

3.1 Aesthetics

This section addresses the potential for the Venice Auxiliary Pumping Plant (VAPP or Proposed Project) to result in impacts on aesthetic resources. The purpose of this analysis is to establish a baseline for evaluating visual resources in the project area and determine if a significant change in the visual environment would occur as a result of the Proposed Project. Project components reviewed in this section include all proposed visible features as well as construction techniques. The analysis discusses the potential for the Proposed Project to result in construction and operational impacts. The Proposed Project is evaluated with respect to a viewer's expected sensitivity and expectations and reviewed for consistency with applicable planning policies. Levels of impact are determined in accordance with the guidelines provided in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*. Mitigation measures, where applicable, are recommended to avoid or minimize significant visual impacts. As noted in the analysis below, direct and indirect impacts associated with aesthetics during construction and operation would be less than significant. However, as described in Section 3.1.4, in an effort to reduce perceived effects as much as practicable, several mitigation measures have been recommended for incorporation into the project.

The Proposed Project would include construction of a pumping facility on a vacant site at the northeast corner of Hurricane Street and Canal Court, adjacent to the existing Venice Pumping Plant (VPP). The Project Site comprises three undeveloped residential lots and are described in Chapter 2, Project Description. The Project Site is surrounded on the north and west by residential buildings and on the east by the Venice Grand Canal and residential buildings. Ballona Lagoon is south of the Project Site.

3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

This section describes existing regulations that are applicable to the Proposed Project related to aesthetics and visual character, including the California Scenic Highways Program, California Coastal Act, Venice Community Plan, Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan, Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, Los Angeles Municipal Code, Citywide General Plan Framework Element, City of Los Angeles Walkability Checklist, Citywide Design Guidelines, and the Public Art, Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Design Review Guidelines.

3.1.1.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations pertaining to aesthetics and visual resources that are applicable to the Proposed Project.

3.1.1.2 State

California Scenic Highways Program

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) established and implemented the California Scenic Highway Program to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment (Caltrans 2008).

Caltrans defines a State Scenic Highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that “traverses an area of outstanding scenic quality, containing striking views, flora, geology, and other unique natural attributes” (Caltrans 2008).

Once a highway has been designated as a state or national scenic highway, or a scenic corridor, special consideration must be given whenever a project proposes to develop the surrounding area.

California Coastal Act

The California Coastal Act of 1976 was adopted after state voters approved Proposition 20 in 1972. A key factor that led to the passage of this landmark legislation was the visible deterioration of the coastal environment as well as development pressures from a growing population (California Coastal Act 2014).

Section 30251 of the act is pertinent to visual resources preservation, stating:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

Section 30253 states, in part, that new development within the Coastal Zone shall

...where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

3.1.1.3 Local

Urban Design Studio

The function of the Department of City Planning’s (DCP’s) Urban Design Studio (UDS) is to offer a progressive Urban Planning approach that integrates required design guidelines and design standards from applicable land use and planning policies into the design of projects. The UDS offers guidance in the form of consultations with staff that combines principles of good urban design through innovative policies to help projects comply the City of Los Angeles’ Planning and Zoning Code. The VAPP has several code based design guidelines and standards derived from the following policies that shaped the design and layout of the Project Site.

Los Angeles Municipal Code

The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) sets forth regulations and standards regarding the allowable types, densities, heights, and designs for new development projects. In particular, Chapter 1 of the LAMC, General Provisions and Zoning, provides development standards for the various zoning districts in the City of Los Angeles. In addition, the LAMC also sets forth the following specific regulations regarding lighting:

Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 12.21, General Provisions, Paragraph A, Section 5, Part (k), restricts light spill onto adjacent properties and provides minimum luminance levels for safety within and around parking facilities.

Chapter 1, Article 7, Section 17.08 C, states that plans for street lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the Bureau of Street Lighting for subdivision maps.

Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117, states that no exterior light source may cause more than two foot-candles of lighting intensity or generate direct glare onto exterior glazed windows or glass doors; elevated habitable porch, deck, or balcony; or any ground surface intended for uses such as recreation, barbecue or lawn areas or any other property containing a residential unit or units.

Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 12.09.5, regulates the RW2-1 Zone – Rear yards and states that There shall be a rear yard of not less than 15 feet in depth. Notwithstanding any provisions of this article to the contrary, the rear lot line is that line opposite and most distant from the lot line separating the narrowest canal frontage of the lot from the navigable public canal or waterway.

Venice Community Plan

The Venice Community Plan is one of 35 community plans that make up the Land Use Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan. As part of the General Plan, the Venice Community Plan, among other purposes, guides development within the area to create a healthful and pleasant environment. Chapter III, Land Use Policies and Programs, is the Land Use Element of the General Plan for the community plan area, which covers approximately 2,061 acres and is located in the western portion of Los Angeles. Chapter III includes a number of objectives and policies that address the visual aspects of new development, including protecting views of wetlands, bluffs, and distinctive visual resources from surrounding public streets and Open Space areas; using landscaping and plant materials to screen and soften visually obtrusive elements; and designing public works improvements with use of the least environmentally disturbing methods. Chapter V, Urban Design, of the community plan provides broad urban design objectives for each district in the area. The design policies and guidelines presented in Chapter V complement existing regulations contained in the adopted specific plans within the community plan area. These design policies and standards ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial projects as well as public spaces and rights-of-way incorporate specific elements of good design. The intent is to promote a stable and aesthetically pleasant environment. In commercial corridors, the emphasis is on the provision and maintenance of the visual continuity of streetscapes and the creation of an environment that encourages both pedestrian and economic activity. In multi-family residential areas, the emphasis is on the promotion of architectural design that enhances the appearance of structures and contributes to the quality of life, living conditions, and neighborhood pride of the residents. In industrial areas, the intent is to improve compatibility between industrial uses and non-industrial uses and encourage quality industrial development.

Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan

One of the purposes of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan (Venice Specific Plan) is to protect, maintain, enhance, and where feasible, restore the overall visual quality of views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas and their natural and man-made resources. It also regulates all aspects of development, including use, height, density, setback, buffer zone, and other factors so that it is compatible with the character of the existing community. It provides for the consideration of aesthetics and scenic preservation and enhancement; and protects environmentally sensitive areas.

The Venice Specific Plan has development regulations that include development standards for each subarea of Venice. The overall project area is located in the Ballona Lagoon West Bank Subarea and Laydown Area 2 is located in the Ballona Lagoon (Grand Canal) East Bank Subarea. The 128 Hurricane St site, which is both Laydown Area 1 and part of the Project Site is located in the Ballona Lagoon West Bank Subarea. As noted in the Venice Specific Plan, whenever the provisions of this Specific Plan differ from the provisions in Chapter 1 of the LAMC, (with regard to use, density, lot area, floor area ratio, building or structure heights, setbacks, yards, buffers, parking, drainage, fences, landscaping, design standards, light, trash, and signage), the provisions of the Venice Specific Plan will supersede the other regulations. Similarly, whenever the Venice Specific Plan is silent, the regulations of the LAMC will apply. It should be noted that although the Venice Specific Plan has been adopted by the Los Angeles City Council, it has not been certified as the Land Implementation Plan portion of the Venice LCP by the California Coastal Commission.

Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan

The Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (Venice LCP LUP) was prepared for development to comply with the California Coastal Act of 1976 within the Venice Coastal Zone. The Venice LCP LUP was established as the Land Use Plan of the Venice LCP, intended to be used to plan for the preservation and enhancement of its coastal environment. The Venice LCP LUP contains information of the kinds, location, and intensity of land uses, the applicable resource protection, development policies and where applicable, a listing of implementation policies. It also addresses issues related to coastal development and design and seeks to develop facilities that will serve the needs of coastal visitors and City residents as well as preserve and enhance coastal overviews, key viewpoint areas, and Open Space. The Venice LCP LUP was certified by the California Coastal Commission. The Venice LCP was not wholly certified, therefore this LUP is only used on a local level and entitled through either a Venice Coastal Development Permit or a Venice Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Review.

City of Los Angeles Walkability Checklist

The 2008 Walkability Checklist for Entitlement Review was developed by the City DCP's UDS to encourage the planning staff, project proponents, and community stakeholders to pursue high-quality urban designs that provide enhanced pedestrian movement, access, comfort, and safety, both in the public right-of-way and on private properties. It specifies urban design guidelines that are generally applicable to all projects that require discretionary approval for new construction. The walkability checklist consists of objectives, goals, and implementation strategies regarding various design elements, which are intended to improve the pedestrian environment, protect neighborhood character, and promote high-quality urban form. Topics such as sidewalks, crosswalks/street crossings, on-street parking, utilities, building orientation, off-street parking and driveways, on-site landscaping, building façades, and building signage and lighting are addressed and should be considered in the design of a project.

Citywide General Plan Framework Element

The 2009 City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework Element provides a series of goals, policies, and objectives that pertain to urban design topics throughout the City of Los Angeles. With respect to the evaluation of aesthetics and views (i.e., the identification and evaluation of key visual resources and a determination as to the degree of visual impact that would be attributable to the project), the Framework Element's Urban Form and Neighborhood Design chapter establishes the goal of creating a livable city (i.e., a city with strong neighborhoods, walkability, a network of

attractive public spaces, affordability, and regional connections) for existing and future residents with interconnected, diverse neighborhoods (Goal 5A). Also within the Framework Element, the Open Space and Conservation chapter calls for the use of Open Space to enhance community and neighborhood character (Objective 6.2). The policies in this chapter recognize that there are communities where Open Space and recreational resources are currently in short supply and, therefore, suggests that pedestrian-oriented streets and small parks, where feasible, might serve as important resources for meeting the Open Space and recreational needs of residents (Policy 6.2.1).

Citywide Design Guidelines

The 2011 Citywide Design Guidelines were adopted by the City Planning Commission for use in reviewing applications for commercial, multi-family, mixed use, and industrial projects. The Citywide Design Guidelines are intended to implement the 10 Urban Design Principles of the City's Framework Element. The principles address mobility and transit access in the public right-of-way, green streets, neighborhood character, and improved equity and opportunity. These principles are a statement of the City's vision for the future of Los Angeles. They provide guidance for new development and encourage projects to complement existing urban forms in order to enhance the built environment in Los Angeles. The intended purpose of one principle is to develop inviting and accessible transit areas, which would be done by augmenting the streetscape environment with pedestrian amenities and reducing visual clutter.

Residential Citywide Design Guidelines

The Proposed Project is located within a single and multi-family residential area. As such, the Residential Citywide Design Guidelines (Residential Guidelines), which address multi-family residential/commercial mixed-use standards are the most appropriate and applicable guidelines. As noted in the Residential Guidelines, multi-family development in the City of Los Angeles varies across a wide spectrum of typologies, from low-density small lot subdivisions in suburban areas to high-density, mixed-use buildings in urban regional centers. Each typology presents unique challenges and opportunities. The Residential Guidelines are intended to address some of the most common, overarching challenges in designing multi-family developments encountered across the City. The prime areas of opportunity for attaining high quality design in multi-family and mixed-use projects include: maximizing sustainability in multi-family developments, establishing height and massing transitions from multi-family uses to commercial uses or less dense single-family residential; considering the pedestrian as the cornerstone of design over automobilecentric design; establishing landscaping and Open Space as essential design concepts from the outset of a project; and highlighting the role that quality building design can play in creating visually interesting and attractive multifamily buildings by contributing to existing neighborhood character and creating a "sense of place." The Residential Guidelines are intended for developers and architects as well as for advisory and decision-making bodies when evaluating a project.¹

3.1.1.4 City of Los Angeles Administrative Code

The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code is used to assist City offices, departments, and other governmental agencies with their functions, and serves as the official source for information about ordinances enacted by the City of Los Angeles that regulate administrative processes.

¹ Source: <http://www.urbandesignla.com/resources/docs/ResidentialCitywideDesignGuidelines/hi/ResidentialCitywideDesignGuidelines.pdf>. Accessed August 24, 2016.

Section 19.85 Public Works Improvements Arts Program - Public Art, Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Design Review Guidelines

The mayor-appointed Cultural Affairs Commission serves as an advisory body to the City's Cultural Affairs Department. The Cultural Affairs Commission approves the design of structures to be built on or over City property, or directly affecting public land or rights-of-way, and reviews and accepts works of public art proposed for acquisition by the City. The Cultural Affairs Commission exercises its discretion in accordance with the June 2008 Public Art, Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Design Review Guidelines. Projects submitted for review are subject to one of four guideline categories (public art, architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design), but it is acknowledged that all the guidelines are mutually supportive and should be considered together in the design of any development within or affecting the public realm. The issues addressed within each guideline category are outlined below.

Urban Design: Critical assessment of place, incremental development of a vibrant and hospitable public realm, pedestrian primacy, street envelope, building massing and site disposition, city lighting and streetscape amenities, new media, and mandatory preliminary early review.

Landscape: Natural systems, urban plant ecology, Open Space networks and corridors, variety of gathering spaces, site boundaries, new media, and mandatory preliminary early review.

Architecture: Encourage evocative design, ensure public realm improvement and activity, design buildings with ample Open Space and landscape, establish pedestrian-friendly site circulation, enhance defensible perimeters, provide façade interest, consider public lighting opportunities, promote sustainability, integrate the public art component early on, incorporate high-quality signage, wayfinding and graphic components, and encourage and provide preliminary early review.

Public Art: Artist-focused, expansive selection process; distinguish public artist selection from traditional design procurement; art panel qualifications; develop and expand the public artist pool; early artist selection; art and architecture process integration; artist independence; art maintenance; temporary public art projects; media and advanced technologies; multiple sites and portable art; and articulation of artistic intent.

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

The visual setting for the Proposed Project is defined below in terms of (a) visual character and quality within the larger community and throughout the study area; (b) scenic resources, scenic vistas, scenic corridors, and other visual resources within the larger community and throughout the study area; and (c) viewer groups potentially affected by the Proposed Project.

3.1.2.1 Defining Quality and Character of Visual Resources

Visual Character. The visual character of a view is described by the topography, land uses, scale, form, and natural resources in the view. Visual character is based on defined attributes such as physical traits—including form, color, line and texture (pattern elements)—as well as pattern character traits and the dominance, scale, and diversity or continuity of visual elements.

Visual Quality. Visual quality is based, in part, on the viewer's values and notions about what constitutes a quality setting. The three criteria that are used to define visual quality are listed below.

- *Vividness* is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.
- *Intactness* is the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. It can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes as well as in natural settings.
- *Unity* is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. It frequently attests to the careful design of individual human-made components in the landscape.

As a general rule, high-quality views are found to have topographic relief, a variety of vegetation, rich colors, impressive scenery, and unique natural and/or built features. Medium-quality views have interesting but minor landforms, some variety in vegetation and color, and/or moderate scenery. Low-quality views contain uninteresting features, little variety in vegetation and color, uninteresting scenery, and/or common elements.

Visual Character and Quality of the Venice Community

The community of Venice is home to approximately 45,000 residents, and the Venice Community Plan Area includes an estimated 2,061 acres of land (City of Los Angeles 2009). Located in the western portion of Los Angeles, the community includes Venice Beach and the Venice Boardwalk, which stretch from Marina Court on the north to Yawl Street on the south. The community is generally bounded on the north by Marine Court and Dewey Street (adjoining the city of Santa Monica). It extends in an irregular fashion from the Pacific Ocean eastward to Walgrove Avenue, Beethoven Street, and Del Rey Avenue, bordering the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey Community Plan Area, parts of Culver City, and Los Angeles County land in Marina Del Rey. The coastline extends to the northern and southern limits of Venice, and the beach is used as a regional recreational resource.

Elements of urban design range from beach foregrounds and other natural landscapes to built structures and associated landscaped areas. Much of the area is developed with a variety of land uses that are typical of beach communities. The predominant land use in the community is residential. The majority of the multi-family development is medium and high medium density and located west of Lincoln Boulevard, extending to the coastline and southward from Washington Boulevard within the Marina Peninsula. Approximately 7 percent of the land is designated for commercial uses (City of Los Angeles 2009). The majority of commercial facilities are small scale in character and serve the local population. A more intense commercial area is located on the western edge of the community, adjoining Lincoln Boulevard, and within the Oxford Triangle. This area contains movie theaters, a large hotel, and a variety of restaurants and other retail uses. The remainder of the commercial uses are generally located at street intersections (e.g., around the Windward Circle) or along major arterials such as Lincoln Boulevard, which is an auto-oriented commercial strip. Of the community's total area, approximately 3 percent is designated for manufacturing and industrial uses. Other concentrations of designated industrial and light manufacturing uses are found along Main Street, from Abbot Kinney Boulevard to Dewey and Navy Streets.

The ESHAs in the Venice Coastal Zone include Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal south of Washington Boulevard, the Venice Canals north of Washington Boulevard, habitat buffer areas on the east and west banks of Ballona Lagoon, and the California least tern nesting areas, as identified on the ESHA

map in the Venice LCP LUP Land Use Plan (City of Los Angeles 2015). The Venice Canals, along with the adjacent Ballona Lagoon, support some of the last remaining pockets of coastal wetland habitat in Los Angeles County. The Venice Canals are part of the Ballona Lagoon sea water system and connected with Ballona Lagoon via Grand Canal. Ballona Lagoon is an easily accessible natural area of estuarine and intertidal habitat. The lagoon is also rich in invertebrate and fish species, some of which are easily observable from the shore. Mudflats in Ballona Lagoon are especially important to shorebirds and waterfowl, which forage there in the fall and winter.

Visual character throughout the community of Venice varies by location and the relative position of the viewer. Visual quality in the community of Venice ranges from low to high quality, depending on the presence of visual resources and the distance, speed, and angle of the viewer, amongst other variables. As typified by the key views shown in Figures 3.1-2A and 3.1-3A, views throughout the project area are mostly medium-quality views of minor landforms, with some variety in vegetation and color and/or moderate overall scenery. The views captured in the selected key views and in viewsheds, as well as lines of sight throughout the immediate project vicinity, particularly those where Ballona Lagoon/Grand Canal (the primary visual resources in the project area) form a large portion of the foreground or middleground, have moderate intactness. They combine fairly well-kept urban features and natural settings, are somewhat free from encroaching elements (i.e., lampposts, etc.), and, thus, maintain an overall moderate level of visual integrity. The same views are moderately vivid; the juxtaposition of water, landscape features, and surrounding man-made elements, such as residential buildings, form partially distinctive and memorable visual patterns. As such, views throughout the project area are also fairly unified, given the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the human-built components and natural features present in the visual setting. For the highest quality views in the immediate project vicinity, Ballona Lagoon/Grand Canal and associated landscape features dominate the viewshed; manmade features and street trees create visual diversity and form a somewhat continuous horizontal line pattern that provides a mostly residential backdrop for the visual setting. The existing VPP is visible throughout the immediate project vicinity as well, where its approximately 50-foot-tall stack serves as a prominent visual feature. The stack could constrain sightlines to other visual resources throughout the project area, depending on the location and angle of the viewer. Viewers with higher exposure and sensitivity to the project area would be accustomed to the vertical presence of the VPP's central stack and other man-made features. Views found throughout the project area are encapsulated in Key Views 1 and 2 (shown below). They form a fairly colorful ocular palette, contain a range of visual textures, and provide moderate scenic relief to viewer groups. As such, views throughout the project area are mostly medium quality.

Scenic Resources, Scenic Vistas, Scenic Corridors, and Other Visual Resources

SR-2, the only official State Scenic Highway (as defined by Caltrans) in Los Angeles County, is located approximately 33 miles northeast of the community of Venice. A segment of SR-1, also known as PCH, is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway; a portion of SR-1 traverses the community of Venice (Caltrans 2011). The southern terminus of the eligible portion is located at the intersection of SR-1 (known as Lincoln Boulevard at this intersection) and Venice Boulevard, which is approximately 2 miles northeast of the Project Site. Other Designated Scenic Highways in the project area, as inventoried in the Mobility Plan 2035, include Culver Boulevard and Vista del Mar. Culver Boulevard, between Vista del Mar and the Ballona Creek, features views of the Ocean and Marina, as well as the Ballona Wetlands (depending on the position and angle of the viewer). Vista Del Mar,

between Culver Boulevard and Imperial Highway, features sand dune and ocean views (depending on the position and angle of the viewer). Culver Boulevard and Vista del Mar are approximately 1.4 miles south of the Proposed Project, on the south side of Marina del Rey and the Ballona Creek.

The Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan designates special marine and land habitat areas, wetlands, lagoons, and estuaries within the local Coastal Zone that are of vital interest and sensitivity. The scenic and visual qualities of these areas and other coastal areas are considered resources of public importance. Ballona Lagoon/Grand Canal and associated waterways are zoned as Open Space (OS). This designation serves to protect recreational, residential, and scenic uses of the area while providing for other uses that would benefit the public without significant impairment of the recreational and residential uses. Standards, regulations, and development guidelines provided in applicable plans regulating development in the study area determine the height limits, setbacks, and the other design criteria necessary to ensure the appropriate scale of development and protect public views. The vacant lot proposed for construction of the VAPP and the site where the existing VPP is located are designated as Lots Fronting ESHAs. Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal are the ESHAs; the lots are located just east of the Habitat Protection Buffer Strip, which lines the east and west sides of Ballona Lagoon from just south of Hurricane Street and west of the Project Site to its southern terminus at Via Marina.

No other officially designated scenic resources, vistas, or corridors have been identified within the immediate project vicinity. The primary visual resources throughout the project area are Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal. Secondary visual resources include their associated landscape features, biological habitat areas, and street trees.

3.1.3 Environmental Impact Analysis

The discussion below identifies potential project impacts and the measures that would be required to mitigate impacts that are found to be potentially significant.

3.1.3.1 Methodology

This analysis generally follows the methodology outlined in the *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2015), which is considered an accepted standard for evaluating the visual effects associated with highway, railroad, and a wide range of nontransportation-related projects.

Determining Quality and Character of Visual Resources

The assessment of visual character is based on defined attributes such as physical traits—including form, color, line, and texture (pattern elements)—as well as pattern character traits and the dominance, scale, and diversity or continuity of visual elements.

Determining the quality of a view is based, in part, on the viewer's values and notions about what constitutes a quality setting. In an effort to establish an objective framework, this analysis applies the evaluative criteria (i.e., vividness, intactness, and unity, as described in Section 3.1.2.1) and qualitative rankings (low, medium, and high, also described in Section 3.1.2.1) presented in the FHWA guidelines. This method should correlate with public judgments of visual quality well enough to predict those judgments and can also help identify specific methods for mitigating each impact that may occur as a result of a project.

Viewer Groups and Assessing Viewer Response

Viewer response comprises two elements: *viewer sensitivity* and *viewer exposure*. *Viewer sensitivity* is both the viewer's concern for scenic quality and the viewer's response to change in the visual resources that make up the view. *Viewer exposure* is a measurement of the number of viewers exposed to the resource change as well as the frequency of the viewing opportunity, type of viewer activity, duration of the view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer.

There are two basic groups of viewers present in the project area, as well as several sub-groups: (1) viewers associated with specific buildings (e.g., residents) and (2) mobile viewers (e.g., commuting motorists, pedestrians, sightseers). Residential viewers typically have the highest level of sensitivity to visual quality and changes to visual quality because of their familiarity with the view over a period of time, investment in the area, and sense of ownership of the view. Other viewers, with exceptions, usually have low or average sensitivity to visual quality or change. These include people on the local roadway system, such as commuting motorists and pedestrians. If they are traveling simply to get from one place to another for work reasons or while doing errands, their sensitivity would normally be average. However, when motorists are traveling for pleasure, or sightseers are present, it is likely that they would be somewhat more sensitive to their surroundings. The level of sensitivity increases, based on the level of familiarity the person has with the visual setting and the viewer's concern for scenic quality (e.g., Venice residents who regularly walk the Ballona Lagoon or Grand Canal versus persons who seldom visit). High viewer exposure heightens the importance of early consideration of design, art, and architecture and their roles in managing the visual resource effects of a project.

Few qualitative standards exist to guide analysts when determining impacts on visual resources. To help establish objective baseline conditions, photographs were taken of key views in the project area, as shown in Figures 3.1-2A and 3.1-3A.

Key Views

A key view is a point from which a select view is analyzed from the perspective of potential key viewer groups. Two key views have been selected that most clearly convey the visual setting. As mentioned, key views represent the perspective of the primary viewer groups, those that could be affected by the project.

A view is considered key if at least one of the following circumstances applies:

- Visual resources are present, regardless of the quality of the view. The sensitivity of the affected viewer group is medium or high, and the duration of the view is long term.
- The quality of the view is medium or high, regardless of whether visual resources are present. The sensitivity of the viewer group is medium or high, and the duration of the view is long term.
- The view is distinct, clear, and unobstructed from the street to adjacent businesses and viewed regularly by a large number of commuters. In this case, the viewer sensitivity would be medium, and the view would be long term.

Figures 3.1-2A and 3.1-3A capture the selected key views of the existing visual setting within the project area; these are identified by the location and direction of view. Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B, which follow, capture the key views that could noticeably change as a result of the project; these use simulations to show the same views as Figures 3.1-2A and 3.1-3A but with project features included (see Section 3.1.3, Environmental Impact Analysis).

As noted above, two key views have been selected to document the visual character and quality of the project area and reflect the perspective of sensitive viewers (e.g., residents) and viewer groups. All key observation points (KOPs) have been evaluated using “before-and-after” visual simulations. The KOPs identified for this analysis are listed below.

- **Key View 1: Pacific Avenue (looking north, toward the Project Site).** The foreground of the view comprises a pedestrian landing, landscaped areas, and biological habitat adjacent to Ballona Lagoon and the Lagoon itself. The middleground comprises Ballona Lagoon, residential buildings of up to three stories, and adjacent trees and landscaped areas. As one moves from the middleground to the background, the existing VPP and residential buildings of varying height, which form a horizontal line pattern and the backdrop for lines of sight from this view, are visible, as is the Lagoon’s confluence with the Grand Canal.
- **Key View 2: Marquesas Way (looking southwest, toward the Project Site).** The foreground of this view comprises the Grand Canal. The middleground includes the existing VPP, the proposed vacant site for the VAPP, and adjacent residential buildings. The background depicts additional adjacent residential buildings, adjacent trees/landscaping, and partial keystoning (e.g., succession of buildings in a line) down Hurricane Street.

The location and angle of the key view photographs relative to the immediate project vicinity is mapped below in Figure 3.1-1. Key Views 1 and 2 are shown thereafter in Figures 3.1-2A and 3.1-3A.

3.1.3.2 Screening Analysis

As noted in Chapter 1.0, Introduction, the analysis and conclusions contained in the Initial Study (see Appendix A (Notice of Preparation/Initial Study) of this EIR) prepared for the Proposed Project considered and then eliminated a number of impacts from further analysis, including those contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* (2006). Therefore, only those impacts and corresponding thresholds of significance noted below were determined to require further analysis and are addressed in this EIR.

3.1.3.3 Thresholds of Significance

The criteria used to determine the significance of an impact on aesthetics are based on the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds*. A project would normally have a significant impact on aesthetics if it could result in significant impacts related to the following:

1. AES-1. The number or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area that would be removed, altered, or demolished.
2. AES-2. The amount of natural Open Space to be graded or developed.
3. AES-3. The degree to which proposed structures in natural Open Space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site through appropriate design, etc.
4. AES-4. The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image.
5. AES-5. The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area because of density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements.

Figure 3.1-1: Location and Angle of Selected Key Views



Source: ICF International, 2016.

Figure 3.1-2A: Key View 1 – Pacific Avenue (Looking North, toward the Project Site)



Source: ICF International, 2016.

Figure 3.1-2B: Simulated View from Pacific Avenue (Looking North, toward the Project Site)

Existing



Simulation



Source: ICF International, 2016.

Figure 3.1-3A: Key View 2 – Marquesas Way (Looking Southwest, toward the Project Site)



Source: ICF International, 2016.

Figure 3.1-3B: Simulated View from Marquesas Way (Looking Southwest, toward the Project Site)

Existing



Simulation



Source: ICF International, 2016.

6. AES-6. The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value.
7. AES-7. Applicable guidelines and regulations.

Obstruction of Views

1. VIEWS-1. The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (e.g., natural topography, settings, human-made or natural features of visual interest, resources such as mountains or the ocean).
2. VIEWS-2. Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway.
3. VIEWS-3. The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, minor diminishment).
4. VIEWS-4. The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail as opposed to a single fixed vantage point.

Shading

1. SHADE-1. Whether shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than 3 hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April) or for more than 4 hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).

Nighttime Illumination

1. LIGHT-1. The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources.
2. LIGHT-2. The extent to which project lighting would spill off the Project Site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

3.1.3.4 Construction Impacts

The analysis below describes the direct and indirect impacts on aesthetics as a result of the Proposed Project during construction. The analysis evaluate the overall aesthetic character and quality and the existing visual environment. Key Views, associated visual simulations, and other resources are used in order to establish the visual setting, identify visual resources throughout the project area(s), and identify potential visual intrusions that could occur as a result of construction. As noted in the analysis below, all impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required. However, although not required, during construction, mitigation measures or best management practices (BMPs) (related to dust generated during construction) are recommended to further reduce and minimize impacts and are discussed below.

AES-1. The number or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area that would be removed, altered, or demolished.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project, because of their short-term nature, would have no long-term effect on the existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the visual character or image of the neighborhood, community, or project area. Although, proposed construction would result in a temporary disturbance because of the presence of construction equipment, staging areas, exposed excavation areas and the temporary cofferdam that would be

visible to nearby viewers. However, there would be no long-term effect on the scenic or primary visual resources, as identified above in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, because none of the existing features or contributing elements, such as Ballona Lagoon, would be removed, altered, or demolished as a result of construction. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-2. The amount of natural Open Space to be graded or developed.

Construction would require grading and excavation at the Project Site and a portion of the west bank of the Grand Canal in the location of the temporary cofferdam in order to construct the diversion structure. The Project Site is currently undeveloped; it contains no natural Open Space that would be graded or developed. However, the west bank of the Grand Canal contains some native and non-native plant communities. As part of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit requirements, and consistent with **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3** (revegetation of the disturbance footprint associated with the west bank of the Grand Canal) any disturbance to the west bank of the Grand Canal would need to be restored. Therefore, because this area would be restored to its pre-project conditions, impacts on open space would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-3. The degree to which proposed structures in natural Open Space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site through appropriate design, etc.

The Project Site would not be located in a natural Open Space area. However, the Project Site is located adjacent to a state, county, and City-designated ESHA, as identified within the Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. Construction activities would not involve integrating structures into existing natural Open Space areas other than construction of the diversion structure, which would be constructed below the Grand Canal and would not protrude into the water column. However, the presence of construction vehicles, the cofferdam and the necessary materials for construction that would be present in the Grand Canal would create a temporary visual intrusion in an area designated as Open Space. Nonetheless, due to the temporary nature of construction, and because the Grand Canal and west bank would be restored to their pre-project conditions (see **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3**), impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-4. The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image.

As mentioned above, because of the short-term nature of construction activities, no long-term effect on the area's valued aesthetic image is expected. Though visual intrusions would occur due to the presence of construction vehicles/materials, associated fencing, and the placement of the cofferdam within the Grand Canal, the temporary nature of construction, and because the Grand Canal and west bank would be restored to their pre-project conditions (see **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3**), these impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-5. The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area because of density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements.

The Proposed Project does not require a zone change from its current zone of RW2-1 (Residential Water Ways) to PF (Public Facilities) because the use qualifies as a Public Benefit Project so no zone change is required. The Public Benefit Project is not being pursued to accommodate greater or taller

structures than surrounding structures and, therefore, would not otherwise detract from the existing style or image of the area as a result of changes related to density, height, bulk, setback, signage, or other physical elements. The vertical elements proposed as part of the Proposed Project (up to approximately 32 feet) are consistent with surrounding land uses, and compliance with applicable City regulations and standards would ensure that appropriate density, height, bulk, etc., would be adhered to as part of the facility's design. Therefore, **no impacts** would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-6. The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value.

Construction activities, which are expected to begin in early 2018 and last approximately two years, would not contribute to the area's aesthetic value. During construction, site preparation and grading activities, construction staging, barricade installation, and the placement of structures and signage would be required to secure the construction site. Construction activities would also include the installation of a temporary cofferdam within the Grand Canal, which would temporarily diminish the visual quality or character of the immediate area. Similarly, the delivery and stockpiling of construction materials and the placement of construction equipment on the Project Site might also temporarily diminish the visual quality or character of the immediate area. However, although not required, **Mitigation Measures MM-AES-1** (screening of construction staging and stockpile areas) **and MM-AES-2** (directing nighttime lighting away from sensitive receptors) are recommended to further reduce aesthetic impacts during construction. Therefore, the Proposed Project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-7. Applicable guidelines and regulations.

All project construction would be completed in conformance with applicable City regulations and standards and therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

Obstruction of Views

VIEWS-1. The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (e.g., natural topography, settings, human-made or natural features of visual interest, resources such as mountains or the ocean).

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, the primary visual resources in the project area are Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal. Project construction would not result in a long-term effect on the nature or quality of valued public views in the immediate project vicinity. However, as discussed above, temporary construction activities could diminish visual quality or character and, thus, valued views of the immediate area. During construction, site preparation and grading activities, construction staging, barricade installation, and the placement of structures and signage would be required to secure the construction site. Construction activities would also include the installation of a temporary cofferdam within the Grand Canal, which would temporarily diminish the nature and quality of recognized or valued views in the immediate area. Similarly, the delivery and stockpiling of construction materials and the placement of construction equipment on the Project Site might also temporarily diminish the nature and quality of recognized or valued views. Once construction is complete, valued views and the primary visual resources therein (Ballona Lagoon and/or Grand Canal) would be preserved and restored to their pre-project conditions, as required in **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3** (see above). Therefore, impacts would be temporary, and as such, **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS-2. Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway.

Certification of the Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (Venice LUP) is currently pending approval by the California Coastal Commission. However, although it has not been certified, the LUP nevertheless addresses issues related to coastal development and design that preserve and enhance coastal views, viewpoint areas, and Open Space. In that capacity, the LUP identifies Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal as ESHAs for their recreational, residential, and scenic uses. No other officially designated scenic resources, vistas, corridors or eligible/officially designated State or County Scenic Highways have been identified within the project viewshed by Caltrans or within the Mobility Plan 2035. As discussed in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, because no officially designated scenic highways, corridors, or parkways have been identified within the immediate project vicinity, **no impacts** would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS-3. The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment).

Project construction would result in a temporary minor diminishment and partial obstruction of views in the immediate project vicinity. Standard construction equipment would be used including compactors, bulldozers, front loaders, trenchers, construction cranes, water trucks, dump trucks, and delivery trucks that would bring construction-related materials to the site. This equipment, vehicle traffic, and the presence of construction workers would obstruct views in the area and result in minor diminishment and partial obstruction of views throughout the project area. However, large, overhead cranes would not be required; therefore, views of visual resources would not be substantially obstructed by this type of construction equipment or similar types of equipment, nor would the presence of construction equipment result in total blockage. Partial interruption and/or minor diminishment would occur in places with sightlines to Ballona Lagoon and/or Grand Canal, depending on the location, distance, speed, and angle of the viewer. Residential viewer groups and regular visitors to the lagoon and canal would be more sensitive to this type of temporary visual intrusion than recreationists or local commuters. However, project construction would not permanently block these visual resources or substantially diminish the nature and quality of recognized or valued private and public views. Because construction activities and the presence of construction equipment would be temporary, and because the project areas would be restored to pre-project conditions, no long-term obstruction of views, including those depicted in Key Views 1 and 2, as shown in Figure 3.1-2A and Figure 3.1-3A, would occur. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS-4. The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail, as opposed to a single fixed vantage point.

As discussed above, the presence of construction materials and equipment would alter existing views, and project construction would result in temporary, minor visual intrusions. However, upon completion of construction of the Proposed Project, recognized views would be preserved and maintained. Roadway users on Marquesas Way and Via Dolce would have more fleeting views of the project area, which would lessen any temporary impacts. From the bike path and trail that connects Hurricane Street to Pacific Avenue (south of the Proposed Site), access to which would be limited during construction because of temporary closures near Hurricane Street (see Figure 2-2 in Chapter 2, Project Description) to accommodate construction activities, views of the Proposed Site are

limited due to the presence of the existing pumping plant, which mostly blocks the project area (as depicted in Figure 3.1-2A). Therefore, any impacts would be temporary, and as such, are **less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.**

Shading

SHADE-1. Whether shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than 3 hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April) or for more than 4 hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).

Construction is not expected to require large cranes or other major construction-related structures and equipment that would cast large shadows. Standard construction equipment would be used, including compactors, bulldozers, front loaders, trenchers, construction cranes, water trucks, dump trucks, and delivery trucks to bring construction-related materials to the site. Similarly, the vertical elements proposed as part of the project (greater than 32 feet), which would be under construction, would not cast shadows that would affect shade-sensitive uses or viewers. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant** during construction of the Proposed Project. No mitigation is required.

Nighttime Illumination

LIGHT-1. The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources.

Ambient illumination near the existing Project Site includes light emitted from residences on Hurricane Street, Canal Court, and Marquesas Way/Via Dolce; on-site lighting at the existing pumping plant; lampposts; and headlights from vehicle traffic. Of the land uses in the immediate project vicinity, the residences on Hurricane Street, Canal Court, and Marquesas Way/Via Dolce, would be the most light sensitive. During construction, some perimeter lighting may be required, both on the Project Site and in Laydown Areas 1 and 2, for security purposes.

If nighttime lighting at the construction site is required, lighting would be directed downward/on-site, away from sensitive receptors (residences), and spillover light would be minimized to the greatest extent practicable, but could be potentially significant. However, through compliance with Articles 1 and 9 of the LAMC, significant changes in ambient illumination levels as a result of project construction activities are not expected to occur. Though construction lighting may be somewhat visible to sensitive receptors, it would not be a significant nuisance for nearby residents due its directional orientation, which would minimize spill effects. Moreover, **Mitigation Measure MM-AES-2** (requiring the contractor to direct nighttime lighting away from sensitive receptors) would assist in reducing this impact. As such, since any construction lighting would adhere to LAMC requirements, and would be limited to the construction period, impacts would be **less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-AES-2.**

LIGHT-2. The extent to which project lighting would spill off the Project Site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

As mentioned above, if nighttime lighting at the construction site is required, lighting would be directed downward, and spillover light would be minimized to the greatest extent practicable. Therefore, it is expected that project lighting would not spill off the Project Site and significantly affect adjacent light-sensitive areas. Construction lighting would not be a significant nuisance for nearby residents. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

3.1.3.5 Operational Impacts

The section below discusses potential impacts associated with on-going and permanent operation of the Proposed Project related to overall aesthetic character and quality and the existing visual environment. Key views, associated visual simulations, and other resources are used to establish the visual setting, identify visual resources throughout the project area, and identify potential visual intrusions that could occur as a result of operation. It should be noted that the analysis does not address Laydown Area 3 located in Culver City since all stockpiled soil would be removed from this site once construction of the VAPP is completed. As noted in the analysis below, all impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required. However, although not required, during operation, a mitigation measure is recommended to further reduce and minimize impacts and is discussed below.

Aesthetics

AES-1. The number or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area that would be removed, altered, or demolished.

The major visible built elements of the Proposed Project include the electrical building (up to 32 feet in height), Open Spaces (located along the eastern side of the VAPP and adjacent parcel to the southwest), landscaping and benches, pathways, public viewing and pedestrian access areas, as well as fencing with blinds and vegetation for screening. Other project elements, including sewer lines, utility connections, transformers, generators, and a diversion structure, would be minimally visible, subterranean, and/or submerged beneath the Grand Canal and, therefore, would not be present in the viewsheds throughout the immediate project vicinity. Photo simulations of the VAPP, once built, are provided in Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B and illustrate the expected changes in the visual setting compared with existing conditions as a result of the Proposed Project. The built features, as shown in Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B, would not remove, alter, or demolish existing features or elements that contribute to the visual character of the project area, primarily Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal. From Key View 1, built features would be minimally present. From Key View 2, built features would not interfere with existing features that contribute to the project area's visual character. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-2. The amount of natural Open Space to be graded or developed.

The Project Site is currently undeveloped. It contains no natural Open Space that would be graded or developed, except the west bank of the Grand Canal where the diversion structure would be constructed below ground and would not visibly protrude into the water column. As noted above and required under **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3**, this portion of the bank would be restored to its pre-existing contours and restored with native plant communities in compliance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit requirements. Moreover, the Proposed Project would provide additional Open Space and pedestrian access to the Grand Canal. Therefore, **no significant impacts** on open space would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-3. The degree to which proposed structures in natural Open Space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site through appropriate design, etc.

The Project Site would not be located in a natural Open Space area. However, the Project Site is located adjacent to a state, county, and City-designated ESHA, as identified within the LUP. As shown in Figure 3.1-3B, the VAPP would be setback from Grand Canal and Ballona Lagoon. It would include, in compliance with the policies and regulations outlined in this section and throughout the EIR related to height, massing and setback, appropriate design features, which would be subject to review and approval by the project design team and City Engineer/City Architect. As such, the visible built elements of the Proposed Project would generally be in keeping with development in the immediate project vicinity that is adjacent to the ESHA. Therefore, it would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the project area. As such, impacts related to the degree to which proposed structures in natural Open Space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site through appropriate design, etc., would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required. However, although not required, **Mitigation Measure MM-AES-3** (compliance with City-required design guidance), which requires structures to be designed and built to the satisfaction of the Department of City Planning and the City Engineer/City Architect and in compliance with all applicable design guidelines, policies, and development standards, is recommended to further reduce any aesthetic impacts and/or inconsistencies between the Proposed Project and the surrounding areas.

AES-4. The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image.

As shown in Figure 3.1-2B, from Key View 1, which is located on Pacific Avenue (looking north, toward the Project Site), the VAPP would be minimally perceptible and visually unobtrusive. Governing land use policies and design guidelines would ensure that visible project elements would be appropriate to the surrounding development with respect to density, height, and setbacks; would be required to incorporate visual treatments to be in keeping with the existing visual setting and environment; and would be situated next to the existing VPP, as shown in Figure 3.1-3B. Furthermore, under **Mitigation Measure MM-AES-3**, structures shall be designed and built to the satisfaction of the Department of City Planning and the City Engineer/City Architect. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-5. The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area because of density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements.

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would not require a zone change from its current zone of RW2-1 to PF because the Proposed Project qualifies as a Public Benefit Project and no zone change is required (see discussion above). A Public Benefit Project is not being pursued to accommodate greater or taller structures than surrounding structures and, therefore, would not otherwise detract from the existing style or image of the area as a result of changes related to density, height, bulk, setback, signage, or other physical elements. The vertical elements proposed as part of the project (up to approximately 32 feet) would be consistent with surrounding land uses, and compliance with applicable City regulations and standards would ensure that appropriate density, height, bulk, etc., would be adhered to as part of the facility's design. Built features associated with the Proposed Project are shown in Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B. Therefore, **no impacts** would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-6. The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value.

Built elements of the Proposed Project include an electrical building (up to approximately 32 feet in height), security walls, and Open Spaces and landscaping. The Open Spaces, landscaping and aesthetically treated walls would enhance visual quality and would contribute to the overall cohesion and continuity of the Proposed Project with adjacent buildings and the Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal by providing color and scenic relief. Though visible, Proposed Project elements would not substantially alter the visual quality and/or character of the project's visual setting because of the project's adherence to applicable design guidelines, as discussed in Section 3.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*. Views throughout the immediate project vicinity would still be of medium quality, maintaining variety with respect to vegetation and color. Similarly, viewsheds throughout the immediate project vicinity would retain their intactness through a combination of well-kept urban features and natural settings, which would continue to be somewhat free of encroaching man-made elements. The project area would also retain its vividness because the Proposed Project's built elements would preserve the juxtaposition of water and landscape features with surrounding elements, such as residential buildings and the existing VPP. Overall, the project area would remain fairly unified, and the Proposed Project would not substantially compromise the visual coherence, line patterns, or overall scenery.

As a result of the additional Open Space and pedestrian access to the Grand Canal, the response from viewer groups, including residents, recreationists, local commuters, etc., is expected to be moderate and positive. Though viewer exposure and sensitivity would be higher for more accustomed viewer groups (i.e., residences and frequent visitors), given the nature and quality of existing viewsheds and the presence of the existing VPP, the Proposed Project would not substantially diminish or alter the aesthetic value of the project area. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

AES-7. Applicable guidelines and regulations.

The Proposed Project would be implemented in conformance with applicable City regulations and standards (see Chapter 2, Project Description, and Section 3.8, Land Use and Planning, of this EIR) and therefore, impacts related to applicable guidelines and regulations would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required. However, although not required, implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-AES-3**, which requires structures be designed and built to the satisfaction of the City Engineer/City Architect and in compliance with all applicable design guidelines, policies, and development standards, would help to further reduce and minimize visual impacts.

Obstruction of Views

VIEWES-1. The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (e.g., natural topography, settings, human-made or natural features of visual interest, resources such as mountains or the ocean).

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, the primary visual resources in the project area are Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal. Built features associated with the Proposed Project would not compromise the nature and/or quality of recognized or valued views. Project elements would be built in accordance with the applicable standards and guidelines and would be designed to be minimally apparent and in keeping with the surrounding visual environment, as discussed above

(and below) and shown in Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B. Thus, valued views and views to/from the primary visual resources therein (Ballona Lagoon and/or Grand Canal) would be preserved. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS -2. Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway.

The Ballona Lagoon and Grand Canal are designated by the state, county, and City as an ESHA for their recreational, residential, and scenic uses. No other officially designated scenic resources, vistas, corridors, or eligible/officially designated State or County Scenic Highways have been identified within the project viewshed. As discussed in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, because no officially designated scenic highways, corridors, or parkways have been identified by Caltrans or within the Mobility Plan 2035 in the immediate project vicinity, **no impacts** would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS -3. The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment).

As shown in Figure 3.1-2B, from Key View 1, the Proposed Project would be minimally perceptible and visually unobtrusive. In accordance with governing design guidelines and land use policies, visible project elements would be appropriate with respect to density, height, and setback and would be provided with visual treatments to be in keeping with the existing visual setting and environment. Views to/from primary and secondary visual resources, including Ballona Lagoon, would be unobstructed and preserved. As shown in Figure 3.1-3B, from Key View 2, the Proposed Project would partially block existing views. Although the VAPP would obstruct views of existing residential buildings, which are not considered visual resources, it would preserve views of the Grand Canal. Additionally, the aesthetically treated fencing and other landscape features included in the Proposed Project would enhance visual quality from this view. As a result of the additional Open Spaces and pedestrian access to Grand Canal and Ballona Lagoon, the response from viewer groups, including residents, recreationists, local commuters, etc., is expected to be moderate and positive. Though viewer exposure and sensitivity would be higher for more accustomed viewer groups (i.e., residences and frequent visitors), given the nature and quality of existing viewsheds and the presence of the existing VPP, the Proposed Project would not substantially diminish or alter valued views throughout the area. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

VIEWS -4. The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail, as opposed to a single fixed vantage point.

Built features associated with the Proposed Project would not result in impacts on recognized views from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail, such as those represented in Key View 1. Project elements would be built in accordance with applicable standards and guidelines and designed in keeping with the surrounding visual environment (e.g. scale, size, density, height, setback, etc.), as discussed above and shown in Figures 3.1-2B and 3.1-3B. Thus, recognized views from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail would be preserved. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

Shading

SHADE-1. Whether shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than 3 hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April) or for more than 4 hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).

In compliance with applicable plans and regulations, the scale and massing of visual elements associated with the Proposed Project would not result in shadows that would significantly affect shade-sensitive uses. The potential for the Proposed Project to cast new shadows or create shade would be limited and similar to that of existing uses/facilities within the project's viewshed. Projects with structural elements in excess of 60 feet in height (relative to nearby shade-sensitive uses) are required to determine the number of hours shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by these elements. Since built elements associated with the VAPP would not exceed approximately 32 feet, no further analysis is required. Thus, impacts would be **less than significant** during operation, and no mitigation measures are required.

Nighttime Illumination

LIGHT-1. The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources.

As discussed above, ambient illumination near the existing Project Site includes light emitted from residences on Hurricane Street, Canal Court, and Marquesas Way/Via Dolce; on-site lighting at the existing pumping plant; lampposts; and headlights from vehicle traffic. Perimeter security lighting would also be installed within the VAPP site, which would face inside, away from sensitive receptors, and be similar to those on the adjacent VPP site. Because substantial illumination, relative to existing conditions, would not be introduced by the Proposed Project, and because new lighting would be directed away from sensitive receptors, the Proposed Project would not significantly alter ambient light levels. Lighting would be installed in accordance with the LAMC, which would minimize the potential for spillover effects. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant** during operation, and no mitigation measures are required.

LIGHT-2. The extent to which project lighting would spill off the Project Site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

Nighttime lighting would be installed in accordance with the LAMC and the potential for spillover effects would be minimized. Therefore, it is expected that project lighting would not result in substantial adverse impacts on adjacent light-sensitive areas. Lighting would not be a significant nuisance for nearby residents. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

3.1.4 Mitigation Measures

Although the analysis above determined that no significant aesthetic or visual construction or operational-related impacts would occur, and no mitigation is required (excepting **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3** [discussed above]), in an effort to reduce perceived effects as much as practicable, several mitigation measures have been recommended for incorporation into the Proposed Project and are included below.

MM-AES-1: Construction Staging/Stockpiled Materials and Equipment. LABOE or its construction contractor shall be the responsible party for providing temporary construction fencing along the periphery of active construction areas to screen as much of the construction activity as possible from view at the street level.

To minimize views of stockpiled materials and idle construction equipment in staging areas and reduce visual clutter and disorder, project construction staging areas shall be enclosed or screened from view at the street level with appropriate screening materials. The contractor shall provide daily visual inspections to ensure that areas immediately surrounding the construction staging areas are free from construction-related clutter and graffiti and maintained in a clean and orderly manner throughout the construction period. Graffiti shall be painted over, masked out, or cleaned off within 24 hours after notification by the project inspector.

MM-AES-2: Nighttime Construction Activities. Should emergency construction activities occur at night, LABOE or its construction contractor shall ensure that lighting will be directed away from surrounding sensitive land uses, particularly residences, and toward the specific location intended for illumination. Lighting associated with construction activities or for security purposes shall be shielded to minimize glare and spill light around sensitive land uses in the surrounding area.

MM-AES-3: Final Design. LABOE shall ensure that all Proposed Project structures will be designed to minimize their visual presence. Where site and design allow, the project elements shall incorporate design and location features that minimize the size of the structures and provide setbacks from adjoining street frontages, screening, and/or architectural treatments that are appropriate to the design setting where visible from the public right-of-way at street level. Where necessary, structures shall be designed and built to the satisfaction of the City Engineer/City Architect and in compliance with all applicable design guidelines, policies, and development standards, as discussed Section 3.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*.

In addition, the following best management practices will be implemented:

BMP-AES-1: Resident Vouchers for Window Washing and Car Washes during Construction. LABOE or its construction contractor will implement best available control measures, as required by SCAQMD Rule 403 regarding fugitive dust, and other relevant regulations related to controlling dust from construction activities. However, to minimize any aesthetic impact construction dust may have on nearby neighboring cars and resident windows, the Public Affairs Office of the Department of Public Works shall provide vouchers to immediately adjacent residents for window washing and car washes, as appropriate.

3.1.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts related to aesthetics would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

3.1.6 Cumulative Impacts

The study area for the cumulative impacts analysis is limited to locations that have clear sightlines to the built elements proposed as part of the Proposed Project. Typically, the study area boundaries extend approximately 0.25 miles from the project perimeter. Due to varying and constrained sightlines throughout the project vicinity, the study area for this cumulative impacts analysis are as

follows: Galleon Street serves as the approximate northern border, Via Dolce/Marquesas Way create a visual border on the east, Pacific Avenue creates a visual border to the west, and to the south, sightlines extend to/from the Project Site to approximately the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Ketch Street.

A list of related projects (see Chapter 1, Table 1-1) was reviewed as part of this cumulative impacts analysis. Of the total list of eight projects, three are within the project's cumulative viewshed—the Venice Dual Force Main, Venice Pumping Plant Vibration Rehab Phase 2 (under construction), and Venice Pumping Plant Generators Replacement Projects. Despite their proximity, these projects are and would only replace existing infrastructure and would consist of subterranean built elements. Therefore, they are not expected to adversely affect visual character and quality, nor result in effects that are potentially cumulatively significant.

Thus, because the Proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts, and would be designed and built to the satisfaction of the Department of City Planning and the City Engineer/City Architect and in compliance with all applicable design guidelines, policies, and development standards, it is not expected to result in or contribute to significant cumulative visual impacts.