4.1 AESTHETICS

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR describes the existing visual resources of the project site and vicinity. The CEQA Guidelines describe the concept of aesthetic resources in terms of scenic vistas, scenic resources (including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings), scenic highways, visual character or quality of public views of the project site, and light and glare. Information for the chapter has been primarily drawn from the Cache Creek Area Plan (CCAP) Update EIR,[1] as well as the Yolo County General Plan[2] and associated EIR.[3]

In response to the NOP, the County received comments related to Aesthetics from a number of residents in the area. These commenters expressed that the Draft EIR should consider the following:

- Aesthetic impacts due to the loss of agricultural land and open space (Resident);
- Visual impacts of the project site from Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery (Resident); and
- Views of mining equipment and fencing (Resident).

The CEQA Guidelines note that comments received during the NOP scoping process can be helpful in "identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in an EIR and in eliminating from detailed study issues found not to be important." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15083.) Neither the CEQA Guidelines nor Statutes require a lead agency to respond directly to comments received in response to the NOP, but they do require the comments be considered. Consistent with these requirements, these comments have been carefully reviewed and considered by Yolo County and are reflected in the analysis of impacts in this chapter. Appendix B includes all NOP comments received.

Concepts and Terminology

The following terms are used throughout this chapter and have important bearing upon properly evaluating aesthetics within the context of the CEQA. As a result, this section begins by providing definitions of key terms, as follows:

A "viewshed" is all of the surface area visible from a particular location or sequence of locations (e.g., roadway or trail).

"Visual character" pertains to the order of patterns composing a landscape. The elements of these patterns are the form, line, color, and texture of the landscape's visual resources.

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1 Yolo County. *Cache Creek Area Plan Update Project, Final Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2017052069*. December 2019.
2 Yolo County. *2030 Countywide General Plan.* November 10, 2009.
3 Yolo County. *Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2008102034*.April 2009.

- **Form:** The unified mass or shape of an object that often has an edge or outline and can be defined by surrounding space. For example, a high-rise building would have a highly regular, rectangular form whereas a hill would have an organic, mounded form.
- **Line:** Perceived when there is a change in form, color, or texture and where the eye generally follows this pathway because of the visual contrast. For example, a city's high-rises can be seen silhouetted against the blue sky and be seen as a skyline, a river can have a curvilinear line as it passes through a landscape, or a hedgerow can create a line where it is seen rising up against a flat agricultural field.
- **Color:** The light reflecting off of an object at a particular wavelength that creates hue (green, indigo, purple, red, etc.) and value (light to dark hues).
- **Texture:** The perceived coarseness of a surface that is created by the light and shadow relationship over the surface of an object. For example, a rough surface texture (e.g., a rocky mountainside) would have many facets resulting in a number of areas in light and shadow and, often, with distinct separations between areas of light and shadow. Conversely, a smooth surface texture (e.g., a beach) would have fewer facets, larger surface areas in light or shadow, and gradual gradations between light and shadow.

"Distance zones" are based on the position of the viewer in relationship to the landscape. Views might be discussed in terms of foreground, middleground, and background views. Foreground views are those immediately presented to the viewer, and include objects at close range that could tend to dominate the view. Middleground views occupy the center of the viewshed and tend to include objects that are the center of attention if they are sufficiently large or visually different from adjacent visual features. Background views include distant objects and other objects that make up the horizon. Objects in the background fade to obscurity with increasing distance. In the context of the background, the skyline can be an important location because objects above this point are highlighted against the background of the sky.

"Scenic vista" is defined as 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" is defined as any stretch of public roadway that is designated as a scenic corridor by a federal, State, or local agency.

"Visual resources" are the visible features that make up the landscape, including but not limited to cultural or human-made components such as buildings and other structures, linear elements (e.g,. ridgelines, landforms, roads), greenscapes such as agricultural crops, or natural resources such as waterways and forest/woodland.

"Visual Quality", as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA),[4] describes what viewers like and dislike about visual resources that compose the visual character of a particular scene. Different viewers may evaluate specific visual resources differently based on their interests in the types of visual resources comprising a particular landscape.

[4] Federal Highway Administration. *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects (Publication No. FHWA-HEP-15-029)*. January 2015. Although the FHWA guidelines were initially created to provide an analytical framework for identifying and assessing qualitative changes to the visual environment that could be introduced as part of a transportation project, this methodology has become an industry standard for evaluating visual impacts associated with local and state non-transportation projects as well.

4.1.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The following setting information provides an overview of the existing conditions of the project site and surrounding area in relation to visual resources.

Visual Character of Regional Environment

The visual character of the region is characterized primarily by continuous agricultural lands within a broad, alluvial valley surrounded by distant rolling hills. Cache Creek generally meanders west to east and runs into the Sacramento Valley, ending in a settling basin east of Woodland, eventually flowing into the Sacramento River. Regional topography is generally flat. Vegetation, other than agricultural crops, is primarily limited to grasslands and ornamental landscaping.

The cultural environment of the region can be described in terms of buildings, structures, roads, or other built features. The region is rural and sparsely populated, with urban development being primarily concentrated within small towns such as Capay, Esparto, and Madison. Rural residences, farm dwellings with various accessory and agricultural structures, and commercial uses sparsely dot the landscape. Roads provide interconnections between agricultural properties having various crops, such as row crops, orchards, and vineyards. Telephone and electricity poles frequently parallel the roadways throughout the region. Aggregate mining operations, inclusive of above-ground structures and equipment, are prevalent throughout the region, in particular, along the banks of Cache Creek, within the CCAP boundaries.

Visual Character of Local Environment

The following information provides an overview of the existing visual character of the local environment, including the project site and its immediate vicinity.

The visual resources on the project site consist primarily of agriculture in row crops, and thus, the visual character of the site can generally be described as having a relatively uniform greenscape texture in the growing season, whereas, outside of the growing season the site is made up of disked fields marked by earth tones of the topsoils. More specifically, the central and southern portions of the project site consist primarily of actively managed agricultural land. Crops planted at the site over the past decade have included wheat, alfalfa, tomatoes, cucumbers, canola, sunflower, and safflower. The northeastern portion of the site previously contained a ranch headquarters (Stevens Ranch); however, the structures that comprised the headquarters were burned down as part of a fire department training exercise in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Currently, structures do not exist at the location and the area is currently overgrown by low-lying brush. The northern portion of the site consists of 52 scattered oak trees and ruderal grassland vegetation.

The visual resources of the immediate vicinity are similarly characterized by agricultural lands, but also includes Cache Creek, immediately north of the project site. Riparian woodland vegetation is located along portions of the banks of Cache Creek.

The cultural environment of the project site consists of several agricultural-related features. For example, Moore Canal, a concrete-lined water conveyance structure owned and operated by the Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (YCFCWCD), bisects the central portion of the site from west to east, and provides a distinctive line pattern through the site. Magnolia Canal is an unlined water conveyance structure owned and operated by the YCFCWCD that intersects the Moore Canal on the northeastern portion of the project site. An existing groundwater well used for agricultural purposes is located along the western site boundary. In

addition, a domestic water supply well is located at the location of the former ranch headquarters. The northern portion of the site also includes an electric conveyor and associated gravel road formerly used to transport mined aggregate from the Teichert Woodland Storz mining site to the Woodland Plant located north of the project site.

The cultural environment of the immediate vicinity is dominated by aggregate mining operations to the north; a golf course (Yolo Fliers Club), rural residential, airport (Watts-Woodland), and farm dwellings to the west/southwest; rural residential, cemetery (Monument Hill Memorial Park), and State Route 16 to the south; and farm dwellings to the east. The aggregate mining operations to the north consist of Teichert's Storz mining site, which is currently in the reclamation process, to the northwest and Teichert's Woodland Plant site to the northeast, beyond which is Teichert's Schwarzgruber mining site. Conveyors, and other mining-related related infrastructure and equipment are common. The Teichert Woodland Plant has been in continuous operation for over 50 years and mining along Cache Creek has been taking place for over 100 years. Figure 4.1-2 through Figure 4.1-4 below provide representative views of the project site from the adjacent roadways.

Viewer Types

For the purposes of this analysis, individuals in the vicinity with views of the project site that may be affected by the proposed project are categorized as follows:

- *Motorists* along County Road 22 and County Road 94B have direct views as they pass the site. These include motorists commuting or touring, hauling trucks, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists along County Road 22 and County Road 94B, who have direct views for longer period of time as they pass the site. However, because neither road includes paved shoulders or sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian traffic along the project frontages of these roads is limited.
- *Neighbors*[5] are considered those who temporarily or permanently occupy land adjacent or visible to the project site and can be defined as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, civic, and recreational neighbors. Residential neighbors having relatively unobstructed views of the project site include limited farm dwellings to the west and east and rural residential to the southwest/south. Views of the site from the Wild Wings subdivision to the west are obstructed by intervening structures and mature landscaping. Neighboring recreational uses include Yolo Fliers Golf/Country Club; however, heavy vegetation along the west side of County Road 94B screens golfers' and other guests' views of the project site. Civic uses include the Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery and the West Valley Baptist Church; however, views of the project site from the church are screened by heavy landscaping along the north side of County Road 22. Views of the site from the neighboring airport are largely obstructed due to intervening mature vegetation.

Specifically, those having views of the project site include motorists along County Road 94B and County Road 22, and neighbors, consisting of farm dwellings to the west and east, rural residential to the south/southwest, and the Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery to the south. Motorists have publicly available views of the site, whereas with the exception of Monument Hill Memorial Park, neighbors have private views.

[5] The term *neighbor* does not always mean that a person resides adjacent to the project site. Rather, it refers to people who may see it from their geographic location.

Private views are views seen from privately-owned land and are typically viewed by individual viewers, including views from private residences. Public views are views that are experienced by the collective public. CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) case law has established that only public views, not private views, are protected under CEQA. For example, in *Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah* (1991) 2 Cal.App.4th 720 [3 Cal. Rptr.2d 488] the court determined that "we must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general. As recognized by the court in *Topanga Beach Renters Assn. v. Department of General Services* (1976) 58 Cal.App.3d 188 [129 Cal.Rptr. 739]: '[A]ll government activity has some direct or indirect adverse effect on some persons. The issue is not whether [the project] will adversely affect particular persons but whether [the project] will adversely affect the environment of persons in general.'"

This conclusion is consistent with the thresholds of significance established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus the aesthetic impact analysis on potential impacts to public views, rather than private views. This approach is also consistent with the approach utilized in the Yolo County General Plan EIR[6] and CCAP Update EIR[7], and the language added to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines in December 2018, regarding focusing the aesthetics analysis onto public views (see Appendix G, Section I, question 'c').

Existing Visual Quality of the Project Site

Visual quality is the experience of having pleasing visual perceptions. In other words, what do people like and dislike about the visual character of the area.[8] Different viewers may value visual resources in different ways and come to varying conclusions about visual quality. Generally, natural open views, unobstructed by cultural (i.e., human-made) structures/features are preferred. Table 4.1-1 below identifies three categories of visual quality: high, moderate, and low.

Table 4.1-1
Visual Quality Evaluation Table

High Quality	Moderate / Average Quality	Low Quality
• Highly memorable. • Elements combine in striking visual patterns. • Presence of distinct focal point(s). • Lack of man-made development does not disrupt the natural landscape. • Minimal to no encroachments to the landscape are visible.	• Somewhat memorable. • Elements form perceivable pattern(s). • Man-made development and the natural landscape are disturbed and encroach on the visual setting.	• Not vivid • Elements appear random with no perceivable pattern(s). • The landscape has encroaching elements that create an eyesore to viewers.

When viewing a scene's environment, viewers inherently evaluate the visual quality of the existing scene, determining if the composition is harmonious. Using the evaluation table, the visual quality of the overall project site is relatively moderate/average quality considering that the agricultural

6 Yolo County. *Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2008102034* [pg. 753]. April 2009.
7 Yolo County. *Cache Creek Area Plan Update Project, Final Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2017052069* [pg. 4.11]. December 2019.
8 Federal Highway Administration. *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects (Publication No. FHWA-HEP-15-029)* [pg. 5-11]. January 2015.

setting of the project site is somewhat memorable and its unity forms a perceivable pattern. Agricultural crops, while a result of human activity, are comprised of vegetation that can provide harmony with a uniform texture and color if relatively uninterrupted by above-ground farm structures, as is the case for the project site. Given that striking visual patterns and distinct focal points are absent from the project site, the visual quality of the site is not considered to be high, but rather moderate.

While, human-made development encroaches on the visual setting, these relatively minor encroachments do not pose an eyesore. Human-made elements on the project site consist of an electric conveyor and associated gravel road formerly used to transport mined aggregate from the Teichert Storz mining site to the Woodland Plant. In addition, the Moore Canal is a concrete-lined water conveyance structure which bisects the central portion of the project from west to east. The Magnolia Canal is an unlined water conveyance structure which intersects the Moore Canal at the northeastern portion of the project site. The on-site canals are below grade and only the Moore Canal is visible from County Road 94B.

Generally, the project site does not contain any distinct visual characteristics that are unique from other agricultural lands within the County and the surrounding region. The overall visual quality of the project site is considered moderate/average quality.

Determination of Key Public Viewpoints

Key views are those public views that provide an image that captures the existing visual character and visual quality of the landscape unit that would be altered by the proposed project. In the case of the proposed project, public views would consist of views from County Road 22 and County Road 94B in the project vicinity, as well as from Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery, which offers publicly accessible views of the project site. Figure 4.1-1 provides a location and direction of each of the photos provided in Figure 4.1-2 through Figure 4.1-5. Figure 4.1-2 through Figure 4.1-4 provide examples of public views of the site from County Road 94B and County Road 22. Figure 4.1-5 shows an existing view of the site from the publicly accessible Monument Hill Memorial Park.

Key Viewpoint # 1

Key Viewpoint #1 represents the view of the project site from County Road 94B, looking southeast. This publicly available view is seen while traveling along County Road 94B. Motorists experience views of low to moderate visual quality with foreground dominated by K-rail barriers, piping, fencing, power pole, gravel, pavement, etc., midground dominated by open vista of a row crop, and background dominate by distant trees and vegetation, structures and rook outlines, and open sky.

The foreground views are dominated by human-made elements, such as k-rail barriers, fencing, a utility pole with overhead lines, piping, etc., whereas the middleground views are dominated by the agricultural croplands. Background views consist of vegetation along County Road 22 and sloping topography associated with Monument Hill Memorial Park. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

Figure 4.1-1
Overview Map of Key Viewpoint Locations

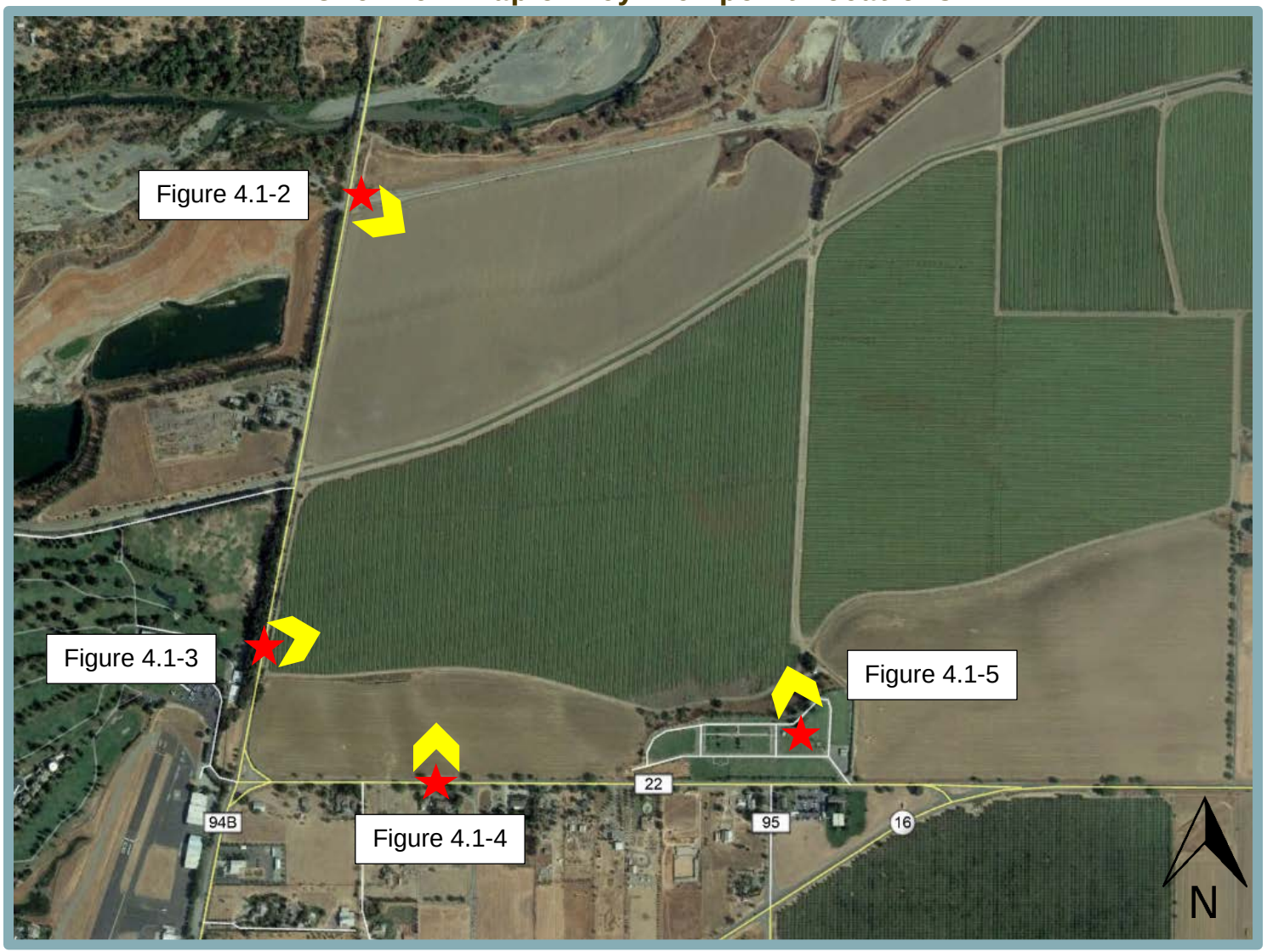


Figure 4.1-2
Existing View of Project Site from County Road 94B Looking Southeast (Key Viewpoint #1)

Figure 4.1-3
Existing View of Project Site from County Road 94B Looking Northeast (Key Viewpoint #2)

Figure 4.1-4
Existing View of Project Site from County Road 22 Looking North (Key Viewpoint #3)

Figure 4.1-5
Existing View of Project Site from Monument Hill Memorial Park Looking North (Key Viewpoint #4)

Key Viewpoint # 2

Key Viewpoint #2 represents the view of the project site from County Road 94B, looking northeast. This publicly available view is seen while traveling along County Road 94B. experience views of a uniform agricultural setting, with less disruptions by human-made elements. This view also has more perceivable patterns than viewpoint #1 given the presence of different types of vegetation (row crops vs. more grass-like vegetation). Foreground views consist of pavement, road shoulder, gravel, and non-native screening vegetation along County Road 94B, and middleground views are dominated by on-site row crops. Background views consist of mature vegetation beyond the project site boundaries, topographic relief and open sky. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

Key Viewpoint # 3

Key Viewpoint #3 represents the view looking north from County Road 22. This publicly available view is seen while traveling along County Road 22. The agricultural land in the foreground is not part of the project site. The project site is not readily visible from this viewpoint, given the lower elevation of the project site, compared to the agricultural lands in the foreground. experience views of a uniform agricultural setting, with few disruptions by human-made elements. While there are minimal encroachments, this view has few perceivable patterns given its uniformity, and thus is not particularly striking, nor memorable. Foreground views consist of pavement, road shoulder, and grassy vegetation. Middleground views are dominated by gently rolling vegetated topography, and background views consist of mature vegetation beyond the project site boundaries and open sky. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

Key Viewpoint # 4

Key Viewpoint #4 represents the view looking north from Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery. This publicly available view is seen from visitors to the memorial park, which is accessible during all hours. Foreground views consist of grass, landscaping, and human-made encroachments, including paved areas, retaining walls, and grave sites. Middleground views are dominated by agricultural portions of the project site, whereas background views consist of mature vegetation beyond the project site boundaries and open sky. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

Light Pollution and Glare

Light pollution refers to unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky can be an important part of the natural environment, particularly in communities with extended viewsheds. Excessive light and glare can also be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species.

The project site is undeveloped and unlit landscape. The immediate vicinity is rural, and as such, relatively few sources of light and glare occur in the project vicinity. Existing sources of light and glare are primarily limited to headlights from vehicles traveling on County Road 22 and County Road 94B, and outdoor lighting on farm dwellings and rural residential areas. The Teichert Woodland Plant to the north also includes existing sources of light associated with mining operations.

4.1.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

The following is a description of federal, State, and local environmental laws and policies that are relevant to the review of aesthetics under the CEQA process.

Federal Regulations

There are no applicable federal laws or regulations pertaining to the aesthetic quality of the project area.

State Regulations

The following are applicable State regulations related to aesthetic resources.

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

Project Consistency with Surface Mining Reclamation Act is discussed in Chapter 4.9, Land Use and Planning.

California Scenic Highway Program

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. These highways are identified in Section 263 et seq. of the California Streets and Highways Code.

Local Regulations

The following are the regulatory agencies and regulations pertinent to the proposed project at a local level.

Local Scenic Highways

Yolo County has no designated federal or State Scenic Highways. A portion of State Route 16 (from approximately the town of Capay at County Road 85, north to the County line) is identified by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as “eligible” for designation as a State Scenic Highway but is not officially designated. Yolo County has, however, designated State Route 16 from the Colusa County line to Capay as a local scenic highway.

Yolo County General Plan

The relevant goals and policies from the County’s General Plan related to aesthetics are presented below:

Goal CC-1 Preservation of Rural Character. Ensure that the rural character of the County is protected and enhanced, including the unique and distinct character of the unincorporated communities.

Policy CC-1.2 Preserve and enhance the rural landscape as an important scenic feature.

Policy CC-1.3 Protect the rural night sky as an important scenic feature to the greatest feasible extent where lighting is needed.

Policy CC-1.4 Identify and preserve, where possible, landmarks and icons which contribute to the identity and character of the rural areas.

Policy CC-1.8 Screen visually obtrusive activities and facilities such as infrastructure and utility facilities, storage yards, outdoor parking and display areas, along highways, freeways, roads and trails.

Policy CC-1.10 Protect existing ridgelines and hillsides from visually incompatible development.

Policy CC-1.12 Preserve and enhance the scenic quality of the County's rural roadway system. Prohibit projects and activities that would obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of views from designated scenic roadways or scenic highways.

Policy CC-1.13 The following routes are designated as local scenic roadways, as shown in Figure LU-3 (Scenic Highways):

- State Route 16 (Colusa County line to Capay)
- State Route 128 (Winters to Napa County line)
- County Roads 116 and 116B (Knights Landing to eastern terminus of County Road 16)
- County Roads 16 and 117 and Old River Road (County Road 107 to West Sacramento)
- South River Road (West Sacramento City Limits to Sacramento County line)

Goal CO-3 Mineral Resources. Protect mineral and natural gas resources to allow for their continued us in the economy.

Policy CO-3.1 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.

Policy CO-3.2 Ensure that mineral extraction and reclamation operations are compatible with land uses both on-site and within the surrounding area, and are performed in a manner that does not adversely affect the environment.

Goal CC-4 Project Design. Require project design that incorporates "smart growth" planning principles and "green" building standards that reflect the County's commitment to sustainable development.

Policy CC-4.28 Provide appropriate buffers or barriers between incompatible residential and non-residential uses. The last-built use shall be responsible for design and construction (and/or other related costs) of the buffer/barrier.

Cache Creek Area Plan

The CCAP is comprised of the Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP) and the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (CCRMP). The OCMP is a scientifically based aggregate resource management plan that allowed for off-channel mining adjacent to Cache Creek. The CCRMP is a scientifically based river management plan that eliminated in-channel commercial mining, established an "improvement program" for implementing on-going projects to improve channel stability, encouraged restoration along the creek banks pursuant to a carefully developed policy and regulatory framework, and established a framework for future recreation along the Creek. The project site is located outside of the CCRMP boundaries.

Off-Channel Mining Plan

The following goal from the Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP) are applicable to the proposed project:

Goal 2.2-2 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, watershed, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.

Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance

Section 10-4.404 of the Yolo County Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance (OCSMO) provides the following requirements related to aesthetics:

> ### Section 10-4.404. Aesthetics
> The visibility of mining operations, facilities, and landform alterations from public areas, viewpoints, and nearby residences shall be minimized, based on an assessment of site-specific visual characteristics and viewing conditions. The use of berms, vegetative screens, seeding, special plant materials and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms or other measures, shall be incorporated in the individual mine and reclamation plans as appropriate.

Section 10-4.420 of the OCSMO provides the following requirements related to lighting:

> ### Section 10-4.420. Lighting
> All lighting shall be arranged and controlled so as not to illuminate public rights-of-way or adjacent properties.

Section 10-4.429 of the OCSMO provides the following requirements related to setbacks:

> ### Section 10-4.429. Setbacks
> All off-channel surface mining operations shall comply with the following setbacks:
> (a) New processing plants and material stockpiles shall be located a minimum of one-thousand (1,000) feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and/or off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce potential noise, dust, and aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented;
> (b) Soil stockpiles shall be located a minimum of five-hundred (500) feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce potential dust and aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented;
> (c) Off-channel excavations shall maintain a minimum one-thousand (1,000) foot setback from public rights-of-way and adjacent property lines of off-site residences, unless a landscaped buffer is provided or site-specific characteristics reduce potential aesthetic

impacts. Where landscaped buffers are proposed, the setback for off-channel excavations may be reduced to a minimum of fifty (50) feet from either the property line or the adjoining right-of-way, whichever is greater. Where mining occurs within one-thousand (1,000) feet of a public right-of-way, operators shall phase mining such that no more than fifty (50) acres of the area that lies within one-thousand (1,000) feet of the right-of-way would be actively disturbed at any time, except where operations are adequately screened from public view. Where adequate screening exists in the form of mature vegetation and/or constructed berms that effectively block public views, the area of active disturbance within one-thousand (1,000) feet of the right-of-way shall not exceed the area that is screened by more than fifty (50) acres at any one time. Actively disturbed areas are defined as those on which mining operations of any kind, or the implementation of reclamation such as grading, seeding, or installation of plant material are taking place.

Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance

Section 10-5.502 of the Yolo County Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance (SMRO) states the following regarding aesthetics:

> Sec. 10-5.502. Aesthetics.
> Means of improving the appearance of the landscape after mining has been completed shall be assessed based on site-specific visual characteristics, site lines, and view corridors. The use and placement of berms, vegetative screens, special plant materials, grading slopes, and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms to mimic surrounding landforms, or other measures, shall be incorporated into the mine reclamation plan as appropriate.

Section 10-5.521 of the SMRO states the following regarding permanent stockpiles:

> Sec. 10-5.521. Permanent Stockpiles.
> There shall be no permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden. Berms established for visual screening and noise abatement shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.

4.1.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The section below describes the standards of significance and methodology used to analyze and determine the proposed project's potential impacts related to aesthetics. A discussion of the project's impacts, as well as mitigation measures where necessary, are also presented.

Standards of Significance

The significance criteria used for this analysis were developed from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and applicable policies and regulations of Yolo County. An aesthetic impact is considered significant if the proposed project would:

- 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;
- In a non-urbanized area, 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);

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; or
- Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating impacts to aesthetics.

Impacts Found Less-than-Significant in Initial Study

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the proposed project site is not located within the vicinity of an officially designated State Scenic Highway.[9] Thus, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to the potential for the proposed project to substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway. Additional analysis on this topic is included in this chapter to assess the broader issue of impacts to scenic resources generally and impacts to locally designated scenic highways.

Method of Analysis

The following analysis utilizes a methodology based upon the FHWA publication *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (1988), and supplemented by the Federal Highway Administration. *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (January 2015), combined with the State CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G Checklist questions for Aesthetics. Together, these provide the key analytical framework and guide the visual impact assessment process for the proposed project. Although the FHWA guidelines were initially created to provide an analytical framework for identifying and assessing qualitative changes to the visual environment that could be introduced as part of a transportation project, this methodology has become an industry standard for evaluating visual impacts associated with local and state non-transportation projects as well. Generally, the process includes the following basic steps:

- Defining the project setting and viewshed.
- Assessing existing visual resources and character of the project site and immediate vicinity.
- Identify viewer types.
- Assess visual quality of the proposed site.
- Identify key viewpoints and assess visual character and quality of viewpoints.
- Assess the visual impacts of the proposed project as seen from these viewpoints.
- Proposing methods to mitigate adverse visual impacts, if necessary.

As part of the analysis, an evaluative framework that defines the visual setting in terms of key views is utilized. A key view is a point from which a select view is analyzed from the perspective of potential viewer groups.

The following analysis assesses the anticipated changes in visual character (e.g., descriptive, non-evaluative characteristics such as land use, topography, scale, form, and color) and visual quality, evaluating them with respect to anticipated viewer response.

[9] California Department of Transportation. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System*. Available at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm. Accessed February 2019.

Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following discussion of impacts related to aesthetic resources is based on implementation of the proposed project in comparison to existing conditions and the standards of significance presented above.

4.1-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact would be *less-than-significant*.

The environment of the immediate vicinity is characterized primarily by agricultural lands. Agricultural activity in the project vicinity has been ongoing since at least the early 1900s. The segment of the Moore Canal that crosses the project site is part of an irrigation system that dates to 1856. The Yolo Fliers Club golf course, developed between 1920 and 1958, the Watts-Woodland airport, developed in 1919, and farm dwellings, developed in the 1950s, are located to the west/southwest. Rural residential uses, developed between 1913 and 1993, and the Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery, are located to the south. Farm dwellings, developed in the 1970s, are located to the east.

Aggregate mining operations are also well established and have an extended history in the vicinity. The aggregate mining operations to the north consist of Teichert's Storz mining site, which is currently in the reclamation process, and Teichert's Woodland Plant site to the northeast, beyond which is Teichert's Schwarzgruber mining site. Conveyors and their mining-related infrastructure and equipment are common in the area. The Teichert Woodland Plant has been in continuous operation for over 50 years. Mining has been occurring along Cache Creek for over 100 years.

The proposed project is identified as a "Future Proposed Mining" area within the CCAP (see Figure 3-4 of the CCAP Update FEIR). As such, mining associated with the proposed project, and its potential effects on scenic vistas was anticipated and evaluated in the CCAP Update FEIR. According to Impact AES-1 of the CCAP Update FEIR concerning impacts to scenic vistas:

> The 2030 Countywide General Plan identifies several scenic vistas of importance in Yolo County, including the County's rural character and landscape (Goal CC-1 and Policy CC-1.2), the night sky (Policy CC-1.3), and ridgelines and hillsides (Policy CC-1.10). The General Plan also specifies that obtrusive activities and facilities such as infrastructure and utility facilities, storage yards, outdoor parking and display areas should be visually screened along highways, freeways, roads and trails (Policy CC-1.8). Based on these General Plan policies, scenic vistas are interpreted to be the rural landscape in general (which occurs throughout the CCAP area), the night sky, and ridgelines and hillsides (e.g., the Coast Range foothills to the west and the Dunnigan Hills to the north) that can be viewed from the CCAP area.

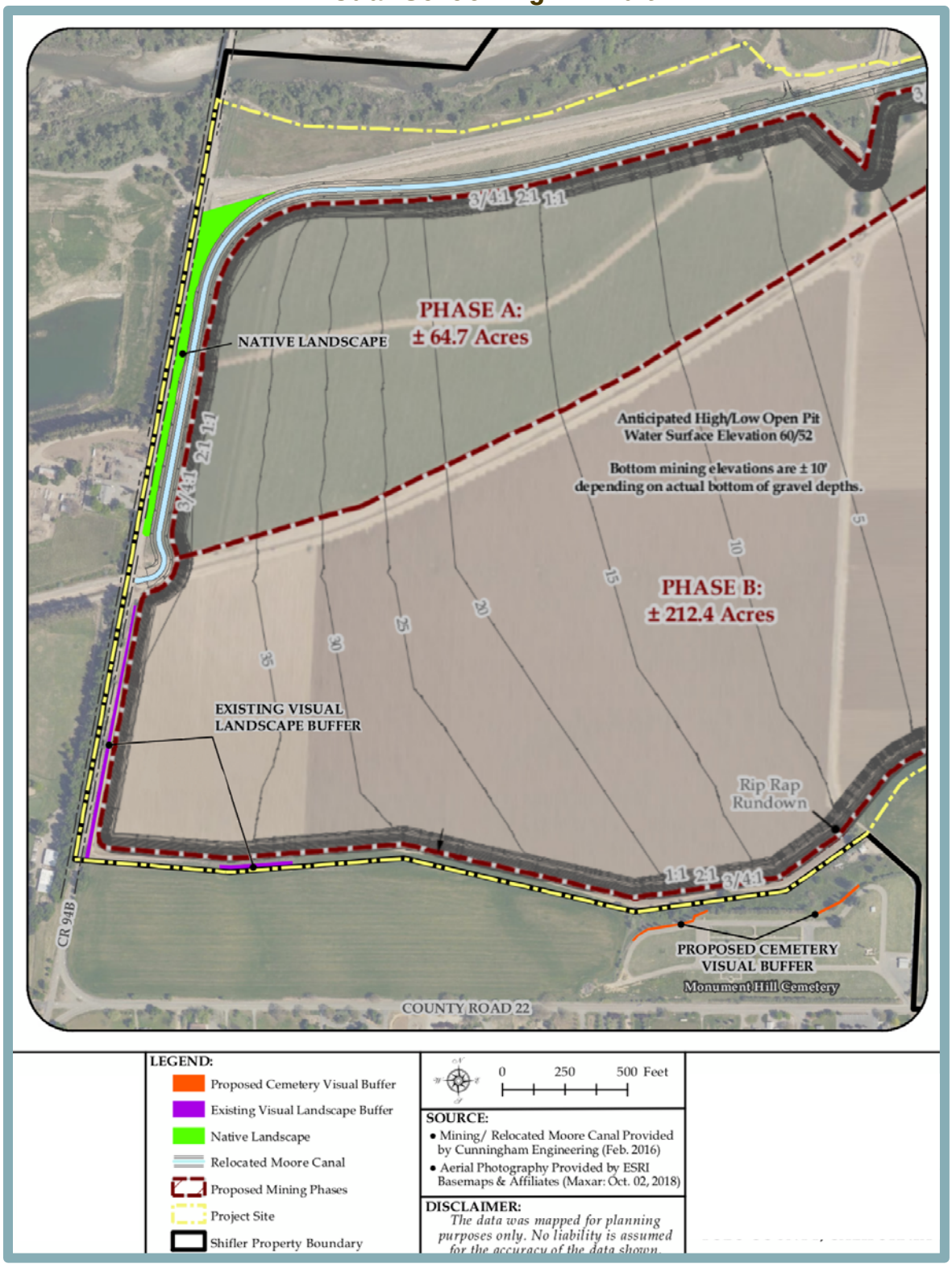
The CCAP Update FEIR notes that establishment of a new off-channel mining facility is the only activity that could occur under the CCAP that would have the potential to have a substantial adverse effect on views of the rural landscape, but also notes that several CCAP regulations in the Mining Ordinance address the potential for off-channel mining facilities to have adverse aesthetic effects in scenic vistas, including:

> Section 10-4.404. Aesthetics. Requires that the visibility of mining operations, facilities, and landform alterations from public and viewpoints and nearby residences be minimized, based on site-specific conditions by using berms, vegetative screens, seeding, and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms. Compliance with this regulation would ensure that adverse effects of active mining on rural landscape vistas would be minimized.
>
> Section 10-4.429. Setbacks. Requires that mining activities not occur within 2,000 feet of the community boundaries of Capay, Esparto, Madison, Woodland, and/or Yolo (or as close as 500 feet when mature vegetation screening would create a visual buffer). Compliance with this regulation would ensure that distant view of hillsides and ridgelines would not be obscured or damaged.
>
> Section 10·4.430. Site maintenance. Requires that during operations, the site must be kept free of debris and maintained in a neat and orderly manner so as not to create any hazardous or unsightly conditions; and that all overburden must be stockpiled and all stumps; brush, or other
> debris resulting from excavation and/or processing be properly disposed.
>
> Section 10-5.502. Aesthetics. Requires that mine reclamation plans include the use and placement of berms, vegetative screens, special plant materials, grading slopes, and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms to mimic surrounding landforms, or other measures into the mine reclamation plan as appropriate. Compliance with this regulation would ensure that adverse effects of post-mining landscape modifications on rural landscape vistas would be minimized.

According to the CCAP Update FEIR (pg. 4.1-9), compliance with these existing regulations would ensure that potential impacts related to off-channel CCAP activities are less than significant. The proposed project would be required to comply with the above-noted regulations. For example, the project includes installation of a landscape buffer along County Road 94B, at the northern section of the western perimeter, which would be planted with native tree and shrub species prior to commencement of mining activities (see Figure 4.1-6). The remaining portion of County Road 94B, along the western boundary of the project site is already heavily screened with landscaping, as shown in Figure 4.1-6. In addition, Teichert proposes to construct a 4-foot high berm around the mining area, which would help to screen above-ground operating equipment from view (see Figure 3-10 of the Project Description chapter). For additional detail regarding setback compliance, see Table 4.9-4 in Chapter 4.9, Land Use and Planning, of this EIR.

The views of the site from County Road 22 are already largely screened by intervening agricultural lands, gently rolling in topography, which blocks much of the views of the site. Scenic views of the site's agricultural setting, as seen from Monument Hill Memorial Park, are partially obstructed due to existing mature vegetation at the park. Please also refer to Impact 4.1-3 for additional discussion regarding views of the site from the park (see Key Viewpoint #4).

Figure 4.1-6
Visual Screening Exhibit



As mining is completed, reclamation will occur in compliance with proposed reclamation plans resulting in approximately 86 acres of agricultural land on the west, approximately 31 acres of agricultural land on the east, a 113-acre open water lake in the central portion of the proposed mining area, 24 acres of riparian habitat along the lake frontage, and 24 acres in grassy slopes and access roads. The lake and surrounding habitat would be dedicated to the County upon completion for future public recreation, public trails, open space, and protected habitat.

Consistent with the conclusion of the CCAP Update FEIR, which anticipated development of project site for future mining, compliance of the proposed project with existing above-noted regulations would ensure that the project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact to scenic vistas.

Mitigation Measure(s)
None required.

4.1-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway. This impact would be *less-than-significant*.

The project site is not within view of a State scenic highway or any of the scenic roadways identified in Policy CC-1.13 of the General Plan. Per the County's General Plan, State Route 16 is a locally designated scenic highway. However, the portion designated as a scenic corridor starts at the Colusa County line and ends at Capay, which is approximately 10 miles east of the project site.

With respect to scenic resources, the project site does not include historic buildings or rock outcroppings. The north portion of the site contains 52 trees, including 49 valley oaks and three coast live oaks. The majority of trees are located along the banks of the Magnolia Canal. The proposed project would include the removal of 46 of the 52 existing oak trees identified within the site vicinity. Yolo County does not have an established tree preservation ordinance or policy. However, given that the proposed project would include removal of native oak trees, the project would be required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Yolo County Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Plan.

In general, the proposed project is in accord with the Yolo County Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Plan; as a result of the proposed reclamation activities, approximately 10.9 acres of the site would be reclaimed as "upper riparian woodland". Per the proposed Reclamation Plan, the upper riparian woodland habitat would be planted with approximately 50 valley oak seedlings per acre, along with other native species.

Thus, the project would ultimately increase the acreage of oak woodland habitat on-site, consistent with Goals 7 and 8 of the Yolo County Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Plan.

Based on the above considerations, and consistent with the conclusion of the CCAP Update FEIR (p. 4.1-10), the proposed project would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact with respect to substantially damaging scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.

Mitigation Measure(s)
None required.

4.1-3 In a non-urbanized area, would the project 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 a publicly accessible vantage point). This impact would be *less-than-significant*.

As previously discussed, the project site is identified as a "Future Proposed Mining" area within the CCAP Update (see Figure 3-4 of the CCAP Update FEIR). As a result, the changes in visual character or quality of the public views of the site as a result of off-channel mining have been anticipated in the CCAP Update FEIR. According to the CCAP Update FEIR, the OCMP and supporting Mining Ordinance include policies and ordinances intended to minimize potential adverse effects on views and vistas from new off-channel mining projects. These are discussed in Impact 4.1-1 and include Setbacks (Section 10-4.429), Site Maintenance (Section 10-4.430) and Aesthetics (Section 10-5.502). The CCAP Update FEIR goes on to note (p. 4.1-12):

> The Mining Ordinance regulations listed above will help limit adverse visual effects during active mining on existing views and vistas. Even so, mining operations will be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. As required by State law and Mining Ordinance Section 10-4.505, new proposed mining operations that could be located in the "Future Proposed Mining" areas shown on Figure 3-4 would be subject to CEQA review. In conjunction with the required environmental review of individual projects permitted under the OCMP, the visibility of mining operations, facilities and landform alterations from public viewpoints would be assessed based on site specific visual characteristics and viewing conditions. The use of berms, vegetative screens, seeding, special plant materials and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms, or other measures, may be incorporated into the individual mine and reclamation plans, as appropriate.

This section assesses the visibility of mining operations, facilities, and landform alterations from the key public viewpoints identified in this chapter, based on site-specific visual characteristics and viewing conditions. It is noted that this project does not propose any changes to the Woodland Plant. However, once excavation and processing operations have ceased at the Esparto Site, the Esparto Plant equipment would be relocated to the Woodland Site to replace the older Woodland Plant equipment. In addition, one additional crusher and two additional screens would likely be required to accommodate the increase in plant capacity from 1.2 million tons per year to 2.2 million tons per year. Additional materials stockpiles may also be located at the Woodland Plant during on-site mining operations. However, these features

would not be visible from the key viewpoints identified in this chapter; therefore, they are not discussed further.

Key Viewpoint #1

Key Viewpoint #1 represents the view of the project site from County Road 94B, looking southeast. This publicly available view is seen from motorists along County Road 94B. Motorists experience views of a uniform agricultural setting, generally lacking striking visual patterns, and disrupted in part by human-made elements, such as utility poles, roadway gates, and concrete barriers. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

As shown in Figure 4.1-7, the project includes planting of a landscape buffer along the east side of County Road 94B, at the project's northwestern boundary, which would serve to screen on-site mining operations from motorists' view. Further south along County Road 94B, existing screen vegetation is already present. Thus, the majority of County Road 94B, along the project's western boundary, would have a landscape buffer, capable of screening on-site mining operations from view of motorists. This landscape buffer allows setbacks from excavation areas to be reduced to a minimum of 50 feet, which is what is proposed for the project (OCSMO, Section 10-4.429; see also Figure 4.1-7). According to the OCSMO (Section 10-4.429), where mining occurs within one-thousand (1,000) feet of a public right-of-way, operators shall phase mining such that no more than fifty (50) acres of the area that lies within one-thousand (1,000) feet of the right-of-way would be actively disturbed at any time, except where operations are adequately screened from public view.

In addition, the project includes installation of a four-foot high earthen berm around the on-site mining area, which would further screen mining operations from view; and a 300-foot portion of the berm along the western boundary of the site would be eight feet high, as required in the Noise Chapter. The project does not include installation of any permanent above-ground structures that would be visible from this, or any key public viewpoint. The overburden stockpiles near the western portion of the site would be below grade, within the mining pit area, and not visible to motorists (see Figure 3-10 of the Project Description chapter).

It is also important to consider the long-term reclamation of the project site. Mining operations would not be conducted in perpetuity, but rather, the site would be reclaimed to other uses, establishing harmony with surrounding uses. Under the proposed phasing plan, mining activities within the project site would be phased generally from north to south (see Figure 3-14 of the Project Description chapter). Agricultural reclamation of the western portion of the project site would occur concurrently with mining activities within the eastern portion of the project site. Mining would occur in two phases: Phase A (64.7 acres) and Phase B (212.4 acres). Reclamation would occur in three phases: Phase A (98.1 acres), Phase B (142.2 acres), Phase C (36.8 acres). Approximately 116 acres of the mining area would be reclaimed to agricultural use, while the remainder of the mining area would be reclaimed to a lake with riparian woodland along the fringes/shoreline. Slopes associated with mining operations would also be reclaimed to grassland. A total of four reclaimed habitat communities are proposed which include grassland slopes, lake, upper riparian woodland, and lower riparian woodland.

As a result of the above considerations, the moderate/average quality of this view would not be substantially degraded by the proposed project. The viewer type at this key viewpoint consists of motorists, who would only have passing views of the site.

Key Viewpoint #2

Key Viewpoint #2 represents the view of the project site from County Road 94B, looking northeast. This publicly available view is seen from motorists along County Road 94B. Motorists experience views of a uniform agricultural setting, with less disruptions by human-made elements. This view also has more perceivable patterns than viewpoint #1 given the presence of different types of vegetation (row crops vs. more grass-like vegetation). The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

For reasons similar to Key Viewpoint #1, on-site mining operations would be largely screened from view. The existing visual landscape buffer along the east side of County Road 94B would serve as a substantial screen for on-site mining operations, though there are some gaps in the existing vegetation. These gaps would receive additional screening by the four-foot high earthen berm that would be created along the site's western boundary.

The project does not include installation of any permanent above-ground buildings that would be visible from this, or any key public viewpoint. The overburden stockpiles near the western portion of the site would be below grade, within the mining pit area, and not visible to motorists (see Figure 3-10 of the Project Description chapter).

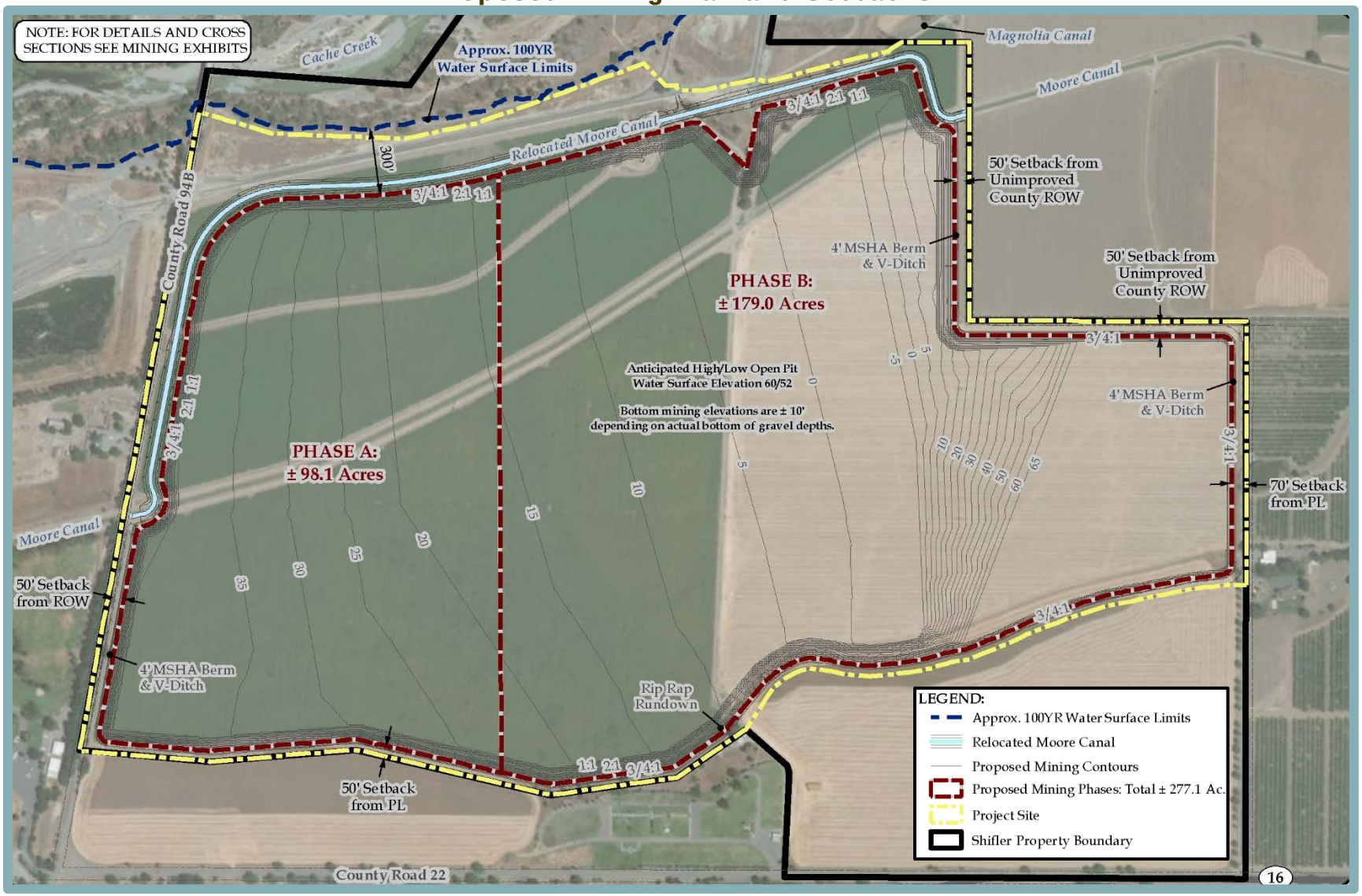
As a result, the moderate/average quality of this view would not be substantially degraded by the proposed project. The viewer type at this key viewpoint consists of motorists, who would only have passing views of the site.

Key Viewpoint #3

Key Viewpoint #3 represents the view looking north from County Road 22. This publicly available view is seen from motorists along County Road 22. The agricultural land in the foreground is not part of the project site. The project site is not readily visible from this viewpoint, given the lower elevation of the project site, compared to the agricultural lands in the foreground. Motorists experience views of a uniform agricultural setting, with few disruptions by human-made elements. While there are minimal encroachments, this view has few perceivable patterns given its uniformity, and thus is not particularly striking, nor memorable. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

On-site mining operations would not be visible due to the intervening, gently rolling topography between the project site and County Road 22. The southern portion of the project site would also include a four-foot high earthen berm. The project does not include installation of any permanent above-ground structures that would be visible from this, or any key public viewpoint.

Figure 4.1-7
Proposed Mining Plan and Setbacks



As a result, the moderate/average quality of this view would not be substantially degraded by the proposed project. The viewer type at this key viewpoint consists of motorists, who would only have passing views of the site.

Key Viewpoint #4

Key Viewpoint #4 represents the view looking north from Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery. This publicly available view is seen from visitors to the memorial park, who are allowed access during all hours. Foreground views consist of grass, landscaping, and human-made encroachments, including paved areas, retaining walls, and grave sites. Middleground views are dominated by agricultural portions of the project site, whereas background views consist of mature vegetation and open sky beyond the project site boundaries. The overall visual quality of this view of moderate/average quality.

Mining operations would be visible from this viewpoint, through gaps in existing vegetation. Excavation areas would occur within 50 feet of the Memorial Park property line. Although a four-foot high berm would be created along the southern boundary of the project site, due to the fact that the Memorial Park is elevated above the project site, the proposed berm would not screen the mining operations. In order to fully screen the view of the project site from this key viewpoint, additional landscape plantings would be necessary. However, due to the elevated nature of the Memorial Park's topography, the landscape plantings would need to be on the Memorial Park property, rather than the project site. Teichert is currently in negotiations with the cemetery property owner regarding the desire to include landscape plantings along the cemetery property's northern boundary prior to commencement of mining activities on the project site. While such plantings would help screen the mining operations at the project site that would occur in the near- to mid-term, the plantings would not be necessary to screen the long-term reclaimed uses at the project site.

Long-term views of the site from this key viewpoint, after reclamation, would consist of agricultural uses and a lake. Thus, the harmony that would be established from this viewpoint in the long-term would be one of striking visual patterns.

While guests of the Memorial Park would be able to see project mining operations through gaps in existing vegetation, and for those frequent guests, a noticeable change in visual character from an agricultural setting to a mining operation would be apparent, guests do not stay at the Memorial Park for extended periods. In addition, the visual quality of this key viewpoint was determined to be moderate/average quality, and not high quality due to the lack of striking visual patterns and distinct focal points.

As a result of the above-noted factors, the moderate/average quality of this view would not be substantially degraded by the proposed project.

Conclusion

The majority of public viewpoints of the project site are available only along County Road 94B and County Road 22. People traveling on these roads have only passing views of the project site, and views of mining operations would be substantially screened by existing and proposed landscape buffers and on-site earthen berms. The

views of the project site from the Monument Hill Memorial Park are partial, through gaps in existing vegetation, and while the visual character or the site would be altered from an intact agricultural setting to surface mining, such alteration would be temporary, as long-term reclaimed uses would consist of agricultural lands and a lake. In addition, based on the visual analysis performed in this chapter, the key viewpoints were determined to have moderate/average visual quality. The project would be required to comply with all applicable aesthetics regulations identified in the OCSMO, as discussed above. As mining is completed, reclamation will occur in compliance with proposed reclamation plans resulting in approximately 86 acres of agricultural land on the west, approximately 31 acres of agricultural land on the east, a 113-acre open water lake in the central portion of the proposed mining area, 24 acres of riparian habitat along the lake frontage, and 24 acres in grassy slopes and access roads. The lake and surrounding habitat will be dedicated to the County upon completion for future public recreation, public trails, open space, and protected habitat. Therefore, consistent with the CCAP Update EIR, the project would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to substantially degrading 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).

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.

4.1-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. The impact would be *less than significant*.

Existing sources of light in the project area include vehicles traveling on County Road 22 and County Road 94B, the nearby residences, and the Teichert Woodland Plant. Development of the proposed project would introduce additional sources of light and glare to the project area that would be similar to those emanating from other mining sites in the area that have been reclaimed. Sources of lighting from the proposed project would be limited to headlights from trucks travelling to and from the site, and potentially, lighting associated with nighttime mining activities.

Mining operations would be consistent with the existing hours of operation for the Woodland Plant and the Schwarzgruber mining site. Hours of operation would typically be limited to the hours of 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday per conditions of the Mining Permit. For the months of August, September, and October, the hours of operation may be extended to 10:00 PM (Monday through Friday). While extended hours would be allowed, the applicant has indicated that nighttime operations would be unlikely. Typically, nighttime operations, when needed, only occur for processing and load out at the plant site, not at the mining site. Nevertheless, should nighttime mining be required, the mining equipment does have lighting that is directed downwards toward the active work area. In addition, there may be some safety lighting associated with the conveyor, which would primarily be located at transfer points and as the conveyor approaches the plant site. Consistent with Section 10-4.420 of the OCSMO, all lighting will be arranged and controlled so as to limit light illumination of

adjacent properties or public rights-of-way. No stationary lighting would be installed on the mining site due to the unanticipated need for nighttime mining.

In addition, during occasional nighttime operations, when vehicles are moving around on-site, headlights would be largely screened from view by landscape buffers and berms around the mining site.

Based on the above, the project could introduce additional sources of light and glare from aggregate mining operations and other improvements. Compliance with Section 10-4.420 would ensure that lighting would be arranged in a way that would minimize the illumination of public rights-of-way or adjacent properties. Compliance with OCSMO standards mentioned above would reduce impacts related to light illumination on the project site. Thus, anticipated lighting from the proposed project would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact, consistent with the conclusion in the CCAP Update FEIR (p. 4.1-9).

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.

4.1-5 Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating impacts to aesthetics. This impact would be *less than significant*.

Table 4.1-2 below provides an analysis of the proposed project's consistency with applicable policies and regulations that have been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects related to aesthetics.

As shown in the table below, the proposed project is anticipated to be would generally consistent with applicable standards related to aesthetic resources. Thus, a ***less-than-significant impact*** would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.

Table 4.1-2
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Yolo County General Plan	
Policy CC-1.2 Preserve and enhance the rural landscape as an important scenic feature.	As an allowed use within the Agricultural zone, in areas that contain aggregate deposits covered by the CCAP, this use has been determined by the County to be compatible with the rural landscape. Aggregate mining is an interim use that allows for excavation of important construction materials, followed by reclamation to open space, agricultural, and habitat uses.

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Table 4.1-2
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
	The Reclamation Plan (Figure 3-15 of the Project Description chapter) proposes a performance standard for productivity of reclaimed agricultural land of equal to or better than existing productivity. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-1.3 Protect the rural night sky as an important scenic feature to the greatest feasible extent where lighting is needed.	Please see Impact 4.1-4. Mining operations would primarily occur during the day, and though unlikely, the possibility exists for limited nighttime mining operations to occur. Daytime mining would not affect the night sky. Pursuant to Section 10-4.420 of the Mining Ordinance, lighting must be arranged and controlled in a manner to limit light spillover. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-1.4 Identify and preserve, where possible, landmarks and icons which contribute to the identity and character of the rural areas.	Distinguished landmarks or icons do not currently exist on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with this policy.
Policy CC-1.8 Screen visually obtrusive activities and facilities such as infrastructure and utility facilities, storage yards, outdoor parking and display areas, along highways, freeways, roads and trails.	Please see Impact 4.1-3. The project would be consistent with all applicable setbacks and screening requirements. The proposed project would include landscape berms along the site boundaries to screen the new mining operations. As part of the proposed project, the northern section of the western perimeter would be planted with native trees and scrubs prior to commencement of mining activities. In addition, as mining operations proceed, excavation activity recedes from sight based on depth of mining. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-1.10 Protect existing ridgelines and hillsides from visually incompatible development.	Existing elevations within the site range from 98 to 112 feet above mean sea level. As such, the project site does not contain any notable ridgelines or hillsides. Distant views of the Coast Ranges beyond the project site would persist from publicly accessible viewpoints, such as roadways, with implementation of the project. Consequently, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-1.12 Preserve and enhance the scenic quality of the County's rural roadway system. Prohibit projects and activities that would obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of views from designated scenic roadways or scenic highways.	The project includes landscaping along the site boundaries to screen mining operations. State-designated scenic highways are not located within the project vicinity and would not be impacted by the proposed project. Per the County's General Plan, State Route 16 is a locally designated scenic highway. However, the portion designated as a scenic corridor starts at the Colusa County line and ends at Capay, which is approximately 10 miles

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Table 4.1-2
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
	east of the project site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-1.13 The following routes are designated as local scenic roadways, as shown in Figure LU-3 (Scenic Highways): • State Route 16 (Colusa County line to Capay) • State Route 128 (Winters to Napa County line) • County Roads 116 and 116B (Knights Landing to eastern terminus of County Road 16) • County Roads 16 and 117 and Old River Road (County Road 107 to West Sacramento) • South River Road (West Sacramento City Limits to Sacramento County line)	Per the County's General Plan, State Route 16 is a locally designated scenic highway. However, the portion designated as a scenic corridor starts at the Colusa County line and ends at Capay, which is approximately 10 miles east of the project site. Considering the distance between the project site and the nearest local scenic roadway, the project would not have the potential to result in impacts related to views from designated local scenic roadways. Moreover, the project would not interfere with the County's designation of roadways as local scenic roadways. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CO-3.1 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.	The CCAP and associated implementing ordinances balance the identified social values. The proposed project is consistent with the CCAP and complies with both the Mining Ordinance and the Reclamation Ordinance. This EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts associated with the project, including impacts to water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, and other environmental factors. Where applicable, mitigation is provided to minimize impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CO-3.2 Ensure that mineral extraction and reclamation operations are compatible with land uses both on-site and within the surrounding area, and are performed in a manner that does not adversely affect the environment.	See discussion for Policy CC-4.28. The proposed project is consistent with the CCAP and complies with both the Mining Ordinance and the Reclamation Ordinance. This EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts associated with the project, including impacts to water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, and other environmental factors. Where applicable, mitigation is provided to minimize impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CC-4.28 Provide appropriate buffers or barriers between incompatible residential and non-residential uses. The last-built use shall be responsible for design and construction (and/or other related costs) of the buffer/barrier.	Please see Impact 4.1-3. The rural residential to the south of the project site would be visually buffered from the project site by existing landscaping along County Road 22 as well as intervening, gently rolling topography between County Road 22 and the southern boundary of the project site. In addition, a four-foot high earthen

(Continued on next page)

Table 4.1-2
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
	berm would be created around the mining excavation boundary. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Off-Channel Mining Plan	
Goal 2.2-2 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, watershed, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.	See Policy CO-3.1 above.
Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance	
Section 10-4.404 The visibility of mining operations, facilities, and landform alterations from public areas, viewpoints, and nearby residences shall be minimized, based on an assessment of site-specific visual characteristics and viewing conditions. The use of berms, vegetative screens, seeding, special plant materials and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms, or other measures, shall be incorporated into the individual mine and reclamation plans as appropriate.	Please see Impact 4.1-3. The proposed project would include berms, vegetative screens, and other measures to minimize the visibility of mining operations. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this regulation.
Section 10-4.420 All lighting shall be arranged and controlled so as not to illuminate public rights-of-way or adjacent properties.	Please see Impact 4.1-4. Mining operations would primarily occur during the day time. For the months of August through October, operation hours may be extended, though the need to do so is unlikely. The project would include berms and landscape features to block views of operations and limit illumination of public rights of way or adjacent properties. In addition, any equipment lighting would be directed to the active work area, consistent with this standard. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this regulation.
Section 10-4.429 (c) Off-channel excavations shall maintain a minimum one-thousand (1,000) foot setback from public rights-of-way and adjacent property lines of off-site residences, unless a landscaped buffer is provided or site-specific characteristics reduce potential aesthetic impacts. Where landscaped buffers are proposed, the setback for off-channel excavations may be reduced to a minimum of fifty (50) feet from either the property line or the adjoining right-of-way, whichever is greater. Where mining occurs within one-thousand (1,000) feet of a public right-of-way, operators shall phase mining such that no more than fifty (50) acres of the area that lies within one-thousand (1,000) feet of the right-of-way would	Please see Impact 4.1-3. Section 10-4.249 establishes required setbacks from various adjoining land uses. The project would be consistent with this regulation.

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Table 4.1-2
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
be actively disturbed at any time, except where operations are adequately screened from public view. Where adequate screening exists in the form of mature vegetation and/or constructed berms that effectively block public views, the area of active disturbance within one-thousand (1,000) feet of the right-of-way shall not exceed the area that is screened by more than fifty (50) acres at any one time. Actively disturbed areas are defined as those on which mining operations of any kind, or the implementation of reclamation such as grading, seeding, or installation of plant material are taking place.	
Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance	
Section 10-5.502 Means of improving the appearance of the landscape after mining has been completed shall be assessed based on site-specific visual characteristics, site lines, and view corridors. The use and placement of berms, vegetative screens, special plant materials, grading slopes, and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms to mimic surrounding landforms, or other measures, shall be incorporated into the mine reclamation plan as appropriate.	Please see Impact 4.1-3. Under the proposed phasing plan, mining activities within the project site would be phased generally from north to south (see Figure 3-14 of the Project Description chapter). Agricultural reclamation of the western portion of the project site would occur concurrently with mining activities within the eastern portion of the project site. Mining would occur in two phases: Phase A (64.7 acres) and Phase B (212.4 acres). Reclamation would occur in three phases: Phase A (98.1 acres), Phase B (142.2 acres), Phase C (36.8 acres). Approximately 116 acres of the mining area would be reclaimed to agricultural use, while the remainder of the mining area would be reclaimed to a lake with riparian woodland along the fringes/shoreline. Slopes associated with mining operations would also be reclaimed to grassland. A total of four reclaimed habitat communities are proposed which include grassland slopes, lake, upper riparian woodland, and lower riparian woodland. The project would be consistent with this regulation.
Section 10-5.521 There shall be no permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden. Berms established for visual screening and noise abatement shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.	Consistent with this standard, no permanent stockpiles are proposed for the reclamation plan. The project would be consistent with this regulation.