

C.13 VISUAL RESOURCES

This section addresses the environmental setting and impacts related to the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and alternatives. Specifically, Section C.13.1 provides a description of the environmental baseline and regulatory settings, followed by an environmental impacts analysis of the Proposed Action in Section C.13.2. Impact analysis for the alternatives is provided in subsequent sections.

C.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE AND REGULATORY SETTING

This section addresses the environmental baseline and regulatory setting for visual resources as it relates to the proposed project and alternatives.

C.13.1.1 Environmental Setting

The study area for visual resources includes areas immediately adjacent to the proposed project and alternative routes located in the Cities of Carson, Long Beach, Bellflower, Cerritos, Norwalk, and the Rancho Dominguez area of unincorporated Los Angeles County. The pipeline would be placed almost entirely within existing streets.

The topography of the study area is primarily characterized by flat urban lands of the Los Angeles Basin. The study area can be characterized as highly urbanized. Urban environments crossed by the pipeline route, from west to east, range from heavy industry, to commercial, and residential land uses. There are scattered open space areas such as the Los Angeles River channel, Compton Creek, and the San Gabriel River channel. At any given point along the proposed and alternative routes background views in the study area are typical of city landscapes with a mixture of vistas including:

- Major freeways such as the I-710, I-605, and the Artesia Freeway (91)
- City streets
- Heavy and light industrial uses such as refineries and warehouses
- Commercial enterprises such as car dealerships and strip malls
- Scattered residential uses such as trailer and mobile home parks, and single- and multi-family dwelling units
- Various institutional uses such as City government offices, churches, libraries, schools, and universities
- Intermittent recreational uses such as parks and golf courses.

For the exact location and description of land uses in the immediate vicinity and surrounding areas of the proposed project and alternatives, see Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation).

People that might be affected by visual impacts associated with the proposed project and alternatives would include motorists using roadways adjacent to the pipeline route, occupants of adjacent residences, business owners/patrons, and users of nearby recreational facilities. Public visual access to the pipeline route and proposed facilities varies throughout the route. The route is very visible to the public where it parallels

major streets. At some places, the route crosses areas less visible to the general public, such as the Watson and Norwalk Stations.

It is expected that some construction may take place at night where permitted, to minimize traffic and land use impacts. Night construction would require the use of large, high-powered flood lights to illuminate the pipeline ROW for construction activities.

Watson Station. The Watson Station is located on Del Amo Boulevard in the City of Carson. In this facility, products are received and stored in 17 storage tanks. This station can be characterized as a heavy industrial land use containing facilities and equipment related to product shipment. This station is located within a heavily industrial area of Carson, surrounded by petroleum facilities such as refineries. Generally, vistas in this area are of poor quality.

Norwalk Station. The property on which Norwalk Station is located is a 50-acre military tank storage facility, and it is located in a residential area of the City of Norwalk. SFPP operates a pump station on a 2-acre easement within the 50-acre tank farm property. Other equipment at the site, include product meters and provers. The tree-lined boundary of this station blocks views of the station to the surrounding residences and vehicular traffic.

Industry Station. Located near the southeast corner of Brea Canyon Road and Valley Boulevard in the City of Industry, this station currently consists of only one pump and a maintenance building in a fenced enclosure of approximately 1 acre immediately north of the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The station is located on the north side of the railroad tracks away from street traffic and residences.

C.13.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Standards

At the county and city level, General Plan Open Space Elements, Scenic Elements, and Scenic Highway and Pathway Elements and Plans provide goals, objectives, and policies addressing the protection of scenic resources and views. These plans can affect the siting, construction, and operation of industrial development. Specific goals, objectives, and policies are listed in Section C.8 (Land Use and Public Recreation). Local visual resources management objectives that could potentially apply to the Proposed Project and alternatives are summarized below.

City of Cerritos General Plan

- Policy 7.12 (2) - All storage, refuse, and maintenance areas must be enclosed or screened from view by solid barriers
- Policy 7.12 (2) - Signing will be controlled by regulations governing size, placement, and lighting with the most restrictive measures applying to industrial uses directly abutting or across a roadway from residential uses.

City of Norwalk General Plan. Although the City of Norwalk General Plan does not address oil pipelines, it establishes a set of policies and objectives for the Defense Fuel Support Point (DFSP)

Norwalk site which is owned and operated by the Army. This site contains SFPP's Norwalk Station facilities (the terminus of the proposed pipeline). The General Plan notes that the location of this industrial facility (50 acres) is incompatible with adjacent sensitive uses such as residences. General plan policies encourage relocation of the facility and redevelopment of the site into a residential community or City or public facility (Norwalk, 1996). Other City policies applicable to visual resources include:

- Requirements that industrial developments incorporate adequate buffers for any abutting residential which adequately protect from adverse impacts due to noise, light, view, visibility of and from industrial activity, vehicular traffic and parking, and risks to property.
- Rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, industrial, and public commercial, industrial, and public facility and right-of-way improvements should be reviewed for consistency and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, district, and the overall community

Los Angeles County General Plan

- Policy 15 (Quality and Compatible Design Section) - Protect the character of residential neighborhoods by preventing the intrusion of incompatible uses that would cause environmental degradation such as excessive noise, noxious fumes, glare, shadowing and traffic.
- Land Use Element, Appendix B - Signs are not to block significant views, cause visual clutter, or disrupt the sight line to the horizon. Where permitted, signs, including off-premise outdoor advertising signs, are to be carefully designed to have a minimum impact on scenic features.

C.13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES: PROPOSED PROJECT

C.13.2.1 Significance Criteria

The factors considered in determining impacts to visual resources typically include the scenic quality of the project site and vicinity; the frequency and extent to which the landscape is viewed; the degree to which the proposed project and alternatives would dominate the view of the observer; the resulting contrast of the proposed facilities with existing visual resources; and the level of public interest in the existing landscape characteristics and concern over potential changes.

The criteria used to assess the significance of visual impacts resulting from the proposed pipeline take into consideration these factors, as well as relevant policies and guidelines pertaining to visual resources. An impact to visual resources is considered significant if it results in one or more of the following:

- Direct, permanent changes to the existing scenic character of a landscape that is viewed by a large number of viewers
- A high level of visual contrast as related to spatial characteristics, visual scale, texture, line, and color
- The change of a visual resource that would require more than three years to restore to its original character
- The impairment of, or obstruction to, views of scenic resources identified in federal, state, and local plans
- Changes that would add significantly to a cumulative visual alteration
- Changes that would generate new sources of glare that would be hazardous to motorists or pedestrians

- Changes that would generate new sources of light that would interfere with normal nighttime activities.

The impact analyses contained in the following sections evaluate the significance of project-related impacts to visual resources in accordance with these criteria.

C.13.2.2 Applicant Proposed Measures

The SFPP Proponent's Environmental Assessment did not address visual resources. However, several aspects of SFPP's project description have the potential to reduce potential impacts to visual resources:

- SFPP will return the ROW to its original condition after construction, including removal of debris, construction signs, and surplus materials, and re-paving affected streets.
- Where a waterway is crossed on a bridge (e.g., Artesia Boulevard crossing of the San Gabriel River), the insulated pipeline could be installed in an outer casing painted to blend into the environment.

C.13.2.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Pipeline Construction

The pipeline would be placed almost entirely within the existing streets as the project area is highly urbanized. While SFPP states that construction is expected to proceed at 300 to 500 feet per day, recent experience in Los Angeles area urban construction has demonstrated that urban construction often moves more slowly, sometimes at less than 200 feet per day.

Construction impacts on visual resources would result from the presence of equipment, materials and work force along the ROW. Vehicles, heavy equipment and workers would be visible during all pipeline construction activities including ditching; hauling and stringing of line pipe; pipe bending; welding and welding inspection; coating and insulation of pipe welds; lowering and tying in; backfilling; hydrostatic testing; and ROW cleanup and re-paving. A variety of project components would be visible in the project area, include pipe sections; pipe fittings; valve assemblies; valve vaults; shoring pile; coating supplies; welding materials; cement, aggregate, gravel, sand and slurry for backfill at street crossings; asphalt for re-paving; and signs and fencing.

Construction equipment and activities would be seen by motorists driving on streets adjacent to the pipeline ROW, by residents and businesses on the ROW, and by pedestrians in the project area. Construction vehicles, equipment and workers would constitute a visual intrusion to these people. Although there are a large number of potential viewers within the project area, the visual impact of project construction is not anticipated to be significant due to the highly disturbed urban nature of the area and the degraded visual quality resulting from existing development. Given the temporary nature of construction activities, visual impacts would be adverse (**Class III**), but not significant.

SFPP has proposed to store construction materials at the facilities of contractors and suppliers providing equipment, supplies or labor to the project. Additional staging areas may be required but would typically be in empty warehouses, parking areas, or other developed areas. Although the visual impacts of

construction are not expected to be significant, the adverse impacts could be reduced with the application of Mitigation Measure V-1.

Impact: Construction activities and equipment would result in visual intrusion to viewers along the ROW (**Class III**).

V-1 SFPP shall confine construction activities and materials storage to within the specified (50-foot maximum) pipeline ROW, at above-ground facility sites (such as existing stations), and within temporary construction yards. All food-related trash (wrappers, cans, food scraps, etc.) shall be disposed of in closed containers, and the containers regularly removed from the construction site.

In addition to construction activities on urban streets, there would be three river crossings along the ROW. Pipeline river crossing techniques include:

- At the Los Angeles River crossing the pipeline would be bored under the river channel. Boring requires bore pits on each side of the channel (bore pits would be approximately 30 feet by 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep). The western pit would be located in the utility corridor (between the 710 Freeway and the river); the eastern pit would be in DeForest Park. Bore pits would be excavated with a backhoe outside the paved storm water channel. Depth of the pits would depend on final pipeline depth. Spoils from the excavation would be placed alongside the pits. Spoils would be used as backfill and wet spoils would be placed in detention basins if uncontaminated and otherwise suitable.
- At the Compton Creek crossing, the open cut technique would be used which involves a trench to be cut across from bank-to-bank. The trench will be deep enough to allow the pipe to be placed a minimum of 5 feet below the 100-year scour depth of the stream channel. The creek would be crossed during the normal period of low flow. The creek would be returned to its original configuration, substrate replaced, and banks stabilized.
- SFPP proposes to cross the San Gabriel River on the existing Artesia Boulevard bridge, which SFPP believes has room to install the pipeline. The pipeline is proposed to be attached to the outside of bridges using structural steel braces fastened to the bridge or other techniques that may be developed and implemented as part of final project design. Where exposed above ground, the insulated pipeline could be installed in an outer casing painted to blend into the environment.

Visual impacts at the Los Angeles River crossing are expected to be similar to the impacts of street construction. Given that the pipeline would be bored under the river channel, the only source of visual intrusion would be the short-term construction activities associated with bore pits, and only the eastern pit (DeForest Park) would be visible to the public. Similar to street construction, this visual intrusion would be short-term, resulting in an adverse (**Class III**), but not significant impact.

The Compton Creek crossing would represent a slightly increased level of visual intrusion, since a trench would be cut in the soft bottom creek channel from bank-to-bank. However, since the crossing would occur in an industrial area, the creek is proposed to be returned to its original configuration, and the visual intrusion would only occur for the duration of construction activities within the channel; therefore impacts would not be significant (**Class III**).

Construction of the San Gabriel River Bridge crossing would also represent an adverse (**Class III**), but not significant impact since impacts would be similar to street construction.

The potential for night construction is addressed in Section C.12, Traffic and Transportation. If implemented, light and glare sources from night time construction would include construction vehicle lights and light emanating from high-powered flood lights used to illuminate the ROW. The intrusion of this light source would present a potential significant impact on motorists, residents, and pedestrians along the ROW. Light and glare emanating from construction sites has the potential to impair the vision of motorists and pedestrians leading to unsafe driving and walking conditions. In addition, the normal night time activities of residences, such as sleeping, could be disturbed. These impacts can be mitigated to **Class II** by Mitigation Measure V-2.

Impact: Visual intrusion of night time construction lights on motorists, pedestrians, and residences along the ROW (**Class II**).

V-2 Night time construction lights shall be directed away from the visual field of motorists and pedestrians along the ROW. **Unless approved by the local jurisdiction**, no night construction should occur within 500 yards of any residence or non-residential sensitive receptor with night-time use, includes construction at the Norwalk Station which abuts a residential development. All adjacent landowners **and residents** shall be given 7 days written notice of upcoming night construction; the notice shall include the specific times, locations, and locations of night construction activities.

C.13.2.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Station Modification

Watson Station. Modifications to the existing Watson Station in the City of Carson include addition of two new electric pumps and new metering equipment within existing station boundaries. Given that this station is located within a heavily industrial area, the modifications would not constitute a noticeable visual alteration to the overall characteristic or aesthetic quality of the area. In addition, since activities associated with station modification would occur within the existing facility, it is unlikely that many viewers such as motorists and pedestrians would be able to observe these activities. Therefore, visual impacts of the Watson Station modifications would be negligible.

Norwalk Station. Activities at the Norwalk Station include installation of the 16-inch pipeline from the street to the SFPP station facilities, and piping modifications to connect the proposed pipeline to the existing pipeline. All modifications would occur within the boundaries of the existing station. Views of the Norwalk Station are blocked to viewers by its tree-lined boundary, so it is unlikely that activities associated with modifications would be visible to motorists, pedestrians, and residences. Residences that could potentially be affected are the houses that abut the station property on its southern boundary. However, a wall separates the views of these residences from station activities. Furthermore the modifications would not result in a visually significant alteration of the station. Therefore, visual impacts of the Norwalk Station modifications would be negligible. If night construction were to occur at this

station, the visual intrusion of construction lights could have a significant impact on the residences abutting the station. However, this impact can be mitigated to **Class II** with the application of Mitigation Measure V-2 (above).

Industry Station. Modifications at the Industry Station include installation of two new electric pumps and the re-routing of SFPP's existing 16-inch line from the south side of the adjacent railroad tracks through the station. This station can be accessed from Brea Canyon Road. Valley Boulevard is located on the north side of the station and there are agricultural fields located to the south. The station is located within a triangular-shaped parcel of land located between railroad tracks adjacent to the agricultural fields, and a flood control channel located adjacent to Valley Boulevard. There is a 15-foot high berm that screens views of the station from Valley Boulevard motorists and residences. The elevated railroad track on the south side of the station visually screens the station to viewers from the south. The station is not visible from Brea Canyon Road. Pipeline re-routing activities are similar to pipeline construction activities, and pumps would be installed within the boundaries of the existing station. Equipment and materials would be present for re-routing and pump installation. However, given that the station is visually screened from the surrounding land uses visual impacts of modifications are expected to be negligible.

C.13.2.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Project Operation

In general, operation of the proposed pipeline is not expected to have a significant effect on visual resources within the study area. Upon completion of pipeline construction, the pipeline would not be visible to viewers since it is located subsurface to streets, or it is bored under and trenched through river channels. The majority of the pipeline would be installed under paved streets, requiring pavement removal and patching. This new pavement strip may be darker than the original pavement. However, this impact would be negligible because the darker pavement strip would not be a prominent feature in the viewshed of the surrounding urban environment, and the viewer's attention will primarily be drawn to other motor vehicles, structures, and activities adjacent to the pipeline ROW. Over time, the pavement strip would fade to match the surrounding asphalt.

At the Artesia Boulevard Bridge crossing, SFPP has stated that the pipeline would be installed in an outer casing painted to blend into the environment where it is exposed and is not expected to result in great visual contrast to the bridge itself. Thus, project operation would not constitute permanent change in the existing visual quality of pipeline ROW. Furthermore, since all three of SFPP's stations are existing industrial facilities, project operation and maintenance activities would not result in any visual alteration of the existing conditions.

C.13.2.6 Secondary Impacts of Project Operation

Proposed project operation would result in increased throughput in the CalNev Pipeline (Colton to Las Vegas) and SFPP's Phoenix-West Pipeline (Colton to Arizona) as well as increased transfer of product

from SFPP to trucks at the Colton Terminal. This increase in the transfer of products, through pipelines or via trucks traveling on existing routes, is not expected to have a significant secondary impacts on visual resources

C.13.2.7 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts to visual resources could occur as a result of the proposed project and other projects occupying the same field of view. The cumulative impact depends on the degree to which the viewshed is altered; visual access to scenic resources is impaired; scenic character is diminished; or the project's visual contrast is increased. It is also possible that a cumulative impact could occur if a viewer's perception was that the general quality of an area was diminished by the proliferation of visible structures, even if the structures were not all within the same field of view. If the proposed pipeline is not visible or noticeable because it is buried beneath a disturbed area or street, then a cumulative impact would not occur.

A cumulative visual impact would be considered significant if it added to significant impacts of the project or resulted in the conditions identified in the Significance Criteria. Short-term cumulative impacts may occur if other projects in close proximity to the pipeline are constructed at the same time as the pipeline. In these cases, construction activities and/or equipment associated with both projects may be visible within the same field of view. However, the construction period for each pipeline segment is sufficiently short that cumulative construction impacts would not be considered significant.

Significant long-term cumulative visual impacts are not expected to occur along the proposed route for the following reasons:

- Most of the proposed route is located within existing streets and its presence would not be noticeable
- Station modifications are effectively screened from view by existing station boundaries.

C.13.2.8 Significant Unavoidable Impacts

No significant unavoidable visual impacts have been identified for the proposed project.

C.13.3 SANTA FE ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Santa Fe Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.4 CHERRY ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Cherry Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.5 PARAMOUNT ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Paramount Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.6 ALONDRA ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Alondra Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.7 BELLFLOWER RAIL ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

The Bellflower Rail Alternative Segment would eliminate 2.4 miles of construction on Artesia Boulevard and the pipeline would be located within a 100-foot wide railroad ROW. Construction would proceed at a rate of approximately 800 to 1,000 feet per day in rail ROW. This is significantly faster construction than on city streets since there would be no requirement for pavement removal, disposal, and re-paving. Construction activities associated with the use of this alternative (versus the proposed project) would result in a minor decrease of the proposed pipeline's visual impacts. Station modification and operational impacts would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.8 ARTESIA ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Artesia Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.9 SHOEMAKER ALTERNATIVE SEGMENT

With the use of the Shoemaker Alternative Segment, construction and operation impacts on visual resources would be the same as the proposed project. However, this alternative would eliminate any potential impacts of construction within the Norwalk Station abutting residences, since the proposed 16-inch pipeline would connect with SFPP's existing 16-inch line outside of the station. Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2 would be applicable to this alternative.

C.13.10 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed project is not built and the existing landscape remains in its current condition. If the proposed project is not built, and demand grows as predicted by SFPP, petroleum products would have to be provided to the Nevada, Arizona, and Inland Empire markets by other methods (either via other pipelines or trucks). Use of existing pipelines to ship product would not cause visual impacts since these pipelines are subsurface. The increased truck transport of product would not be distinguishable as a project-specific visual impact by motorists that use the same transport routes as the trucks. No mitigation measures are required or recommended.

C.13.11 MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Table C.13-1 presents the Mitigation Monitoring Program for visual resources.

Table C.13-1 Mitigation Monitoring Program

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Location	Monitoring/ Reporting Action	Effectiveness Criteria	Responsible Agency	Timing
Construction activities and equipment would result in visual intrusion to viewers (Class III)	V-1 Confine construction activities and materials storage to within the pipeline ROW and above-ground facility sites, such as existing stations. All food-related trash (wrappers, cans, food scraps, etc.) shall be disposed of in closed containers, and the containers regularly removed from the construction site.	Along the entire route of proposed project and alternative routes	Conduct weekly site inspections during Project Construction to confirm adherence to contract specifications regarding confinement of construction activities and storage of construction materials.	Construction materials and excavated soils are minimally visible from adjacent travel corridors.	CPUC and Los Angeles County and City Building Departments	During construction
Intrusion of construction nighttime lights on motorists, residents, and pedestrians (Class II)	V-2 Night construction lights shall be directed away from the visual field of motorists and pedestrians along the ROW. Prohibit night construction within 500 yards of residences and sensitive receptors. Provide 7 days notice of night construction.	Along the entire route of proposed project and alternative routes	Review construction schedule and local jurisdictions' permits to determine the location and time of occurrence of night time construction	Night construction activities do not occur adjacent to residences	CPUC and Los Angeles County and City Building Departments	Prior to and during project construction

C.13.12 REFERENCES

Cerritos, City of. 1988. Cerritos General Plan. May.

Los Angeles, County of. 1993. County of Los Angeles General Plan. January.

Norwalk, City of. 1996. City of Norwalk General Plan. February 29.