

4.1 Aesthetics

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the proposal:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting describes aesthetic qualities associated with the proposed Project. The environmental setting also addresses local regulations that affect aesthetic resources.

Regional Setting

The MGSF is located primarily in the City of Montebello and partially in the City of Monterey Park, both within Los Angeles County, California (Chambers Group 2000). Montebello and Monterey Park are within the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area and are located some eight miles east of downtown Los Angeles.

Local Setting

The Main Facility is nestled onto the southern slopes of hills lying south of the Pomona Freeway near Montebello Boulevard (Fig. 4.1-1). It is built within the floor of a previously mined gravel/rock quarry. Although part of the surrounding area is residential, the gas processing and well site facilities at the Main Facility can be observed only from the backyards of the few residences directly abutting these facilities on the west, south, and southeast. Also, on the southeast side, portions of the gas processing and well facilities are visible by individuals walking on the adjacent public sidewalk; however, due to landscaping and topography, only small portions of the processing and well facilities would be visible from vehicles and by pedestrians across the street from that sidewalk.

The gas processing and well gallery facilities are also visible from areas of the adjacent Operating Industries, Inc. Landfill near the facility's northern and northeastern fence lines; however, the landfill is a federal Superfund site that is undergoing remediation and is not open to the public. The portion of the landfill abutting the Main Facility is comprised of a large artificial hillside and a leachate-gas collection system.

The East Site consists of two parcels located at the corner of Montebello Boulevard and Jefferson Boulevard. The Fourteen Lots consist of 14 individual lots and clusters of residential and commercial lots located within 4,000 ft of the Main Facility.

REGULATORY SETTING

No federal or state regulatory requirements with regard to aesthetics apply to the proposed Project, although some local guidelines may apply.

Local

The Montebello and Monterey Park General Plans provide guidelines for housing, hillside contouring, vegetation planting, and lighting standards, among others that apply to new development.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Significance Criteria

The following outlines the significance criteria utilized to assess potential environmental effects based on established regulatory frameworks or established science.

- Have a substantial adverse 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
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

Decommissioning and Sale

Checklist Question a) The East Site is within the vista of the northbound Montebello Boulevard corridor. Most well sites are not in the line-of-sight views from the roads and only the high rigs would be visible.

The Main Facility lies only within the vista of the Howard Avenue, but because of the elevation differences of the road and site grades, little impact would occur even from the high rigs on vehicular views from the street.

Checklist Question b) There are no state scenic highways within the Project area; therefore there is no impact.

Checklist Question c) Most MGSF sites are generally less developed and more landscaped than the surrounding residential areas; therefore the decommissioning process would substantially change the visual character and quality.

Decommissioning of the Townsite Lots would result in significant changes for the local neighborhoods. The four Maple/Victoria Townsite Lots would temporarily but significantly change the visual character and quality of the lots and their surroundings, especially for Acuna Park. Decommissioning of the East Site and Main Facility would cause little change other than to remove the current buildings and equipment.

Checklist Question d) Decommissioning after gas recovery would involve increased construction-like activities and glare from site lighting. Standard permit conditions would control nighttime lighting for the Townsite Lots. At the end of decommissioning, site lighting and glare would decline until the beginning of new developments.

Site lighting for nighttime security on the East Site along Montebello Boulevard would change from existing limited lighting and would have greater presence than the other MGSF sites.

Current lighting on the Main Facility generates limited lighting glare from the lower and higher grades of the site. During decommissioning some lighting may be added and increase the local glare for existing residential communities.

Compliance with construction permit conditions would render this activity a less-than-significant impact.

Future Development

Checklist Question a) Future development of the Maple/Victoria (Grandview) Townsite Lots would change the current vista of the area adjacent to the city's Acuna Park and library along Victoria. The general plans of the cities of Montebello and Monterey Park do not identify any of the MGSF sites as possessing significant visual qualities requiring special consideration in the course of their development. Evaluation of the sites for their role in contributing to vistas that cross the sites concluded that their development consistent with the existing general plans will not lead to the degradation of distant vistas. Any new development would follow the design guidelines in the City of Montebello General Plan and Zoning Ordinances, therefore would have a less-than-significant impact.

Checklist Question b) There are no state scenic highways within the Project area; therefore there is no impact.

Checklist Question c) Although individually insignificant, conversion of some of the 14 lots (several lots and the Maple/Victoria cluster) would significantly change the existing open space visual qualities and character of existing lots and their vicinity. As these lots are already zoned for residential development, construction of the new structures per the city General Plan and Zoning Ordinance would render this a less-than-significant impact.

Checklist Question d) Future development of residential communities and lots would add significant street and structural-related lighting to the areas. Although significant in its total addition, development lighting of most Townsite Lots would add to existing conditions and provide light/glare continuity to the neighborhood. Lighting and glare from development of the East Site would fill-in lighting along the entire western side of the Montebello Boulevard frontage from Lincoln to Montebello Town Center. Although significant in its increase to local glare, adjacent glare sources reduce the significance to Montebello. Similarly, residential glare generated by development of the Main Facility site

would only fill-in existing glare generation and not add as significantly as that of the East Site. This is a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure 4.1-1

Checklist Question c) Initial landscape screening of the Main Facility and East Sites shall be provided where any significant earthworks may be undertaken during decommissioning that may be seen by the public. The screening shall be installed where no screening exists and shall include at least three rows of shrubs or small trees, which will screen views from typical passenger cars on public streets. These landscaping screens shall be maintained until the SCG and the new owner(s) have completed the sale and transfers.

Mitigation Measure 4.1-2

Checklist Question c) Physical screening of individual lots shall be provided during decommissioning of wells and removal of all physical facilities, leaving a clear and clean site.