “Research Review of Potential Safety Effects of Electronic Billboards on Driver Attention and Distraction – Final Report”, September 11, 2001.

⁵⁹ City of Escondido General Plan, Mobility and Infrastructure, Roadway Classifications, Figure III-6, Circulation Diagram and pages III-15 to III-17.

the performance or safety of such facilities. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**
- b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of a freeway-oriented sign within an embankment between a shopping center parking lot and the I-15 Freeway. No new land uses or expansion of existing uses on-site are proposed, and therefore, installation of the proposed project would not generate any increase in wastewater over existing conditions. No connections to water or wastewater systems are proposed. Accordingly, the proposed project would not exceed applicable wastewater treatment requirements or require construction or expansion of existing wastewater treatment facilities. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

- c. Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

No Impact. The proposed project would not alter existing stormwater runoff volumes, patterns, or rates by altering existing drainage. The proposed project site is approximately 324 square feet within an embankment. Flows conveyed by the existing municipal storm drain system would not increase, as a result of the proposed project's presence. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

- d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resource, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?**

No Impact. The proposed project is limited to the installation and operation of the sign. No new land uses or expansion of existing uses on-site are proposed as part of the proposed project, and therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not generate any increase in demand for water over existing conditions. The proposed project would not require connections to existing water infrastructure. Accordingly, the proposed project does not seek entitlement for increased water supplies. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

- e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

No Impact. No new land uses or expansion of existing uses on-site are proposed as part of the proposed project, and therefore, its implementation would not generate any increase in wastewater over existing conditions. The proposed project would not connect to any wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Accordingly, the proposed project would not exceed applicable wastewater treatment requirements or require construction or expansion of existing wastewater treatment facilities. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures are required.

f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would generate little construction debris, mainly related to modest site clearing and packaging of the freeway-oriented sign elements. Operation of the proposed project would not generate solid waste. As such, there would be less than significant impact on landfill capacity as a result of the installation and operation of the proposed project. Further analysis of this issue is not necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. The proposed project would be consistent with the applicable regulations associated with solid waste, as the proposed project would generate little construction debris, and its operation would not generate solid waste. No further analysis of this issue is necessary, and no mitigation measures would be required.

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on the information provided above, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment, due to its limited scope and negligible impacts to biological resources or their habitats. No important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory would be affected by the proposed project.

b. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less Than Significant Impact. Cumulative impacts are concluded to be less than significant for those issues for which it has been determined that the proposed project would have no impact. Environmental issues meeting this criterion include agricultural resources, cultural resources, mineral resources, population and housing, public services and recreation. Compliance with applicable federal, state and City regulations would preclude significant cumulative impacts with regard to geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and utilities and service systems.

Other than on-going renovation at Westfield North County, there are no known related projects proposed for development within the proposed project locale, and there are no other LED freeway-oriented signs

proposed within the City of Escondido. Impacts are considered to be less than significant with respect to the environmental issues of aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gases, and transportation and traffic. As proposed project-related impacts from these environmental issues would be considered statistically insignificant, cumulative impacts from related projects would also be statistically insignificant. As such, no significant cumulatively considerable impacts would occur as a result of the proposed project.

c. Does the project have environmental effects which cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on the documentation provided above, implementation of the proposed project would not cause environmental effects that cause substantial direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings.

APPENDIX A - RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

The Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft MND) was made available to various public agencies, citizen groups, and interested individuals for a 30-day public review period from October 25, 2013 through November 25, 2013. This appendix to the Final MND presents the one comment letter submitted during the public comment period for the Draft MND.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 11, DIVISION OF PLANNING

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November 25, 2013

11-SD-15

PM 26.97

Westfield North County Digital Pylon Sign
PHG 13-0023Jay Paul
City of Escondido
201 Noth Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear Mr. Paul:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) received the Notice of Intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Westfield North County Digital Pylon Sign near Interstate 15 (I-15) in the City of Escondido. Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans has confirmed the proposed sign is on-premise and will not require an Outdoor Advertising Display Permit.

Illuminated signs could be considered a traffic safety hazard given the potential of light and glare to distract drivers. Section 21466.5 of the California Vehicle Code regulates illumination by placing limits on maximum light output. http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d11/vc21466_5.htm

Caltrans does not define formal requirements regarding brightness or light intensity of advertising signs. However, the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) recommends that a commonly sized LED billboard should commit to a maximum ambient light output level of 0.3 footcandles at a distance of 250 feet from the billboard. The light levels emitted from the billboard should be set to adjust, based upon ambient light conditions at any given time (i.e., nighttime versus daytime).

If you have any questions, please contact Marisa Hampton of the Development Review branch at (619) 688-6954.

Sincerely,

for 

JACOB ARMSTRONG, Branch Chief
Development Review Branch

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RESPONSE TO COMMENT

Mr. Jacob Armstrong, Branch Chief
Development Review Branch
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
District 11, Division of Planning
4050 Taylor Street, MS 240
San Diego, CA 92110

RESPONSE 1

This comment is noted and is hereby included in the Final MND. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has accurately confirmed that the proposed sign is an on-premises sign that does not require a permit pursuant to the Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations. As provided on page B-63 of the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), the proposed sign is in compliance with the provisions of the Outdoor Advertising Act and Regulations and would not require an Outdoor Advertising Display Permit.

RESPONSE 2

This comment is noted and is hereby included in the Final MND. As provided on page B-63 to B-65 of the attached MND the proposed sign would not create a safety hazard related to driver distraction due to light and glare. As indicated on pages B-31 and B-63, the sign would be designed in compliance with California Vehicle Code Section 21466.5, in order to avoid adverse impacts upon drivers. Impacts related to traffic safety are considered less than significant.

RESPONSE 3

This comment is noted and is hereby included in the Final MND. As provided on page B-31 of the MND, the maximum ambient light output levels at the closest view points to the proposed sign would be between 0.015 to 0.049 foot-candle, which is much less than the 0.3 foot-candle level recommended by the Outdoor Advertising Association of America. Automatic sensors will monitor ambient lighting conditions and adjust the lighting intensity from the sign in accordance with ambient lighting conditions. The daytime intensity of the sign would be at a maximum (100%) intensity during the daytime, in order to be visible in the bright sunlight environment, while the nighttime intensity of the sign would be generally at the minimum (3%). As such, the illumination from the proposed project would not be considered vision-impairing due to brilliance, and the measured brightness would not exceed the stated standard. Impacts related to illumination are considered less than significant.

APPENDIX B - MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)

This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared for the City of Escondido Westfield North County LED Freeway-Oriented Sign Project in compliance with Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines, which is required for all projects where a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared. Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code states: “ ...the [lead] agency shall adopt a reporting or monitoring program for the changes made to the project or conditions of project approval, adopted in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment...[and the program] shall be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation.” The City of Escondido is the Lead Agency for the Project.

This MMRP identifies the mitigation measures prescribed in the Draft MND to reduce the Project’s potentially significant environmental impacts to a less than significant level. The MMRP defines the timing during which the mitigation measure is to be implemented and monitored; the enforcement agency; and the verification/approval party. The MMRP is included as Table B-1 below.

Table B-1

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Mitigation Measure	Implementation (I)/ Monitoring (M) Phase	Enforcement Agency	Verification		
			Staff Compliance Verification	Date of Implementation (I)/ Monitoring (M)	Remarks
Biological Resources					
<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Avoid Migratory Bird Nesting Season or Complete Surveys Before Construction Activities.</p> <p>Removal of suitable vegetation for migratory birds shall occur outside the nesting season (i.e., September 1 through January 14) to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, if feasible. If vegetation removal is required during the nesting season, within 10 days of the commencement of construction activity, a qualified biologist shall survey the area once within 100 feet of the proposed freeway-oriented sign base for the presence of nesting birds. It should be noted that due to its location a short distance from a busy I-15 Freeway, the Via Rancho Parkway overpass, and Westfield North County parking lots and restaurants, the site is currently subject to a great deal of noise and vibration. Birds found nesting in these conditions have a high tolerance to such disturbances when compared to other birds living in less noisy areas. Consequently the commonly accepted avoidance buffer distances for nesting songbirds of 300 feet (500 feet for raptors) do not apply. If any active nests are detected it shall be determined by the biologist at what distance, if any, an avoidance buffer needs to be observed. If the biologist determines that an avoidance buffer is necessary to protect the nest, that area shall be delineated, flagged, and avoided until the nesting cycle is complete, or as determined appropriate by the biologist. Biological monitoring shall also occur until the nesting cycle is complete.</p>	<p>(I) Pre-construction; during construction</p> <p>(M) Pre-construction; during construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Escondido 	<p>(I)</p> <p>(M)</p>	<p>(I)</p> <p>(M)</p>	



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