

8.13 Visual Resources

Visual resources are the natural and cultural features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public's enjoyment of the environment. Visual resource or aesthetic impacts are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics and potential visibility and the extent to which the project will change the perceived visual quality of the environment in which it will be located.

This section was prepared following California Energy Commission (CEC) guidelines for preparing visual impact assessments for Applications for Certification (AFCs). Section 8.13.1 documents the visual conditions that currently exist in the Sun Valley Energy Project (SVEP) area. Section 8.13.2 discusses the potential environmental effects as they relate to visual resources. Section 8.13.3 discusses the potential cumulative impacts of this and other projects in the area. Section 8.13.4 summarizes the mitigation measures proposed to reduce project impacts on visual resources. Section 8.13.5 describes the applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS). Section 8.13.6 lists permits required. Section 8.13.7 presents agencies involved and agency contacts. Section 8.13.8 cites the references used to prepare this section.

Figure 8.13-1 shows the location of the site the project's estimated visibility from the surrounding area and the locations of the Key Observation Points (KOPs) referenced in this section. The existing views and simulated views of the project from the KOPs follow as Figures 8.13-2, 8.13-3, and 8.13-4. All illustrations in this section are bound together at the end of the section for the reader's convenience.

8.13.1 Affected Environment

8.13.1.1 Regional Setting

The SVEP will be developed in the portion of Riverside County southeast of the unincorporated community of Romoland. This area lies immediately east of the City of Perris and 20 miles south of the City of Riverside. The SVEP site is located in Perris Valley, which consist of a broad, flat alluvial plain that is punctuated by small, rocky hills, and bordered by treeless buttes that rise up to 300 feet or more from the valley floor. At present, the SVEP area landscape has a mixed land use character. The valley in which the SVEP is located is surrounded by arid, undeveloped hills, and much of the flat land on the plains is devoted to a mix of irrigated and dry-farmed field crops. The incorporated community of Perris, and the unincorporated communities of Romoland and Sun City are nodes of suburban density residential, commercial and industrial development. Pockets of rural residential development surround these communities and are found in other locations scattered throughout the area as well. Most views in the portions of the SVEP area that are outside of the more developed areas are of broad, sweeping expanses defined by distant buttes and even more distant mountains. In the more densely developed portions of the area, views are often limited to some degree by close-by structures and trees. Electric power infrastructure is a well-established part of the landscape in this area, as well. Southern California Edison's (SCE) Valley Substation, a large 500-kilovolt (kV) substation located east of Romoland and 600 feet north of the SVEP site, is the focal point of a system of 500-kV and 115-kV lines which thread through the surrounding landscape.

Although much of the SVEP area landscape now has a rural or quasi-rural appearance, it is a landscape that is in rapid transition to a more uniformly urbanized level of development. Figures 8.6-2 and 8.6-3 in the Land Use Section are maps indicating the future lands uses that are permitted within a one-mile radius of the SVEP site under adopted land use plans and the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance. As these figures suggest, and as the summaries of the plans presented in the Land Use Section indicate, the plans will permit a conversion of much of the area's now-open agricultural lands to industrial use and to suburban density residential and commercial uses. Such conversion is already taking place in the corridor along the east side of Menifee Road to the east and south of the SVEP site where Menifee Valley Ranch, a residential tract development is now under construction. As a consequence of the development that has been planned and is now taking place, in the not-too-distant future, much of the SVEP area landscape will have a suburban level of development. There will be fewer sweeping views, and more views in which widened roads, intensive roadside landscaping, buildings, and infrastructure facilities are the dominant landscape features.

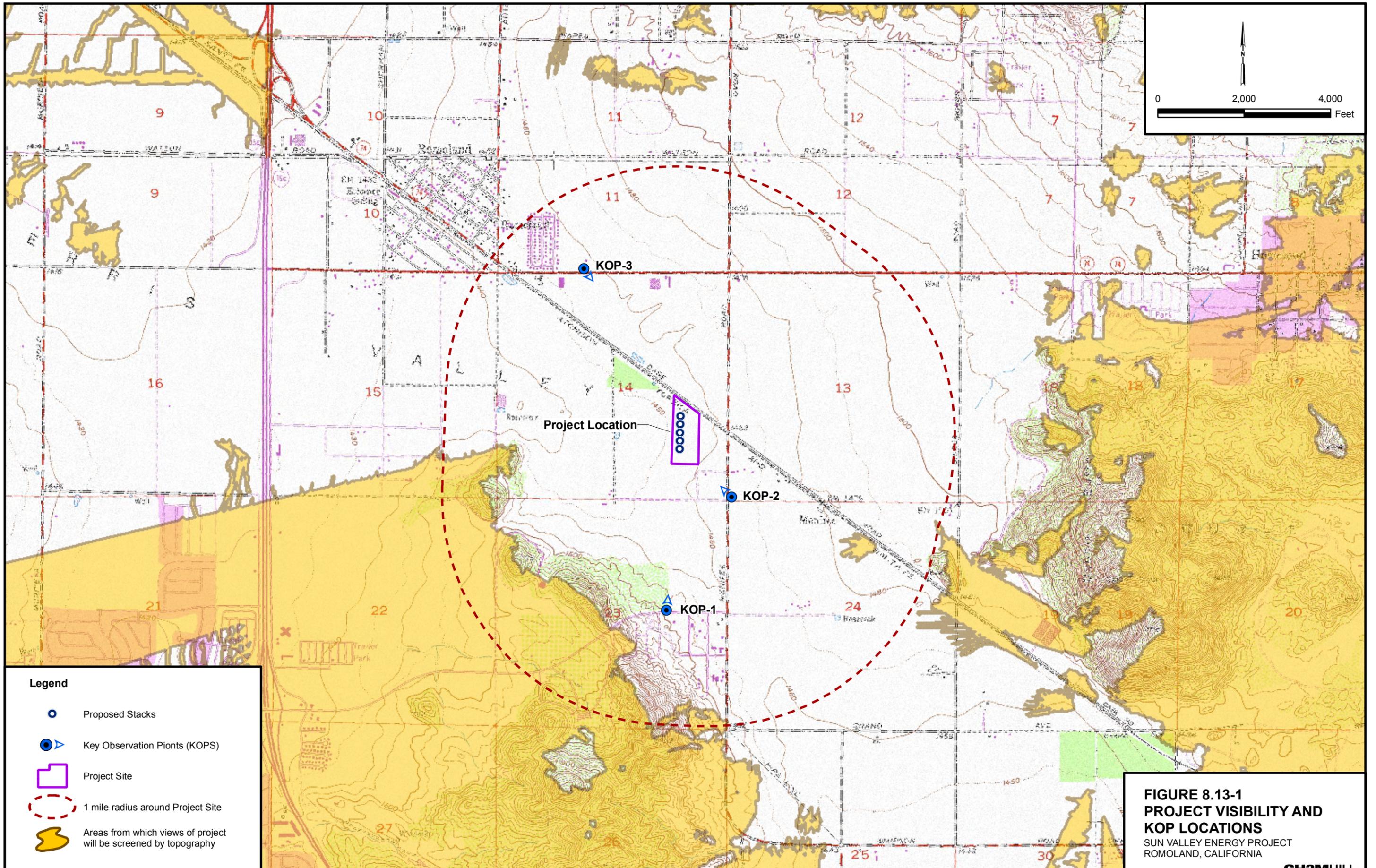
8.13.1.2 Project Site and Linear Routes

The electric generation facility and switchyard will be located on a 20-acre property located to the southeast of Romoland. The project site is located west of Menifee Road, and is bounded by the Burlington, Northern, and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad tracks and Matthews Road on the north and Junipero Road on the west. Both Matthews Road and Junipero Road are unpaved in this area.

The site is flat and open, and at present it is used for dry farming of grains. The parcels to the east, south, and west of the site are generally open and used for dry farming of grains as well. The exception is a parcel that lies between the SVEP site and Menifee Road that appears to have once been the site of a ranch home and operations center. This parcel has a number of large trees on it, and a residential structure. At present, it appears that it is being used a construction staging area. Across Junipero Road from the site's northwest corner, there is a fenced area being used for the storage of construction materials. To the north of the BNSF Railroad tracks and Matthews Road, which border the site on the north, there is a small grain field that lies between the roadway and the southern end of the SCE Valley Substation. A portion of this area accommodates the right-of-way for a 500-kV SCE transmission line that connects with the substation. Approximately 800 feet to the northwest of the SVEP site there is a developed industrial area that includes a concrete block plant, moderately-sized foundry, and a crematorium. The Inland Empire Energy Center (IEEC), a large, 790-megawatt (MW) combined-cycle power plant is now under construction on the western edge of this industrial area, at a site located approximately one half-mile to the west of the SVEP. When completed, the IEEC will be a large structure with stacks 195 feet tall.

Because of its agricultural use, the SVEP site has no natural vegetation. In spring and summer, its surface is a green and later a brown grain field and in winter the soil is left bare. Because of its flat, featureless character, the site could not be characterized as containing any scenic features or having intrinsic visual sensitivity.

The project's linear facilities will all be located in very close proximity to the project site. Reclaimed wastewater for various applications on the project site will be obtained through a direct connection to a reclaimed water pipeline located in a utility easement immediately north of the project site. Potable water will be obtained through a connection with a water main located in the same easement. Sanitary waste water will be discharged to a sanitary



**FIGURE 8.13-1
PROJECT VISIBILITY AND
KOP LOCATIONS**
SUN VALLEY ENERGY PROJECT
ROMOLAND, CALIFORNIA



A. KOP-1. Existing view looking north on Junipero Road toward the proposed project site from the intersection with McCall Boulevard.



B. KOP-1. Simulated view of the proposed project site as seen from Junipero Road at McCall Boulevard.

FIGURE 8.13-2
KOP-1- CORRIDOR ALONG
MCCALL BOULEVARD ON
SLOPE SOUTH OF PROJECT SITE
 SUN VALLEY ENERGY PROJECT
 ROMOLAND, CALIFORNIA



A. KOP-2. Existing view looking northwest toward the proposed project site from the residential subdivision under development east of Menifee Road.



B. KOP-2. Simulated view of the proposed project site from the residential subdivision under development east of Menifee Road.

FIGURE 8.13-3
KOP-2- DEVELOPING RESIDENTIAL
AREA EAST OF MENIFEE ROAD
SUN VALLEY ENERGY PROJECT
ROMOLAND, CALIFORNIA



A. KOP- 3. Existing view looking southeast toward the proposed project site from the exit of the parking lot serving the Hamshaw Farms market and the Romoland Post Office on the north side of SR-74.



B. KOP- 3. Simulated view of the proposed project site from the exit of the parking lot serving the Hamshaw Farms market and the Romoland Post Office on the north side of SR-74.

FIGURE 8.13-4
KOP-3- CORRIDOR ALONG SR-74
EAST OF ROMOLAND
SUN VALLEY ENERGY PROJECT
ROMOLAND, CALIFORNIA

sewer line that is also located in this easement. Non-reclaimable wastewater will be discharged through a pipeline that will be routed for approximately 0.75 mile under McLaughlin Road that will tie in with an existing non-reclaimable wastewater line that now terminates at McLaughlin and Antelope Roads.

Natural gas will be obtained from an existing Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) high pressure natural gas pipeline that runs along Menifee Road. Connection with this gas line will require a 750-foot-long gas line that will be installed underground in a right-of-way that runs along the BNSF Railroad tracks. The project's transmission line will consist of an approximately 600-foot-long, double-circuit 115-kV line that will extend from the northwest corner of the SVEP site to the SCE Valley Substation. A single transmission tower will be required, which will be located in the area between Matthews Road and the substation.

8.13.1.3 Construction Laydown Area

As indicated in Figure 2.1-1, the project construction laydown area will be located on the SVEP site in an area along its eastern boundary.

8.13.1.4 Potential Project Visibility

Figure 8.13-1 is a map that indicates the location of the proposed project and the nearby areas from which it has the potential to be visible. Because it was infeasible to take structures and vegetation into account in preparing this analysis, this map highlights the areas from which views toward the project will be blocked by topography. In the remaining areas, the project will be visible to varying degrees, depending on the extent of view blockage by buildings and vegetation in the foreground of the view. As this map indicates, the ridges of the buttes that rise up out of the valley in the area in the general vicinity of the project site will block views toward the project in the areas behind them. From many of the developed areas on the valley floor, views toward the project will be limited to a large degree by buildings located in the foreground, and by trees and other vegetation.

8.13.1.5 Sensitive Viewing Areas and Key Observation Points

To structure the analysis of the project's effects on visual resources, the view areas that would be the most sensitive to the project's potential visual impacts and the sensitive receptors¹ in those areas were identified. Representative viewpoints from these sensitive receptor locations are referred to as Key Observation Points (KOPs). Three KOPs were selected for detailed analysis for the proposed project. These KOPs were selected based on: (1) the expected unobstructed views of project facilities from sensitive locations, and (2) the photos being generally representative of views from the larger areas in which they are located. The three KOPs were determined to be sufficient for this analysis because they represent the viewing conditions from the three major areas of potential viewer sensitivity from which the project has the potential to be seen. These are: (1) developing residential subdivisions on the valley floor in proximity to the SVEP site (KOP-1), (2) an area being developed with community facilities and residential areas on the hillside area 0.4 mile south of the project site (KOP-2), and (3) the corridor along State Route 74, where there are views seen by Romoland residents and by travelers passing through (KOP-3). The locations of the KOPs are indicated on Figure 8.13-1.

¹ Typically, residents and recreationists are considered to be sensitive receptors to changes in the landscape. This is because of the potential for effects to their long-term views or their enjoyment of a particular landscape or activity.

Based on fieldwork conducted in September 2005, the existing visual conditions of the views from each of the KOPs were documented and evaluated. Assessments of existing levels of scenic quality were made based on professional judgment that took a broad spectrum of factors into consideration, including:

- Natural features, including topography, water courses, rock outcrops, and natural vegetation
- The positive and negative effects of human-caused alterations and built structures on visual quality
- Visual composition, including an assessment of the vividness, intactness, and unity of patterns in the landscape²

The final scenic quality ratings assigned to each view fit within the rating scale summarized in Table 8.13-1. Development of this scale builds on a scale developed for use with an artificial intelligence system for evaluation of landscape visual quality (Buhyoff et al., 1994), and incorporates landscape assessment concepts applied by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

TABLE 8.13-1
Landscape Scenic Quality Scale

Rating	Explanation
Outstanding Visual Quality	A rating reserved for landscapes with exceptionally high visual quality. These landscapes are significant nationally or regionally. They usually contain exceptional natural or cultural features that contribute to this rating. They are what we think of as "picture post card" landscapes. People are attracted to these landscapes to view them.
High Visual Quality	Landscapes that have high quality scenic value. This may be due to cultural or natural features contained in the landscape or to the arrangement of spaces contained in the landscape that causes the landscape to be visually interesting or a particularly comfortable place for people. These landscapes have high levels of vividness, unity, and intactness.
Moderately High Visual Quality	Landscapes that have above average scenic value but are not of high scenic value. The scenic value of these landscapes may be due to man-made or natural features contained within the landscape, to the arrangement of spaces, in the landscape or to the two-dimensional attributes of the landscape. Levels of vividness, unity, and intactness are moderate to high.
Moderate Visual Quality	Landscapes, that are common or typical landscapes that have, average scenic value. They usually lack significant man-made or natural features. Their scenic value is primarily a result of the arrangement of spaces contained in the landscape and the two-dimensional visual attributes of the landscape. Levels of vividness, unity, and intactness are average.
Moderately Low Visual Quality	Landscapes that have below average scenic value but not low scenic value. They may contain visually discordant man-made alterations, but these features do not dominate the landscape. They often lack spaces that people will perceive as inviting and provide little interest in terms of two-dimensional visual attributes of the landscape.
Low Visual Quality	Landscapes that have below average scenic value. They may contain visually discordant man-made alterations, and often provide little interest in terms of two-dimensional visual attributes of the landscape. Levels of vividness, unity, and intactness are below average.

Note: Rating scale based on Buhyoff et al., 1994; U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 1988; and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, 1995.

² Vividness is the memorability of the visual impression received from contrasting landscape elements as they combine to form a striking and distinctive visual pattern. Intactness is the integrity of visual order in the natural and man-built landscape, and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment. Unity is the degree to which the visual resources of the landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern. Unity refers to the compositional harmony of intercompatibility between landscape elements. (US DOT FHWA, 1988)

8.13.1.5.1 KOP-1: Corridor along McCall Boulevard South of Project Site

Figure 8.13-2a depicts the view from KOP-1, a viewpoint located on Junipero Road at McCall Boulevard. This view looks toward the north, and the entire SVEP site is clearly visible in the far middleground as the open area located immediately in front of the area of large-scale electrical equipment visible at the SCE Valley Substation. This photo represents the views visible from the existing low-density residential area located on the hillside to the south of McCall Boulevard, the view from the nearby segment of McCall Boulevard, and the view seen by those traveling north on this segment of Junipero Road. Because the area to the left side of the road and just out of the photo is occupied by the recently constructed Boulder Ridge Elementary School, this view is seen by those accessing the school from McCall Boulevard. Because the school is located lower on the slope than this photo viewpoint, the view toward the SVEP site from the school is not as expansive as this view. The cleared area visible on the right side of Junipero Road has recently been graded for development of commercial uses. The flat areas to the left and right of Junipero Road that lie between the toe of the slope and Rouse Road to the north have been designated in adopted plans for development with residential uses. Because this view is now seen by roadway users accessing the school, and will, in the future, be seen by drivers and passengers accessing a large residential area, the level of sensitivity is moderately high.

Because of the presence of the distant mountains, the natural-appearing hillsides to the east, and the prominent butte in the area to the west of the SCE Valley Substation, this view has a moderately high level of vividness. Because much of the landscape visible in this view is still open, and because some of it is still agricultural in character, many of the elements of the landscape join together to create a view with a moderately high level of compositional harmony or unity. The level of intactness is moderate at most because of the visual intrusions created by the newly graded areas in the foreground of the view, and the presence of the large-scale electrical equipment in the SCE Valley Substation, the large towers that carry the 500-kV transmission line that ties into the substation, and the area of large industrial buildings that lies to the west of the substation. Applying the Buhyoff landscape visual quality scale, the view seen in this photograph would be classified as having a moderate to moderately high level of visual quality.

8.13.1.5.2 KOP-2: Developing Residential Area East of Menifee Road

Figure 8.13-3a is the view from KOP-2, a viewpoint located on the future site of Menifee Valley Ranch, a residential subdivision that is now being developed in the area to the east of Menifee Road and south of the BNSF Railroad tracks. The viewpoint is located slightly to the east of Menifee Road and on the north side of Rouse Road. This viewpoint is intended to represent the views that will be seen by future residents as they drive out of their subdivision. To some degree, it also represents the view that would be seen by drivers on Menifee Road, although it does not lie entirely within the primary cone of vision of drivers on this portion of the road. Under the Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan, the segment of Menifee Road in this area has been designated as eligible for county scenic highway status. Because of the screening that will be provided by the walls that will surround the subdivision's exterior, and because of the view blockage within the subdivision that will be created by the presence of structures and landscaping in the immediate foreground of the view, the visibility of the SVEP's structures from within the subdivision is expected to be limited. The primary view that will be available from this area in the future is the one that will be seen by drivers and passengers in cars driving out of the

subdivision on Rouse Road. Because this view will be seen by motorists for relatively short periods of time as they drive in this area, rather than by people at their residences, the sensitivity of this view is moderate.

This view is oriented toward the northwest and the SVEP site, which is located in the area behind the cluster of trees in the foreground. In the immediate foreground, a set of tall wooden towers that carry both electric distribution lines and a double circuit electric transmission line is visible along the eastern edge of Menifee Road. Across Menifee Road, the parcel with the trees is now being used as a construction staging area and a parking lot for construction workers. Further in the distance, there is a 500-kV transmission line carried on large lattice steel towers that connects with the SCE Valley Substation, whose complex of large-scale electrical equipment can be seen at the right edge of the view. Applying the Buhyoff landscape visual quality scale, the view from this area would be classified as having a moderately low level of visual quality. The presence of clusters of trees in the foreground and middleground add a small measure of vividness of the view, but the levels of unity and intactness are very low.

8.13.1.5.3 KOP 3: Corridor along State Route 74 East of Romoland

Figure 8.13-4a is the view from KOP-3, a viewpoint located along State Route 74 at the exit from the parking lot that serves a commercial strip that includes the Romoland Post Office and the Hamshaw Farms produce market. This KOP lies approximately 0.66 mile northwest of the SVEP site's northwestern corner. This viewpoint was selected because it represents views that would be seen by people using this shopping area, which, partly because the post office is located there, is an important community activity center. This view is also intended to be representative of the views seen by eastbound travelers along State Route 74, although the project site is not fully within the primary cone of vision of drivers on this portion of the road. This highway is the primary east-west thoroughfare through the Perris Valley, and has a two-way average daily traffic (ADT) level of over 20,000 vehicles per day. Although Riverside County has nominated the segment of State Route 74 in this area as eligible for inclusion in the State Scenic Highway system, the steps for completion of the inclusion process for the portion of State Route 74 passing through the project area have not been completed. The only special protection that the County has established to protect the visual qualities of the landscape along this portion of the highway has been to adopt regulations that limit the development of new billboards in the corridor within 500 feet of the roadway. Because of the SVEP site's potential visibility from the parking lot of the commercial strip that is an important community use area and because of its visibility from heavily traveled Highway 74, the sensitivity of this view is moderately high.

The major components of this view are utility lines and the State Route 74 roadway in the immediate foreground, and in the area to the south of the highway, a small area of vacant agricultural land that is bracketed on east side by a warehouse and a recreational vehicle sales lot, and on the west side by another warehouse. In the area behind the warehouse to the west, there is a glimpse of a large pile of material located in an asphalt recycling facility that lies further to the south. In the open area between the two warehouse facilities, there is a view toward the SVEP site. A line of trees and a 500-kV transmission line are also visible in the near middleground of the view. Applying the Buhyoff landscape visual quality scale, the view seen in this photograph would be classified as having a low to moderately low level of visual quality because the overall level of vividness is not high, and the levels of intactness and unity are low.

8.13.2 Environmental Consequences

8.13.2.1 Analysis Procedure

This analysis of the visual effects of changes that would be brought about by the SVEP project is based on field observations and review of the following information: local planning documents, project maps and drawings, photographs of the project area, computer-generated visual simulations from each of the KOPs, and research on design measures for integrating electric facilities into their environmental settings.

Site reconnaissance was conducted to view the site and surrounding area, to identify potential key observation points, and to take representative photographs of existing visual conditions. A single-lens reflex 35-mm camera with a 50-mm lens (view angle 40 degrees) was used to shoot site photographs.

Page-size photographs are presented to represent the “before” conditions from each KOP. Visual simulations were produced to illustrate the “after” visual conditions from each of the KOPs, to provide the viewer with a clear image of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the proposed project. These simulation images represent the project’s appearance in the period immediately after completion of construction. The computer-generated simulations are the result of an objective analytical and computer modeling process described briefly below. The images are accurate within the constraints of the available site and project data.

Computer modeling and rendering techniques were used to produce the simulated images of the views of the site as they would appear after development of the project. Existing topographic and site data provided the basis for developing an initial digital model. The project engineers provided site plans and digital data for the proposed generation facility, and site plans and elevations for the components of the transmission system. These were used to create three-dimensional (3-D) digital models of these facilities. These models were combined with the digital site model to produce a complete computer model of the generating facility and portions of the overhead transmission system (see also Figure 1.1-1 for an oblique, aerial rendering of the 3-D project model).

For each viewpoint, viewer location was digitized from topographic maps and scaled aerial photos, using 5 feet as the assumed eye level. Computer “wire frame” perspective plots were then overlaid on the photographs of the views from the KOPs to verify scale and viewpoint location. Digital visual simulation images were produced as a next step, based on computer renderings of the 3-D model combined with high-resolution digital versions of base photographs. The final “hardcopy” visual simulation images that appear in this AFC document were produced from the digital image files using a color printer.

8.13.2.2 Impact Evaluation and Significance Criteria

Analysis of the project’s impacts was based on evaluation of the changes to the existing visual resources that would result from construction and operation of SVEP. An important aspect of this analysis was evaluation of the “after” views provided by the computer-generated visual simulations, and their comparison to the existing visual environment. In making a determination of the extent and implications of the visual changes, consideration was given to the following:

- The specific changes in the affected visual environment's composition, character, and any specially valued qualities
- The affected visual environment's context
- The extent to which the affected environment contains places or features that have been designated in plans and policies for protection or special consideration
- The numbers of viewers, their activities, and the extent to which these activities are related to the aesthetic qualities affected by the likely changes

Following the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Appendix G, Section XI), the project would cause a significant impact if it would result in the following:

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

8.13.2.3 Project Appearance

8.13.2.3.1 Project Structures and Dimensions

The proposed project facilities are described in detail in Section 2.0, Project Description. Figure 2.1-1 shows the general arrangement and layout of the proposed project features on the site, and Figure 2.1-2 provides typical elevation views. Table 8.13-2 summarizes the dimensions of the generating facility's major features.

TABLE 8.13-2
Approximate Dimensions of the Major Project Features

Feature	Height (feet)	Length (feet)	Width (feet)	Diameter (feet)
Combustion Turbine Generators (CTGs)				
Combustion turbine generator	28	20	18	—
Inlet air filters	47	22	29	—
Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) casings	38	25	23	—
CTG exhaust stacks	90	—	—	13.5
Combustion turbine variable bleed valve silencer	68	—	—	10.75
Cooling tower (height to fan deck)	27	211	37	—
Cooling tower (height to top of fan shrouds)	39	—	—	—
Tanks				
Deionized (DI) water storage tank	24	—	—	28
Treated water storage tank	24	—	—	28
Recycled water storage tanks	28	—	—	31

TABLE 8.13-2
Approximate Dimensions of the Major Project Features

Feature	Height (feet)	Length (feet)	Width (feet)	Diameter (feet)
Administration and control building	21	80	40	—
Maintenance/warehouse building	21	100	40	
Compressor building	21	90	60	
Water Treatment Building	21	80	40	
Cooling tower chemical building	18	35	22	

The exteriors of all major project equipment will be treated with a neutral tan finish intended to optimize its visual integration with the surrounding environment. The project will be surrounded by a chain link security fence.

8.13.2.3.2 Transmission Line

The 115-kV transmission line that will connect the project with SCE’s Valley Substation will require a single transmission tower at the northwestern corner of the project site, and an additional tower that will be located in the SCE transmission right-of-way located north of the substation. The transmission towers will consist of tubular steel poles, 90 feet high, and each will have three arms from which insulators and conductors will be suspended. The poles will be neutral tan in color, the insulators will be made of a non-reflective and non-refractive material, and the conductors will be non-specular (that is, their surfaces will have dulled finish so that they will not reflect sunlight and thus call attention to themselves).

8.13.2.3.3 Pipelines

The natural gas, non-reclaimable wastewater, potable water, and sanitary sewer pipelines will be buried and will thus not be visible. Construction of the sewer, recycled water supply, and potable water lines will require small amounts of excavation of the easement located immediately north of the site. Construction of the gas line will require excavation along the BNSF railroad right-of-way for a distance of 750 feet. Construction of the pipeline for non-reclaimable waste water will require excavation for 0.75 mile under McLaughlin Road between the SVEP site and the site of the IEEC. During construction of the pipelines, the ground surface of the areas in the alignments will be temporarily disrupted by the presence of construction equipment; excavated piles of dirt, concrete and pavement; and construction personnel and vehicles. These effects will be minor and temporary. After construction, the ground surfaces will be restored, and the pipelines will not create a long-term change to the visual environment.

8.13.2.3.4 Construction Laydown Area

As detailed in Section 2.1.15, construction of the project is to take place during the approximately 12-month period extending from Spring 2007 through Spring 2008. During the construction period, the portion of the parcel that lies along its eastern edge will be used for parking for construction workers and laydown of equipment. During this time, construction materials, construction equipment, trucks, and parked vehicles will be visible on the site.

8.13.2.3.5 Landscaping

Before construction begins, a landscape plan will be prepared that responds to all of the requirements of the Riverside County General Plan, the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan, and the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance. The plan will be designed to use context-appropriate plant species that provide screening of the plant facilities from both nearby and distant views.

8.13.2.3.6 Lighting

Although the proposed power plant is a simple-cycle unit designed to supply power during times of peak demand, which are most likely to occur during the daytime, it could also be operated at night. The plant's operation will also require onsite nighttime lighting for safety and security. To reduce offsite lighting impacts, lighting at the facility will be restricted to areas required for safety, security, and operation. Exterior lights will be hooded, and lights will be directed onsite so that significant light or glare would be minimized. Low-pressure sodium lamps and fixtures of a non-glare type will be specified. For areas where lighting is not required for normal operation, safety, or security, switched lighting circuits will be provided, thus allowing these areas to remain unilluminated (dark) at most times, minimizing the amount of lighting potentially visible offsite.

Project construction activities are planned to occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. During some construction periods and during the startup phase of the project, some activities will continue 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. During periods when nighttime construction activities take place, illumination that meets state, and federal worker safety regulations will be required. To the extent possible, the nighttime construction lighting will be erected pointing toward the center of the site where activities are occurring, and will be shielded. Task-specific lighting will be used to the extent practical while complying with worker safety regulations.

8.13.2.3.7 Water Vapor Plumes

Experience with plants of this type has demonstrated that the high velocity and temperature of the stack exhaust result in a quick dispersion of stack plumes, minimizing the probability that a visible plume would be created above the stacks. Based on previous experience with these kinds of systems, it is likely that formation of visible plumes from the project would be a rare occurrence related to unusual combinations of cold and damp conditions and that, when present, the plumes would be relatively small.

Because the SVEP will be a peaking plant, it is expected that it will operate at no more than a 40 percent annual capacity factor. It is anticipated that much of the time that the plant operates will be during the summer during hours when temperatures and thus electric loads are high. Because plume formation only takes place at times when ambient temperatures are low, there is little potential for plume formation during the high temperature periods when the plant is most likely to be in operation.

8.13.2.4 Assessment of Visual Effects

8.13.2.4.1 KOP-1: Corridor along McCall Boulevard South of the Project Site

Figure 8.13-2b is a simulated view of the SVEP as it would appear from KOP-1. With development of the project, the turbine housings, stacks, electric transmission equipment, and auxiliary buildings would all be readily visible. The project's features will contrast with

the backdrop and will stand out in the view. However, the project will not dominate the view or substantially change its existing character. The SVEP's solid forms will not be entirely new elements in the landscape because a large, solid structure is now visible in the western portion of the SCE Valley Substation and large warehouse buildings are seen in the area to the west of it. The SVEP's structures will block much of the view of the structures in the substation. The SVEP's stacks will appear somewhat in line and the forward stacks will block views of the stacks further away, reducing the project's visual profile. The overall effect will be to create a small degree of increase in the portion of the view's middleground occupied by solid structures. In terms of scale, the project's tallest features, the stacks, will appear no taller than the bus structures that now exist at the SCE Valley Substation, and will appear to be shorter than the towers carrying some of the existing transmission lines that converge on the substation. The neutral tan color used for the surfaces of the major project features will reduce their degree of visual contrast with the setting and will help to make them more recessive in the view.

The project will change the visual character of this view to some extent, adding stacks to a view where they do not now exist, making the view seem somewhat more industrial in character. The addition of the project features to this view will create a slight diminishment of the existing level of visual quality, which is now moderate to moderately high. The level of vividness will remain the same, but presence of the stacks will reduce the levels of visual intactness to some extent. Although there will be a slight reduction in the level of visual quality, the reduction will not be substantial.

The simulation presented as Figure 8.13-2b does not reflect the landscaping that will be installed around the SVEP's perimeter. As it matures, this landscaping will screen the SVEP's lower structures, and will provide partial screening of the stacks, greatly reducing the extent to which the SVEP will be visible. An additional factor to consider is that under approved plans, the area between this viewpoint and the SVEP will be completely developed with residences and other suburban land uses, and that the future structures, residential landscaping, and street trees will provide substantial screening of views toward the SVEP from this viewpoint, and will create a more developed-appearing landscape context.

8.13.2.4.2 KOP-2: Developing Residential Area East of Menifee Road

Figure 8.13-3b is a simulated view of the SVEP as it would appear from KOP-2, a viewpoint located in the area now being developed as the Menifee Valley Ranch residential subdivision. In this view, the SVEP will be visible in the near middleground, in the area behind the trees on the parcel on the west side of Menifee Road that is now being used as a construction staging area. The most prominently visible features will be the stacks, the air inlet enclosures, the turbine enclosures, and the auxiliary buildings along the project's eastern edge. This view already has an electric infrastructure and industrial character because of the prominence of transmission lines, the SCE Valley Substation, and large industrial buildings in the view. By adding stacks and the large air inlet housings to the view, the SVEP will not substantially change the view's existing character, but it will add to and reinforce the view's existing industrial/electric infrastructure character. In terms of their scale, the SVEP's features will be subordinate. They will appear to be considerably smaller in scale than the transmission lines in the foreground, and will be generally similar in scale to the transmission lines and industrial structures in the background. The neutral tan color used for the surfaces of the project features will reduce their visual contrast with

their surroundings, and will help them be absorbed into the view. The view's overall level of visual quality is now moderately low, and with the SVEP, the level of visual quality will remain about the same. Because the trees in the foreground will not be affected, there will be no change in the vividness of the view. The level of visual unity will remain about the same because the SVEP will have an orderly appearance that will be consistent with the overall composition of the view. There will be some decrease in the level of intactness because the additional facilities could be perceived as a visual encroachment.

The simulation presented as Figure 8.13-3b does not reflect the landscaping that will be installed around the SVEP's perimeter. As this landscaping matures, it will screen the auxiliary buildings, turbine housings, and air inlet enclosures to a large degree, and will provide partial screening of the stacks, greatly reducing the extent to which the SVEP will be visible. An additional factor to consider is that, under approved plans, the area that lies between the SVEP site and Meniffee Road has been designated for development with light industrial land uses. At the time this development occurs, it can be anticipated that the industrial buildings and the trees and other landscaping associated with them will provide substantial screening of the SVEP's structures.

8.13.2.4.3 KOP-3: Corridor along SR-74 East of Romoland

Figure 8.13-4b is a simulated view of the SVEP as it would appear from KOP-3. In this view, the tops of the stacks will be visible in the area between the two warehouse buildings located on the south side of the highway. The trees in the middleground will screen all of the SVEP's lower structures. Because very little of the SVEP will be visible, and because those elements which are visible will be seen in the background and in the context of warehouse buildings and a large transmission line, they will have very little effect on the overall character of the view. Because the visible portions of the stacks will appear to be about the same height as the trees in the view, and because they will be considerably lower in height than the 500-kV transmission line located in front of them, they will be visually subordinate in the view. The neutral tan color used on the exterior of the stacks will help make them visually consistent with the warehouse structures in the view, and will reduce their level of contrast with the sky backdrop. The existing visual quality of the view from this viewpoint is low to moderately low, and the addition of the project to this view will not result in a substantial change in this visual quality level.

8.13.2.4.4 Light and Glare

The project's effects on visual conditions during hours of darkness will be limited. As indicated previously, some night lighting would be required for operational safety and security. There would be additional visible lighting associated with the project stacks, and open site areas. High illumination areas not occupied on a regular basis would be provided with switches or motion detectors to light these areas only when occupied. At times when lights are turned on, the lighting would not be highly visible offsite and would not produce offsite glare effects. The offsite visibility and potential glare of the lighting would be restricted by specification of non-glare fixtures and placement of lights to direct illumination into only those areas where it is needed. With implementation of the project, the overall change in ambient lighting conditions at the project site, as viewed from nearby locations would not be substantial.

Lighting that may be required to facilitate nighttime construction activities would, to the extent feasible and consistent with worker safety codes, be directed toward the center of the construction site and shielded to prevent light from straying offsite. Task-specific construction lighting would be used to the extent practical while complying with worker safety regulations. In spite of these measures, there may be times during construction when the project site may appear as a brightly lit area as seen in views from the residential areas now being developed on the hillside to the south and in the area east of Menifee Road. This effect will be temporary, however.

8.13.2.4.5 Water Vapor Plumes

When the SVEP will be operating at times of low temperature and high humidity, the potential exists for the exhaust from the combustion turbine stacks and the cooling tower to condense and form visible steam plumes. However, the amount of time the proposed project is likely to produce plumes will be limited by the fact that as a peaker plant, the proposed power plant is expected to operate no more than 40 percent of the time, and much of that time will be on hot days during the summer when electric loads are the greatest. Coincidentally, these hot summer days are the times at which plumes are the least likely to form. In its evaluation of the Roseville Energy Park Project (03-AFC-01), the standard that CEC staff applied in evaluating the visual impacts of visible steam plumes was that plume impacts are significant if plumes occur more than 20 percent of winter seasonal (October through March) daylight no rain/fog high visual contrast (that is, clear) hours.³ Given the plant's expected operational regime that will emphasize peaking power during high-demand times in the summer, it is unlikely that the plant would be operated more than 20 percent of the non-rain, non-fog, clear daylight hours during the period from October through March. As a consequence, it is very unlikely that visible steam plumes would be present during more than 20 percent of these hours.

8.13.2.5 Impact Significance

A discussion regarding whether the visual effects of the project would be significant pursuant to CEQA is provided below. The assessment of these impacts has been structured by applying the criteria set forth in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The CEQA Guidelines define a "significant effect" on the environment to mean a "substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including objects of historic or aesthetic significance (14 CCR 15382)." The four questions related to aesthetics that are posed for lead agencies and the answers to them are:

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No. There are no vista points or roads that have a currently adopted scenic designation located in the nearby project viewshed.

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

No. This question does not apply to the proposed project because none of the project facilities fall within the boundaries of a state scenic highway.

³ California Energy Commission. 2004. Final Staff Assessment for the Roseville Energy Park. p. 4.12-13p

Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

No. The site itself is a flat, entirely open parcel that does not contain any resources of scenic significance that would be affected by the project.

As indicated in the analyses of the project's effects on views from KOPs -1, -2, and -3, the project will be visible in views from these areas. However, the project's facilities will not dominate these views, and will not substantially change the existing levels of visual quality. The project will be readily visible in the view from the slope south of the site in the vicinity of McCall Boulevard and Junipero Road (KOP-1) and from the area along the east side of Menifee Road to the east and south of the site (KOP-2) adding visible stacks and other power plant equipment into views where they do not now exist, reinforcing the existing industrial/electric infrastructure character of these views. The development of the SVEP will cause some diminishment of the quality of the view seen from the area represented by KOP 1, but this diminishment in view quality will not be substantial and will thus not be significant. Over time, as the landscaping that will be installed as part of the SVEP's development matures and as the local development in the area to the south of the SVEP occurs, the SVEP's effects on this view will be attenuated. In the view from the area represented by KOP-2, there may be a small decrease in the level of visual intactness, but the overall level of visual quality will remain about the same. In both of these areas, the visual changes will be less than significant. Because most of the SVEP's structures will be screened in views from the corridor along State Route 74 east of Romoland (KOP-3), and because those portions of the stacks that are visible will be seen as background elements in the view, there will be very little change in view character or quality, and the impact on this view will be negligible and less than significant.

As indicated in the analysis above, given the plant's expected operational regime, it is highly unlikely that the plant would operate more than 20 percent of the non-rain, non-fog, clear daylight hours during the wintertime period from October through March and that, as a consequence, it is very unlikely that visible steam plumes would be present during more than 20 percent of these hours, staying below the threshold the CEC has established for significant impacts related to the presence of steam plumes.

Would the project create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No. As described above, project light fixtures will be restricted to areas required for safety, security, and operations. Lighting will be directed onsite; it will be shielded from public view, and non-glare fixtures and use of switches, sensors, and timers to minimize the time that lights not needed for safety and security are on will be specified. These measures will substantially reduce the offsite visibility of project lighting.

Any lighting that will be installed to facilitate nighttime construction activities will, to the extent feasible and consistent with worker safety codes, be directed toward the center of the construction site and shielded to prevent light from straying offsite. Task-specific construction lighting will be used to the extent practical while complying with worker safety regulations. With these measures, lighting associated with the project construction and operation will not pose a hazard or adversely affect day or nighttime views toward the site.

8.13.3 Cumulative Impacts

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15355) define cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.”

The CEQA Guidelines further note that:

The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time.

As indicated in the Land Use analysis (Section 8.6), Riverside County has adopted plans and zoning regulations for the area around the IEEC project site that foresee and permit the area’s transformation into a more highly urbanized area with a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial development. The SVEP will be part of the transformation taking place in the project area over the next decade, but this is a landscape change that has been approved by the County and is being facilitated by the Riverside County General Plan (Riverside County, 2003a), the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan (Riverside County, 2003b), and the Menifee North Specific Plan (Riverside County, 1997). The project will be just one small element of the overall changes that implementation of these plans will produce. Although the SVEP in combination with the other planned land uses will change the appearance of this area, these changes will not adversely affect identified scenic resources or protected scenic corridors and will not substantially degrade the area’s current level of visual quality.

8.13.4 Mitigation Measures

This analysis has documented the fact that no significant visual impacts will result from implementation of the proposed project. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed. Project implementation will be subject to Riverside County’s planning regulations, however. Specifically, a Plot Plan will be prepared and submitted to the County for review and comment and CEC Compliance Project Manager for review and approval before construction begins. The site plan will comply with all applicable provisions of the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Riverside County, 2005), including provisions related to landscaping and project appearance.

8.13.5 Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards

8.13.5.1 Introduction

This section describes the LORS relevant to the visual resource issues associated with the SVEP project. No federal, state, or regional visual resource LORS exist. However, visual resource and urban design concerns applicable to the project are addressed in the Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan (2003), the Sun City Menifee Valley Community Plan (2003), and the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (2005).

Table 8.13-3 lists the Riverside County plans and ordinances that are pertinent to the project. The specific provisions of each plan or ordinance that have potential relevance to the project are identified below.

TABLE 8.13-3
Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards Applicable to SVEP Visual Resources

LORS	Purpose	AFC Section Explaining Conformance	Agency Contact
Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan	The primary statement of goals and policies for implementing development and conservation proposals for the unincorporated lands under county jurisdiction. Applies to all project facilities.	Section 8.13.5.2	Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Department 4080 Lemon Street, 7th Floor Riverside, CA 92501 Staff (909) 955-3200
Menifee North Specific Plan	A community plan that applies to 27,857 acres in and around the unincorporated community of Sun City. The plan designates land uses and provides policies for the orderly development of the area. The proposed SVEP site, and the water lines, gas line, and transmission line serving the SVEP are located within the area under the jurisdiction of this plan.	Section 8.13.5.3	<i>Same as above</i>
Riverside County Zoning Ordinance	Establishes classes of zoning districts governing the use of land and placement of buildings and improvements. Includes setback and landscaping requirements. Applies to all project facilities.	Section 8.13.5.3	<i>Same as above</i>

8.13.5.2 Riverside County General Plan

Riverside County incorporates three levels of planning into its long-term strategy for County development. The Riverside County Comprehensive General Plan (2003a) is the primary statement of goals and policies for implementing development and conservation proposals for the unincorporated lands under County jurisdiction. Community plans have been developed to provide land use goals and policies that are tailored to the concerns within each of the community planning areas into which the county has been divided. Specific plans have been developed for many smaller, localized areas to provide detailed guidance for land use development and environmental protection.

Because the County General Plan's policies are essentially guiding policies that apply to all unincorporated lands, they apply to all project facilities.

The only portions of the County General Plan that specifically address visual resource issues are the sections in the Land Use Element, the Circulation Element and the Multipurpose Open Space Element devoted to Scenic Highways, and the section of the Multipurpose Open Space Element related to Scenic Resources (Table 8.13-4). These sections mention the road segments in the County that have been made a part of the Official State Scenic Highway system and list the road segments that have been nominated as eligible for inclusion in the system. It also identifies road segments that it nominates as candidates for designation as Official County Scenic Highways. In the project area, the segment of State Route 74 from Grand Avenue in Perris to the western boundary of the San Bernardino National Forest has been nominated as eligible for inclusion the State Scenic Highway system. Although a portion of State Route 74 further to the east in the San Bernardino National Forest has been added to the State Scenic Highway system, the steps for completion of the inclusion process for the portion of State Route 74 passing through the project area have not been completed. The segment of McCall Boulevard from I-215 to Menifee Road, the segment of Menifee Road from McCall Boulevard north to State Route 74, which passes through the project area, has been determined to be an Eligible County Highway. The policies the General Plan sets out related to scenic corridors apply to both Designated and Eligible State or County Scenic Highways.

TABLE 8.13-4
Conformity of the SVEP with the Riverside County General Plan

Provision	Conformity?
Land Use (LU) Element—Scenic Corridors	
LU 13.1 Preserve and protect outstanding scenic vistas and visual features for the enjoyment of the traveling public	Yes. Review of the simulations and analyses for the views from key observation points (KOPs) -1, -2, and -3 indicates that the SVEP will not adversely affect scenic vistas and important visual features seen from the Eligible Scenic Highways closest to the SVEP site.
LU 13.2 Incorporate riding, hiking, and bicycle trails and other compatible public recreational facilities within scenic corridors	Not Applicable. The SVEP site does not border an Eligible Scenic Highway.
LU 13.3 Ensure that the design and appearance of new landscaping, structures, equipment, signs, or grading within Designated and Eligible State and County scenic highway corridors are compatible with the surrounding scenic setting or environment.	Yes. The SVEP will not be visible in the immediate foreground of the closest Eligible Scenic Highways, and as review of the simulations and analyses for KOPs-1, -2 and -3 indicate, the SVEP facilities will be compatible with the existing landscape setting.
LU 13.4 Maintain at least a 50-foot setback from the edge of the right-of-way for new development adjacent to Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways.	Not Applicable. The SVEP site does not border an Eligible Scenic Highway.
LU 13.5 Require new or relocated electric or communication distribution lines, which would be visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways, to be placed underground.	Not Applicable. The power lines associated with the SVEP will be transmission lines, rather than distribution lines, so they are not subject to this provision.
LU 13.6 Prohibit offsite outdoor advertising displays that are visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways.	Yes. The SVEP will not have any offsite outdoor advertising displays that are visible from the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways.

TABLE 8.13-4
Conformity of the SVEP with the Riverside County General Plan

Provision	Conformity?
LU 13.7 Require that the size, height, and type of on-premise signs visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways be the minimum necessary for identification. The design, materials, color, and location of the signs shall blend with the environment, utilizing natural materials where possible.	Yes. Signage on the site will be limited and subdued in design, and will not be visible from the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways.
LU 13.8 Avoid the blocking of public views by solid walls.	Yes. Because the SVEP does not border any of the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways, as the simulations prepared for KOPs-1, -2 and -3 indicate, any walls that are part of the project are not likely to block important public view from these roadways.
Circulation (C) Element—Scenic Corridors	
C 19.1 Preserve scenic routes that have exceptional or unique visual features in accordance with Caltrans' Scenic Highways Plan. (AI 79)	Yes. As the simulation and analysis prepared for KOPs-1, -2, and -3 indicate, the SVEP will not adversely affect views of exceptional or unique scenic features from the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways.
C 19.2 Wind turbine generators have proven to be a unique tourist attraction.	Not Applicable.
Multipurpose Open Space (OS) Element—Scenic Resources	
OS 21.1 Identify and conserve the skylines, view corridors, and outstanding scenic vistas within Riverside County.	Yes. As the simulation and analysis prepared for KOPs-1, -2 and -3 indicate, the SVEP will not adversely affect important skyline views or, view corridors, or outstanding scenic vistas
Multipurpose Open Space Element—Scenic Corridors	
OS 22.1 Design developments within designated scenic highway corridors to balance the objectives of maintaining scenic resources with accommodating compatible land uses.	Yes. The SVEP will not be visible in the immediate foreground of the closest Eligible Scenic Highways, and as review of the simulations and analyses for KOPs-1, -2 and -3 indicate, the SVEP facilities will be compatible with the existing landscape setting.
OS 22.2 Study potential scenic highway corridors for possible inclusion in the Caltrans Scenic Highways Plan. County of Riverside General Plan	Yes. Development of the SVEP will not conflict with this objective.
OS 22.3 Encourage joint efforts among federal, state, and County agencies, and citizen groups to ensure compatible development within scenic corridors.	Yes. Development of the SVEP will not conflict with this objective.
OS 22.4 Impose conditions on development within scenic highway corridors requiring dedication of scenic easements consistent with the Scenic Highways Plan, when it is necessary to preserve unique or special visual features	Not Applicable. As review of the existing condition photos for KOPs-1, -2 and -3 indicate, the views from the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways do not include unique or special visual features that would require protection by means of easements.
OS 22.5 Utilize contour grading and slope rounding to gradually transition graded road slopes into a natural configuration consistent with the topography of the areas within scenic highway corridors	Not Applicable. The grading on the site will not be visible views from the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways.

Source: Riverside County General Plan, Land Use Element, October 2003

8.13.5.3 Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan

The proposed SVEP site, and all of the linear facilities that will serve it, are located within the area under the jurisdiction of this plan. The provisions of the plan applicable to the SVEP and its linear facilities are summarized and evaluated in Table 8.13-5.

TABLE 8.13-5
Conformity of the SVEP with the Sun City/Menifee Valley Community Plan (SCMVAP)

Provision	Conformity?
<p>Third and Fifth Supervisorial District Design Standards and Guidelines Policy SCMVAP 8.1: Adhere to development standards established in the Standards and Guidelines for the Third and Fifth Supervisorial Districts.</p>	<p>Not Applicable. These guidelines were superseded by Countywide Standards and Guidelines adopted on January 13, 2004. Because these guidelines deal only with residential development, they are not applicable to the SVEP.</p>
<p>Mt. Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy SCMVAP 12.1: Adhere to the County lighting requirements for standards that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.</p>	<p>Yes. The design of the SVEP's lighting will be consistent with the County's lighting requirements to prevent interference with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.</p>
<p>Scenic Highways Policy SCMVAP 16.1 Protect the scenic highways in the SCMVAP from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of adjacent properties in accordance with the Scenic Corridors sections of the General Plan Land Use, Multipurpose Open Space, and Circulation Elements.</p>	<p>Not Applicable. The SVEP site does not lie adjacent to any of the nearby Eligible Scenic Highways. In any case as the visual simulations and analyses of the project's effects on the views from KOPs -1, -2 and -3 indicate, the SVEP will not have a substantial adverse effect on views from nearby Eligible Scenic Highways.</p>

Source: Riverside County General Plan, Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan, October 2003

8.11.5.4 Riverside County Zoning Ordinance

The SVEP site lies within an area designated by the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (2005) as the M-SC Zone (Manufacturing-Service Commercial). This zone has been established to “(1) promote and attract industrial and manufacturing activities which will provide jobs to local residents and strengthen the County’s economic base; (2) provide the necessary improvements to support industrial growth; (3) insure that new industry is compatible with uses on adjacent lands, and (4) protect industrial areas from encroachment by incompatible uses that may jeopardize industry” (Riverside County Planning Department, 2005a). The district specifies an extensive list of permitted uses and includes provisions for conditional approval of uses not specifically enumerated. The provisions of the ordinance relevant to the visual resource issues associated with the SVEP discussed in detail in Section 8.8, Land Use, and summarized below in Table 8.13-6.

TABLE 8.13-6
Conformity of the SVEP with the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance

Provision	Conformity?
Section 11.4b. Setbacks	
(1) Where the front, side, or rear yard adjoins a lot zoned R-R, R-1, R-A, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-6, R-T, R-T-R, or W-2-M, the minimum setback shall be 25 feet from the property line.	Yes. Because the project's structures will be set back more than 25 feet from all property lines and from all streets, the SVEP will be consistent with the setback requirements.
(2) Where the front, side, or rear yard adjoins a lot with zoning classification other than those specified in paragraph (1) above, there is no minimum setback.	
(3) Where the front, side, or rear yard adjoins a street, the minimum setback shall be 25 feet from the property line.	
(4) Within the exception of those portions of the setback area for which landscaping is required by Subsection E. below, the setback area may only be used for driveways, automobile parking, or landscaping. A setback area which adjoins a street separating it from a lot with a zoning classification other than those zones specified in paragraph (1) above, may also be used for loading docks.	
Section 11.4c. Height Requirements	
The height of structures, including buildings, shall be as follows:	Yes. The 90-foot-high stacks will require approval under Section 18.34, which permits non-building structures up to 105 feet high.
(1) Structures shall not exceed 40 feet at the yard setback line.	
(2) Buildings shall not exceed 50 feet unless a height up to 75 feet is approved pursuant to Section 18.34 of this ordinance.	
(3) Structures other than buildings shall not exceed 50 feet unless a height up to 105 feet is approved pursuant to Section 18.34 of this ordinance.	
(4) Broadcasting antennas shall not exceed 50 feet unless a greater height is approved pursuant to Section 18.34 of this ordinance.	
Section 11.4d. Masonry Wall	
Masonry Wall. Prior to occupancy of any industrial use permitted in this article, a six foot high solid masonry wall or combination landscaped earthen berm and masonry wall shall be constructed on each property line that adjoins any parcel specifically zoned for residential use, unless otherwise approved by the hearing officer or body.	Not Applicable. This provision does not apply because none of the property lines of the SVEP site adjoin residentially zoned lands.
Section 11.4e. Landscaping	
(1) A minimum of 10 percent of the site proposed for development shall be landscaped and irrigated.	Yes. A minimum of 10 percent of the site will be devoted to landscaping.
(2) A minimum ten-foot strip adjacent to street right-of-way lines shall be appropriately landscaped and maintained, except for designated pedestrian and vehicular accessways. Said landscaping strip shall not include landscaping located within the street right-of-way.	Yes. The zone along the street right-of-way lines that will be devoted to landscaping will be more than 10 feet in width.

TABLE 8.13-6
Conformity of the SVEP with the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance

Provision	Conformity?
<p>(3) A minimum 20 foot strip adjacent to lots zoned R-R, R-1, R-A, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-6, R-T, R-T-R, or W-2-M, or separated by a street from a lot with said zoning, shall be landscaped and maintained, unless a tree screen or other buffer treatment is approved by the hearing officer or body. However, in no case shall said landscaping be less than ten feet wide excluding curbing.</p>	<p>Yes. None of the SVEP’s exterior boundary lines are adjacent to or across the street from areas zoned for residential use, so a 20-foot landscape buffer strip is not required. The landscaped areas along all of the project’s outer edges will be a minimum of 10 feet in width.</p>
<p>Section 11.4.g Trash Collection Areas</p>	
<p>Trash collection areas shall be screened by landscaping or architectural features in such a manner as not to be visible from a public street or from any adjacent residential area.</p>	<p>Yes. Trash collection areas on the SVEP site will be screened by the perimeter landscaping.</p>
<p>Section 11.4.h Outside Storage and Service Areas</p>	
<p>Outside Storage and Service Areas. Outside storage and service areas shall be screened by structures or landscaping.</p>	<p>Yes. Outside storage and service areas on the SVEP site will be screened by the perimeter landscaping</p>
<p>Section 11.4.i Utilities</p>	
<p>Utilities shall be installed underground except electrical lines rated at 33 kV or greater.</p>	<p>Yes. All utilities on the site will comply with this requirement. The project’s transmission line is 115 kV</p>
<p>Section 11.4.j Mechanical Equipment</p>	
<p>Mechanical equipment used in the manufacturing process shall be required to be enclosed in a building, and roof-mounted accessory equipment may be required to be screened from view.</p>	<p>Yes. Most of the equipment on the SVEP site will be either fully or partially enclosed. Further screening of the equipment and equipment enclosures will be provided by the landscaping that will be proposed as a part of the plot plan.</p>
<p>Section 11.4.k Lighting</p>	
<p>All lighting fixtures, including spot lights, electrical reflectors and other means of illumination for signs, structures, landscaping, parking, loading, unloading and similar areas, shall be focused, directed and arranged to prevent glare or direct illumination on streets or adjoining property.</p>	<p>Yes. The nighttime lighting at the SVEP will be in conformance with these requirements. Lighting will be restricted to areas required for safety, security, and operation. Exterior lights will be hooded, and lights will be directed onsite so that significant offsite light or glare will not be created. Fixtures of a non-glare type will be specified. For areas where lighting is not required for normal operation, safety, or security, switched lighting circuits or motion detectors will be provided, thus allowing these areas to remain unilluminated at most times, minimizing the amount of lighting potentially visible offsite. In addition, landscaping around the site perimeters will further prevent glare or illumination on streets or adjoining property.</p>

Source: Riverside County. Zoning Ordinance

8.13.5.5 Summary of Project’s Conformity with Applicable Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards

The project is consistent with applicable LORS related to visual resource issues.

8.13.6 Permits Required

The required permit that is of the most direct relevance to visual resource issues is the Plot Plan Review and Use Permit/Conditional Use Permit (Table 8.13-7).

TABLE 8.13-7
Visual Resources-Related Permits Needed for Project Approval

Permit or Approval	Schedule	Agency Contact	Applicability
Plot Plan Review and Use Permit/Conditional Use Permit*	Prior to construction	Dianna Ross, Principal Planner Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, Development Review 4080 Lemon Street Riverside, CA 92501 (951) 955-3265	For uses not expressly indicated in zoning. Review of proposed onsite facilities layout and issuance of permit

* The plan review and permit would be required but for the exclusive authority of the CEC to license thermal power plants of more than 50 MW in California.

8.13.7 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts

The agency responsible for the Site Plan Review and the issuance of the Use Permit/Conditional Use Permit is Riverside County. See Table 8.13-8 for contact information.

TABLE 8.13-8
Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts

Agency	Contact/Title	Telephone
Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency Planning Department, Development Review 4080 Lemon Street Riverside, CA 92501	Dianna Ross, Principal Planner	(951) 955-3265

8.13.8 References

Buhyoff, G. J., P. A. Miller, J. W. Roach, D. Zhou, and L. G. Fuller. 1994. An AI Methodology for Landscape Visual Assessments. *AI Applications*. Vol. 8, No. 1., pp. 1-13.

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