

### 4.13 AESTHETICS

Would the proposal:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Create light or glare?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SETTING

### ***REGIONAL SETTING***

The Encina and South Bay Power Plants, the 24th Street Terminal Refueling Facility, and several of the combustion turbine (CT) sites are situated along the California coastline and San Diego Bay. These areas are generally considered to have scenic resource value. Coastal areas are also generally sensitive to visual impacts. Coastal landscapes are typically open, affording clear views over the range of viewing distances from the immediate foreground to the horizon. Land forms and patterns (e.g., the curve of the shoreline itself) are often distinctive in their forms, colors, and textures; small changes in existing landscape elements or the introduction of features that are modest in scale may be visually prominent and disruptive. Generally speaking, building materials associated with the generating assets being divested are predominantly steel and concrete, and colors and exterior finishes are flat and subdued.

The local setting for each of the assets being sold is described briefly below. As explained therein, none of the assets is located in a pristine coastal setting. Rather, each site is highly developed with industrial, commercial, and/or military uses.

### ***LOCAL SETTING***

#### **Encina Power Plant**

The Encina Power Plant is located along the coast in the City of Carlsbad. This area of the coast is highly developed, consisting principally of residential areas and associated shopping centers. The plant site is bound by residential land uses to the north of the site; mixed residential, commercial, and industrial land uses to the south; open space to the east; and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The Pacific Ocean and the Agua Hedionda Lagoon are popular recreational and scenic areas. Figure 4.13.1 shows an aerial view of the Encina Power Plant and vicinity.

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**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.1**  
**Aerial View of the ENCINA POWER PLANT**

The steam turbine units at the Encina Power Plant are located in an enclosed building with an approximate height of 100 feet. The building's main stack rises to approximately 200 feet. These structures are dominant visual features from surrounding land uses, including Highway 101. Exterior finishes include shades of beige and blue-green that are intended to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Views of the Encina Power Plant are available from public recreation areas and adjacent residences, including those residences located on Harbor Drive, Tierra del Oro Street, and Garfield Street, among others. Figures 4.13.2a and b show off-site views of the plant from the end of Garfield Street looking south and the end of Harbor Drive looking south, respectively. No designated scenic routes are located in the site vicinity.

### **South Bay Power Plant**

The South Bay Power Plant is located in the City of Chula Vista. Interstate 5 (I-5) runs along the eastern boundary of the power plant property. Extensive undeveloped areas are located within the fenced boundaries of SDG&E's property. The plant site is bound by light industrial land uses to the south; commercial/industrial land uses to the east; public park and recreation areas to the north; and San Diego Bay to the west. Residential land uses are located on the other side of I-5, approximately one mile east of the power plant.

Portions of the facility rise approximately 150 feet above ground level, dominating background views from surrounding roadways and other off-site locations. Exterior finishes include shades of gray, blue, green, and brown that are intended to reduce visual contrast with the surrounding landscape. A web of transmission lines crosses the plant site. Landscaping and natural barriers located along the perimeter of the site partially screen the facility from off-site viewpoints. Figure 4.13.3 shows an aerial view of the South Bay Power Plant and vicinity.

Views of the South Bay Power Plant are available from Chula Vista Park, Chula Vista Marina, and the bicycle trail along the harbor. Figures 4.13.4a and b show off-site views of the plant from the north end of the site and from Chula Vista Park looking south, respectively. Views from boats docked in the Chula Vista Marina are partially obstructed by the entrance road embankment. Storage tanks at the north end of the plant site are highly visible from surrounding areas to the north and contribute to the overall industrial character of the site. No designated scenic routes are located in the site vicinity.

### **Combustion Turbines**

Each of the CT sites is located in an area primarily surrounded by commercial and industrial land uses. Generally speaking, all of the CTs are similar in appearance and resemble a trailer or other small-scale building. In each case, the exterior finishes are beige and gray to reduce visual contrast with surrounding facilities. Figure 4.13.5a shows a view of the CT located at the Naval Training Center. CTs located at other sites are similar in appearance. Each of the CT locations is described below.

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**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.2a  
VIEW OF THE ENCINA POWER PLANT FROM THE END OF GARFIELD STREET  
LOOKING SOUTH**

**and**

**4.13.2b  
VIEW OF THE ENCINA POWER PLANT FROM THE END OF HARBOR DRIVE  
LOOKING SOUTH**

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**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.3**  
**Aerial View of the SOUTH BAY POWER PLANT**

**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.4a**  
**VIEW OF THE SOUTH BAY POWER PLANT TANKS LOOKING SOUTH**

**and**

**4.13.4b**  
**VIEW OF THE SOUTH BAY POWER PLANT FROM CHULA VISTA PARK**  
**LOOKING SOUTH**

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**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.5a  
VIEW OF THE NAVAL TRAINING CENTER COMBUSTION TURBINE SITE FROM  
INSIDE THE FACILITY**

**and**

**INSERT FIGURE 4.13.5b  
VIEW OF THE 24th Street TERMINAL REFUELING FACILITY FROM THE EAST  
SIDE OF QUAY ROAD LOOKING SOUTHWEST**

### ***El Cajon Substation***

The CT at the El Cajon Substation site is located in a commercial area of the City of El Cajon. The nearest residential units are approximately 400 feet south of the site on Richfield Avenue. SDG&E's Eastern Construction and Operations Center, which includes an electrical substation, surrounds the CT site. A parking lot is located to the north and east, the substation is located to the south, and a fuel storage facility is located to the west of the CT.

Mature trees and SDG&E's existing substation obstruct views of the CT from nearby residences to the south. Transmission lines extending from the site stand out from the surrounding flat topography. No designated scenic routes are located in the site vicinity.

### ***Kearny Construction and Operation Center***

Nine CTs are located at SDG&E's Kearny Construction and Operation Center in the City of San Diego. Eight of the CTs are clustered together, while the remaining CT is located elsewhere at the site. The site is fully developed for heavy commercial/light industrial uses and includes five aboveground storage tanks that contain back-up diesel fuel for the CTs. The CT site is surrounded by other commercial and industrial land uses such as the County of San Diego Operations Center, the Sheriff's Probation Department Public Services Work Projects Center, Ryder Truck Rental, Taco Bell, Parson's Air Gas, the City of San Diego Municipal Wastewater Department's Operations Center and Facilities Support Center, Cabrillo Business Park, and San Diego Municipal Court.

The visual character of the site vicinity is defined primarily by the flat topography and surrounding industrial uses to the north, east, and south. No scenic vistas or routes are located in the site vicinity.

### ***Miramar Yard***

Two CTs are located at SDG&E's Miramar Yard in the City of San Diego. The site is bound by commercial land uses to the north; industrial land uses to the east and west; and the Marine Corps (formerly Naval) Air Station Miramar to the south. The CTs are located at the site such that they are not visible from any public off-site vantage point.

### ***Naval Station***

The Naval Station CT site is surrounded by naval land uses. The CT is located within an industrial steam energy complex operated by an independent operator (Sithe Energies). Large equipment and structures associated with the industrial steam energy complex are such that the CT is not visible from any public off-site vantage point.

### ***Naval Training Center***

The Naval Training Center CT is located on an inlet of San Diego Bay at the U.S. Navy's Naval Training Center in the City of San Diego. The western ends of the runways at Lindbergh Field are located to the east. The site is surrounded by naval uses. The CT is located within an industrial steam energy complex operated by Sithe Energies. Large equipment and structures



associated with the industrial steam energy complex are such that the CT is not visible from any public off-site vantage point.

### ***North Island Naval Air Station***

Two CTs are located at the U.S. Navy's North Island Naval Air Station in the City of Coronado. The North Island Naval Air Station CTs are located on U.S. Navy property and are within an industrial steam energy complex operated by Sithe Energies. Large equipment and structures associated with the industrial steam energy complex are such that the CTs are not visible from any public off-site vantage point.

### ***Division Substation***

The Division Substation CT is located on the southwesterly side of Harbor Drive, immediately adjacent to an SDG&E electrical substation in the City of San Diego. A large U.S. Navy parking lot extends to the north, south, and west. Railroad and trolley tracks parallel Harbor Drive to the east. The site is roughly one-half mile southwest of I-5.

The visual character of the site is defined primarily by the flat topography and surrounding industrial uses to the north, east, and south. No scenic vistas or routes are located in the site vicinity.

### **24th Street Terminal Refueling Facility**

The 24th Street Terminal Refueling Facility is located approximately one-half mile west of I-5 in the City of National City. Port District parking lots for new vehicles and storage yards for other goods that are being shipped through the National City Terminal surround the site. Railroad tracks run along the western boundary of the site, while a lumber yard occupies the lands to the south and east. Vacant land is found to the north, beyond which is a large parking lot used for the storage and staging of cars being shipped into the 24th Street Terminal. Views of the three storage tanks are available to the public from Quay Road east of the site (see Figure 4.13.5b on page 4.13-7). No scenic vistas or routes are located in the site vicinity.

## **CHECKLIST ISSUES**

### ***a) SCENIC VISTAS AND SCENIC HIGHWAYS***

Existing views from or of the project facilities would not change or be physically blocked, reduced in area, or reconfigured by the sales of the facilities. Moving view sequences of the project sites or of existing site features, such as views from a vehicle traveling along a roadway or from a pedestrian path, would not be shortened or interrupted by the proposed project.

Because the project involves the transfer of ownership of facilities, only minimal visual or aesthetic changes are anticipated. The proposed project would not substantially change the existing physical characteristics of each facility. Significant modification of the facilities would

require permits that would trigger review and thus offer opportunities to address any potential changes in the nature or degree of visual and aesthetic effects.

Because no major modifications would be made as a result of the project, the potential impacts on scenic vistas, views open to the public, or highways would be less than significant.

### **Encina Power Plant**

The Encina Power Plant facility is located within the Coastal Zone and thus any future development would be subject to the policies of the Local Coastal Program, which encourages the protection of scenic views within the Coastal Zone. Plant facilities are also partially visible from I-5, which extends along the western boundary of the Encina Power Plant. I-5 is eligible to be designated as a scenic highway. The property offered for sale in SDG&E's divestiture application is currently almost entirely developed with equipment associated with the power plant. Although construction or expansion of the facility is not foreseeable, any future construction would not be anticipated to substantially alter the existing visual character of the site. The only anticipated physical modifications of the plant resulting from the project would be to construct a fence (or fences) to separate the divested property from the retained property, and any associated access improvements (such as an access road). These modifications are not anticipated to substantially alter the appearance of the site; therefore, the impact on scenic vistas and highways would be less than significant.

### **South Bay Power Plant**

Similar to the Encina Power Plant, the South Bay Power Plant facility is located within the Coastal Zone, and subject to the policies of the Local Coastal Program, which encourages the protection of scenic views within the Coastal Zone. Highway 75 is eligible but not officially designated as a scenic highway. Because the project would not adversely affect scenic views from Highway 75, it would not be in conflict with Local Coastal Program policies. Therefore, the impact on scenic vistas and highways would be less than significant.

The only anticipated physical modifications of the plant resulting from the project would be to construct a fence (or fences) to separate the divested property from the retained property, and any associated access improvements (such as an access road). These modifications are not anticipated to substantially alter the appearance of the site and would not be considered a significant adverse impact.

### **Combustion Turbines and 24th Street Terminal Refueling Facility**

No designated scenic routes are identified in the vicinity of any of the CT sites, and the CT units at the sites are not prominent in any scenic vistas. The CTs at North Island Naval Air Station, the Naval Station, and the Naval Training Center are not visible to the surrounding land uses. Also, the 24th Street Terminal Refueling Facility storage tank site is visible from nearby agricultural and industrial uses. Nonetheless, the only anticipated physical modifications to any of the CT facilities and 24th Street Terminal resulting from the proposed project would be

construction of a fence to separate the divested units and associated leased properties from the retained properties, and any associated access improvements. The project would not result in substantial foreseeable modifications, at any of the CT facilities, that could adversely affect scenic views from the highway. It is possible that a new owner could remove the tanks and their equipment at the 24th Street Terminal. However, what might replace it, if anything, is unknown. Therefore, the impact on scenic vistas and highways would be less than significant.

### **Conclusion**

The project would not result in substantial visible changes to any of the plants. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant.

### ***b) NEGATIVE AESTHETIC EFFECTS***

The only anticipated physical modifications of the plants resulting from the project would be to construct fences to separate the divested property from retained property, and any associated access improvements. These modifications would not substantially alter the appearance of the sites and would not cause a significant negative aesthetic effect. Therefore, the project would not result in a potentially significant impact.

### **Conclusion**

The project would not result in substantial visible changes to any of the plants. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant.

### ***c) LIGHT AND GLARE***

#### **Combined Effects**

The transfer of ownership may require relatively minor construction, which would likely be limited to activities necessary to separate the divested generating units from on-site transmission and distribution equipment, ownership of which would be retained by SDG&E. Such minor construction activities, which would be conducted during daylight hours, would not produce new light or glare. Although the project could result in increased levels of plant operation and electricity generation, the project would not introduce any additional sources of reflected sunlight or glare to the plant site vicinities from windows, automobiles, and other reflective surfaces. Any additional sources of night lighting (e.g., vehicle headlights) would be minimal. Because substantial changes to light and glare conditions would not be anticipated at any of the plants to be divested, this impact would be less than significant.

### **Conclusion**

The only anticipated physical modifications of the plants resulting from the project would be to construct fences to separate the divested properties from the retained properties, and any associated access improvements. Minor construction activities at the plants anticipated for the

project would not introduce additional sources of reflected sunlight and glare to these site vicinities. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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REFERENCES — Aesthetics

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