

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section describes the visual resources and aesthetic qualities present on and near the Project area, while also assessing the potential impact the Project could have on those resources. The pre-development conditions of the landscape within and surrounding the Project area would inform the degree of impact that the Project could potentially have on that existing landscape. Available reference materials such as the *County of Riverside's General Plan (RCGP)*, *City of Beaumont General Plan Update (GP)*, and *City of Beaumont Municipal Code (MC)*, would provide context regarding the area's visual character and the importance of its visual resources. Impacts are assessed on their effects on scenic vistas, scenic resources (e.g., trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings) within scenic highways, or the degradation of the visual quality of the area. The analysis also considers the potential effects of light and glare generation from the Project.

VISUAL RESOURCE TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTS

When viewing the same landscape, people may have different responses to that landscape and any proposed visual changes, based upon their values, familiarity, concern, or expectations for that landscape and its scenic quality. Due to each person's unique attachment to and value for a landscape, visual changes to that landscape inherently affect viewers differently. However, generalizations can be made about viewer sensitivity to scenic quality and visual changes. Recreational users (e.g., hikers, equestrians, tourists, and people driving for pleasure) are expected to have high concern for scenery and landscape character. People commuting daily through the same landscape generally have a moderate concern for scenery, while people working at industrial sites generally have a lower concern for scenic quality or changes to existing landscape character.

The visual sensitivity of a landscape is affected by the viewing distances at which it is seen, such as close-up or far away. The visual sensitivity of a landscape is also affected by the travel speed at which a person is viewing the landscape (high speeds on a highway, low speeds on a hiking trail, or stationary at a residence). The same project feature can be perceived differently by people depending on the distance between the observer and the viewed object. When a viewer is closer to a viewed object in the landscape, greater detail is visible, and there is greater potential influence of the object on visual quality because of its form or scale (relative size of the object in relation to the viewer). When the same object is viewed at background distances, details may be imperceptible but overall forms of terrain and vegetation are evident, and the horizon and skyline are dominant. In the middle ground, some detail is evident (e.g., the foreground), and landscape elements are seen in context with landforms and vegetation patterns (e.g., the background).

The following terms and concepts are used in the discussion below to describe and assess the aesthetic setting and Project impacts.

Scenic Vista. An area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. This includes any such areas designated by a federal, state, or local agency.

Scenic Highway. Any stretch of public roadway that is designated as a scenic corridor by a federal, state, or local agency.

Sensitive Receptors. Viewer responses to visual settings are inferred from a variety of factors, including distance and viewing angle, types of viewers, number of viewers, duration of view, and viewer activities. The viewer type and associated viewer sensitivity are distinguished among project viewers in recreational, residential, commercial, military, and industrial areas. Viewer activities can range from a circumstance that encourages a viewer to observe the surroundings more closely (such as recreational activities) to one that discourages close observation (such as commuting in heavy traffic). Viewers in recreational areas are considered to have high sensitivity to visual resources. Residential viewers generally have moderate sensitivity but extended viewing periods. Viewers in commercial, military, and industrial areas are considered to have low sensitivity.

Viewshed. A project's viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the project is likely to be seen, based on topography, atmospheric conditions, land use patterns, and roadway orientations. "Project viewshed" is used to describe the area surrounding a project site where a person standing on the ground or driving a vehicle can view a project site.

Visual character. Typically consists of the landforms, vegetation, water features, and cultural modifications that impart an overall visual impression of an area's landscape. Scenic areas typically include open space, landscaped corridors, and viewsheds. Visual character is influenced by many different landscape attributes including color contrasts, landform prominence, repetition of geometric forms, and uniqueness of textures among other characteristics.

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project Site's topography is composed of generally flat areas dominated by grasslands in the northeast as well as rolling hills supporting patch scrub throughout the north and south, and open space areas to the west.¹ According to available historical sources, the Project Site has been undeveloped since as early as 1901; developed with rural residential or farming-related structures from the 1930s to about the late 1960s; and undeveloped to the present.² Additionally, the overall Project Site including the Warehouse Site is currently vacant and has been subject to regular unauthorized human disturbances, evidenced by signs of tire tracks and ramps left behind from off-road vehicle (ORV) use. The heavily disturbed nature of the site caused by the unauthorized ORV activity, contributes to the diminished aesthetic value of the Project Site and the surrounding area.

The Project Site is situated in an area of the City of Beaumont (City) being developed with and planned for similar uses, such as industrial and manufacturing developments. The Heartland Specific Plan, which provides for industrial and commercial uses, is located just north of State Route 60 (SR-60), and manufacturing/warehousing/industrial uses are located to the east. The site is surrounded by vacant land to the south and west. The Project Site is currently split between City and County jurisdiction. The Project would include annexation of the County land to the City, and adoption of a land use change and prezone for the County parcels. A General Plan Amendment and prezone would be processed to designate the

¹ Ecological Sciences, Inc. 2018. *General Habitat Assessment*.

² Partner Engineering and Sciences, Inc. 2018. *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report*.

County parcels Industrial (I) and Manufacturing (M), respectively. A portion of the Project Site, the southernmost 28.41-acre parcel that is also being annexed into the City, would also have a Residential Overlay Zone imposed in addition to the manufacturing zoning designation.

The Project Site is located in the northwest portion of the City, within the County of Riverside (County) south of SR-60 and approximately one mile west of Interstate 10 (I-10). The City is bordered to the east by the City of Banning; to the south by unincorporated County land; to the west by unincorporated County land and the City of Calimesa approximately two miles west; and to the north by the unincorporated community of Cherry Valley. Immediately north of the Warehouse Site are new freeway on and off ramps to SR-60 that are currently under construction. North of SR-60 is a Specific Plan development area. The future alignment of Potrero Boulevard and vacant land lies to the east of the Project Site. The unpaved alignment of 4th Street forms the southern boundary of the Warehouse Site, and vacant land that is part of the Project Site and which would be annexed into the City as part of the Project, but for which no development is proposed is south of the 4th Street alignment. Vacant land is to the west of the Project Site.

SCENIC VISTAS

Scenic resources are an important quality of life component for residents of Riverside County. In general, scenic resources include areas that are visible to the general public and considered visually attractive. Scenic resources include natural landmarks and prominent or unusual features of the landscape. Generally, scenic backdrops in the County include hillsides and ridges that rise above urban or rural areas or highways.³

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly-valued landscape for the benefit of the public. Neither the County nor the GP officially designate any scenic vistas near the Project Site or in the City, but the updated GP does have policies focused on protecting and enhancing scenic vistas and views. Although no area within the City is officially designated as a scenic vista, the City is situated at a half-mile elevation in the County's The Pass Area Plan, south of southern California's highest peak, San Gorgonio Mountain, and north of San Jacinto Peak which provide the most prominent views from the City. The most prominent scenic vistas are provided by the San Bernardino Mountains located approximately 20 miles north of the Project Site and the San Jacinto Mountains located approximately 12 miles southeast of the Project Site.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS

Scenic highways and routes are a unique component of the circulation system as they traverse areas of unusual scenic or aesthetic value. No state scenic highway traverses the Project Site, nor is a scenic highway located in the immediate vicinity. The nearest designated Scenic Highway is SR-243, located approximately nine miles east of the Project Site.⁴

³ County of Riverside. 2015. *General Plan – Multipurpose Open Space Element*. https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_Plan_2017/elements/OCT17/Ch05_MOSE_120815.pdf?ver=2017-10-11-102103-833 (accessed November 2021).

⁴ Caltrans. 2018. *California State Scenic Highway System Map*. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca> (accessed November 2021).

LIGHT AND GLARE

Generally, there are two types of light intrusion, light and glare. Light which emanates from the interior of structures and passes through windows and light that projects from exterior sources, such as exterior building parking, street lighting, security lighting, and landscape lighting. “Light spill” is typically defined as the presence of unwanted and/or misdirected light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. Glare is the sensation produced by luminance within the visual field that is significantly greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted, which causes annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility.

The Project is located in a largely vacant area of the City and County, bordering SR-60. Light and glare in the Project area are typical of that found in urban and rural environments. Sources of light and glare include light from SR-60 and related traffic. No stationary light sources are currently present in the Project Site.

The Project would introduce features typically found in logistics center developments: concrete tilt-up walls, office space, parking, landscaping, and outdoor security lighting onto the Warehouse Site.

3.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

STATE

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

The Project Site’s northerly boundary is located approximately 150 feet south of SR-60 and would require off-site improvements including utility extensions. An interchange planned for the SR-60 and future Potrero Boulevard, also known as the SR-60/Potrero Boulevard Interchange Project, is currently being constructed in the area between the northern boundary of the Project Site and SR-60 on property owned by the City. Note that the construction of the interchange improvements and the Project would occur independent of one another. Caltrans manages the California Scenic Highway Program (CSHP), which is intended to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. State laws governing State Scenic Highways are found in Streets and Highways Code (SHC) §§ 260 to 263. A highway may be designated as scenic based on certain criteria, including how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the landscape’s scenic quality, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler’s enjoyment of the view. The CSHP’s Scenic Highway System List identifies scenic highways that are either eligible for designation or have already been designated as such. The list can be found here:

- <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/2017-03desigandeligible-a11y.xlsx>

REGIONAL

County of Riverside Ordinance No. 655

A portion of the Project Site is currently located in unincorporated Riverside County and is currently subject to regulations set forth in Ordinance No. 655. The Project proposes annexation of that portion of

the Project Site to the City. County of Riverside Ordinance No. 655 “Regulating Light Pollution” is intended to restrict the permitted use of certain light fixtures emitting into the night sky undesirable light rays which have a detrimental effect on astronomical observation and research. Ordinance No. 655 defines the zones where light pollution could impact Palomar Observatory: Zone A is within 15 miles; Zone B is between 15 and 45 miles of the observatory.⁵ The Project Site is approximately 40 miles from the Palomar Observatory in Zone B.

County of Riverside Ordinance No. 915

As stated previously, a portion of the Project Site, the Annexation Site, is currently located in unincorporated Riverside County and is therefore subject to County ordinances and regulations. The purpose of Ordinance No. 915 is to provide minimum requirements for outdoor lighting in order to reduce light trespass, and to protect the health, property, and well-being of residents in the unincorporated areas of Riverside County.

County of Riverside Zoning Ordinance No. 348

A portion of the Project Site is currently located in unincorporated Riverside County and is currently subject to regulations set forth in this ordinance. Ordinance No. 348 is intended to be the primary ordinance that governs land use review and approval and zoning applications in Riverside County. Originally adopted in 1949, Ordinance No. 348 has been amended over 4,000 times in the last 69 years. The current Ordinance No. 348 has 64 articles and 484 sections.

LOCAL

City of Beaumont General Plan

The Land Use and Community Design Element

The Land Use and Community Design Element establishes goals and policies to accommodate City growth and development over time. This Element complies with the State requirements for a Land Use Element and a Community Design Element. The Project’s consistency with these goals and policies is discussed in **Table 3.10-3, Beaumont General Plan Consistency Analysis** of this EIR. The following goals and policies are applicable to visual resources:

Goal 3.12: A City that minimizes the extent of urban development in the hillsides, and mitigates any significant adverse consequences associated with urbanization.

Policy 3.12.2: Limit the extent and intensity of uses and development in areas of unstable terrain, steep terrain, scenic vistas, and other critical environmental areas.

⁵ Riverside County Planning Department. 2015. *Draft Environmental Impact Report No. 521, Section 4.4 Aesthetics and Visual Resources. Page 4.4-6. Figure 4.4.1: Mt. Palomar Night Time Lighting Policy Area.*
https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_plan_2015/DEIR%20521/04-04_AestheticsAndVisualResources.pdf (accessed November 2019).

Policy 3.12.3: Control the grading of land, pursuant to the City's Municipal Code, to minimize the potential for erosion, landslides, and other forms of land failure, as well as to limit the potential negative aesthetic impact of excessive modification of natural landforms.

Goal 8.6: A City that protects and enhances its scenic vistas and views.

Policy 8.6.4: When grading is necessary, encourage grading for new development that complements the surrounding natural features.

Policy 8.6.6: Limit light pollution from outdoor sources, especially in rural, hillside and mountain areas, and open spaces, to maintain darkness for night sky viewing.

Goal 11.7: Design buildings that are at a human-scale and create quality environments.

Policy 11.7.6: Ensure that loading docks and service entrances are screened from the right-of-way and adjacent properties; are accessed via alleys, side streets, or services access driveways; and are internal to the building envelope and equipped with closable doors to improve the aesthetics of the public realm and limit noise.

City of Beaumont Municipal Code

Upon project completion, the proposed Project Site would be entirely within the City of Beaumont and would be required to comply with the regulations set forth in the Beaumont MC.

Beaumont Municipal Code, Title 17- Zoning

Beaumont MC Title 17, Chapter 17.07 – Signs is intended to make the City attractive to residents, visitors, and commercial, industrial and professional businesses while maintaining economic stability and vitality through an attractive signing program.

Chapter 17.07.010 (A) – *Recognition of Needs; Goals*. The City recognizes the need for signs as a means to identify businesses and other necessary and beneficial activities within the community. The City finds that signing is an important design element of the physical environment. Provisions consistent with the goals and objectives of the community are necessary to ensure that the special character and image the community is striving for can be attained while serving business and other needs in the community. The City is striving to provide an economically stable and visually attractive community through high-quality site planning, building designs, landscaping, and signing. As a planned architectural feature, a sign can be pleasing and can harmonize with the physical character of its environment. Proper controls can achieve this goal and would make the City a more attractive place to live, work, and shop.

Beaumont Municipal Code Title 8 Health and Safety Code

Beaumont MC Title 8.50 – Outdoor Lighting – Has the purpose and intent to establish regulation and standards which would reduce light pollution generated by residential, commercial, and industrial lighting fixtures and devices, minimize light pollution which has a detrimental effect on the environment and the enjoyment of the night sky, reduce and minimize lighting and lighting practices which cause unnecessary illumination of adjacent properties, correct problems of glare and light trespass, and reduce energy use. This code further defines prohibited lighting, exempt lighting, and lighting requirements for commercial and industrial zones to include height limits, light power, lighting curfew, and discusses nonconforming lighting.

3.1.3 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G contains the Environmental Checklist Form, which includes questions concerning aesthetics. The questions presented in the Environmental Checklist Form have been utilized as significance criteria in this section. Accordingly, the Project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- 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) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; and
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Project is evaluated against the aforementioned significance criteria/thresholds, as the basis for determining the impact's level of significance concerning aesthetics. This analysis considers the existing regulatory framework (i.e., laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards) that avoid or reduce the potentially significant environmental impact. Where significant impacts remain despite compliance with the regulatory framework, feasible mitigation measures are recommended, to avoid or reduce the Project's potentially significant environmental impacts.

Approach to Analysis

This analysis of impacts on aesthetic resources examines the Project's temporary (i.e., construction) and permanent (i.e., operational) effects based on significance criteria/threshold's application outlined above. For each criterion, the analyses are generally divided into two main categories: (1) temporary impacts; and (2) permanent impacts. Each criterion is discussed in the context of Project components that share similar characteristics/geography. The impact conclusions consider the potential for changes in environmental conditions, as well as compliance with the regulatory framework enacted to protect the environment.

The baseline conditions and impact analyses are based on: field observations conducted by Kimley-Horn in April 2019; review of Project maps and drawings; analysis of aerial and ground-level photographs; and review of various data available in public records, including local planning documents. The determination that a Project component would or would not result in "substantial" adverse effects on scenic resources or visual character considers the site's aesthetic resource value and the severity of the Project component's visual impact (e.g., the nature and duration of the impact). For example, a Project component resulting in a severe impact on a site with a low aesthetic resource value would result in a less than significant impact concerning scenic or visual character. In other words, new conspicuous structures

or visual changes in areas with a low aesthetic resource value may not necessarily result in substantial adverse effects on visual resources.

Visual sensitivity can be described as viewer awareness of visual changes in the environment and is based on the viewers' perspective while engaging in activities from public areas near a project site. The Project Site is visible to various users. The sensitivity of those users to changes within a project site varies with the type of use, length of time that the viewer would be within a project site's zone of visual influence (ZVI), and the viewer's distance from a project site. Viewers of the Project Site may include nearby residents located north of SR-60, future warehouse employees, travelers, and commuters within the project's ZVI. However, it should be noted that the residents located north of SR-60 have an obstructed view overlooking south of the SR-60 due to highway berms along SR-60 and boundary walls along the residential development.

3.1.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.1-1: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant Impact

The Project Site's topography is composed of generally flat areas dominated by grasslands in the northeast as well as rolling hills supporting patch scrub throughout the north and south, and open space areas to the west.⁶ According to available historical sources, the Project Site has been undeveloped since as early as 1901; developed with rural residential or farming-related structures from the 1930s to about the late 1960s; and undeveloped to the present.⁷ Additionally, the Project Site is currently vacant and has been subject to regular human disturbances, evidenced by signs of tire tracks and ramps left behind from ORV use. The heavily disturbed nature of the site caused by the unauthorized off-road vehicle activity, contributes to the diminished aesthetic value of the Project Site and the surrounding area.

The Project Site is situated in an area of the City being heavily developed and planned with similar uses, such as industrial and manufacturing developments. The Heartland Specific Plan, which includes mixed-use, industrial, and residential development, is located just north of SR-60, and manufacturing/warehousing/industrial uses to the east. The site is surrounded by vacant land to the south and west. The Project Site is currently split between City and County land. The Project would include a General Plan land use amendment and zone change for Project parcels to have an Industrial land use designation and manufacturing zoning designation. The Project also proposes the adoption of a Residential Overlay for the 28.41-acre portion of the Project Site south of the alignment of 4th Street. No development is currently proposed for these 28.41 acres.

The City does not contain any specifically-designated scenic vistas.⁸ The most prominent scenic vistas are provided by the San Bernardino Mountains located approximately 20 miles north of the Project site and the San Jacinto Mountains located approximately 12 miles southeast of the Project Site.

⁶ Ecological Sciences, Inc. 2018. *General Habitat Assessment*.

⁷ Partner Engineering and Sciences, Inc. 2018. *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment*.

⁸ City of Beaumont. 2020. *Beaumont General Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report*.
<https://www.beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36627/DEIR-090720> (accessed November 2021).

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the Project would require mass grading of the site. Based on the existing topography, it is anticipated that approximately 2,495 cubic yards of soil would be imported to achieve the proposed building pads.⁹ Trenching and installation of water, wastewater, recycled water pipelines, and dry utilities would be necessary. Project construction would also require the temporary use and storage of heavy equipment and vehicles on-site which may be visible off-site. Project construction would temporarily alter views of the site but would not obstruct any scenic vistas. The associated visual impacts from the construction phases are anticipated to occur over the duration of construction and would cease upon completion of the Project; resulting in a less than significant impact.

The following is a list of on- and off-site utility improvements:

- On- and off-site utility connections and street improvements: water, sewer, gas, electric and street frontage improvements along Potrero Boulevard and 4th Street;
- The existing on-site drainage course would be re-directed to an underground storm drainpipe through the Project Site, and then would discharge off-site into the existing natural drainage;
- Water improvements would include a connection to the water line on 4th Street immediately adjacent to the site, and construction of a water line on Potrero Boulevard;
- Sewer service would be addressed by connecting to the existing sewer pump station on 4th Street; effluent would then be lifted to the nearest gravity main for transmission to the City of Beaumont sewer treatment plant; and
- Storm drain improvements would consist of collecting and treating on-site flows prior to conveying them off-site to an existing storm drain system on 4th Street, or directly into Coopers Creek.

OPERATIONS

The visual character of the Project Site would be altered as a result of Project implementation. The Project would include the development of approximately 32 acres of vacant, undeveloped land that would include a 48-foot tall “high-cube” warehouse facility with associated amenities such as vehicle and truck parking, landscaping, and water retention basins. Interior security lighting would be used throughout the day and exterior security lighting would be used at night. All exterior lighting would be directional and shielded to minimize light spill and glow. The security lighting would not impede or interfere with any scenic vistas. Furthermore, trucks entering and exiting the facility would not obstruct views of scenic vistas.

The Project Site is not considered a scenic vista. While the Project would change the visual characteristics of the Project Site, it would not interfere with and would not obstruct views of any scenic vista including distant views of the San Bernardino Mountains or the San Jacinto Mountains to the northeast or east, respectively. The proposed building height would be 48 feet and would not obstruct existing public views of scenic vistas including the San Bernardino Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountains. The Project Site is flanked by low lying hills to the south rising to just above 2,500 above mean sea level. Due to intervening

⁹ Thienes Engineering, Inc. 2021. *Conceptual Grading Plan*.

topography, vegetation, and adjacent manufactured slopes, the existing low relief of the Project Site, and the proposed finished grading elevations, the Project would not substantially affect views as seen from off-site areas.

Thus, implementation and future operation of the Project and changes to the site would not result in substantial changes to any scenic vista. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant, and mitigation is not required.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Impact 3.1-2: Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway?

Level of Significance: No Impact

CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS

No State Designated Scenic Highway traverses the Project Site nor is the Project Site in the vicinity of a State Designated Scenic Highway. The nearest State Designated Scenic Highway is the eastern segment of SR-243, located approximately nine miles southeast of the Project Site. Due to distance, development, and intervening topography, the warehouse development would not be visible from the State Designated Scenic Highway portion of SR-243. Therefore, while the Project Site does contain trees, there are no other designated scenic resources, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings. Thus, because the Project Site is not within or near a State Designated Scenic Highway, or, impacts to scenic resources within a State Designated Scenic Highway would not occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Impact 3.1-3: Would the Project, in non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Level of Significance: Less than Significant Impact

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the warehouse facility would result in temporary visual changes to the Project Site, which is located in an area experiencing ongoing urbanization. Construction activities would require the use of heavy equipment and machinery; eventually the development of the warehouse structure would dominate the Project Site. Limited public views occur on the Project Site from fast-moving traffic along SR-60. While the site is relatively flat and does not contain substantial visible variation in landforms, grading activities would be required, and this would result in an alteration of existing grades and creation of slopes but not in an area considered to possess substantial scenic quality.

Site grading and other construction activities also would comply with the Beaumont GP, Beaumont MC construction requirements, and specifically Beaumont MC Title 15. Conformance with applicable requirements would minimize impacts to visual elements, minimizing hillside development, minimizing impacts to scenic resources, require preparation of a grading analysis, control grading to minimize erosion, and reduce the potential for land failures. In addition, the lack of development through most of the area to be annexed would maintain a large percentage of the existing site topography. Thus, conformance to these development standards and codes would minimize the visual changes to the environment within the Warehouse Site during construction.

Project construction and staging would be visible from parcels to the east, west, and south. The adjacent parcels are currently vacant, but are either undergoing construction, or not accessible via any public roadway. As such views of Project construction from neighboring parcels would not be afforded or would be consistent with ongoing development activities. It should be noted, for the reasons discussed in Impact 3.1-2, above, due to intervening topography, vegetation, low topographic relief and other existing manufactured slopes, the Project would largely be obscured from view as seen from the residential developments north of SR-60.

Off-site construction activities related to lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping would occur on Potrero Boulevard and 4th Street. As previously mentioned, construction-related activities would be temporary and would be completed as part of the single phase of Project development. Once construction is completed, the visual impacts from these construction activities would cease.

Although construction and staging for the Warehouse Site would be visible from parcels to the east, west, and south, the adjacent parcels are all vacant and no impact to neighboring parcels would occur. Additionally, no residential developments exist south of SR-60, and therefore the Project site is not visible from any residential properties.

Because of its temporary nature, views of the site's construction would be typical of other construction activities, and because construction would not substantially contrast with surrounding uses or other ongoing construction in the vicinity, these impacts are less than significant. Therefore, as discussed above, although construction would change the sites appearance, overall, construction on the Warehouse Site would not result in a substantial degradation to the existing visual character or quality of the site and impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

OPERATIONS

Project implementation and operation would allow for new development within a currently undeveloped vacant space. The Project would result in permanent alteration of the existing landforms and visual quality in the area by introducing the new structures, modified topography, manufactured slopes, retaining walls, parking lots, and landscaping. The Project would result in the creation of an approximate 40 foot 2:1 slope on the northerly side of the Warehouse Site. This slope, however, would peak at the existing grades and slopes to the south. Thus, the slope would be concealed from views from residential uses and roadways to the north. Approximate 10-foot slopes would be required on the easterly Project boundary adjacent to the new alignment of Potrero Boulevard, and the slopes on the westerly side of the Warehouse Site would

be up to 30 feet, with some areas requiring no slope. These areas would be contour graded and would be adjacent to the undeveloped parcel to the west.

Grading is needed to enable development of a 577,920-square foot “high-cube” warehouse facility; refer to **Exhibit 2-4, *Building Elevations***. The “high-cube” warehouse facility would be approximately 48 feet in height.

The visual setting surrounding the Project Site currently consists of primarily undeveloped landscape dominated by native shrubs and non-native plants with scattered residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. The visual integrity of the site itself has been disrupted by the disturbed nature of the site, which is crossed by dirt trails and roads and scattered debris piles due to ongoing trespassing. Overall, the proposed warehouse development would alter the existing rural character of the Project area. The Project would eliminate the illegal uses currently occurring on site (trespassing) and develop the vacant parcels with maintained development and landscaping. The existing freeway, SR-60 to the north, would act as a buffer between the existing residential uses north of the freeway and the Project south of the freeway. The warehouse development would be of similar bulk and scale as other industrial and commercial development planned for the surrounding Project area, including Beaumont Crossroads and Beaumont Pointe. Further, high-quality development with visually appealing elements including landscaping and natural-like building materials would create cohesive designs with other similar facilities currently under development or planned for development within the Project vicinity. See **Exhibit 2-5, *Conceptual Landscape Plan***.

Trucks are anticipated to be enter and exit the property during both the day and nighttime hours. Additionally, security lighting would be present on the exterior of the building. However, in accordance with design requirements, the structure would be set back from the roadway and landscaping would be installed between the structure and property boundary and roadways. To help reduce visual impacts, the warehouse would be designed in accordance with all required design standards of the City, and the structure would be set back from adjacent roadways, and partially screened by slopes and vegetation. The Project also would following streetscape and sign standards, minimize hillside development and development that would impact scenic resources, and reduce light pollution by conformance to Dark Sky standards and “night- sky” ordinance.

The Project would not impact the views from the residential areas in the Heartland Specific Plan which is north of SR-60. Those residents have an obstructed view overlooking south of the SR-60 due to highway berms along SR-60 and boundary walls along the residential development. Additionally, the Potrero Boulevard interchange also serves to obstruct the view to the south for residents of the Heartland Specific Plan community.

In order to minimize the conversion of a currently-vacant Project site to one developed with warehouse uses, the Project would incorporate Project design features such as landscaping and other measures, such as structural lighting, that would minimize visual intrusion on the surrounding visual environment. With the approval of the proposed General Plan and Zone change amendments, the Project would be in compliance with applicable policies and codes and no conflicts with the City’s zoning would occur such that a significant impact would result.

Refer to ***Exhibit 3.1-1: North View - Site Photo; Exhibit 3.1-2: South View – Site Photo; Exhibit 3.1-3: East View - Site Photo; Exhibit 3.1-4: West View – Site Photo.***

The Warehouse Site would change from a vacant undeveloped area to a fully developed site with a “high-cube” warehouse. ***Exhibits 3.1-1*** through ***3.1-4*** show existing conditions and views within the Warehouse Site and overall Project Site. The existing visual quality of the site, due to unauthorized ORV use and human disturbances, has been heavily degraded. Due to this degradation, the existing visual quality of the site is not high. Therefore, the Project would convert the undeveloped, degraded site, with warehousing development and the Project would incorporate landscaping to visually buffer the structure. Design standards and lighting would be implemented in compliance with Beaumont GP policies to enhance aesthetic value. Furthermore, the site is not visible from adjacent residential areas north of SR-60, so visual obstruction would not occur. Therefore, the warehouse would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site or public views.

Additional Project design features incorporated into the Project to visually buffer the structure include trees, shrubs, and ground covers, and other visual accents along the perimeter of the site and adjacent to the exterior walls of the proposed structure. For these reasons, impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Impact 3.1-4: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Level of Significance: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Lighting effects are associated with the use of artificial light during the evening and nighttime hours. There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). Light introduction can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, diminish the clear night sky’s view and, if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances.

The Project Site is vacant and undeveloped and does not currently create any light or glare. The Project would create new sources of light and glare would be introduced within the Warehouse Site. Typical light/glare sources would include street lighting, exterior night lighting of the structure, and lighting necessary for safety and security. Applicable provisions of County Ordinance No. 655 act to reduce or avoid potential light/glare impacts that could affect activities at the Palomar Observatory. County Ordinance No. 655 effectively reduces potential light/glare impacts of new development within unincorporated Sphere of Influence (SOI) properties. Within the City’s corporate boundaries, City Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 8.50, “Outdoor Lighting” currently contains restrictive lighting standards that act to prevent or minimize overall illumination levels, and effectively reduce or preclude potential light/glare overspill impacts. In this regard, the City’s Outdoor Lighting Ordinance establishes specific design, construction, and performance standards applicable to lighting and light fixtures within the City. New development within SOI properties (which applies to APNs 424-010-009 and 424-010-010 located within

the County of Riverside) proposing annexation to the City are also subject to provisions and requirements of the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. In all instances, lighting restrictions and performance standards established under the City Zoning Ordinance meet or exceed the provisions of County Ordinance No. 655. In combination, County Ordinance No. 655 and the City Outdoor Lighting Ordinance act to effectively reduce potential light and glare impacts within the Project site to below significance thresholds.¹⁰

The Project is analyzed below for its potential to generate obtrusive light, infusing spill light, glare and sky glow. With respect to obtrusive lighting, the degree of impact would vary widely depending on the amount of light generated, light sources heat, presence of barriers/obstructions, type/design of light source, and weather conditions.

CONSTRUCTION

Project construction would result in the temporary increase of spill light and glare from construction equipment, staging areas, lighting poles, and security lighting. Construction of the warehouse would be limited to daytime hours (unless otherwise approved by the City through issuance of a permit for construction between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. in compliance with Beaumont MC § 9.02.050). Standard nighttime lighting during the construction phase would not be required until the site is operational. However, given the Project's location in an isolated area, on-site security measures, including some on-site lighting, may be utilized in certain locations such as around construction trailers, and equipment and machinery storage areas. Residential uses would be located approximately 1,000 feet north of SR-60. No short-term, construction-related impacts associated with light and glare are expected to occur. However, to minimize potential lighting impacts, Mitigation Measure (MM) AES-1 would be implemented.

MM AES-1 requires that a Construction Lighting and Screening Plan be developed to minimize light and glare impacts during construction. Furthermore, construction would adhere to Beaumont MC Chapter 8.50 - Outdoor Lighting. Therefore, in consideration of MM AES-1, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

OPERATIONS

Project build out would increase nighttime lighting in this portion of the City. Sources of lighting include interior and exterior lighting sources, streetlights, signage, and on-building and freestanding security lighting. The Project includes the following Project Design Features to reduce sources of lighting:

- Exterior lighting, other than street lighting, shall be low to the ground or shielded and hooded to avoid shining onto adjacent properties and streets; an example of this includes lighted bollards.
- Lighting fixtures shall be well integrated into the visual environment and the theme.
- Low-intensity, energy-conserving night light shall be used.
- Low-voltage light-emitting diode (LED) lighting shall be used wherever feasible throughout the Project.

¹⁰ City of Beaumont. 2020. *Beaumont General Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report*. <https://www.beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36627/DEIR-090720> (accessed November 2021).

Light pollution, also known as “sky glow,” is an adverse effect of man-made light. The term is often used to denote urban sky glow (brightening of the night sky due to man-made lighting) but also includes glare (intense and blinding light) and light trespass (light falling where it is not wanted or needed; spill light). In many cases, sky glow is visible from great distances, particularly in evenings when there is moisture in the air. Minute water droplets in the evening air reflect and scatter light into the atmosphere. The County of Riverside Ordinance No. 655 “Regulating Light Pollution” defines the zones where light pollution could impact the Palomar Observatory: Zone A is within a 15-mile radius of the observatory; Zone B is between 15 and 45 miles of the Palomar Observatory. The Project Site is in the Zone B radius and subject to the lighting restrictions outlined in the Ordinance. The Project Site is approximately 40 miles north and well outside of the Mt. Palomar “sky glow” zones.

Operational impacts resulting from new sources of light or glare would be less than significant with implementation of Project Design Features and MM AES-1.

Mitigation Measures

MM AES-1 Prior to the start of construction, the Project applicant shall prepare a Construction Lighting & Screening Plan. The Construction Lighting and Screening Plan would indicate aesthetic and lighting treatments for all construction work areas. The Plan shall identify methods used to ensure construction lighting is directional (aimed toward work areas, and not toward nearby sensitive receptors), and limited to sufficient wattage for safety and security. Construction areas visible to sensitive receptors shall be screened via curtains from public view. Construction screening materials shall be of sufficient height and appropriate color to minimize viewshed impacts, as determined appropriate by the applicable jurisdiction(s). All lighting must conform to maximum lumen and shielding guidelines in Chapter 8.50 of the Beaumont MC.

3.1.5 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

No significant unavoidable aesthetic impacts have been identified.

3.1.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

When evaluating cumulative aesthetic impacts, several factors must be considered. The cumulative study area for aesthetic impacts is the viewshed that includes the Project area and its surroundings. The context in which a project is being viewed would also influence the aesthetic impact’s significance. The contrast a project has with its surrounding environment may be reduced by the presence of other cumulative projects. If most of an area is or is becoming more urbanized, the contrast of a project with the natural surrounding may be less since it would not stand out in contrast as much. For a cumulative aesthetic impact to occur, the proposed cumulative projects’ elements need to be seen together or in proximity to each other. If the projects were not near each other, the viewer would not perceive them in the same scene.

The geographical area for the aesthetics cumulative analysis would be the County of Riverside and City of Beaumont. The Project Site is currently vacant and undeveloped, and a portion of the Project Site is located within unincorporated Riverside County but would be annexed to the City as part of the Project.

A significant cumulative impact would occur if cumulative projects would adversely impact views of a scenic vista or scenic resources within a Designated State Scenic Highway. Although the Project would change the current visual quality of the Warehouse Site, changes do not necessarily result in degradation. The Project would be of high-quality design and would not adversely affect any protected public viewsheds or destroy any scenic vistas, nor would it impede views of the San Jacinto Mountains or the San Bernardino Mountains.

Future development at the Project Site and of surrounding cumulative projects in the area would be subject to a formal development review process including site and architectural plan review. Such discretionary review would ensure consistency with existing and proposed land use designations and zoning mandated by the City's General Plan and Zoning and Development Code. Additionally, over time, it is anticipated that the visual character of the area in the vicinity of the Project Site will change as industrial development is contemplated for the surrounding area in the City's GP, as well as the Riverside County GP. The Project would be consistent with the development contemplated by these jurisdictions and planned for under their respective GP documents. As a result, the Project in combination with future proposed projects would result in views from surrounding areas that are consistent with the aesthetic goals and policies envisioned by the City for the Project area. A less than significant cumulative aesthetic impact would occur.

With regard to cumulative light and glare impacts, implementation of the Project and future proposed projects would increase the amount of light and glare in the surrounding area, as it would increase the amount of development compared to existing conditions. It is anticipated that lighting would include exterior wall-mounted light fixtures and lighting in the on-site surface parking areas to ensure public safety. To ensure cumulative light and glare impacts are reduced to levels that are less than significant, future proposed projects—including the Project—would be required to adhere to existing City policies for community design and aesthetics. The Project would be designed in compliance with the City's Zoning Ordinance, which requires that all lighting used on-site to be directed and/or shielded to prevent the light from adversely affecting adjacent properties and that no structures or features that create adverse glare effects are permitted. Therefore, the Project would not result in cumulatively considerable light and glare impacts since impacts would be less than significant.

Therefore, the Project, in conjunction with other cumulative projects, would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution. The cumulative impact related to scenic vistas and resources would be less than significant.

3.1.7 REFERENCES

CalTrans. 2018. *California State Scenic Highway System Map*. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>
<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.

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https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_Plan_2017/elements/OCT17/Ch05_MOSE_120815.pdf?ver=2017-10-11-102103-833.

Ecological Sciences, Inc. 2018. *General Habitat Assessment*.

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EXHIBIT 3.1-1: North View - Site Photo
Potrero Logistics Center Warehouse Project

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EXHIBIT 3.1-2: South View - Site Photo
Potrero Logistics Center Warehouse Project

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EXHIBIT 3.1-3: East View - Site Photo
Potrero Logistics Center Warehouse Project

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EXHIBIT 3.1-4: West View - Site Photo
Potrero Logistics Center Warehouse Project

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