

description, site design or operations and project maintenance, and are included to reduce or eliminate significant impacts that could otherwise result. These include:

PDF-32 Apply a micro-benching methodology to reduce height and width of the step-benches and include native vegetation as measures to eliminate negative aesthetics elements associated with traditional benching method.

PDF-4 Final reclaimed slopes are to be contoured horizontally and vertically to mimic the pre-mining contour, incorporating vertical articulation thereby eliminating negative aesthetic elements.

4.1.4 Aesthetic Issues Identified to Have No Impact

Despite the presence of existing mining and the potential for improvement over future or existing reclamation techniques, no issues regarding aesthetics were determined to have no impact.

4.1.5 Aesthetics Impact Analysis

The City of Azusa Initial Study Checklist is utilized to identify the primary thresholds of significance relating to CEQA issues. As such, the Proposed Project would have a significant effect on Aesthetics if it would exceed the thresholds of significance stated in Section 4.1.3, for any of the five viewpoints listed below. Each of these five viewpoints were selected as potentially sensitive viewpoints which typically include any scenic vistas, scenic highways, residential views, public parks, recreational areas, and/or culturally important locations from which the project could potentially be visible.

A “scenic vista” is defined as an area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. This includes any such areas designated by a Federal, State, or local agency. A “scenic highway” is defined as any stretch of public roadway that is designated a scenic corridor by a Federal, State, or local agency. Residential viewers typically have extended viewing periods and are generally considered to have high visual sensitivity. For this reason, residential views are typically considered sensitive. Views from public parks, recreational trails, and/or culturally important sites also have high visual sensitivities and are therefore considered as sensitive viewpoints.

In order to locate sensitive viewpoints from where the Proposed Project activities could potentially be seen, the project viewshed was studied in the field. Weather conditions were clear and sunny with 10 to 15 miles of visibility, representing the conditions under which the highest level of project visibility would occur. The analysis of viewpoints was limited to a 3-mile radius of the site.

The viewpoints are identified on Figure 4.1-6 by a letter or number then referenced in the text. Photographic simulations are presented from each viewpoint showing both the existing conditions and simulating the Proposed Project. Additional simulations were prepared for four of the viewpoints corresponding to the 5-, 10-, and 20-year phases of the existing project and Proposed Project (as identified in the Project Description). Final site contours for both reclamation plans are presented as Figures 4.1-7 and 4.1-8.

line, color and texture of the surrounding native terrain, but one point has been deducted from the cultural modification score to account for potential viewer sensitivities to the appearance of the micro-benches.

Interim simulations were prepared for this viewpoint to further identify visual impacts associated with mine phasing. Figures 4.1-24, 4.1-25, and 4.1-26 simulate the Proposed Project in five-, ten- and twenty-year intervals. By Year 5, the ridgeline contour has been altered and an operation quarry wall is partially visible. This benched hillside lies in contrast to the surrounding vegetation. The cultural modification rating deducts 2 points, reducing the rating score to 13. By Year 10, the exposed hillside has been recontoured and revegetated. The short-term impacts to views during the first ten years of operations and reclamation are considered significant.

By Year 20, the reconfigured ridgeline and vegetation have been reestablished to reduce the direct visual impacts to less than significant. However, the removal of the ridgeline as shown, permanently alters the ridgeline as viewed from the southwest and this is considered a significant impact.

Potential views of the site from Duarte will be impacted by 1 point as a result of the Proposed Project. The impact is therefore considered significant.

Short-Term Impacts (Approximately Years 1 – 10): Potential views of the site from Duarte residences to the southwest of the site for the first ten years of the Proposed Project are considered significant until such time as the mining and reclamation along the ridgeline are completed, and revegetation has had time to adequately cover the disturbed areas.

Long-term Impacts: Potential views of the site from Duarte residences to the southwest of the site are considered significant due to the permanent alteration of the ridgeline.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure AES-1:

In order to reduce potential impacts associated with the west quarry ridgeline, a 20-foot operating berm shall be ~~installed and maintained~~ where structurally feasible during in place within the west quarry's Phase II-W mining as outlined in Figure 4.1-38 (attached). This will obscure equipment from view and deflect equipment noise during operations (see Section 4.9 Noise mitigation).

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measures would reduce the level of impacts to Duarte residences, but impacts remain significant. Also, see Mitigation Measures AES-2 and AES-3 herein regarding lighting and nighttime operations. Despite recommended mitigation, the visual impacts to Duarte residences, associated with this ridgeline alteration will remain significant.