

5.14 AESTHETICS

5.14.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Aesthetics

The Cadiz Project site is located in a generally undeveloped area in the Mojave Desert. The area has expansive views of sand, rocks and scrubby growth to views of distant mountain ranges. Parts of the north end of the Cadiz Project are currently cultivated. The green of citrus trees and table grapes contrasts sharply with the tans and muted tones of the native desert landscape. North of the northernmost cultivated land on the Cadiz Project site, there is a small airstrip with a temporary office. The only other development in the study area, aside from unpaved roads, is the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant at the southern end of the Cadiz Project area. The Iron Mountain Pumping Plant is owned and operated by Metropolitan. It consists of a pumping plant, forebay, electric power substation, housing for staff, maintenance facilities and a small airstrip.

There are no state or local scenic highways that have views of the Cadiz Project site.

There are several Federal Wilderness Areas managed by the BLM in the vicinity of the Cadiz Project, as shown later on Figure 5.17-1. The Trilobite Wilderness Area is north of the Cadiz Project site, with the closest boundary approximately 3.5 miles away. Much of this Wilderness Area is shielded from the Cadiz Project area by the southern part of the Marble Mountains. The Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area is east of the Cadiz Project area. The western boundary of this Wilderness Area is more than six miles from the location of the project wellfield wells and project spreading basins in the northern part of the Cadiz Project area. However, part of this Wilderness Area would be within several hundred feet of the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives conveyance and power distribution facilities. Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area is directly adjacent to the northerly segment of the water conveyance facility alignment common to all the Cadiz Project Alternatives. The northeast boundary of this Wilderness Area lies within a 100 feet of the alignment for a distance of approximately five miles. The southeast boundary of Cadiz Dunes wilderness area is also proximate to the Western Alternative. The Sheephole Valley Wilderness Area is west of the Cadiz Project area. At the closest point, the east boundary of this Wilderness Area is approximately five miles away.

Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives

Figure 5.14-1 illustrates the vantage points and directions from which photographs of existing views of the Cadiz Project area were taken. Photographs of existing views of the Cadiz Project area, shown in Figure 5.14-2, are described in the following sections.

Photo 1

This view is from the location of the project wellfield looking north/northwest. A field of table grapes is on the left side of the dirt road and an oleander hedge is on the right side. The Marble Mountains are in the far distance, outside the Cadiz Project area.

Photo 2

This view, looking northwest across the location of the project spreading basins, shows sparse vegetation stretching into the distance and the Marble Mountains in the background in the center and left of the photograph. The Clipper Mountains are visible in the right of the photograph. The BNSF

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rail lines which cross the Cadiz Project area on the north side of the location of the project spreading basins are not visible in this view.

Photo 3

This view is from the north side of Cadiz-Rice Road adjacent to the location of the proposed water conveyance and power distribution facilities looking southwest across Cadiz-Rice Road to the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area just beyond Cadiz-Rice Road. The light stripe in the distance is Cadiz Dry Lake and farther in the distance is the Calumet Mountain range. The location of the proposed water conveyance and power distribution facilities is behind the point where the photo was taken.

Photo 4

This view is from the southwest side of Cadiz-Rice Road looking across the location of the water conveyance and power distribution facilities to the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area and the Old Woman Mountains in the northeast. The location of the alignment for these facilities is between Cadiz-Rice Road and the ARZC track to the east. The edge of the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area is adjacent to the east side of the rail line at this view point. In the far left of the photograph, the ruins of the abandoned Chubbuck Station are visible.

Photo 5

This view is from Cadiz-Rice Road looking west across the location of the water conveyance and power distribution facilities and the Kilbeck Hills beyond.

Photo 6

This view looking south/ southwest is taken from south of Cadiz-Rice Road on an unnamed dirt road that crosses Danby Dry Lake. The canal segment of the Eastern/Canal Alternative would be visible here. Danby Dry Lake is visible as a light line across the photograph in front of the Iron Mountains in the distance. The water conveyance and power distribution facilities for the Eastern Alternative, between Danby Dry Lake and the Iron Mountains, would be approximately four miles from this view location. The dominant feature in the view is one of a series of Southern California Edison and Metropolitan electrical power transmission towers and high voltage lines. These facilities provide electricity to the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant, located on the far side of the Iron Mountains in this photograph, as well as to Southern California Edison customers.

Western Alternative

Figure 5.14-3 illustrates the vantage points and directions from which photographs of existing views of the Western Alternative were taken. Photographs of existing views of the Cadiz Project area are shown in Figure 5.14-4 and are described in the following sections.

Photos 1 through 3

Vantage points 1 through 3 on Figure 5.14-3 are the same as vantages point 1 through 3 shown earlier on Figure 5.14-1 for the Eastern Alternative. Photographs for these points are shown on Figure 5.14-2 and described in the text for the Eastern Alternative.

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Photo 4

This view is from a dirt road along the southeast boundary of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area looking across the location of the Western Alternative southeast to the Kilbeck Hills beyond. The most dominant feature is the range of hills in the distance.

Photo 5

This view is from a point on a dirt road approximately two miles east of the Sheephole Valley Wilderness Area boundary, looking to the northeast. Cadiz Dry Lake is visible as a light area in the center and left of the photo, the Ship Mountains are at the far left, the Kilbeck Hills are in the center of the photo in the distance and the Iron Mountains are in the right of the photo. The location of the water conveyance and power transmission facilities under the Western Alternative would run in front of the Iron Mountains and between Cadiz Dry Lake and the Kilbeck Hills. The location of the water conveyance and power transmission facilities would be approximately four miles from this photo point.

Photo 6

This view, looking north, is taken from the location of the Western Alternative substation which would be located immediately north of the Colorado River Aqueduct. The Iron Mountains are on the right and the Kilbeck Hills are just visible in the center of the photo. Cadiz Dunes are in the left of the photo. The water conveyance and power transmission facilities under the Western Alternative would run in a northwest direction from the center foreground into the distance toward the left of the photo, between Cadiz Dunes and the Kilbeck Hills.

Combination Alternative

Figure 5.14-5 illustrates the vantage points and directions from which photographs of existing views of the location of the Combination Alternative were taken. Photographs of existing views of the Cadiz Project area are shown in Figure 5.14-6 and are described in the following sections.

Photos 1 through 5

Vantage points 1 through 5 on Figure 5.14-5 are the same as vantage points 1 through 5 shown earlier on Figure 5.14.1 for the Eastern Alternative. Photographs for these points are shown on Figure 5.14-2 and are described in the text for the Eastern Alternative.

Photo 6

Vantage point 6 on Figure 5.14-5 is the same as vantage point 6 on Figure 5.14-3 for the Western Alternative. The photograph for this point is shown on Figure 5.14-4 and is described in the text for the Western Alternative.

Photo 7

This view is taken from the south side of the location of the water conveyance and power transmission facilities under the Combination Alternative looking toward the northwest, past Cadiz Dry Lake to the Calumet Mountains in the distance. This photo point is extremely remote and is not accessible from a road or four-wheel drive track.

Photo 8

This view is taken from the south side of the location of the conveyance facilities under the Combination Alternative looking north. The Kilbeck Hills are in the right of the photo.

Light and Glare

There are few sources of night light and glare in the vicinity of the Cadiz Project area because it is largely undeveloped. A slight amount of reflection is generated from the windows and bodies of vehicles using Cadiz-Rice Road and the other unpaved roads near the Cadiz Project area. However, traffic in the area is minimal. Night light is also present from infrequent vehicles using the roads after dark. Lights from several salt mining operations on Bristol and Cadiz dry lakes are visible in the evening hours. There is also night lighting at the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant.

5.14.2 CEQA THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

For purposes of CEQA, a project would normally have a significant adverse environmental impact related to aesthetics if it results in:

- A degree of visual contrast that exceeds the parameters of the BLM designated Visual Resource Management classifications.
- A substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, such as construction and operation activities that strongly contrast with the existing landscape, resulting in discordant elements that would adversely affect the visual quality of a sensitive viewpoint.
- Substantial damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to: trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings visible from a state or local scenic highway.
- Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings.
- The creation of a new source of light or glare which will adversely affect views in the project area during the day or night.

For a further discussion of CEQA thresholds of significance, see Section 5.20.

5.14.3 METHODOLOGY

The potential visual impacts of the Cadiz Project were assessed based on the existing visual characteristics of the site and the surrounding area. The assessment also included the character of the completed Cadiz Project and the Cadiz Project under construction that will be visible from adjacent sensitive land uses. Photographs of the existing area and anticipated changes in views with the Cadiz Project were reviewed. Photographs of the existing visual conditions in the Cadiz Project area and changes in views that would be expected if the Cadiz Project were completed, assisted in identifying the potential aesthetic impacts of the Cadiz Project.

The BLM uses a system called Visual Resource Management (VRM) to: 1) define visual quality and scenic values for land that it manages and to 2) determine acceptable levels of visual modification to these lands. The system has five classes, each with a different degree of acceptable modification to the basic visual elements of form, line, color and texture. The VRM classes are as follows:

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Class I. Areas where natural ecological changes and very limited management alterations are allowed. Any contrast created in an existing landscape must not attract attention. This class applies to wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers and similar situations.

Class II. Areas where changes in any of the basic visual elements of form, line, color and texture caused by a project should not be evident in the existing characteristic landscape. Contrasts may be seen but should not be evident.

Class III. Areas where contrasts to basic elements caused by a project may be evident, but should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

Class IV. Areas where project-created contrasts can attract attention and may be dominant landscape features in terms of scale. However, the changes should repeat the form, line, color and/or texture in the existing characteristic landscape.

Class V. Areas where the natural character of the landscape has been disturbed to a point where rehabilitation is needed to allow the terrain to be classified into one of the previous four classifications.

The changes in views anticipated with implementation of the Cadiz Project were compared with the visual modifications allowed for the assigned VRM classification. Visual impacts of the Cadiz Project were determined to be within or outside of the allowable VRM classification parameter.

The potential light and glare impacts associated with the Cadiz Project were assessed by comparing anticipated future light and glare that will be generated in the Cadiz Project area to the existing light and glare characteristic of the Cadiz Project area and adjacent areas.

5.14.4 IMPACTS

Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives

Project Wellfield and Project Spreading Basins

Changes in Visual Character. A wellfield consisting of 30 wells, piping and manifold, and approximately 390 acres of project spreading basins would be located at the north end of the Cadiz Project area. A site plan for the project wellfield is provided in Section 4. Each well site would typically be 80 feet by 130 feet enclosed by 6-foot high chain link fence. Inside the fence, crushed gravel would surround the 35 foot by 75 foot concrete slab that supports the well equipment. Equipment would include pipe, various types of valves, gauges and meters, pump motor and starter equipment, a lighting panel and an SCADA panel. The tallest equipment will be up to 12 feet high. The well sites would typically be at least one-half mile apart.

Project wellfield substations would be located in the project wellfield. A typical substation plan is provided in Section 4. A typical substation would be 50 feet by 95 feet enclosed with 6-foot high chain link fence. Equipment would include various batteries, a switcher separated from a transformer by a 10-foot high concrete wall and connected by an overhead duct, two disconnect switches and an oil circuit breaker. A cable would connect the disconnect switch with overhead power lines. The tallest element on the site would be the duct at approximately 12 feet high.

The project spreading basins would be constructed by scraping the soil surface and building up the scraped soil to form berms for the sides of the basins. The berms would be low, with a maximum

height of four to five feet, and would be composed of native soils having the same texture and color as the adjacent landscape. The area of the project spreading basins would look different than the surrounding area because the existing vegetation would be removed. Although the shapes of the project spreading basins would be visible from high elevations, such as parts of the Ship or Marble mountains, the project spreading basins would blend with the earth tones of the surrounding landscape during periods when the basins are empty. When the project spreading basins contain water, the water surface would contrast with the existing landscape in color and texture from these same high elevation views. However, the project spreading basins area would be level and not much higher than ground level (four to five feet above ground level). Therefore, when viewed from the valley floor, the basins, and any water they might intermittently contain, would not be noticeable.

Visual Contrast Analysis. The areas of the Cadiz Project wellfield and spreading basins have a BLM-designated VRM classification of III. In this class, contrasts to the basic visual elements of form, line, color and texture created by a project may be evident but should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

There are existing extraction wells on the Cadiz Project site. Three of these existing wells, with the addition of upgraded motors, would be used for the Cadiz Project. The addition of the motors would not substantively alter the appearance of these wells. However, the project wellfield facilities and substations would contrast in form and line with the characteristic landscape. The contrast would occur because the project wellfield would be at least one-half mile from existing Cadiz Inc. agricultural operations wells, and there are no elements in the existing landscape adjacent to the project wellfield that are geometrically shaped. Although the new well facilities and substations would be evident from near views, they have low profiles. The tallest point would be 12 feet high and most of the equipment would be within a few feet of the ground level. The chain link fence will become indistinct from a distance. These elements would be subordinate to the panoramic views of open expanse and distant mountains ranges. Therefore, these Cadiz Project elements would be within the VRM contrast parameters established for the area and these Cadiz Project impacts related to aesthetics would be below a level of significance.

The project spreading basins, which are proposed for an area with a VRM classification of III, would blend in with the surrounding landscape during periods when the project spreading basins would be empty. The berms forming the sides of the basins would be low, with a maximum height of four to five feet, and would be composed of native soils having the same texture and color as the adjacent landscape. The area of the project spreading basins would look different than the surrounding area because vegetation would be permanently removed. When the project spreading basins contain water, the surface would contrast with the existing landscape in color and texture. However, the project spreading basin area and vicinity are level and the basins are not much higher than ground level (four to five feet). Therefore, when viewed from the valley floor, the project spreading basins would not be noticeable. When filled, the project spreading basins would be more obvious from higher elevations such as parts of the Ship or Marble Mountains, much of which are managed by BLM. The project spreading basins would be filled on an intermittent basis. In some years they may contain water for several weeks or months, at other times water may not be pumped to the basins for a year or more. The project spreading basins would contrast with the existing landscape only on the intermittent occasions when they are filled with water and at these times would only be noticeable from elevated views. Therefore, the project spreading basins would be considered to be within the VRM Class III parameters established for the area and impacts associated with the project spreading basins related to aesthetics would be below a level of significance.

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Pumping Plants

Changes in Visual Character. For the Eastern Alternative, the Cadiz Pumping Plant would be located at the existing Iron Mountain Pumping Plant east of the existing pump house and north of the forebay. The Cadiz Pumping Plant has been designed to be compatible with the existing Iron Mountain Pumping Plant buildings. The plant would be built on vacant land and the existing Iron Mountain Pumping Plant landscaping would not be altered or disturbed.

The Eastern/Canal Alternative would have two new pumping plants located at the northern (Intermediate Pumping Plant No. 1) and southern (Intermediate Pumping Plant No. 2) end points of the canal section of the water conveyance facility. These pumping plants would be similar to the Cadiz Pumping Plant, but would be located within the water conveyance facility right-of-way.

Visual Contrast Analysis. The Cadiz Pumping Plant would be constructed adjacent to an area that has historic buildings. The Cadiz Pumping Plant at the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant would be designed to be visually compatible with these existing historic structures. Therefore, the contrast between the Cadiz Pumping Plant and the existing structures would be minimal. The Cadiz Pumping Plant would be within the VRM Class III parameters established for the area. Therefore, the impacts of the Cadiz Pumping Plant related to aesthetics would be below a level of significance.

The two intermediate pumping plants for the Eastern/Canal alternative would be constructed in an area of the water conveyance alignment with a VRM classification of IV. These pumping plants would be within VRM Class III parameters and therefore would be visually compatible in a lesser Class IV context.

Water Conveyance and Power Distribution Facilities

Changes in Visual Character. Within the project area there is a single-wire, wood pole supported electric line along a segment of the ARZC track. This electric line ends approximately three miles north of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area. There are electric lines supported by wood poles along the BNSF rail line that cross the Cadiz project area along the north side of the spreading basins. There are overhead electric lines providing service to the El Paso Natural Gas Company facility and to facilities located at Cadiz.

Following implementation of the Cadiz Project, the power distribution facilities, comprised of new utility poles and lines, would be visible from the adjacent areas including Cadiz-Rice Road and BLM lands and wilderness areas. The location of the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives water conveyance and power distribution facilities would be within 100 feet of Cadiz-Rice Road for a distance of approximately 13.5 miles. Power poles and lines and ground disturbance associated with the installation of the water conveyance facility would be most apparent to users of this road.

The location of the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives water conveyance and power distribution facilities would be within several hundred feet of the west boundary of the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area for approximately 1.25 miles. The alignment for these facilities is within 100 feet of the eastern boundary of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area for approximately five miles. As a viewer would move farther away from the power distribution facilities, the poles and lines would be less and less distinct in the view, especially when viewed against the backdrop of the distant mountain ranges. Ground surface disturbance from the installation of the water conveyance facility would also be visible from adjacent areas. An approximate 200 foot-wide construction area for the water conveyance facility would be altered by crushing or grubbing of vegetation and stockpiling and respreading vegetation and topsoil causing a visible mark on the landscape.

For the Eastern Alternative, after the completion of pipeline construction, an 80-foot wide right-of-way for operation and maintenance of the Cadiz Program would remain. Within this 80-foot right-of-way there would be located a 20-foot wide, dirt maintenance road and alongside this road there would be located distribution facilities and low markers (to show the location of the underground pipeline).

For the Eastern/Canal Alternative, a 120-foot wide permanent right-of-way would remain for the canal segment. Within this 120 feet would be the canal and two 10-foot wide maintenance roads, one on each side of the canal. Berms forming the sides of the canal would be visible from a distance.

Currently, visitors to the Cadiz Dunes and Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Areas experience views of vast expanses of open desert land interspersed by linear features including utility poles and lines, unpaved roads and railroad tracks. With implementation of the Cadiz Project's water conveyance facility (underground pipeline or pipeline and canal), power distribution facility and scarring from the temporary right-of-way, visual disturbance from additional man made linear features would be introduced into the area. The closer these project features would be to a viewer, the more noticeable they would be and the greater the intrusion would be on the sense of open wild land. Both the Cadiz Dunes and the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Areas extend a considerable distance away from the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives. Cadiz Dunes extends 4.5 to six miles away from the adjacent alignment and the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area extends more than 17 miles away from the alignment. Therefore, the utility lines and surface disturbance would not be particularly noticeable from major portions of these Wilderness Areas, nor would they be noticeable from roads and BLM lands similarly distant from the alignment. However, the Eastern/Canal Alternative would have additional visual impacts because its seven mile canal section would be visible from the hills on both sides of Danby Dry Lake, as well as from the valley floor. The concrete canal would be empty for long periods and would only contain water during spreading and withdrawal operations.

Visual Contrast Analysis. From the southernmost end of the conveyance and power distribution facilities alignment to approximately two miles north of Chubbuck, the VRM classification is IV, and from this point north to the end of the conveyance facilities and power distribution facilities the classification is III. The power distribution facility would contrast in form and line with the characteristic landscape, as there are relatively few elements in the existing landscape that are tall and straight. The construction zone, with the exception of the dirt road and power distribution facility is expected to be revegetated. However, due to the arid conditions in the Cadiz Project area, it would be expected that many years would pass before the vegetation is mature enough to be indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. The scar from disturbance in the construction right-of-way would be visible for a long period of time.

Although the utility poles and surface scarring from construction would be evident from near views such as Cadiz-Rice Road and adjacent parts of wilderness areas, they would be less and less distinct from more distant views. This is especially the case when poles would be viewed against the backdrop of distant mountain ranges. The right-of-way disturbance would not be noticeable in the distance from the valley floor but would be more noticeable from higher elevations which may be used by visitors on BLM lands.

Although the utility poles and construction disturbance would contrast with the existing landscape, they would be subordinate to the panoramic views of open expanse and distant mountains. Therefore, these Cadiz Project elements would be within the VRM contrast parameters established

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for the area and the Cadiz Project impacts related to aesthetics would be below a level of significance.

Light and Glare Impacts

There would be night lighting associated with the project wellfield and substations and pumping plants. There would be no lighting associated with the operation of the water conveyance and power distribution facilities. Lighting would be used during construction. Lighting would be noticeable in the project wellfield because there are few, if any, other sources of light in this area. The addition of light at the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant would not be obvious because other sources of light are present at the existing Iron Mountain facility. Night lighting at the intermediate pumping plants for the Eastern/Canal Alternative would be visible from Cadiz Rice Road. Although the Cadiz Project would introduce new sources of light to the Cadiz Project area, implementation of mitigation measure AS-2 would reduce the potential impacts related to light to below a level of significance.

Some glare would be generated from fencing and/or other metallic or hard, smooth surfaces associated with the project spreading basins, wellfield and substations. However, this glare would be minimal because of the relatively small scale of these facilities. The reflective water surface in the project spreading basins could generate considerable glare, depending on the acreage covered with water at a given time. Potentially, 330 acres of water surface would be generated. The water surface in the canal on the Eastern/Canal Alternative could also introduce glare when viewed from higher elevations. However, as described earlier, the project spreading basins would be filled on an intermittent basis. In some years they may contain water for several weeks or months, at other times water may not be pumped to the project spreading basins for a year or more. Also, the project spreading basins would not be noticeable from the valley floor but only from elevated vantage points such as parts of the Ship and Marble mountains. Therefore, the potential impacts of the project spreading basins associated with glare are considered to be below a level of significance.

Construction Related Impacts

During implementation of the Cadiz Project, construction activities would be visible, and construction noise would be evident from areas adjacent to the active construction zone. Construction activities would include topsoil removal and stockpiling, trench and basin excavation, utility preservation/relocation, pipe and power pole placement, well drilling, power line and equipment installation, backfill, concrete pouring and appurtenant construction. It is anticipated that construction of the project wellfield would take up to 18 months to complete. Project spreading basin construction would be expected to last approximately eight months and the Cadiz Pumping Plant would have a construction period of 18 months. Construction of the conveyance and power distribution facilities would be approximately 18 months. Within that 18-month period, it would be anticipated that construction activities may last up to three months along the adjacent boundary with Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area and a much shorter period than this along the boundary with the Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area.

These short-term aesthetic impacts associated with the construction of the proposed Cadiz Project would be temporary but substantial. Views for users of Cadiz-Rice Road and portions of the wilderness areas and BLM lands near the Cadiz Project area would be of heavy construction equipment, supply trucks, pipeline trenches and other excavated areas. Because these construction impacts related to aesthetics would be of relatively short duration, they are not considered as important as long-term effects. These construction impacts would therefore be considered to be adverse, but not significant.

Western Alternative

Project Wellfield and Project Spreading Basins

The aesthetic impacts of the project wellfield and project spreading basins related to aesthetics are the same for the Western Alternative as described earlier for the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives. They will be less than significant.

Pumping Plant

Changes in Visual Character. The West Portal facilities would include a forebay similar to the existing forebay at the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant. Pumping plant and substation facilities under the Western Alternative construction would be similar to those for the Cadiz Pumping Plant described under the Eastern Alternative only they would be introduced into a more remote area with few existing man-made features.

Visual Contrast Analysis

The proposed forebay would be similar to but wider than the adjacent Colorado River Aqueduct. Visually, the forebay would blend with the Colorado River Aqueduct. The West Portal pumping plant would contrast in form and line with the characteristic landscape, as there are no elements in the existing landscape that are geometrically shaped like the pumping plant. However, mitigation measure AS-1 would require that the earth tone color of the facility blend with the landscape. The pump plant would be also small in scale and would be subordinate to the panoramic views of open expanse and distant mountain ranges. Therefore, the pumping plant and forebay, which would blend with the existing Colorado River Aqueduct, would be within the VRM Class III parameters established for this area. The impacts of these elements related to aesthetics would be below a level of significance.

Water Conveyance and Power Distribution Facilities

The Western Alternative is within several hundred feet of the southeast boundary of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area for approximately 1.25 miles and within 100 feet of the east boundary of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area for approximately five miles. The effects along these parts of the Western Alternative and the balance of the alignment are the same as described previously for the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives. However, the southern segment of the Western Alternative is an area with few man-made features. From the southernmost end of the water conveyance facilities alignment to Cadiz-Rice Road the VRM classification is III, with the exception of a section of the alignment extending from the east edge of Cadiz Dunes to the west edge of the Kilbeck Hills that is Class IV. The VRM classification from the intersection with Cadiz-Rice Road north to the end to the water conveyance facilities alignment is a Class IV. The Cadiz Project elements associated with the water conveyance and power distribution facilities would be within the VRM contrast parameters established for a Class III area and would therefore be compatible with both the Class III and Class IV segments of this alignment.

Therefore, the level of significance of impacts of the water conveyance facilities related to aesthetics for the Western Alternative would be the same as for the Eastern Alternative, less than significant.

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Light and Glare

The impacts of the Western Alternative related to light and glare are less than significant, the same as for the Eastern Alternative.

Construction

The impacts of the Western Alternative related to construction are less than significant, the same as for the Eastern Alternative.

Combination Alternative

Project Wellfield and Project Spreading Basins

The Cadiz Project impacts related to aesthetics are the same for the Combination alternative as those described earlier for the Eastern, Eastern/Canal and Western alternatives for the extraction wells and spreading basins. They are less than significant.

Pumping Plant

The impacts of the West Portal Facilities related to aesthetics are the same for the Combination Alternative as those described earlier for the Western Alternative. They are less than significant.

Water Conveyance and Power Distribution Facilities

From the southernmost end of the conveyance facilities and power distribution facilities alignment to northwest of the Iron Mountains, the VRM classification is III. From this point to approximately two miles north of Chubbuck, the VRM classification is IV and the remainder of the alignment from this point north is Class III. The Cadiz Project elements associated with the water conveyance and power distribution facilities would be within the VRM contrast parameters established for a Class III area and would therefore be compatible with both the Class III and Class IV segments of this alignment.

The Cadiz Project impacts related to aesthetics are the same for the water conveyance and power distribution facilities for the Combination Alternative as those described earlier for the Eastern Alternative. These impacts are less than significant.

Light and Glare

Similar to the Eastern Alternative, the impacts of the Combination Alternative related to light and glare would be less than significant.

Construction

Similar to the Eastern, Eastern/Canal and Western alternatives, the temporary construction impacts of the Combination Alternative would be less than significant.

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Cadiz Project would not be constructed. Therefore, views in the area would remain as they currently exist and there would be no impacts to aesthetics caused by the project.

5.14.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measure AS-1 applies to the Western, Combination and Eastern/Canal Alternatives to ensure that the color of the pumping plants at the West Portal and along the canal segment blend with the existing landscape.

AS-1 The Pumping Plants at the West Portal and the Canal will be constructed of earth-toned materials, such as block or painted earth tones.

Mitigation measures AS-2 and AS-3 apply to all the alternatives.

AS-2 Metropolitan shall ensure that all outdoor lighting and fixtures are shielded or designed and located so that direct light is contained within the project site so that adjacent properties including BLM lands are protected from spillover light.

AS-3 All permanent project night-lighting will be controlled by a switch or motion sensor so that fixtures do not remain lit continuously during the evening and night hours.

5.14.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

With the application of the above mitigation measures; AS-1 and AS-2, none of the project alternatives results in a visual contrast that exceeds the parameters of the BLM designated Visual Resource Management Classification. In addition, no significant adverse aesthetics impacts will result, nor will scenic resources be adversely affected. The visual quality of the area will not be significantly degraded by any of the Cadiz Project alternative.

There are also no state or scenic highways in the Cadiz Project area and, therefore, no Cadiz Project impacts related to aesthetics on scenic highways. As a result, residual impacts on aesthetics will be less than significant for all Cadiz Project alternatives.