

5.11.1 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

This section describes the visual character of the City of Solvang and Santa Ynez Valley and lists local policies that are applicable to aesthetics. The section also evaluates potential aesthetic impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update and the construction and operation of the various components. The proposed Master Plan Update would have potentially significant impacts related to scenic vistas and visual character. The section identifies mitigation measures to reduce those potential impacts. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas and visual character of the proposed Master Plan Update areas would be less than significant (Class II).

5.11.2 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Project conditions were evaluated against the existing visual character of the City and individual project sites, such as proposed well sites and the location of the proposed water treatment plant, in the context of topography, vegetation, existing uses, and visual character. Information from the City's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element¹ provided context in order to determine the significance of visual impacts.

5.11.3 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

5.11.3.1 State Regulations

State of California Scenic Highway Program

In 1963, the State Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program, which was intended to play an important role in encouraging the growth of the recreation and tourism industries. The Streets and Highway Code states that it was the intent of the Legislature to protect and enhance California's natural scenic beauty through special scenic conservation.² Additionally, scenic routes would require careful coordination of planning, design, construction, and regulation of land use and development by state and local agencies to protect the "social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources."

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

¹ City of Solvang, *Solvang General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element*, (1988).

² California Streets and Highway Code, Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 2.5. Section 260 et seq.

and Highways Code.³ A list of California's scenic highways and a map showing their locations may be obtained from California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Coordinators.

The status of a state scenic highway changes from eligible to officially designated when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. The agency must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances make up the scenic corridor protection program.

According to Caltrans, the nearest Designated Scenic Highway corridor to the City is State Route 154, and extends from the State Route 101 intersection near Los Olivos to State Route 101 in the City of Santa Barbara. In addition, the City is east of U.S. Route 101, which is eligible for the "Scenic Highway" designation.⁴

5.11.3.2 Local Regulations

City of Solvang

General Plan

The City's General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element outlines goals and policies concerning land use and is designed to serve as the basis for development decision making. The applicable goals and policies include:

Goal 3.2	To protect and enhance sensitive open space areas and viewsheds.
Objective 1.0	Preserve existing open spaces at appropriate locations throughout the city.
Policy 3.a	The City shall restrict development along the Santa Ynez River, Alisal Creek, Adobe Creek, Alamo Pintado Creek, and the area between Manzanita Drive and Willow Drive to those uses which

³ California Streets and Highway Code, Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 2.5. Section 263.

⁴ California Department of Transportation, *Scenic Highway Guidelines*, [undated]. Available online: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/guidelines/scenic_hwy_guidelines.pdf

retain the open space character of these areas (e.g., parks, open space spines, golf courses, etc.)

Policy 3.b The City shall implement the objectives and policies established in the community design element of the general plan which promote the preservation and enhancement of open space features.

Objective 2.0 Encourage the preservation of the City’s hillside areas and natural landforms.

Policy 2.a The City shall enact a hillside development ordinance which contains development standards to: (1) maintain the natural visual character of the hillsides by integrating architecture and landscaping into the hillside setting, (2) minimize grading impacts, (3) architecturally integrate any structures within the prominent ridgelines designated in the general plan, (4) encourage the contouring of manufactured slopes to blend with natural slopes, (5) encourage the use of innovative designs which adapt to the natural topography, (6) encourage the blending of colors and materials with the hillside environment, and (7) provide for the planting of slopes with appropriate vegetation.

Objective 3.0 Maintain the quality of views to the north and to the southeast of the City as well as the overall visual quality of the City’s landscape.

Policy 3.2 The City shall require that new structures and improvements be integrated with the surrounding environment to the greatest possible extent.

Policy 3.c The City shall enforce its adopted design guidelines as specified in the community design element of this general plan.

Santa Barbara County

Comprehensive Plan

The County of Santa Barbara Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element⁵ outlines the goals and policies concerning land use, and is designed to serve as the basis for development decision-making. Visual Resources policies include:

1. All commercial, industrial, and planned developments shall be required to submit a landscaping plan to the County for approval.
2. In areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps, the height, scale, and design of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, except where technical requirements dictate otherwise. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms; shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape; and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.
3. In areas designated as urban on the land use plan maps and in designated rural neighborhoods, new structures shall be in conformance with the scale and character of the existing community. Clustered development, varied circulation patterns, and diverse housing types shall be encouraged.

Santa Ynez Community Plan

The Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan⁶ augments various elements of the County's Comprehensive General Plan to provide region specific policy direction for the Santa Ynez Valley Community. Applicable goals and policies include:

Goal VIS-SYV-1: Protect the Rural/Agricultural Character and Natural Features of the Planning Area, Including Mountain Views, Scenic Corridors and Buffers, Prominent Valley Viewsheds, and the Quality of the Nighttime Sky.

Policy VIS-SYV-1: Development of property should minimize impacts to open space views as seen from public roads and viewpoints and avoid destruction of significant visual resources.

⁵ County of Santa Barbara, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element adopted 1980 amended February 2011.

⁶ County of Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan adopted October 6, 2009.

5.11.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

5.11.4.1 Regional Visual Resources

The City of Solvang is located in the Santa Ynez Valley within an alluvial plain formed by the Santa Ynez River and the southeastern edge of Purisima Hills. The area outside the City of Solvang offers significant open space features such as range and agricultural lands that promote the image of Solvang as a village in a rural setting. The area within the City also offers several open space features. Key open spaces include the Alisal Golf Course along Alisal Creek in the southern portion of the City, the Santa Ynez River bisecting the City, Hans Christian Andersen Park and Adobe Creek in the eastern portion of the City, and Alamo Pintado Creek along the eastern edge of the city. The southern portion of the City is flanked by the open spaces of the Santa Rosa Hills at the foot of the Santa Ynez Mountains. A number of scenic views are available throughout the City. In the area in the south of the City, scenic vistas include views overlooking the Santa Ynez River and views of the Santa Ynez Mountains. To the north of the City, the Purisima Hills offer scenic views to Solvang's residents and visitors.⁷

The nearest Designated Scenic Highway corridor to the City is State Route 154, which is less than 4 miles to the northeast, and extends from the State Route 101 intersection near Los Olivos to State Route 101 in the City of Santa Barbara. In addition, the City is approximately 2.5 miles east of U.S. Route 101, which is eligible for the "Scenic Highway" designation. The dominant views from the both of these highways feature gentle slopes, grasslands, and agricultural lands in the Santa Ynez River valley. The urban development of the City can be seen from some viewpoints in the background from State Route 154. The City is not visible from U.S. Route 101.

5.11.4.2 Existing Visual Character

The City has evolved into a highly popular tourist destination during the post-World War I period with its identity and economic vitality linked to the aesthetic character of the community. The center portion of the City, identified as the "Village Area," is characterized by "old world" Danish and Northern European design. The Village Area represents the principal focus of activities in the City. In addition, areas of the city outside of the Village Area are mostly residential neighborhoods consisting of single-family residences, and estate/ranchette residential areas. Other land uses include sand and gravel operations and multi-family residential uses primarily in the westernmost edge of the City and beyond City boundaries in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. The Master Plan Update area generally corresponds with City boundaries, though a portion of the area is within Santa Barbara County. Existing water storage facilities are located throughout the City and are shown on **Figure 2.0-3, City of Solvang Water System**. The

⁷ City of Solvang, *Solvang General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element*, (1988).

location of existing water distribution is mostly underground and within urban roadways. Some of the storage facilities and pipelines may be constructed in undeveloped areas within or near the City.

Proposed Well Sites

The proposed well sites are located in undeveloped floodplain area, west of Alisal Bridge. Existing wells are also situated adjacent to the Santa Ynez River, east of the Alisal Bridge. The river floodplain and channel are visually complex due to the various landforms, colors, and textures associated with the dynamic landscape in a river corridor. The patches of dense riparian woodland contrast with the broad open floodplain areas. When water is present, the floodplain exhibits a high quality visual amenity due to the naturalness of the features and the large expanse along the river. Two Alisal Golf Course wells are located adjacent to the Alisal Bridge, to the east, as shown in **Figure 2.0-5, Proposed Future Wells Site Areas**. **Figure 5.11-1, View of Existing Wells from Alisal Bridge**, shows the view of two existing wells from Alisal Bridge. As shown in the figure, the wellheads appear as a small cement structures enclosed by a chain fences.

As shown in **Figure 2.0-6, Wells Site A**, the primary views of the river floodplain within Well Site A are from the Alisal Golf Course (from golfers), residents in homes above Fjord Drive, and along Alisal Bridge. The latter represents the only public viewing location of the floodplain. The site contains riparian vegetation and scrub. In addition, one inactive well is located within Well Site A. A dirt road and trail network are visible from public viewing locations.

Primary views of Well Site B are primarily from State Route 246, which parallels the river floodplain approximately 0.25 miles to the north. The site is entirely contained within an existing gravel mining operation, adjacent to agricultural uses. The site contains some riparian vegetation.

Proposed Water Treatment Plant Site

The treatment plant would be located in the northeast corner of Alisal Commons, a City open space area (see **Figure 2.0-9, Proposed Water Treatment Plan Location**). Alisal Commons open space is relatively open and visible to residents on the west side, and by travelers on Alisal Road on the east site. The visual quality of the area is considered moderate or high by the City's General Plan because open space and landscaping provide a pastoral feature in a moderately dense residential area.⁸ The existing SWP Booster Station is located adjacent to the proposed site.

⁸ City of Solvang, *Solvang General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element*, (1988).



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. - 2011

FIGURE 5.11-1

5.11.5 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* identify criteria for conditions that may be deemed to constitute a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in physical conditions.

Specifically, Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Environmental Checklist Form) lists the following threshold, under which a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

- Have a substantial effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor.
- Substantially degrade the visual character of any area.

5.11.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The environmental impact analysis presented below is based on determinations made in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for issues that were determined to be potentially significant with mitigation incorporated, or for issues identified by reviewing agencies, organizations, or individuals commenting on the NOP that made a reasonable argument that the issue was potentially significant (see Responses to NOP, **Appendix 1.0**).

5.11.6.1 Have a substantial effect on a scenic vista.

Impacts

Construction

Master Plan Update

A scenic vista is generally defined as an expansive view of a highly valued landscape as observable from a publicly accessible vantage point. Scenic vistas include views of natural features such as topography, water courses, rock outcrops, and natural vegetation, as well as man-made scenic structures. Scenic vistas are available throughout the City of Solvang to residents and visitors and include views of the Santa Ynez River, the Santa Ynez Mountains, and views of the Purisima Hills.

The construction of the distribution system improvements would require the partial excavation of urban roadways, which may result in temporary aesthetic impacts to visual quality of the sites and surroundings. The construction activities would temporarily impact the views from roadways due to

signage, traffic-control measures (orange cones/barrels), and construction equipment, and the activities would be noticeable to motorists, pedestrians, and adjacent property owners and businesses. In general, a minimum of several hundred feet of pipeline could be completed in one day. Therefore, construction-related aesthetic impacts would generally last less than one week in any one location. Construction activities are generally a common and accepted feature of the urban environment. Additionally, upon completion of the construction activities, all pipelines would be permanently located underground and would have no impact on scenic vistas.

A portion of the proposed distribution system would be located in rural areas, which would require excavation and construction activities in otherwise rural and/or undeveloped areas. For instance, a new aboveground reservoir and pipelines to aboveground reservoirs may be constructed in undeveloped hillside areas near Riley Road. Construction activities in undeveloped areas such as this one may temporarily impact scenic vistas by removing vegetation and affecting topography. In accordance with the City's General Plan policies, development under the Master Plan Update should be integrated with the surrounding environment to the greatest possible extent. Although construction impacts would be temporary, removing trees and vegetation in open space areas and otherwise affecting a scenic resource would be considered a potentially significant impact.

Proposed Well Sites and Treatment Facilities

Well construction within Well Site A and/or Well Site B would require temporary use of drilling equipment, trucks, and a drilling rig within the floodplain of the Santa Ynez River, which is a natural scenic resource for the area. The exact location of any wells that may be needed is not known though the Well Sites A and B are comprised of undeveloped open space and natural areas. Construction activities would also include removing vegetation and grading the well sites and access roads, if such roads (such as a fire road) are not already available for use. Although exact locations for wells is not known, views of Well Site A and Well Site B are available from public vantage points and could be considered a temporary scenic resources impact. Construction activities for each well would be completed within five days. Given the temporary nature of construction activities, the construction activities in themselves would not have an adverse impact on the Santa Ynez River scenic vista.

Construction of the proposed water treatment facilities would take place within the City's Alisal Commons open space, near the Alisal Glen housing subdivision. Views of the Santa Ynez River scenic corridor are available from this location, though views are screened by distance, topography, and vegetation. Construction activities at the site would occur over a nine-month period of time and would involve grading and construction of foundation and retaining wall, building construction, and installation of utilities and treatment module. Building construction and system installation will involve

various work trucks and construction worker vehicles. A construction staging area would be established adjacent to the treatment plant site in the open area south of the existing SWP Booster Pumping Station building. The construction activities would impact the views from roadways due to signage and construction equipment, and the activities would be noticeable to motorists, pedestrians, and adjacent property owners. Impacts from construction of the wells and the water treatment facility would be potentially significant.

State Water Right Permit

The proposed change to the City's water right Permit 15878 would provide for the Extended Reach of Diversion (see **Figure 2.0-4**) downstream of Alisal Bridge to include Wells Sites A and B. As described above, construction of the downstream wells would have potentially significant impacts to scenic vistas. However, the revision to water right Permit 15878 would not have any impacts on aesthetics. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Master Plan Update

The proposed Master Plan Update recommends improvements to the water supply, improvements to the distribution system, reservoir storage improvements, standby power, and alternative water supply sources. The location of most improvements would be underground, within urban roadways and previously disturbed areas and would not have the potential to damage scenic resources in the City. However, development of distribution and storage infrastructure may be located in rural and undeveloped areas that could be considered scenic resources. Improvements of the reservoir storage infrastructure, such as the relocation the reservoir and Riley Road booster station would need to occur at higher elevations such as the undeveloped hillside above Riley Road, and could damage views of the area. Development of other components under the Master Plan Update could develop structures that interfere with views of the Santa Ynez River. To the extent that features developed under the Master Plan Update could permanently affect views of a scenic vista, the impact to scenic vistas would be potentially significant.

Proposed Well Sites and Treatment Facilities

The proposed wells would be located within Well Sites A and B along the Santa Ynez River, though the exact location of the wells within each area is not yet known. Views of Site A are available from the east by viewers on Alisal Road, and from the north by viewers on Fjord Drive. The proposed well sites would

not be visible to homes above the golf course due to the great distance, and because the wells sites would be small and would blend in with the floodplain background.

The visual aspects of the proposed wells would each consist of a well pump and wellhead located on a 12- to 24-inch concrete well pad measuring 25 by 25 feet. Each well would be surrounded by a 10- by 10-foot chain link enclosure that would be 6 feet in height. Wells are relatively small facilities that appear as small pipes within concreted casings and can be housed within aesthetically appealing enclosures of about 100 square feet. The wellhead and enclosures are less than 6 feet in height, so they are low profile in height and would not impede views of surrounding areas. The proposed wells would resemble the existing wells shown in **Figure 5.11-1**. To the extent that the wells could permanently interfere with views of the Santa Ynez River, the impact would be potentially significant.

The proposed water treatment plant would be situated in the Alisal Commons open space, northwest of the existing SWD Pump Station. Total area required for the water treatment plant would be approximately 30,000 square feet and the facility would be housed in a single-story structure less than 1,152 square feet in size and located behind a 7-foot-high decorative wall. The structure would be surrounded by open space; however, an existing pump facility for the Central Coast Water Agency SWP pipeline is currently located in the open space area. The Santa Ynez River floodplain is located more than 1,000 feet south of the site and views of the river are largely screened by existing topography and the SWD Pump Station. Therefore, development of the proposed water treatment building would not block or preclude views of a scenic vista. The impact would be less than significant

State Water Right Permit

The proposed change to the City's water right Permit 15878 would provide for the extension of the Existing Reach of Diversion downstream of Alisal Bridge to include Wells Sites A and B (see **Figure 2.0-4**). As described above, construction of the proposed downstream wells would have potentially significant impacts to scenic vistas. However, the revision to water right Permit 15878 would not have any impacts on aesthetics. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

AES-1 Prior to commencement of grading activities for each phase of project development associated with the Master Plan Update, including proposed wells to be located in Wells Sites A and B and the proposed water treatment plant located in Alisal Commons open space, the City shall prepare a Landscape Plan that identifies specific measures to reduce

the visual impacts associated with the visible above ground facilities, including the strategic planting of native trees, shrubs, and other vegetation to buffer the views of the structures.

- AES-2** For projects associated with the Master Plan Update, including proposed wells to be located in Wells Sites A and B and the proposed water treatment plant located in Alisal Commons open space, with the potential to significantly degrade visual character during construction, construction contracts shall consider locating staging areas where opportunities for screening with existing topography and vegetation can be maximized. Security fencing shall be placed around staging and construction areas to hide the area from public view.
- AES-3** Reservoir tanks and booster pump stations shall be painted with low-reflective paint in a camouflaging color that blends with the surrounding environment.
- AES-4** Prior to the commencement of grading activities for the proposed wells to be located in Wells Sites A and B and the proposed water treatment plant located in Alisal Commons open space and any water reservoirs (tanks) improvements, the project engineer for the grading and construction of the reservoir tanks shall provide to the City Engineer a grading plan that incorporates landform grading techniques and minimizes changes to topography. If bench-cuts into hillsides are required, then landform grading techniques shall be incorporated that preserve as much of the natural topography as possible and create cuts that blend into the surrounding hillside areas. Additionally, graded areas shall be revegetated upon completion of construction activities with native seeds and/or plants in order to restore previously vegetated areas to pre-construction conditions to the greatest extent practicable.

Residual Impacts

Implementation of **Mitigation Measure AES-1** through **AES-4** would reduce potential impacts to the visual character of the proposed Master Plan Update areas to less than significant with mitigation (Class II).

5.11.6.2 Substantially damage scenic resources including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor.

Impacts

Construction

The City of Solvang is located 4 miles away from the nearest State Designated Scenic Highway Corridor along State Route 154. It is also located 3 miles east of U.S. Route 101, which is eligible for the “Scenic Highway” designation. The urban development within the City appears in the background of views from these highways, and individual structures are not easily distinguished from one another. The scenic resources associated with these corridors include large open spaces and agricultural lands that appear in the foreground from the roadways. Given the proximity to the State Route 254 and U.S. Route 101, construction would appear as a part of the urban area and would not damage the scenic resources in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The dominant views from the State Route 154 and U.S. Rote 101 feature gentle slopes, grasslands, and agricultural lands in the Santa Ynez River valley. While urban development of the City can be seen in the background from these roadways, given the distance to the designated scenic highways, facilities proposed under the proposed Master Plan Update would appear indistinguishable from the surrounding urban area of the City and would not damage the scenic resources in the area. For instance, views of the existing wells in the Santa Ynez River are not visible at all from these highways. Therefore, there would be no impact to scenic resources associated with a state scenic highway corridor. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measure is required.

Residual Impacts

The operation and construction of the Master Plan Update, including the proposed wells, and water treatment plants, would result in less than significant impacts related to scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

5.11.6.3 Substantially degrade the visual character of any area.

Impacts

Construction

Master Plan Update

Construction of water supply, improvements to the distribution system, reservoir storage improvements, standby power, and alternative water supply sources recommended by the proposed Master Plan Update would involve use of construction equipment, trucks, and stockpiles of material that would be visible to sensitive receptors throughout the City. Construction activities related to the Master Plan Update would generally be located in roadways and other sites where public views are available. To the extent that construction sites are visible to the public, they would cause a temporary visual nuisance for visual receptors and would temporarily degrade the visual character of areas within the City.

Proposed Wells and Water Treatment Facilities

Construction activities for each well would be completed within five days. Given the temporary nature of construction activities, the construction activities in themselves would not have an adverse impact on the Santa Ynez River scenic vista.

Construction of the proposed wells would require construction equipment, trucks, and a drilling rig within the floodplain of the Santa Ynez River, which is a natural scenic resource for the area. The exact location of any wells that may be needed is not known though the Well Sites A and B are comprised of undeveloped open space and natural areas. Construction activities would also include removing vegetation and grading the well sites and access roads, if such roads (such as a fire road) are not already available for use. Given that the construction for each well would be completed within five days, the temporary views of this construction equipment would not significantly degrade the visual character in the area. However, construction activities associated with well installation could result in the removal of riparian vegetation near the Santa Ynez River, which would degrade the visual character of the well sites in the near term. This would be a potentially significant impact.

Construction of the proposed water treatment facility would take place within the Alisal Commons open space, near the Alisal Glen housing subdivision. Views of the Santa Ynez River scenic corridor are available from this location, though views are screened by distance, topography, and vegetation. Construction activities at the site would occur over a nine-month period of time and would involve grading and construction of foundation and retaining wall, building construction, and installation of

utilities and treatment module. Building construction and system installation will involve various work trucks and construction worker vehicles. A construction staging area would be established adjacent to the treatment plant site in the open area south of the existing SWP Booster Pumping Station building. The construction activities would impact the views from roadways due to signage and construction equipment, and the activities would be noticeable to motorists, pedestrians, and adjacent property owners. Construction activities could significantly degrade the visual character in the area for this period of time, which would be considered a potentially significant.

State Water Right Permit

The proposed change to the City's water right Permit 15878 would provide for the extension of the Existing Reach of Diversion downstream of Alisal Bridge to include Wells Sites A and B as shown in **Figure 2.0-4**. As described above, construction of the proposed downstream wells would have potentially significant impacts to scenic vistas. However, the revision to water right Permit 15878 would not have any impacts on aesthetics. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

Operation

Master Plan Update

The proposed Master Plan Update recommends improvements to the water supply, distribution system, reservoir storage, standby power, and alternative water supply sources.

Improvements associated with the distribution system would involve replacement of water pipelines, hydrants, and valves. Since pipelines are underground, implementation of these improvements would have no impact on visual character. Since existing hydrants would be simply replaced or would not be noticeable in the context of the surrounding urban development, no impacts to visual character from these components would occur.

The reservoir storage improvements would replace old cisterns with new reservoirs, replace waterlines, and relocate the Riley Road booster station adjacent to the new reservoir. Replacement of the old cisterns with new reservoirs would increase the size of the storage facility from 40,000 gallons of capacity to 400,000 gallons and would reconfigure the location of the reservoir to the Zone 1 hydraulic grade line. The construction of a reservoir and booster station in the hillside area above Riley Road would change visual character of the hillside. Development of these components would represent a potentially significant impact to visual character due to grading and changes in topography, removal of vegetation and placement of a structure in a hillside location.

Landscaping around the reservoir tanks and along access roads could provide a visual buffer between the tanks and surrounding areas. For example, trees and/or shrubs should be planted near the tanks to minimize the visual impacts to scenic vistas. Additionally, aesthetic treatments, such as careful selection of the reservoir paint color (low-reflective and camouflaging) and the use of aesthetically pleasing fencing materials would further minimize impacts to scenic vistas. Impacts are potentially significant.

Proposed Wells and Water Treatment Facilities

Photographs of the existing wells in the Santa Ynez River are presented in **Figures 5.11-1**. As explained in **Subsection 5.11.6.1**, views of Well Site A would be visible to viewers from the Alisal Bridge and Fjord Drive and would look similar to the existing wells shown on **Figure 5.11-1**.

The proposed wells that would be located along the Santa Ynez River in both Wells Sites A and B would each consist of a well pump and wellhead located on a well pad, which would be surrounded by a chain link enclosure. The development of these structures in the context of the undeveloped river floodplain would degrade the views in the area. To the extent that the wells could permanently degrade the visual character of the Santa Ynez River, the impact would be potentially significant. This is considered a potentially significant impact.

Operation of the treatment plant in the Alisal Commons open space area would introduce a new man-made structure to the mostly natural setting of the area. The building would be highly visible to users of the area, who would pass within 30 feet of the building when using the sidewalk on the east side of the Alisal Commons open space area. The building would also be visible to residents located west. In contrast, the building would be partially obscured by a slope to viewers along Alisal Road.

The proposed building would not create a significant visual impact to the Alisal Commons open space setting for the following reasons: (1) the building would be small relative to the size of the entire open space area; (2) the building would be partially obscured by a slope; (3) the building would be located on the margins of the open space; (4) the building would not block views; and (5) the building would not be a foreign visual feature because it would be designed with architecture and color scheme to match the adjacent SWP Booster Pump Station building. As such, the visual character impact from the water treatment plant would be less than significant.

State Water Right Permit

The proposed revision to water right Permit 125878 would provide an extension to the Existing Reach of Diversion downstream of the Alisal Bridge (see **Figure 2.0-4**) and installation of additional wells downstream in Wells Sites A and B and beyond the Existing Reach of Diversion. The proposed extension

of the Existing Reach of Diversion to include the Extended Reach of Diversion in water right Permit 15878 would not have any other aesthetics impacts. This would be less than significant (Class III).

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures AES-1 through AES-4 shall be implemented.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation (Class II). For operational conditions, impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

5.11.7 CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

5.11.7.1 Cumulative Impacts

The City of Solvang General Plan indicates that 497 additional residential units may be added to the City over the next 20 years. The new development under the City's General Plan would incrementally convert agricultural land or underdeveloped areas to residential uses and could result in significant impacts related to aesthetics. New development within the City would have the potential to significantly impact visual resources, which would be considered a significant cumulative impact. The components constructed under the proposed Master Plan Update would appear minor compared to residential development in the City and all potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant level with proposed mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed Master Plan Update would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to aesthetics. The impact would be less than significant (Class III).

5.11.7.2 Cumulative Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

5.11.7.3 Residual Cumulative Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).