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## 4.1 AESTHETICS

Would the Proposed Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 within a state scenic highway?			✓	
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			✓	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			✓	

### 4.1.0 Introduction

This section assesses the potential visual or aesthetic impacts associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Gas Company—hereinafter referred to as “the Applicants”—Pipeline Safety & Reliability Project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project involves construction, operation, and maintenance of an approximately 47-mile-long, 36-inch-diameter natural gas transmission pipeline that will carry natural gas from SDG&E’s existing Rainbow Metering Station to the pipeline’s terminus on Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar. Aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public’s experience and appreciation of the environment. Visual resource or aesthetic impacts are generally defined in terms of a project’s physical characteristics, potential visibility, and the extent to which its presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment. The Proposed Project route generally follows an existing highway corridor through both rural and urban landscape settings, including a mixture of commercial, industrial, and residential development. With the implementation of Applicants-Proposed Measures (APMs), it is anticipated that any impacts to aesthetics from the Proposed Project will be less than significant.

### 4.1.1 Methodology

The analysis of the potential aesthetic effects associated with the Proposed Project is based on a review of the following:

- technical data, including maps and drawings of the Proposed Project;

- aerial and ground-level photographs of the Proposed Project area;
- field reconnaissance;
- local planning documents; and
- a computer-generated visual simulation that shows the anticipated final appearance of a selected aboveground Proposed Project facility.

The following analysis addresses the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for visual impact analysis. Central to this assessment is an evaluation of representative public views from which the Proposed Project will be visible. As described in Chapter 3 – Project Description, the majority of the Proposed Project facilities will be placed underground, with the exception of the following Proposed Project components<sup>1</sup>:

- one pressure-limiting station located south of the existing Rainbow Metering Station and one pressure-limiting station located at the Line 1600 Cross-Tie facility;
- actuators for each of the 10 mainline valves (MLVs); and
- equipment associated with the Line 1601, Line 1600, and Line 2010 cross-ties.<sup>2</sup>

A visual simulation depicting the proposed Line 1600 Cross-Tie was produced as a representative of the cross-tie facilities for the Proposed Project using computer modeling and rendering techniques. The simulation illustrates the location, scale, and appearance of a component of the Proposed Project, as seen from a representative public viewpoint; photographs for the simulation were taken in March 2015 using a digital single-lens reflex camera. The simulation photograph was taken with a 50-millimeter lens, which represents a horizontal viewing angle of 40 degrees. The photograph was taken approximately 260 feet south of the proposed facility location. For the simulation viewpoint, the viewer location was digitized from topographic maps using five feet as the assumed eye level. Computer wireframe perspective plots were overlain on photographs to verify the scale and viewpoint location. The visual simulation was then produced based on a computer rendering of the three-dimensional model combined with digital versions of the selected site photograph. The simulation was used in conjunction with field reconnaissance to estimate the degree of visual contrast the Proposed Project component (i.e., the Line 1600 Cross-Tie) will create from the viewpoint evaluated. The visual simulation is presented as a set of before-and-after images. The simulation portrays the appearance of the proposed Line 1600 Cross-Tie, and is included as Figure 4.1-1: Visual Simulation – Line 1600 Cross-Tie. This facility was selected to be simulated because it will be the most visible to sensitive receptors from Mule Hill Trail as compared to the other aboveground facilities. The other cross-tie and MLV facilities will be designed similarly to the Line 1600 Cross-Tie, but will be located along roadways where views will be primarily from passing motorists.

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<sup>1</sup> Line markers will also be aboveground, but are considered a negligible visual impact so they are not discussed in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Equipment includes valve controls and communications equipment installed in cabinets, solar panels, and a pig receiver (at the Line 2010 Cross-Tie).



Existing view of the location of MLV 7, as viewed from the south along the Mule Hill Trail



Visual simulation of the Proposed Project

**Figure 4.1-1: Visual Simulation – Line 1600 Cross-Tie**





A typical drawing of an MLV and site plans of cross-tie facilities have also been included as part of Chapter 3 – Project Description; the final locations of the MLVs will be determined according to final engineering and permanent easement requirements.

This visual impact assessment is based on a review and application of relevant policies and guidance, and this assessment evaluates the potential changes to existing visual resources that may result from construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

#### **4.1.2 Existing Conditions**

This section includes a description of the visual setting and regulatory framework. Existing visual conditions are characterized in terms of the physical landscape features that compose visual resources in the Proposed Project area.

#### **Regulatory Background**

##### ***Federal***

There are no federal regulations pertaining to aesthetics that apply to the Proposed Project area.

##### ***State***

##### ***California Department of Transportation Scenic Highway Program***

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program was created by the state Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. The status of a state scenic highway changes from “eligible” to “officially designated” when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives the designation. A city or county may propose to add routes with outstanding scenic elements to the list of eligible highways; however, state legislation is required for them to become designated.

The Proposed Project is not proposed to cross or be located under any designated state scenic highways. However, the Proposed Project will run parallel to a segment of one eligible state scenic highway, which is a segment of Interstate (I-) 15. North of the segment’s intersection with State Route (SR-) 76, the Proposed Project will roughly parallel this segment at distances of 80 to 500 feet from I-15.

##### ***Local***

Pursuant to Article XII, Section 8 of the California Constitution, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has exclusive jurisdiction in relation to local government to regulate the design, siting, installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of natural gas pipeline transmission facilities. Other state agencies have concurrent jurisdiction with the CPUC. Although local governments do not have the power to regulate such activities, the CPUC encourages, and the Applicants participate in, cooperative discussions with affected local governments to address their concerns where feasible. As part of the environmental review

process, the Applicants have considered relevant regional and county policies, and issues, and have prepared this evaluation of the Proposed Project’s potential impacts to aesthetics.

*County of San Diego*

County of San Diego General Plan

The County of San Diego’s General Plan directs future growth in the unincorporated areas of the county and is based on a set of guiding principles designed to protect the county’s unique and diverse natural resources and to maintain the character of its rural and semi-rural communities. Contained within the General Plan are several aesthetics-related policies in the Land Use and Conservation and Open Space elements that are designed to ensure that infrastructure and public service development are consistent with the guiding principles of the General Plan. A description of each policy, as well as the Proposed Project’s consistency with these policies, is included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

In addition to these policies, the county’s visual resources are addressed in Chapter 5, the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County of San Diego’s General Plan. This element establishes a County Scenic Highway System, which was created to protect and enhance the county’s scenic, historic, and recreational resources within a network of scenic highway corridors. The county-designated scenic roadways in the vicinity of the Proposed Project are identified in Table 4.1-1: County Scenic Highway System Roadways.

**Table 4.1-1: County Scenic Highway System Roadways**

<b>Roadway</b>	<b>Segment</b>	<b>Location Relative to the Proposed Project</b>
I-15	Escondido city limits north to the Riverside County line	80 to 500 feet from approximate MP 0.0 to MP 20.7
Mission/Live Oak Park/Gird Roads	SR-76 north and east to I-15	Intersects at approximate MP 3.8
SR-76	Oceanside city limits to SR-79	Intersects at approximate MP 8.4

Source: County of San Diego 2011

Rainbow Community Plan

The County of San Diego adopted the Rainbow Community Plan as a part of its General Plan in 2011 and amended the plan in 2014. The purpose of the plan is to address the unique character and identity of the unincorporated area of Rainbow. The Community Plan contains several policies that are relevant to aesthetics and the potential impacts of the Proposed Project. A description of each relevant policy, as well as the Proposed Project’s consistency with these policies, is included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.



### Interstate 15 Corridor Subregional Plan

The County of San Diego also maintains and implements the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan (I-15 Plan) as part of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan. The I-15 Plan is intended to promote orderly development, protect environmental and man-made resources, and implement the county's objectives for growth management and the structure of government for the North County Subregion. The I-15 corridor extends approximately 20 miles from the Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. The I-15 Plan includes a set of guidelines and objectives to be reviewed when evaluating potential new development within the plan area. A description of each applicable guideline and objective, as well as the Proposed Project's consistency with these guidelines and objectives, is included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

#### *City of San Diego*

The City of San Diego's General Plan was reviewed for policies relating to utilities and aesthetics that are relevant to the Proposed Project. The Urban Design Element of the General Plan includes several policies that are relevant to aesthetics and visual impacts. A description of the policies, as well as the Proposed Project's consistency with the policies, is included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

#### *City of Escondido*

The City of Escondido's General Plan was reviewed for aesthetics-related policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project. Several policies from the General Plan apply, and a description of each policy—as well as the Proposed Project's consistency with these policies—is included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

#### *City of Poway*

The City of Poway's General Plan was reviewed for aesthetics-related policies that are relevant to the Proposed Project. Several policies that apply to the Proposed Project were identified in the General Plan; descriptions of these policies, as well as the Proposed Project's consistency with the policies, are included in Attachment 4.10-A: Local Land Use Plans and Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

### **Regional and Local Landscape Setting**

Attachment 4.1-A: Proposed Project Visual Character Photograph Viewpoint Locations depicts the Proposed Project's regional landscape context. Located in San Diego County, the Proposed Project area will be located in a diversity of landscapes and development patterns that includes open space, residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County, as well as within the cities of San Diego, Escondido, and Poway. Additionally, the Proposed Project will cross undeveloped portions of MCAS Miramar. Rugged, hilly landforms and varying terrain characterize a significant portion of the Proposed Project area, with mountain peaks dominating the distant views along the Proposed Project route to both the east and west. Along the entire length of the Proposed Project route, existing aboveground

infrastructure—including water valves, electrical transformers, telecommunication facilities, power lines, and force mains—is visible at various points without any particular concentration of these features in any one area.

Locally, the landscape setting consists of hilly, sparsely populated areas in the vicinity of the Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station. As the Proposed Project continues south from this location, the landscape transitions to rural open space characterized by agricultural uses, densely vegetated valleys, and sparsely vegetated hilltops with intermittent development. The Proposed Project will continue south along major transportation corridors into the more urbanized areas of the cities of Escondido and Poway, from which distant views of the Proposed Project area are mostly obstructed by existing development and ornamental vegetation along the various roadways. The surrounding landscape in these areas is dominated by suburban development patterns, including residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses. As the Proposed Project route continues south across MCAS Miramar, the landscape is undeveloped, ruderal, and mostly hidden from public view, except for intermittent viewpoints along SR-52.

### **Proposed Project Viewshed**

The Proposed Project viewshed is defined as the general area from which the Proposed Project will be visible. Within this area, for much of the Proposed Project route, existing telecommunication towers, overhead electric transmission and distribution lines, force main stations and water valves, transportation corridors, and other infrastructure and development are established landscape features. Some portions of the Proposed Project route traverse open space areas such as the San Dieguito River riparian area, Lake Hodges Reservoir and Recreational Area, and MCAS Miramar. The following section describes the visual setting and identifies locations (e.g., roadways, public open space, and nearby commercial developments) from which the Proposed Project's aboveground features may be visible to the public following the completion of construction.

For reference, visual details generally become apparent to the viewer when they are seen in the foreground at distances of 0.5 mile or less (Smardon 1986). For the purpose of the Proposed Project visual analysis, this foreground viewshed area is considered the primary focus as it is where visual details are most apparent. Due to the nature, size, and anticipated placement of the aboveground Proposed Project facilities, distances beyond 0.5 mile were not considered as these facilities are not likely to be noticeable at such distances due to existing development and vegetation.

### **Potentially Affected Public Views**

Because the Proposed Project is predominantly located underground, only the aboveground facility locations will be visible to the public. Except in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project route along Old Highway 395, Centre City Parkway, Bear Valley Parkway, Mule Hill Trail, and Pomerado Road, views of the Proposed Project area are generally limited by intervening vegetation, sound walls, and topographical features that partially or fully obstruct views beyond 100 feet. These features and the resulting public view are depicted in the existing conditions photographs in Attachment 4.1-B: Visual Character Photographs.

The Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station will be located at the site of the existing metering station at the intersection of Rainbow Valley Road and Old Highway 395 near MP 0. The visibility of this metering station site from I-15—which lies approximately 500 feet west of the site—and from other surrounding land uses is diminished by existing vegetation and topography. As the Proposed Project progresses south from the Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station along Old Highway 395 and past West Country Club Lane near MP 21.4, the surrounding area is semi-rural, dominated by single-family residential uses and various agricultural, institutional, commercial, and industrial uses. Views of the Proposed Project along this roadway will be restricted by existing sound walls and ornamental vegetation; views will be almost completely obstructed beyond the approximately 100-foot-wide roadway corridor.

Along Centre City Parkway and from MP 18.3 to MP 25.5, views of substantial portions of the Proposed Project from neighboring properties will be obstructed by existing sound walls and topography. Occasionally, the Proposed Project will be partially visible from hillsides along this roadway, but these views will again be obstructed by existing sound walls and ornamental vegetation in this largely suburban environment.

As the Proposed Project begins again near MP 29.3 and travels south of Bear Valley Parkway along Mule Hill Trail (an unpaved non-motorized trail popular with recreationalists), the landscape transitions from urban/suburban uses and development patterns to undeveloped open space. This undeveloped open space is dominated by the San Dieguito River riparian area from MP 29.3 to MP 30.2 and the elevated I-15 roadway corridor. The pressure-limiting station will be collocated with MLV 7 and the Line 1600 Cross-Tie along Mule Hill Trail near MP 29.3. This facility will be surrounded by a six- to eight-foot-high, concrete, earth-toned block wall. Views of the Proposed Project in this area will be unobstructed along Mule Hill Trail and visible in the distance from Bear Valley Parkway. Figure 4.1-1: Visual Simulation – Line 1600 Cross-Tie shows a before-and-after view of the proposed Line 1600 Cross-Tie.

The Proposed Project will then continue west on Highland Valley Road for approximately 500 feet before heading south along Pomerado Road, where the local landscape setting again transitions abruptly to suburban development patterns, which are separated at most locations from Pomerado Road by elevated berms and sound walls. Existing water, electrical, and telecommunication infrastructure is easily recognizable along the entirety of Pomerado Road, and is typically located in the vicinity of major intersections. Views of the roadway from surrounding uses are again obstructed in whole or in part by existing walls and vegetation. At the intersection of Pomerado Road and Avenue of Nations, the Proposed Project will head south past a middle school and a university. South of the schools' fence line, the Proposed Project will pass existing fixed-array photovoltaic panels and follow an existing water line access road across the sparsely vegetated, hilly landscape of MCAS Miramar. Views south from this location will be impeded only by a chain-link fence, although the viewing area is currently used for truck and equipment storage only. For the next approximately 2.6 miles, the Proposed Project will only be intermittently visible from public locations as it crosses MCAS Miramar.

### **Visual Character of the Proposed Project**

As shown in Attachment 4.1-A: Proposed Project Visual Character Photograph Viewpoint Locations and as described previously, the Proposed Project will traverse undeveloped, sparsely

vegetated areas, as well as fully developed, suburban roadways and land use patterns. The majority of the Proposed Project will be underground; certain equipment associated with the cross-ties, MLVs, and the pressure-limiting stations constitute the aboveground facilities. The Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station will be located just south of the existing metering station, which is surrounded by existing rural commercial uses and has limited residential development nearby. The footprint of the new facility will occupy approximately 0.18 acre within a parcel already owned by the Applicants. The Proposed Project will then travel along or in the vicinity of major roadways where existing rural residential development informs the visual character of the area. The majority of the proposed MLV stations will be located along these roadways, which is consistent with other existing utility and infrastructure development in the area.

The Line 1600 Cross-Tie will measure approximately 50 feet by 75 feet and will occupy an area of approximately 3,750 square feet of previously undeveloped land; this area is characterized by the surrounding undeveloped, vegetated riparian area to the south and east, as well as the undeveloped, sparsely vegetated hilly landforms to the south and west. Mule Hill Trail is located approximately 12 feet west of the proposed facility. Bear Valley Parkway and the surrounding commercial developments on each side of the Bear Valley Parkway are located to the north.

### **4.1.3 Impacts**

#### **Significance Criteria**

To determine the significance of the anticipated visual changes, the Proposed Project's effects were evaluated in light of the direction provided by the CEQA Guidelines. Impacts to aesthetics will be considered significant if the Proposed Project will:

- 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

To determine significance, the factors considered include the extent of Proposed Project visibility from residential areas and designated scenic routes; the degree to which the various Proposed Project elements will contrast with or be integrated into the existing landscape; and the extent of change in the landscape's composition and character. Proposed Project conformance with public policies regarding visual quality was also taken into account, as previously discussed.

#### **Visual Change**

The Proposed Project will introduce several new, permanent, aboveground facilities in locations with varying degrees of existing development. Ten MLV locations are proposed along the Proposed Project route, approximately five miles apart. The MLV locations will be placed at regular intervals and predominantly along existing developed roadway corridors. The MLV stations will be approximately 50 feet wide by 75 feet long and enclosed within an approximately six- to eight-foot-high masonry block walls.

Figure 4.1-1: Visual Simulation – Line 1600 Cross-Tie shows a before-and-after view of the proposed Line 1600 Cross-Tie. This visual simulation, which was taken from approximately 260 feet south of the facility’s proposed location, shows the typical equipment and block wall associated with the cross-ties and MLVs. Construction of the cross-tie facility at this site will alter the visual appearance of the property as viewed from Mule Hill Trail, as well as views of the surrounding open area from Bear Valley Parkway. Although this proposed facility will be located within an open space area, the location is close to Bear Valley Parkway and the commercial development on both sides of Bear Valley Parkway. Because views in this area include a major roadway and substantial commercial development along Bear Valley Parkway, the appearance of the Line 1600 Cross-Tie and the associated equipment will present a change to the immediate area; however, this change will not be inconsistent with the visual character of the surrounding area, which is dominated by other urban and suburban development.

At the Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station location, the existing aboveground facilities will be expanded to include additional equipment and facilities in an area surrounded by existing rural commercial and residential development. The Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station will be approximately 0.24 acre<sup>3</sup> in size. In addition, the Line 1601 Cross-Tie—which will measure approximately 80 feet by 80 feet—will be constructed near MP 23.4 and the SR-78 crossing in the City of Escondido. Both the Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station and the Line 1601 Cross-Tie will be surrounded by similar six- to eight-foot-high masonry block walls. As a result, the Proposed Project facilities will be visible to the public in varying degrees from a limited number of areas.

Temporary visual impacts may be experienced during construction. Six staging areas will be installed to facilitate laydown yards and equipment storage. Where open trenching of the Proposed Project route is anticipated to occur across previously undisturbed areas, temporary visual impacts may result following the completion of construction. In these areas, existing vegetation will be removed and soils will be excavated to allow for underground construction, which can result in linear expanses of barren land that have substantial visual contrast with the surrounding landscape. These types of visual changes to the natural landscape can be long-term in environments with low precipitation and slow vegetation growth, and can create unnatural, strong, linear contrasts with the surrounding non-linear patterns of existing vegetation. The majority of open trenching activities are anticipated to occur along existing roadways and other previously disturbed areas; however, potential temporary visual impacts may occur in six locations where the Proposed Project route will cross previously undisturbed lands. These locations are as follows:

- MP 3.1 – Approximately 0.5 mile of undisturbed land between Rainbow Hills Road and Avo Drive
- MP 9.3 – Approximately 0.5 mile of undisturbed land between the proposed HDD exit point and Old Highway 395
- MP 11.1 – Approximately 800 feet of undisturbed land between the HDD entry point and Old Highway 395

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<sup>3</sup> The Rainbow Pressure-limiting Station has been designed to the existing SDG&E-owned parcel, which is irregularly shaped. The dimensions are roughly 100 feet by 100 feet.

- MP 11.9 – Approximately 800 feet of undisturbed land between the HDD exit point and Old Highway 395
- MP 29.3 – Approximately 0.6 mile of semi-disturbed land along Mule Hill Trail, south of Bear Valley Parkway
- MP 43.3 – Approximately 1,000 feet of undisturbed land between Avenue of Nations and the exiting access road along the northern boundary of MCAS Miramar

Work areas for HDD and horizontal boring locations will also be visible during construction. Work areas for HDD are approximately 200 feet by 400 feet for entry sites and approximately 200 feet by 100 feet for exit sites. Bore pits associated with horizontal bores are approximately 15 feet by 40 feet, and horizontal boring exit pits are approximately 10 feet by 15 feet. Typically, bore pits are approximately 10 feet deep. Typical construction activities are depicted in Figure 3-10: Typical Cross-Country Construction through Figure 3-14: Typical Horizontal Bore – Road in Chapter 3 – Project Description. Work areas that were previously vegetated will be restored when construction is complete; although these impacts are temporary, the revegetated areas will be somewhat visible until the vegetation is matured.

Operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project is not expected to result in permanent visual changes to the landscape. During maintenance activities, some trucks and equipment may occasionally be visible to the public. These impacts, however, will affect limited areas and will be similar to other maintenance activities carried out for the Proposed Project and other infrastructure in the areas.

#### **Question 4.1a – Scenic Vista Effects – *Less-than-Significant Impact***

CEQA requires that the Proposed Project be evaluated on whether its implementation has a substantial, adverse effect on a scenic vista. For the purposes of this evaluation, a scenic vista is defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality. There are no designated scenic vistas along the Proposed Project route; however, views from Mule Hill Trail and the trailhead at Highland Valley Road and Pomerado Road (south of the proposed Line 1600 Cross-Tie) overlook the San Dieguito River valley and Lake Hodges. These points afford a scenic vista that could be temporarily affected by construction activities associated with the Proposed Project. However, these impacts will be temporary and will not permanently affect scenic views in the area. In the northern portion of the Proposed Project, where the Proposed Project route is overland and temporary work areas are in previously vegetated areas between Rainbow Metering Station and approximate MP 12, views of temporary construction activities and work areas will be available. However, these impacts will be temporary and experienced by motorists traveling on Old Highway 395 and I-15 at moderate to higher speeds. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not have a substantial effect on a scenic vista.

#### **Question 4.1b – Scenic Resource Damage within a State Scenic Highway – *Less-than-Significant Impact***

There are no designated state scenic highways adjacent to the Proposed Project; however, the Proposed Project will be parallel to one eligible state scenic highway. Specifically, the Proposed Project will roughly parallel an eligible segment of I-15 north of its intersection with SR-76 at distances of 80 to 500 feet from I-15. Distant views of the Proposed Project's construction

activities and aboveground facilities will be available from portions of this eligible route; however, the Proposed Project will not be easily visible given the distance from the roadway, the rate of motorists' travel along the roadway, the minimal amount of aboveground facilities anticipated to be located along this area. Due to the location of the Proposed Project's aboveground facilities—including two MLVs located south of the Rainbow Metering Station and near MP 1.5—and the existing vegetation and landforms obstructing views of the existing facility location, the Proposed Project will be only briefly noticeable from the roadway and will not obstruct views of nearby landscape features or the surrounding background.

The Proposed Project will also intersect two locally designated scenic roadways listed in Table 4.1-1: County Scenic Highway System Roadways. Viewers traveling along these roadways will experience temporary impacts related to the staging and use of construction equipment. However, the impacts will not be permanent, the laydown yards will be screened with chain link fence and slats or fabric, and these roadways are not state-designated scenic highways. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not damage resources within a state scenic highway, nor will it permanently or temporarily impact state scenic highways. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic resources will be less than significant.

#### **Question 4.1c – Visual Character Degradation**

##### ***Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact***

Construction-related visual impacts will result from the presence of equipment, materials, and work crews along the Proposed Project route and at the aboveground facility locations. Views of the Proposed Project route will generally occur from vantage points along I-15, Pomerado Road, and other major transportation corridors where the pipeline is proposed to be located, as well as in the vicinity of the aboveground facility locations. Although the visual effects from construction activities will be relatively short-term and will last an estimated 12 to 18 months overall (and only a few days or weeks within any given viewshed), they will be most noticeable to motorists traveling along these roadways and from commercial and residential areas with unobstructed views of the Proposed Project route. However, views of the majority of the Proposed Project route—including the majority of anticipated cross-tie and MLV locations—are diminished by existing vegetation and trees, as well as topographical changes along the Proposed Project route.

MLVs will be enclosed by approximately six- to eight-foot-high, earth-tone block walls, which will obscure views of the majority of equipment contained within and will blend in with other industrial development located throughout the transportation corridor. Proposed Project facilities associated with the Line 1601 Cross-Tie near MP 23.4 will also be located in an area of substantial existing development and will be surrounded by similar block walls and obscured from public views. Similarly, views of the Proposed Project route from I-15 will be diminished by the distance to the route, as well as intervening vegetation and landscape features.

The most prominent view of the Rainbow Pressure-Limiting Station will occur from along Old Highway 395; however, there is an existing facility at this site, and views of this location are obstructed by existing vegetation. In addition, the visual character of the area is dominated by the existing Rainbow Metering Station and by rural commercial development in the surrounding area. Similarly, other MLVs will be located along the developed roadways where other

infrastructure is part of the accepted visual landscape. The Line 1600 Cross-Tie will be located along Mule Hill Trail, where there is little existing development in the immediate area, though the nearby parkway and surrounding commercial development present a suburban commercial character in the larger viewshed. A visual simulation of the Line 1600 Cross-Tie is presented in Figure 4.1-1: Visual Simulation – Line 1600 Cross-Tie. In this location, the tall trees in the background aid in camouflaging an antenna and solar panel that is approximately 24 feet taller than the block wall enclosure. However, the block wall enclosure presents a strong visual contrast against the existing landscape. In order to reduce the potential impact of the Line 1600 Cross-Tie, the Applicants will implement APM-AES-01, which requires the development of a landscaping plan and decorative treatment of the block wall to visually integrate the structure into the landscape.

As described previously, temporary visual impacts may occur at six locations where the Proposed Project route will be constructed using open trenching across previously undisturbed lands. While these six areas total approximately two miles of the entire Proposed Project route, each area will be visible to the public in varying degrees from along major roadways and surrounding land uses. In order to reduce visual contrast and the potential impacts that may result in these areas, the Applicants will revegetate open trenching areas in accordance with a Habitat Restoration Plan, as required by APM-BIO-03. With implementation of this APM, potential impacts to aesthetics as the result of construction will be less than significant.

#### ***Operation and Maintenance – No Impact***

Regular maintenance of the Proposed Project facilities will occur in the same manner as it is required for existing pipelines and facilities in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. These activities will include operation of testing and maintenance equipment, as well as the periodic use of vehicles to transport workers and equipment. Because these activities will occur periodically and are similar in both nature and scope to current operation and maintenance activities conducted for existing facilities in the area, no significant changes in these activities will result, and no impact will occur.

#### **Question 4.1d – New Light or Glare**

##### ***Construction – Less-than-Significant***

No Proposed Project facilities will require or include the construction or use of lighting fixtures at aboveground facility locations. Additionally, all aboveground facilities will be enclosed by earth-tone concrete block walls or a chain-link fence, and all facilities located within the limits of these block walls and fences will be painted with non-reflective, light-colored paint. A majority of the construction of the Proposed Project will occur during daytime hours, unless otherwise required by a permitting agency to avoid potential impacts to other environmental resource areas. If construction activities are required at night, all necessary lighting will be shielded or otherwise positioned to minimize excess light or glare to the extent possible, as is consistent with APM-AES-02. As a result, any potential impacts from new light or glare will be less than significant.

##### ***Operation and Maintenance – No Impact***

Regular maintenance of the Proposed Project facilities will occur in the same manner as it is required for existing pipelines and facilities in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. These



activities will include operation of testing and maintenance equipment, as well as the use of vehicles to transport workers and equipment. Routine operation and maintenance activities will occur during daytime hours; no nighttime lighting will be included or used at any aboveground facility location unless an emergency occurs that requires nighttime work. Because regular operation and maintenance activities will occur periodically during daytime hours and are similar in both nature and scope to current operation and maintenance activities conducted for existing facilities in the area, no significant changes in these activities will result, and no impacts from new light or glare will occur.

#### 4.1.4 Applicants-Proposed Measures

The Applicants will implement the following APMs to minimize potential aesthetic impacts from the Proposed Project:

- **APM-AES-01:** In order to reduce potential visual contrast and to integrate the Line 1600 Cross-Tie enclosure's appearance with the surrounding landscape setting, the Applicants will design and implement landscaping or a decorative treatment for the block wall enclosure, such as a stone facade that is coordinated with the design of the nearby interpretive signage structures, in consultation with the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority.
- **APM-AES-02:** If nighttime construction is required, the Applicants will light areas only as required for safety and in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety Administration standards. All nighttime lighting will be shielded or otherwise positioned to minimize potential light trespass from the lighted work area and to reduce potential impacts to nighttime visibility.

#### 4.1.5 References

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**ATTACHMENT 4.1-A: PROPOSED PROJECT VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPH  
VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS**



**ATTACHMENT 4.1-B: VISUAL CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHS**