

Attachment F

This page intentionally left blank.

ATTACHMENT F

Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project

VISUAL IMPACT ANALYSIS
for the
Desalination Plant

Updated April 17, 2019

Submitted to:
Monterey County
Resource Management Agency

Prepared by:
Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc.
947 Cass Street, Suite 5
Monterey, CA 93940

Prepared for:

CDM Smith
on behalf of
California America Water Company

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Project Overview	1
1.2 Visual Impact Analysis Purpose	1
1.3 Assessment Organization	1
2.0. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	2
2.1 MPWSP Purpose	2
2.2 Project Description.....	2
2.3 Desalination Plant Project Location & Surrounding Uses.....	2
3.0. REGULATORY SETTING.....	9
3.1 State Regulatory Setting	9
3.2 Local Regulatory Setting.....	9
4.0. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS.....	12
4.1 Introduction.....	12
4.2 Terminology.....	12
4.3 Methodology.....	14
4.4 Existing Visual Environment.....	16
4.5 Key Observation Point Analysis	19
5.0. IMPACT ANALYSIS	21
5.1 Introduction.....	21
5.2 Consistency with Regional and Local Plans	22
5.3 CEQA Evaluation	25
6.0. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	27
7.0 REFERENCES.....	28

FIGURE

- S FIGURE 1. Site Plan
FIGURE 2. Existing Conditions - Site Photos
FIGURE 3. Reverse Osmosis Building Elevations
FIGURE 4. Project Vicinity
FIGURE 5. Project Location
FIGURE 6. Scenic Highways
FIGURE 7. Picture Locations
FIGURE 8. Field Reconnaissance Photos

TABLES

- TABLE 1. Existing Visual Character & Quality
TABLE 2. Post-Project Conditions

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

This Visual Impact Analysis (VIA) covers a portion of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (MPWSP), specifically the Desalination Plant component (Project). Based on previous discussions with Monterey County Resource Management Agency (County RMA), DD&A prepared the following VIA to document the potential visual effects of the MPWSP Desalination Plant¹.

1.2. Visual Impact Analysis Purpose

The purpose of this VIA is to provide additional information in support of the MPWSP Combined Development Permit application to the County of Monterey. More specifically, DD&A prepared this VIA to respond to comments received from the County RMA. The primary source of information for this VIA is the MPWSP Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS) certified by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in September 2018.

This VIA is intended to provide an analysis of the Desalination Plant's potential aesthetic-related effects, as well as evaluate its consistency with relevant Monterey County policies. The VIA describes the existing visual character of the site and surrounding area, depicts the visual extent of the Desalination Plant as perceived from Key Observation Points (KOPs), and evaluates the potential aesthetic-related effects.

1.3 Assessment Organization

This document begins with a brief introduction to the Project and defines the purpose of the VIA. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed Project description. Chapter 3 describes the regulatory environment. Chapter 4 describes the affected environment, including key terminology and methods used, for the purpose of describing the existing environmental setting and evaluating potential effects, and a description of Key Observation Points. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of potential impacts associated with the Project, including an evaluation of consistency with applicable Monterey County General Plan policies and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) impact analysis. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a summary and conclusions.

¹ The analysis contained in this VIA is consistent with the findings of the analysis contained in the MPWSP FEIR/EIS (CPUC 2018).

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. MPWSP Purpose

The purpose of the MPWSP is to replace a significant portion of the existing water supply currently being diverted from the Carmel River, as directed by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The proposed water supply is needed to replace existing supplies that are constrained by legal decisions affecting the Carmel River and Seaside Groundwater Basin water resources: SWRCB Order No. WR 95-10 (“Order 95-10”), and the Monterey County Superior Court adjudication of water rights in the Seaside Groundwater Basin. Both rulings are intended to reduce CAW’s reliance on its two primary sources of water supply for the Monterey District. In addition, in October 2009, the SWRCB issued a Cease and Desist Order (CDO), which imposed a deadline of December 31, 2016 for CAW to reduce diversions from the Carmel River by approximately 70 percent. In July 2016 the State Water Board adopted Order WR 2016-0016, which amends Order 95-10. Order 2016-0016 extends the date by which CalAm must terminate all unlawful diversions from the Carmel River from December 31, 2016, to December 31, 2021.

2.2 Project Description

The MPWSP consists of several distinct components: a seawater intake system, a desalination plant, desalinated water conveyance facilities including a pump station and reservoir storage facilities, and an expanded aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) system. The Desalination Plant includes the following facilities: a pretreatment system, a Reverse Osmosis system, a post-treatment system, backwash supply and filtered water equalization tanks, desalinated product water storage and conveyance facilities, brine storage and disposal facilities, and an administration building and laboratory facility (see **Figure 1, Site Plan**). The Project site consists primarily of dead, low-lying, ruderal brush (see **Figure 2, Site Photos**). The Reverse Osmosis Building is the tallest building at 25 feet 2 inches². **Figure 3, Reverse Osmosis Building Elevations**, provides the building elevation construction drawing for this building, as it is the most likely building to be visible. For a more detailed description, please refer to the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS (CPUC 2018) and 90% Design Submittal (CDM Smith 2019).

2.3 Desalination Plant Project Location & Surrounding Uses

The proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant is located in unincorporated Monterey County, on the upper terrace (approximately 25 acres) of a 46-acre vacant parcel on Charles Benson Road, northwest of the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (now referred to as the “Monterey One Water”) Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (RTP) and the Monterey Regional Environmental Park, also known as the Monterey County landfill (see **Figure 4, Project Vicinity** and **Figure 5,**

² Dimensions and information presented in this VIA are based on the 90% design. All building heights are anticipated to be below 35 feet tall with a maximum tank height anticipated to be 35-40 feet tall (Michael Zafer, CDM Smith, personal communication, April 2019). Accordingly, the analysis contained in this report conservatively evaluates anticipated visual impacts based on the potential maximum building heights.

Project Location). The proposed Desalination Plant is located within an industrial landscape. Access would be provided via Charles Benson Road, a privately owned and maintained road. A majority of the site is zoned Permanent Grazing/40 (PG/40-D-S), and approximately 1.7 acre in the lower terrace of the parcel is designated as Farmlands/40 (F/40-D-S) according to Title 21 of the Monterey County Code.

The site is bordered on the west and north by agricultural lands and the Salinas River, and to the south by more agricultural lands. To the northwest and southeast lies the Dole processing facility and Monterey Regional Environmental Park, respectively. The Dole processing facility consists of warehouses and a large asphalt loading, sorting, and truck staging/parking yard with outdoor lighting for nighttime activities. Development within the adjacent Monterey Regional Environmental Park consists of office building and structures ranging in size from one- to two- story buildings (up to approximately 30 feet tall), and approximately 4,500 square feet to over 100,000 square feet. South of the Monterey Regional Environmental Park lies the several-hundred-acre Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency's RTP and drying beds. The treatment plant includes primary clarifiers, trickling filters, and a generation plant, each rising to heights of approximately 35 to 45 feet.

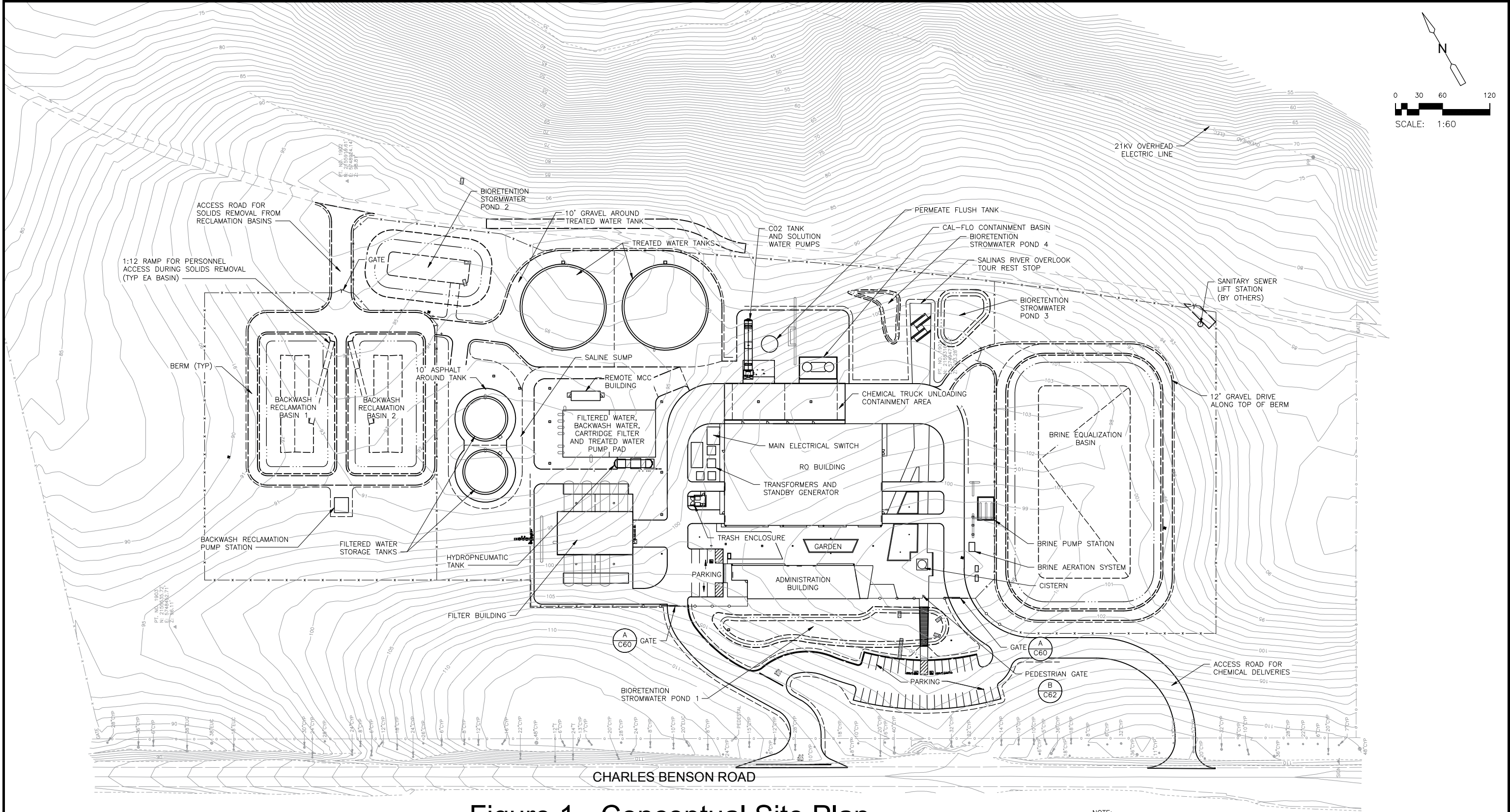


Figure 1 - Conceptual Site Plan

NOTE:
1. SEE C12 FOR SITE FEATURE
ELEVATION DATA.

	REVISIONS		REVISIONS		 2300 Clayton Road, Suite 950 Concord, CA 94520 Tel: (925) 933-2900	 CA LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER NO. 77106	 CDM SMITH 2300 CLAYTON ROAD, SUITE 950 CONCORD, CA DRAWN BY G. RODRIGUEZ PROJECT ENG'R D. BROWN DATE MARCH 2019 PROJECT 154001-0191	MPWSP DESALINATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT CIVIL SITE PLAN			CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER CO. COASTAL DIVISION 90% SUBMITTAL USE APPROVED DRAWINGS ONLY FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES	USE DIMENSIONS ONLY SCALE AS NOTED 154001-0191-C7
	△		△									
	△		△									
	△		△									
	△		△									

C:\cdmext\mahadevanm\dms96389\1540010191C07.dwg PRINTED: 3/6/19 BY: MAHADEVANM



Photo 1. View from the southeast corner of the Project site looking northwest toward Highway 1 and the Salinas River.



Photo 2. View from the northwest corner of the Project site looking northwest toward the Highway 1 and row of trees boarding the Project site.



Photo 3. View from the northwest portion of the Project site, facing the Regional Treatment Plant and row of trees boarding the site along Charles Benson Road.



Photo 4. View from the center of the Project site facing northwest toward Highway 1 and the lower terrace of the Project site.

Source: DD&A 2017

Title: **Existing Conditions - Site Photos**

Date: 8-16-2017

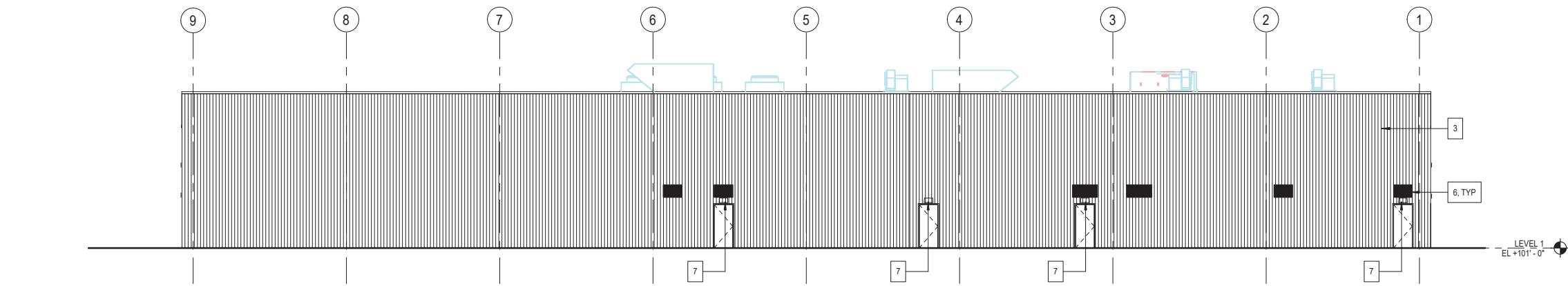
Project: 2014.12



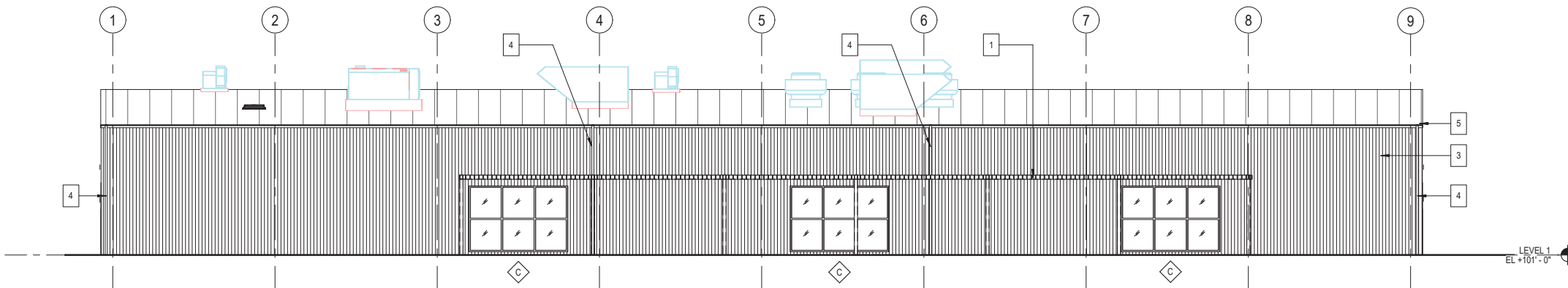
Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Cass Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
2

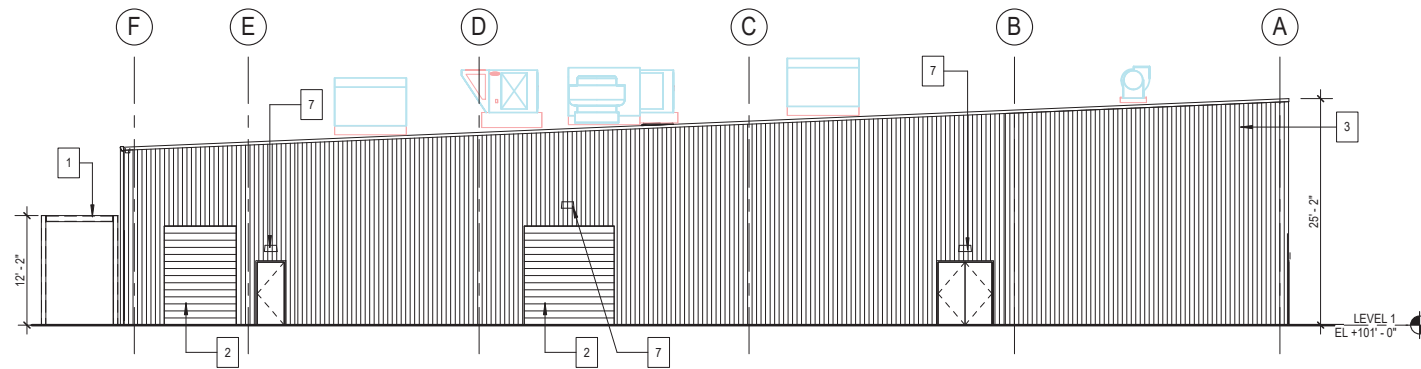
REVERSE OSMOSIS BUILDING EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS/2019 3:52:45 PM



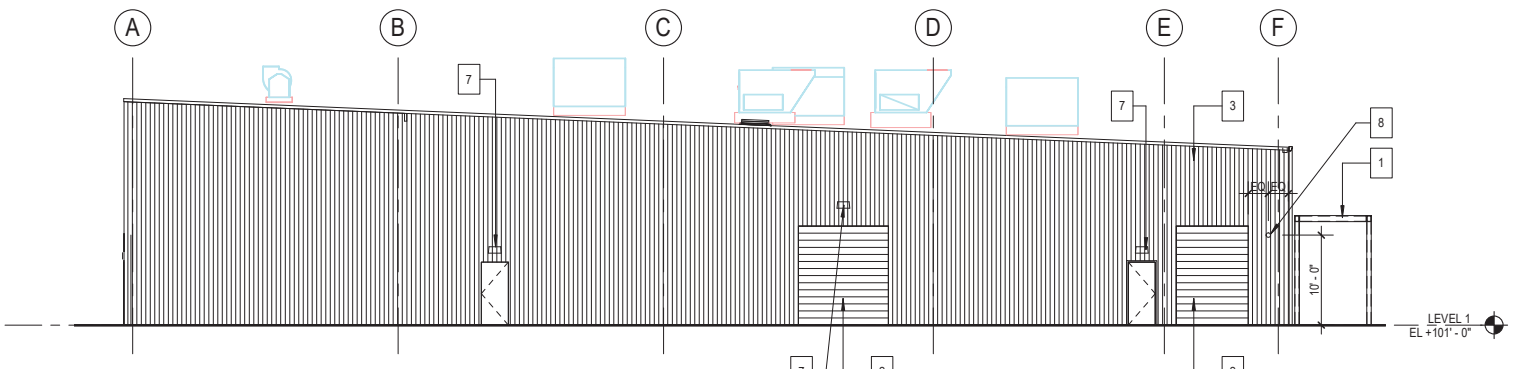
1 RO BUILDING NORTH
A24 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



2 RO BUILDING SOUTH
A24 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



3 RO BUILDING EAST
A24 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



4 RO BUILDING WEST
A24 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

SHEET NOTES

1. STOP WORK WITHIN 50 METERS (165 FEET) OF UNCOVERED RESOURCE AND CONTACT MONTEREY COUNTY RMA - PLANNING AND A QUALIFIED ARCHAEOLOGIST IMMEDIATELY IF CULTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL OR PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES ARE UNCOVERED.
2. REFER TO SHEET A10 FOR GLAZING SYSTEM TYPES AND GLASS TYPE.

KEY NOTES

1. TRELLIS
2. OVERHEAD COILING DOOR
3. EXTERIOR METAL PANEL - PRELIMINARY COLOR: GREEN
4. RAINWATER LEADER
5. CONTINUOUS METAL GUTTER
6. LOUVER
7. LIGHT FIXTURE, SED
8. FIRE BELL

Figure 3 - Reverse Osmosis Building Elevation



REVISIONS			
△		△	
△		△	
△		△	
△		△	
△		△	

**CDM
Smith**
2300 Clayton Road, Suite 950
Concord, CA 94520
Tel: (925) 933-2900

DUNCAN B. BALLASH

CA LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT
NO. C 22066

PIER 1, BAY 2
THE EMBARCADERO
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111
INFO@EHDD.COM
+1 415-285-9193

ehdd.

Drawn by JB

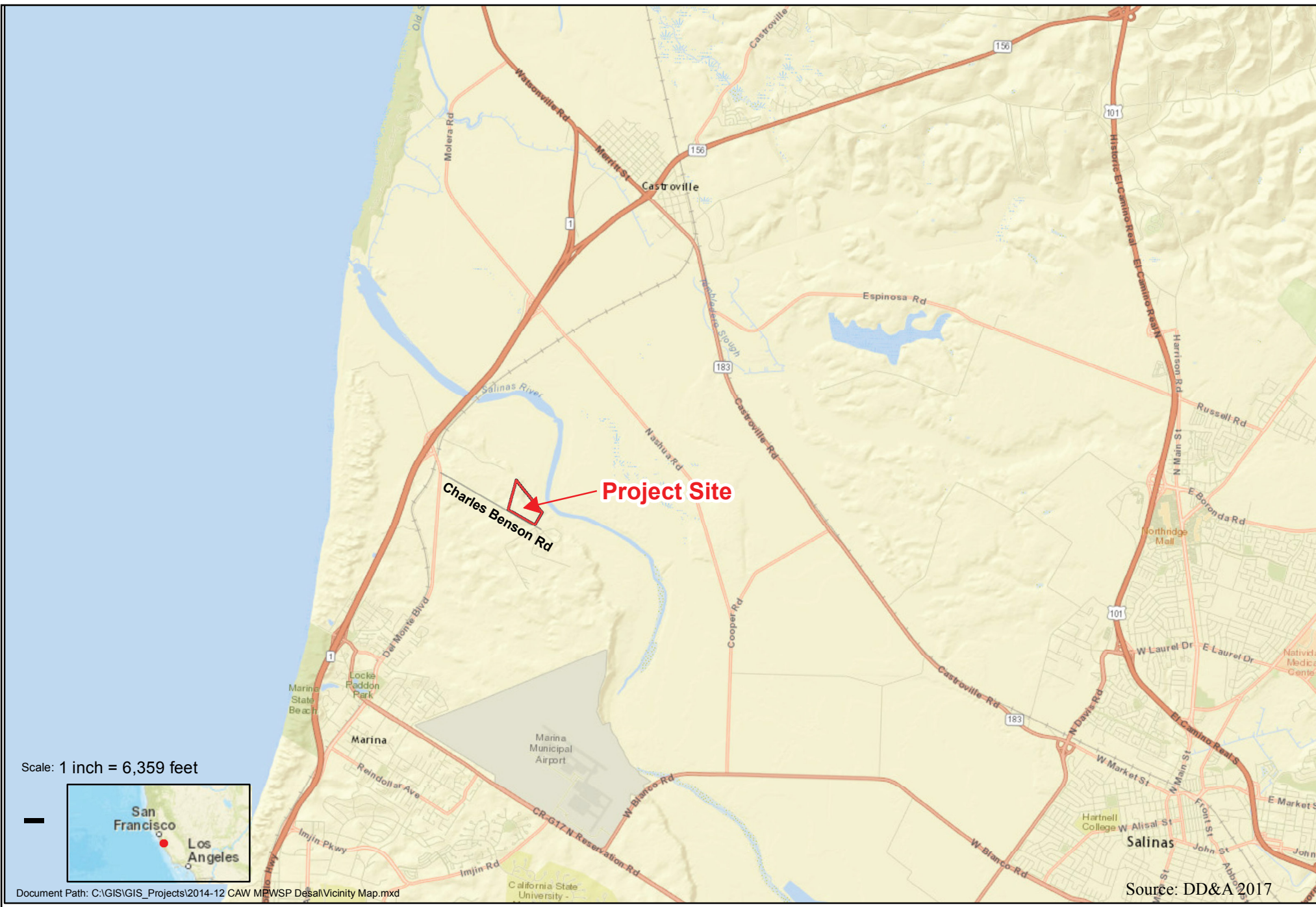
DATE MARCH 2019

PROJECT 154001-0191

MPWSP DESALINATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT
ARCHITECTURAL

REVERSE OSMOSIS BUILDING EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER CO.	COASTAL DIVISION	USE DIMENSIONS ONLY SCALE AS NOTED
USE APPROVED DRAWINGS ONLY FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES	90% SUBMITTAL	154001-0191-A24



Title:

Project Vicinity

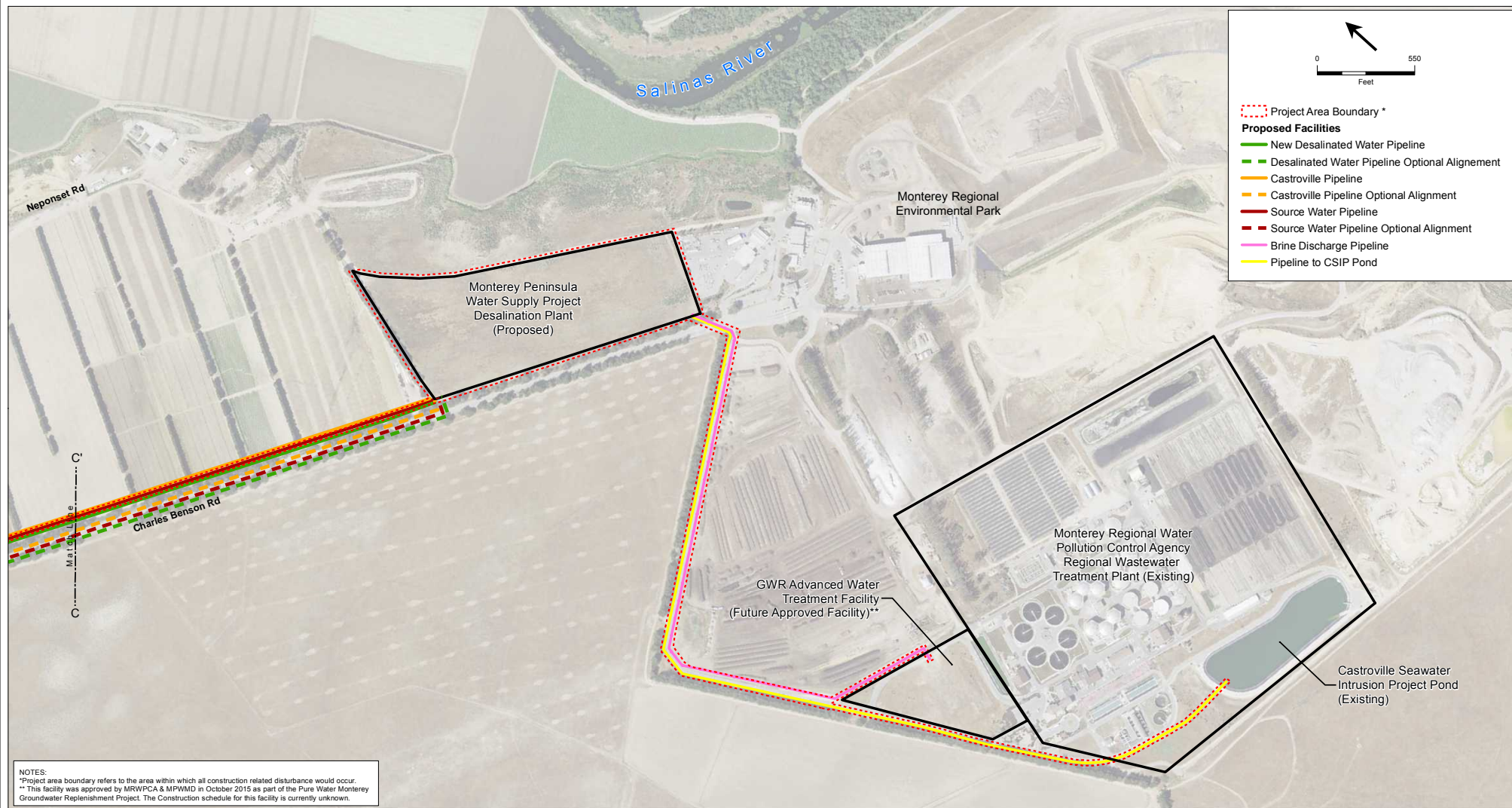
Date: 8-16-2017

Project: 2014.12



Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Cass Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
 4



Source: CPUC 2019

Title:

Project Location

Date: 8-16-2017

Project: 2014.12



Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Cass Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
5

3.0 REGULATORY SETTING

3.1 State Regulatory Setting

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G contains the following thresholds as guidance for analyzing aesthetic impacts.” Does the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?”

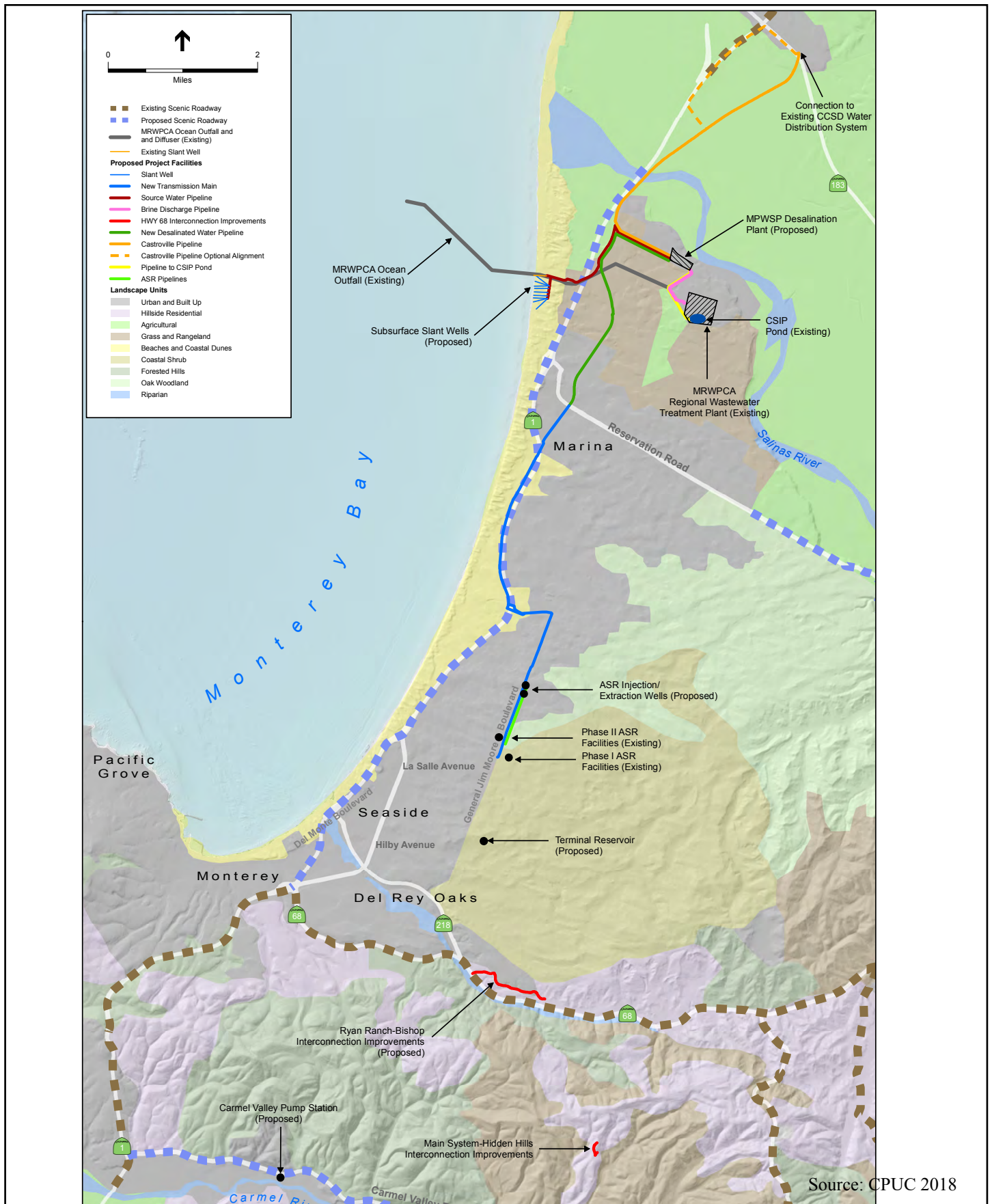
California Scenic Highways Program. The California State Scenic Highway program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program includes a list of highways that are either designated or eligible for designation as a scenic highway. The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. There are no designated or eligible State or County highways within the vicinity of the Project site. However, Highway 1, which is located approximately 1.15 miles from the Project site, is a proposed scenic highway (see **Figure 6, Scenic Highways**). The Project site is not visible from Highway 1 due to existing site topography and vegetation, and distance from Highway 1.

3.2 Local Regulatory Setting

Monterey County 2010 General Plan. The Desalination Plant is located in the unincorporated Monterey County and therefore subject to the policies contained in the Monterey County General Plan. The Monterey County General Plan is a long-range, comprehensive plan addressing all aspects of future growth, development and conservation for the County. The Conservation and Open Space Element of the Monterey County General Plan contains guidance, goals, and specific policies relating to maintaining and improving the appearance of the physical environment. An evaluation of the Project’s consistency with applicable Monterey County General Plan policies related to visual resources is provided in Chapter 5.

Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan. The Project is located within unincorporated Monterey County in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area. This Planning Area is bordered by the North County and Greater Salinas Areas on the north, the Toro and Cachagua Planning Area to the east, and the Coast Planning Area to the south (Monterey County 1995). The Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area consists of some of the most striking geography in Central California. The Monterey Peninsula – which separates Monterey and Carmel Bays – and the Carmel Valley are the two most significant geophysical features in the area. An evaluation of the Project’s consistency with applicable Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan policies related to visual resources is provided in Chapter 5.

Monterey County Code. The County of Monterey requires an evaluation of potential aesthetic-related effects and a determination of significance from common public view areas. “Common public viewing area means a public area such as a public street, road, designated vista point, or public park from which the general public ordinarily views the surrounding viewshed” (Monterey County Code, §21.06.195). For the purposes of visual impact analyses, Monterey County defines a substantial adverse visual impact as a “visual impact which, considering the condition of the existing viewshed, the proximity and duration of view when observed with normal unaided vision, causes an existing visual experience to be materially degraded” (Monterey County Code, §21.06.1275).



Scenic Highways

Date: 7-28-2017

Project: 2014.12



Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Case Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
 6

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

Methods pursued in order to establish the environmental setting included site visits, review of site photographs and aerials of the Project site, and preparation of an existing conditions inventory. The existing conditions inventory describes the visual character of the viewshed in the Project vicinity, identifies the types of viewer groups that would see the Project site and associated improvements, and describes their sensitivity to changes in the viewed environment (viewer sensitivity). This assessment uses the terminology and methodology based on the system developed by the Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) for assessing the visual effects of highway projects (see FHWA’s Visual Impact assessment of Highway Projects).

The FHWA’s methodology was selected because it provides a scientifically valid approach, commonly used under CEQA, to evaluate the potential aesthetic impacts of a project by providing a common evaluation criteria and analytical approach to evaluating potential aesthetic impacts. The FHWA’s methodology is generally accepted as suitable for assessing potential aesthetic impacts of transportation and non-transportation projects. This Chapter provides an overview of key terminology used in this assessment, a description of the methodology for assigning visual sensitivity and site selection, and provides a description of the existing visual character from each of the KOPs selected for analysis.

4.2 Terminology

The existing visual quality of the Project site and surrounding area is described using a three criteria scale system. These categories are then used to help assess changes in the visual environment that may occur as a result of the Project. The three criteria used are: vividness, intactness, and unity, and are defined as follows:

- **Vividness** is the degree of drama, memorability, or distinctiveness of the landscape components. Vividness is composed of four elements—landform, vegetation, water features, and human-made elements—that usually influence the degree of vividness.
- **Intactness** is a measure of the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. This factor can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings. High intactness means that the landscape is free of eyesores and is not broken up by features that appear to be out of place. Intactness is composed of two primary elements—development and encroachment—that influence the degree of intactness.

- **Unity** is the degree of visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape when it is considered as a whole. High unity frequently attests to the careful design of individual components and their relationship in the landscape.

The FHWA's methodology typically assigns numeric ratings to the three criteria – vividness, intactness and unity - that determine visual quality and then averages the ratings to establish an overall visual quality score. For purposes of this analysis, rather than using numerical ratings, qualitative assessments are provided for each of the criteria and then an overall assessment is provided to assign a “high, medium or low” rating³. The concepts utilized to evaluate the visual character and quality of a particular viewing location may be somewhat esoteric or subjective, but these criteria help identify the existing visual environment in a manner that allows a meaningful evaluation of potential project effects. Applying this approach yields a scale that reasonably represents the range of visual quality and allows identification of viewpoints that may be considered more visually sensitive than other locations. This approach is considered appropriate for the dual purposes of: a) determining the visual quality of an area; and b) determining whether the Project will (or will not) result in a change in the visual environmental that would constitute a substantial adverse visual effect, as defined by the County of Monterey. The overall visual quality categories are described as low, medium, or high, which are defined as follows:

- **Low Visual Quality.** Areas that have low visual quality may have features that seem visually out of place, lack visual coherence, do not have compositional harmony, and contain eyesores.
- **Medium Visual Quality.** These areas can be generally pleasant appearing but may lack distinctiveness, memorability, drama, and compositional harmony, or may simply be common and ordinary landscapes.
- **High Visual Quality.** These areas may be memorable, distinctive, unique (in a positive way), intact natural or park-like areas, or urban areas with strong and consistent architectural and urban design features.

Viewers can be categorized as having low, medium, or high sensitivity to changes in the viewed environment. Viewer sensitivity is strongly influenced by a viewer's activity, awareness of his or her surroundings, and amount of time spent looking at a view. People who view a landscape infrequently, view it for short periods of time (often as they pass through it), or are not attentive to it due to focusing on other activities (such as driving) are often less sensitive to changes and are assumed to have low viewer sensitivity. Viewers with average viewer sensitivity include workers and customers who may expect a somewhat pleasant visual setting but are in the locations for purposes other than

³ The VIA utilizes a qualitative rating system instead of a quantitative approach to better reflect the subjective nature of visual impacts. The existing visual quality of an area and the potential impacts associated with new development are subject to variation depending on viewer sensitivity, duration of views, and other factors. For these reasons, a qualitative system is used because it is more inclusive of user sensitivities. The qualitative approach to assessing visual impacts is commonly utilized by CEQA professionals to assess the potential visual impacts of a project.

enjoying its scenery or visual quality. The visual quality of an area can provide a good indication of how responsive an area's most sensitive viewers would likely be to changes in the visual environment. For example, viewers with high viewer sensitivity in areas that are categorized as having high visual quality would be expected to react more to changes in the visual environment than they would in areas that have medium or low visual quality. This concept can help determine areas where a project might be expected to have its greatest impacts on visual resources.

4.3 Methodology

Representative locations, viewpoints, or key observation points (KOPs), were selected which are representative of viewing locations surrounding the Project site. A total of four (4) KOPs, were selected, including vantage points from Del Monte Boulevard near Charles Benson Road, Del Monte Boulevard at Highway 1 overpass, Monte Road north of the Salinas River and Highway 1. These KOPs were selected because they represent common public viewing locations where the Project could potentially be visible. These locations are considered representative of "Common Public Viewing Areas" as defined in §21.06.195 of the Monterey County Municipal Code.⁴⁵

As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, the site is not visible from any public vantage points due to existing topography and vegetation, distance, and the site's remote and industrial setting. While the site is not visible from any public vantage points, the four (4) KOPs were selected to provide a comprehensive visual assessment for the purposes of this VIA to thoroughly assess and disclose potential visual impacts.

There is only one (1) private residence that is located along Neponset Road and within close proximity to the Project site. However, private views are not protected under the County's General Plan and therefore are not evaluated as a part of this analysis.⁶

In order to determine and evaluate KOPs field reconnaissance was performed, which included visual inspection of the site and taking photos from roads that may have the potential to show views of the Desalination Plant. These roads included Del Monte Boulevard near Charles Benson Road, Del Monte Boulevard at Highway 1 overpass, Monte Road north of the Salinas River and Highway 1 (see **Figure 7, Picture Locations**).

⁴ §21.06.195 of the Monterey County Municipal Code defines a "Common Public Viewing Area" as a public area such as a public street, road, designated vista point, or public park from which the general public ordinarily views the surrounding viewshed.

⁵ While the Project is not located in a Visual Sensitivity Zoning District (VS), the VIA conservatively evaluates the Project's potential visual impacts based on the criteria established to evaluate potential visual impacts associated with projects located in a VS district. The VIA evaluates the Project's potential to create a substantial adverse visual impact from a common public reviewing area based on the criteria contained in Title 21 of the Monterey County Code (see §21.06.195 and §21.06.1275).

⁶ In general, CEQA does not require a detailed evaluation of individual private views, particularly when only a limited number of private views would be affected by site development activities. *Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah*, 2 Cal. App. 4th (1991); *Porterville Citizens for Responsible Hillside Development v. City of Porterville*, 157 Cal. App. 4th 885 (2007) (Under CEQA, the question is whether a project will affect the environment of persons in general, not whether a project will affect particular persons.)



Source: Google Earth, 2017

Title:

Picture Locations

Date: 8-16-2017

Project: 2014.12



Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Cass Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
 7

4.4 Existing Visual Environment

The existing visual environment for each KOP is described below. The general location of each KOP is depicted in **Figure 7, Picture Locations**. Photographs of existing conditions are provided in **Figure 8, Field Reconnaissance Photos**.

KOP A – Highway 1. KOP A is located on Highway 1, a proposed scenic highway. The site is located approximately 1.15 miles from the Project site. The existing visual character of the area as perceived from this location is considered medium, views of distant coastal mountain ranges are visible from this location. Views are considered relatively intact and have a medium degree of unity, however many views are intruded by existing industrial infrastructure, including the existing Dole processing facility. Viewer sensitivity is considered medium, due to duration of views as perceived by vehicular traffic.

The Project site is not visible from Highway 1 due to existing topography, distance from the roadway, existing industrial infrastructure, and vegetation which includes a row of Monterey cypress and eucalyptus planted on the western and southern borders of the Project site. As part of the Project design seven (7) trees of various sizes will be removed along Charles Benson Road to provide access to the site, therefore portions of the Project may be visible from these locations.⁷ Alternative viewing locations along Highway 1 would include similar views, and only vary slightly depending on location along Highway 1. KOP A is representative of the type of visual experience perceived from Highway 1.

Visual quality: Medium. **Viewer Sensitivity:** Medium.

KOP B – Del Monte Boulevard at Charles Benson Road. KOP B is located along Del Monte Boulevard, a frontage road that runs parallel to Highway 1. Charles Benson Road is a private road that will provide access to the Project site and currently serves the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Monterey Regional Environmental Park.⁸ KOP B is located less than one (1) mile from the Project site. Views from this location consist primarily of views of agricultural fields, grasslands, and distant but memorable views of coastal mountain ranges. However, existing industrial infrastructure obstructs many views providing a medium degree of intactness and unity. The existing visual quality of the area as perceived from this location is considered medium, despite the existing infrastructure impeding views. Viewer sensitivity is considered medium, as this location offers memorable views, though impeded by infrastructures, however duration of views are limited as perceived by vehicular traffic. No Project components will be visible from this location due to existing topography, distance, and existing vegetation.

⁷ Tree removal required for this Project will be subject to review by Monterey County Planning Commission as a part of the use permit application (PLN150889) pursuant Monterey County Zoning Ordinance – Title 21 (for Inland Areas) Section 21.64.260.

⁸ Charles Benson Road is a private, gated road therefore it was not included in the KOP analysis as it is not considered representative of “Common Public Viewing Areas” as defined in §21.06.195 of the Monterey County Municipal Code.

Visual quality: Medium. **Viewer sensitivity:** Medium.

KOP C – Del Monte Boulevard at Highway 1 Overpass. KOP C is located along Del Monte Boulevard at the Highway 1 overpass, approximately one (1) mile from the Project site. Much like KOP B, views from this location primarily consist of views of agricultural fields, grasslands, and memorable views of distant coastal mountain ranges. This location offers distant but memorable views of coastal mountain ranges; however views are not intact with many visual intrusions due to existing vegetation, industrial infrastructure and topography. The existing visual quality of the area as perceived from this location is considered medium, despite the existing infrastructure impeding views. Viewer sensitivity is considered medium, as this location offers memorable views, however impeded by infrastructure, topography, and vegetation, as well as duration of views is limited as perceived by vehicular traffic. No Project components will be visible from this location due to existing topography, distance, and existing vegetation.

Visual quality: Medium. **Viewer sensitivity:** Medium.

KOP D – Monte Road North of the Salinas River. KOP D is located along Monte Road north of the Salinas River, and approximately 1.5 miles from the Project site. Visual quality as perceived from this location is considered medium, as distant but memorable views of coastal mountain ranges and neighboring agricultural fields are visible from this location. However, these views are not fully intact due to local topography and vegetation. Viewer sensitivity from this location is considered low, as the use of the road is limited and primarily used for agricultural purposes; therefore it is not regularly traveled by the public at large. Furthermore, duration of views are short as perceived by vehicular traffic. No Project components will be visible from this location due to existing topography, distance, and existing vegetation.

Visual quality: Medium. **Viewer sensitivity:** Low.



Photo 1. View from KOP A - Highway 1, facing east toward the proposed Project site, as shown views are blocked by topography and existing vegetation.



Photo 2. View from KOP B - Del Monte Blvd at Charles Benson Road, facing east toward the proposed Project site, as shown, views of the Project site are blocked by existing topography and utility lines.



Photo 3. View from KOP C - Del Monte Blvd at Highway 1 overpass, facing east toward the proposed Project site, as seen in the picture views of the Project site are blocked by local topography, existing vegetation, and industrial infrastructure.



Photo 4. View from KOP D - Monte Road, facing southeast toward the proposed Project site, as seen in the picture views of the Project site are blocked by existing vegetation.

Source: DD&A, 2017

Title:

Field Reconnaissance Photos

Date: 8-16-2017

Project: 2014.12



Monterey | San Jose
Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc.
 Environmental Consultants Resource Planners
 947 Cass Street, Suite 5
 Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 373-4341

Figure
 8

4.5 Key Observation Point Analysis

The following table below displays the existing visual quality of each KOP and anticipates changes in visual quality, if any, which may occur as a result of implementation of the Project. The table provides a qualitative method to evaluate the potential visual and aesthetic effects of the Project. Visual quality assessments examine the composition of the character-defining features for selected views and determine how a Project might impact the features of the view. This assessment seeks to determine the following:

- Is this particular view common or dramatic?
- Is this particular view a pleasing composition (with a mix of elements that seem to belong together) or not (with a mix of elements that either do not belong together or are eyesores and contrast with the other elements in the surroundings)?

The visual quality criteria utilized to determine the overall visual quality (e.g., high, medium, or low) of a KOP include vividness, intactness, and unity. The information contained in **Table 1** has been prepared utilizing a modified analytical approach and terminology derived from the FHWA's Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects. The concepts utilized to evaluate the visual character and quality of a particular viewing location may be somewhat esoteric or subjective, but they are used to determine visual quality categories as illustrated in **Tables 1 and 2** (Table 2 is found in Chapter 5). This approach has been used to describe existing conditions and the Project's expected visual impacts, if any.

Table 1
Existing Visual Character & Quality

KOP	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
KOP A – Highway 1	Medium. Distant but memorable views of the coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields.	Medium. Existing vegetation, topography and industrial park present in viewshed.	Medium. Existing vegetation, topography and industrial park present in viewshed.	Medium.
KOP B – Del Monte Blvd.	Medium. Distant but memorable views of the coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields.	Medium. Existing vegetation, topography and industrial park present in viewshed.	Medium. Existing vegetation, topography and industrial park present in viewshed.	Medium.

KOP C – Del Monte Blvd at Highway 1 Overpass	Medium. Distant but memorable views of the coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields.	Medium. Topography, existing vegetation, and industrial infrastructure interrupt most views.	Medium. Topography, existing vegetation, and industrial infrastructure interrupts most views	Medium.
KOP D – Monte Road North of the Salinas River	Medium. Distant but memorable views of the coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields.	Medium. Topography and existing vegetation interrupt most views.	Medium. Topography and existing vegetation interrupts most views	Medium.

5.0 IMPACT ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

As described above, the KOP analysis identified the overall visual quality and visual sensitivity from each KOP. Overall, all KOPs had medium visual quality and medium to low visual sensitivity. Distant views of mountain ranges are present, however these views are often interrupted by existing topography, vegetation, and existing industrial infrastructure. In addition, the visual sensitivity is considered medium to low because the duration of views are short due to vehicular traffic and the Project is not visible from any public roads. Views of the Desalination Plant from Highway 1, Del Monte Boulevard, and Monte Road would be obstructed by the site topography, existing vegetation (i.e., eucalyptus and Monterey cypress trees) on the west and south sides of the Project site, and industrial infrastructure.

Table 2 summarizes potential changes in visual quality at each KOP and identifies the evaluation criteria used to evaluate potential changes in visual quality due to construction of the Project. This table explains the nature of potential visual effects, including identifying whether the Project would result in a visual change. This determination is based on the field reconnaissance and each KOP's visual sensitivity. This assessment focuses on how the Project would change the existing visual quality of one of more evaluation categories (such as high to medium or medium to low). As previously stated, the Desalination Plant would not be visible from any of the common viewing areas.

Table 2
Post-Project Conditions

KOP	Vividness with Project	Intactness with Project	Unity with Project	Visual Quality with Project
KOP A – Highway 1	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating.
KOP B – Del Monte Blvd	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating.

KOP C – Del Monte Blvd at Highway 1 Overpass	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating.
KOP D – Monte Road North of the Salinas River	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating. Views of distant coastal mountains and neighboring agricultural fields would not be impacted.	Medium. No change in rating.

5.2 Consistency with Regional and Local Plans

The Monterey County General Plan and the Greater Peninsula Area Plan are the primary planning documents that are applicable to the Project. They contain guidance, goals, and specific policies relating to maintaining and improving the appearance of the physical environment. Implementation of the Project would introduce new features on a vacant Project site. However, as identified previously, Project components would not be visible from any common public viewing area. Due to the industrial setting of the Project site and limited access to this viewing location, the Project is not anticipated to result in an inconsistency with regional and local planning policies designed to protect existing visual resources.

An analysis of the Project's consistency with relevant Monterey County General Plan and Greater Peninsula Area Plan policies is provided below as required by the County of Monterey. The Project is consistent with all other regional and local plans.

Monterey County General Plan GOAL OS-1: *Retain the character and natural beauty of Monterey County by preserving, conserving, and maintaining unique physical features, natural resources, and agricultural operations.*

Policy OS-1.1: Voluntary restrictions to the development potential of property located in designated visually sensitive areas shall be encouraged.

Not Applicable. The Project site is not located within an area designated as a visually sensitive area, nor is it viewable from designated visually sensitive areas.

Policy OS-1.2: Development in designated visually sensitive areas shall be subordinate to the natural features of the area.

Not Applicable. The Project site is not located within an area designated as a visually sensitive area.

Policy OS-1.3: To preserve the County's scenic qualities, ridgeline development shall not be allowed. An exception to this policy may be made only after publicly noticed hearing and provided the following findings can be made:

- a. The ridgeline development will not create a substantially adverse visual impact when viewed from a common public viewing area; and either,
- b. That the proposed development better achieves the goals, policies and objectives of the Monterey County General Plan and applicable area plan than other development alternatives; or,
- c. There is no feasible alternative to the ridgeline development. Pursuant to *Policy OS-1.6*, in areas subject to specific plans, the ridgeline policies and regulations of the applicable specific plan shall govern.

Consistent. The Project would not create a substantially adverse visual impact when viewed from a common public viewing area as a result of ridgeline development.

Policy OS-1.9: Development that protects and enhances the County's scenic qualities shall be encouraged. All Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities are exempt from the viewshed policies of this plan, except as noted in *Policy OS-1.12*.

Consistent. The Project would not affect the County's scenic qualities. The Project site is not located within a visually sensitive area, nor is it viewable from designated visually sensitive areas. The Project will not detract from the County's scenic qualities.

Policy OS-1.12: The significant disruption of views from designated scenic routes shall be mitigated through use of appropriate materials, scale, lighting and siting of development. Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities shall be exempt from this policy, except:

1. large-scale agricultural processing facilities, or
2. facilities governed by the Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan

Consistent. The Project site is not located within view from a designated scenic route according to the Monterey County General Plan. Furthermore, Project site landscaping and building color would minimize any potential impacts. Accordingly, the Project would not cause the significant disruption of views from a designated scenic route.

Policy OS-5.5: Landowners and developers shall be encouraged to preserve the integrity of existing terrain and native vegetation in visually sensitive areas such as

hillsides, ridges, and watersheds. Routine and Ongoing Agricultural Activities shall be exempt from this policy.

Consistent. The Project is located on a previously disturbed site and would not require substantial alteration of natural terrain or native vegetation. Moreover, the Project is not located in a visually sensitive area.

Monterey Peninsula Area Plan

GMP-3.3: The Greater Monterey Peninsula Scenic Highway Corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map shall be used to designate visually "sensitive" and "highly sensitive" areas generally visible from designated Scenic Highways. The following policies shall apply to areas that have one of these designations:

Part e: New development to be located in areas mapped as "sensitive" or "highly sensitive" and which would be visible from a designated scenic route shall maintain the visual character of the area. In order to adequately mitigate the visual impacts of development in such areas, the following shall be required:

1. Development shall be rendered compatible with the visual character of the area using appropriate siting, design, materials, and landscaping;
2. Development shall maintain no less than a 100-foot setback from the scenic route right-of-way;
3. The impact of any earth movement associated with the development shall be mitigated in such a manner that permanent scarring is not created;
4. Tree removal shall be minimized;
5. Landscape screening and restoration shall consist of locally native plant and tree species consistent with surrounding native vegetation;
6. Architectural review of projects shall be required to ensure visual compatibility of the development with the surrounding area; and
7. New development in open grassland areas shall minimize its impact on the uninterrupted viewshed.

Consistent. The Project site is not located within an area designated as visually sensitive or highly sensitive in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Scenic Highway Corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map. Furthermore, the Project site is compatible with the existing industrial facilities located in the area

and existing vegetation and topography screens the Project site from the section of Highway 1, proposed as a scenic highway.

GMP-3.4: Plant materials shall be used to integrate manmade and natural environments, to screen or soften the visual impact of new development, and to provide diversity in developed areas.

Consistent. Views of the proposed MPWSP Desalination Plant would be screened by existing trees planted along the western and southern borders of the Project site.

5.3 CEQA Evaluation

California Environmental Quality Act. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) prepared and circulated the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS that evaluated the potential aesthetic impacts associated with the construction and operation of all MPWSP components, including the Desalination Plant. It is important to note that the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS found potential impacts to aesthetic resources relative to the Desalination Plant to be less than significant for the following reasons: the Project design is consistent with the industrial setting of the area, and the site is screened by existing vegetation and topography. Furthermore, the Project site is a considerable distance from Highway 1. The findings of this VIA are consistent with the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS. No additional aesthetic impacts would occur beyond those previously identified in the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS.

5.3.1 Scenic Vista

The Project site is not located within an area designated as a scenic vista. The Project is not visible from public viewing areas due to local topography, distance, and existing vegetation. Furthermore, the Project site is consistent with the surrounding uses and industrial setting of the area. The Project is not visible from Highway 1 or any other public roads.

5.3.2 Scenic Resources

There are no designated State or County highways located in the immediate vicinity of the Project site. The portion of Highway 1 closest to the Project site, which is located 1.15 miles from the site, is a proposed Scenic Highway, however it is not officially designated. Moreover, the distance of the Project from Highway 1 is too far (over a mile) to affect views. Based upon the existing topography, vegetation, and industrial facilities blocking views as well as the distance, the Project site is not visible from Highway 1. The Project is not visible from an officially designated scenic highway. The Project would not adversely affect existing views and/or visual character of a state designated scenic highway, or eligible scenic highway.

5.3.3. Visual Quality/Character

The Project would visually transform the existing character of the Project site from a vacant, disturbed, lot to a developed site (i.e. Desalination Plant). Within this context it is important to

consider the existing visual character of the area in relationship to the Project site's visibility from common public viewing areas. While the Project would permanently transform the Project site, visual impacts due to the change in visual quality/character of the site would primarily be confined to those areas in the direct vicinity of the Project site. External views of the site are limited due to site topography and existing vegetation.

No common public viewing areas would be affected by the change of the visual quality/character of the Project site. Moreover, the Project would result in the introduction of new built features into an area that is already highly developed with industrial infrastructure. As a result, the Project would be compatible with the existing industrial setting of the surround area.

Even though the Project would alter the existing visual character of the Project site, visual impacts would be primarily internalized and the Project is consistent with the industrial setting of the surrounding area. As a result, potential impacts would be less than significant.

5.3.4 Lighting/Glare

The Project would introduce a limited new source of light or glare at night, however night lighting would not be noticeable from any of the KOPs evaluated due to distance, existing topography, and vegetation. Furthermore, the neighboring industrial facilities also provide a source of night light, therefore the additional light the Project site would introduce would not add a significant source of lighting/glare in the general area. Construction activities at the MPWSP Desalination Plant site are anticipated to occur for up to 12 hours per day from 7:00AM and 7:00PM, Monday through Saturday, for 25 months creating a limited but new temporary source of lighting (i.e. from sunset to 7:00PM primarily in the winter), however the site is screened from view due to site topography and existing vegetation along any public viewing areas. In addition, lighting from headlights off of Highway 1 and from the Dole processing facility is a more significant source of light than from temporary lighting due to construction activities. Furthermore, lighting would be designed to provide the minimum illumination needed to achieve safety and security and will be downward facing. As a result, any nighttime lighting impacts on area motorists and area residents would be negligible.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This VIA has been prepared to evaluate potential aesthetic/visual impacts that may result from construction and operation of the MPWSP Desalination Plant.

The potential visual impacts from the MPWSP Desalination Plant are limited. Views of the Desalination Plant would largely be confined within the existing property. The site is not visible from any public viewing areas or roads.

The Project would not result in an adverse change to the visual quality or visual characteristics of the overall vicinity of the Project site. The Project would not result in an inconsistency with policies designed to minimize impacts on visual resources in the County or Project area. Moreover, the analysis contained in the MPWSP Final EIR/EIS determined that potential visual impacts with the Desalination Plant would be less than significant. The Project site is surrounded by industrial uses, shielded by existing topography and vegetation, and is distant from most public viewing areas. The Project will not significantly affect the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

7.0 REFERENCES

[CPUC] California Public Utilities Commission. September 2018. Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement. Available online at: < <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/esa/mpwsp/index.html>>. Accessed April 8, 2019.

CDM Smith. March 2019. 90% Construction Drawings for the Desalination Infrastructure Project.

County of Monterey. 2010. Monterey County 2010 General Plan, available at: <http://co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-i-z/resource-management-agency-rma-/planning/resources-documents/2010-general-plan>

County of Monterey. 1995. Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan, available at: http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/docs/plans/1982%20Monterey%20County%20General%20Plan/GMPAP_complete.PDF

Federal Highway Administration, Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects, available at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/scr/guidance.htm#visual>