

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section describes the existing aesthetic character of the project area and describes views of the project site from surrounding vantage points. The potential visual and aesthetics changes resulting from project implementation are addressed. The information presented in this section is based on field reconnaissance; review of the project site and aerial photographs; review of the proposed project plans; and computer-generated visual simulations.

4.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

On-site Land Uses

As described in Section 3.0, Project Description, the project site is currently occupied by the inoperative Olive Hills Reservoir and associated control house. The project site exists as an engineered plateau within a naturally occurring canyon. The reservoir is surrounded to the south, east, and north by sparsely vegetated slopes leading up to residential uses. A paved access road northwest of the reservoir leads down a large hill to the control house. Immediately west of the reservoir, an earthen dam exists and an undeveloped slope leads down to additional single-family residences. This slope is subject to seasonal mowing and is occupied by ruderal (weedy) species and grasses. Other vegetation on-site is limited to a few ornamental species surrounding the reservoir. These species are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3, Biological Resources.

Off-site Land Uses

The Nohl Canyon Water Storage Tank project site is located within a highly developed area and is highly visible from surrounding residential uses within the cities of Anaheim and Orange. The project site is surrounded by residential development of varying scale and intensity. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located immediately south and east of the site. A townhome complex is located north of the site and additional single-family residential uses are located west of and down slope from the project site. The project site is also partially visible from Nohl Ranch Road and Nohl Canyon Elementary School; the school is located at the intersection of Nohl Ranch Road and Nohl Canyon Road.

Views of the project site from surrounding areas are described below from two vantage points.

Viewshed Descriptions

- **View 1–View from Townhomes along Terra Vista Lane facing southeast toward the Project Site.** View 1 depicts the existing view of the project site from the backyards of the westernmost townhome units along Terra Vista Lane. The view is dominated by the asphalt-paved reservoir and access road in the foreground. The background view includes several of the adjacent single-family residences as well as some sparse vegetation on the slope between the reservoir and the single-family residences.
- **View 2–View from Residences along Villa Real Drive facing west toward the Project Site.** This view provides a direct view of the existing reservoir facility from the backyards of adjacent single-family residences along Villa Real Drive. Currently, the view is dominated by the asphalt-paved reservoir and access road in the foreground. The background view is dominated by distant city views, which is considered to be a scenic vista. Vegetation surrounding the reservoir is also visible from this viewpoint.

Light and Glare

The project site is subject to nighttime lighting effects from various on-site and off-site uses in the area. Existing sources of nighttime lighting include security lighting associated with the reservoir, street lighting along the local circulation network, and security and accent lighting related to the surrounding residences.

Existing land uses on the project site are comprised of materials that are not highly subject to glare effects; therefore, existing glare effects from the project site are nominal. However, the project site is subject to minimal off-site glare effects typical of an urban, residential development including glass windows of surrounding structures.

Related Planning Programs

City of Anaheim General Plan

Green Element

The Green Element of the City of Anaheim General Plan includes goals and policies related to aesthetics and visual resources that are applicable to the proposed project. These goals and policies are provided in Table 4.1-1 with a project consistency analysis.

City of Anaheim Municipal Code

Title 18 of the City of Anaheim Municipal Code is set aside as the City's Zoning Ordinance. According to Chapter 18.18 of the Zoning Code, the project site is located within a Scenic Corridor (SC) Overlay Zone. This SC Overlay Zone extends throughout the City's limits: lying easterly of the intersection of SR-55 and SR-91, westerly of the Orange County line, southerly of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, and northerly of the present or any future southern City boundary. According to Chapter 18.18, the SC Overlay Zone has been established "for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the unique and natural scenic assets of these areas as a valuable resource to the community."

4.1.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following criteria are based on the Initial Study checklist:

- Threshold 4.1.1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Threshold 4.1.2:** Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Threshold 4.1.3:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
- Threshold 4.1.4:** Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

4.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Impact Analysis

The following analysis addresses the change in the aesthetics and visual character of the project area as seen from surrounding vantage points which were previously described in Section 4.1.1. The visual impacts of the proposed project include both the objective visual resource changes created by the proposed development and the subjective viewer response to these changes. Viewer perception is subjective; the perception of different viewer groups to the visual environment varies based on viewer activity and awareness.

Threshold 4.1.1: Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? and,

Threshold 4.1.2: Would the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

As previously discussed, the project site is highly visible from a variety of local land uses. The proposed project would replace the existing inoperative reservoir with a partially buried concrete water storage tank which would extend approximately 30 feet above ground. The project has been designed to minimize visual intrusion. Specifically, the tank is proposed to be stained or painted a color which will blend into its surroundings. Drought tolerant vegetation would also be used to screen views of the reservoir.

The change in visual character from the two key vantage points resulting from implementation of the proposed project is discussed below.

View 1—View 1 represents the view from residential uses located north of the project site. As depicted in Exhibit 4.1-1, implementation of the proposed project would change the existing view by eliminating the asphalt-paved reservoir from the foreground and introducing a 30-foot-tall concrete tank. The tank would be partially screened from view through the planting of trees and shrubs around the tank and on the side slopes (refer to PDF 1-1). Background views of existing residences along Villa Real Drive would remain largely unchanged. Direct views of some residences would be limited through the installation of landscaping; however, views of these residences are not considered a significant scenic resource. Although the visual character of View 1 would be changed through implementation of the proposed project, this change would not represent a significant adverse impact.

View 2—As shown on Exhibit 4.1-2, development of the proposed project would modify existing views of the site by eliminating the existing asphalt-paved reservoir from the foreground and introducing a 30-foot-tall concrete tank. The tank would be partially screened from view through the planting of trees and shrubs around the tank and on the side slopes (refer to PDF 1-1). Background city views would remain unchanged. Due to the proposed height of the reservoir and the elevation difference between the reservoir and the residences along Villa Real Drive, the proposed project would not impede or degrade existing views of the scenic vista.

The view would be substantially altered from existing conditions; however, the visual character of the site would not be degraded, nor would the existing scenic vista be impacted. Rather, the project would replace the existing, large reservoir with a smaller tank surrounded by visually pleasing landscaping. As shown in Exhibit 4.1-2, the project would improve the foreground views while maintaining the background city views. This visual change would represent a less-than-significant impact.

Impact Statement: **Less Than Significant.** Development of the proposed project would substantially alter existing views of the project site; however, the changes would not represent degradation to the area's visual character, nor would they impact a scenic vista. Implementation of PDF 1-1 would ensure that a significant impact would not occur.

Threshold 4.1.3: Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

The proposed Nohl Canyon Water Storage Tank project would include lighting for security purposes in an area that is currently subject to lighting effects typical of a residential area. The existing, on-site land use employs night lighting in the form of security lights; therefore, the proposed lighting would replace existing security lighting which would be demolished as part of the reservoir. No new sources of light would be introduced. In accordance with PDF 1-2, the replacement security lighting would be shielded and oriented to not shine directly on adjacent, off-site land uses.

The project proposes construction of a pre-stressed concrete water storage tank. The tank would be constructed of concrete and would be treated with a color stain or paint to better blend with the surrounding environment. The proposed materials would not be subject to significant amounts of glare; therefore potential impacts related to glare would be less than significant.

Impact Statement: **Less Than Significant.** The proposed project would not generate significant additional sources of light and glare within the project area and implementation of PDF 1-2 would ensure that a significant impact would not occur.

Threshold 4.1.4: Would the proposed project conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

An EIR must discuss the consistency between the proposed project and applicable General Plan and regional plans. As discussed above, the project site is included within the SC Overlay Zone as described in Chapter 18.18 of the City of Anaheim Zoning Ordinance. The SC Overlay Zone promotes orderly growth and the protection, preservation, and enhancement of scenic assets. The SC Overlay Zone requirements include guidelines for the replacement of trees, specifically eucalyptus, oak, pepper, and sycamore trees (also known as "specimen trees").

Implementation of the project would require removal of approximately 50 trees along the perimeter of the reservoir and, as described in Section 4.3, Biological Resources, some of these trees may qualify as "specimen trees." Following grading and installation of an irrigation system, over 200 new trees will be planted. In compliance with the SC Overlay Zone, a tree removal plan and landscape plan shall be submitted to the City of Anaheim Planning Department for review and approval (MM 1-1). Implementation of MM 1-1 and PDF 1-3 would reduce any potentially significant impacts related to specimen tree removal to a less than significant impact.

Specific to the General Plan Green Element, Table 4.1-1 provides an analysis of the consistency of the proposed project with specific goals and policies from the Green Element.



Existing View



Proposed View With Mature Trees

Note: This rendering is preliminary. Actual Landscape may look slightly different.

View from Townhomes along Terra Vista Lane Facing Southeast Toward the Project Site

Nohl Canyon Water Storage Tank Project

Exhibit 4.1-1



Existing View



Proposed View With Mature Trees

Note: This rendering is preliminary. Actual landscape may look slightly different.

View from Residences along Villa Real Drive Facing West Toward the Project Site

Nohl Canyon Water Storage Tank Project

Exhibit 4.1-2

**TABLE 4.1-1
CONSISTENCY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WITH
AESTHETICS-RELATED GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES**

Goals and Policies		Consistency Analysis
City of Anaheim General Plan		
Goal 1.1	Maintain strict standards for hillside grading to preserve environmental and aesthetic resources.	As detailed in Sections 3.0 and 4.4, Project Description and Geology and Soils, respectively, the project would require substantial grading and site preparation to ensure a stable foundation and placement of the tank on underlying bedrock material. This would ensure future slope stability for the tank site as well as the surrounding area occupied by residential land uses. Removal of the existing earthen dam would yield approximately 100,000 cubic yards of soil which would be stockpiled on-site for later use as backfill. The regrading of the side slopes and backfilling of the site would require approximately 110,000 cubic yards of material. After compaction of the stockpiled material, this would yield a balanced site and no export or import of material would be required.
Policy 1	Limit grading to the amount necessary to provide stable areas for structural foundations, street rights-of-way, parking facilities, and other intended uses.	
Policy 2	Minimize import/export associated with grading.	
Goal 2.1	Preserve views of ridgelines, natural open space and other scenic vistas wherever possible.	As discussed previously, background city views would remain unchanged due to project implementation. Due to the proposed height of the reservoir and the elevation difference between the reservoir and the residences along Villa Real Drive, the proposed project would not impede or degrade existing views of the scenic vista.
Policy 2	Encourage development that preserves natural contours and views of existing backdrop ridgelines or prominent views.	

Impact Statement: Less Than Significant With Mitigation. The proposed project would be consistent with the relevant goals and policies related to aesthetics and no impact would occur. The potential impact associated with the removal of specimen trees would be reduced to a less than significant level after implementation of MM 1-1 and PDF 1-3.

4.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative study area for aesthetic impacts is the viewshed that includes the project site and the surrounding areas that have views of the project site. As indicated previously, views of the project site are limited to uses surrounding the site and vantage points along roadways in the vicinity of the project site.

The project proposes to replace the existing water storage facility with a smaller water storage facility and would incorporate landscaping to shield direct views of the tank. The proposed project would not degrade the visual quality of the project site or surrounding areas and would have less-than-significant impacts related to light and glare. Impacts related to the loss of specimen trees would be mitigated to a less than significant level through the installation of replacement trees. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative aesthetic impacts.

4.1.5 MITIGATION PROGRAM

Project Design Features

- PDF 1-1 After the completion of demolition and construction activities on the site, the City of Anaheim Public Utilities Department shall ensure that open areas surrounding the storage tank and the side slopes are planted with drought-tolerant landscaping.
- PDF 1-2 Replacement lighting fixtures shall include directional light mounts illuminating inward and downward toward the site to minimize off-site impacts.
- PDF 1-3 The project will include implementation of a California Friendly landscape plan that provides for the installation of over 200 trees, including approximately 30 California Live Oak, 25 Australian Willow, 50 Maidenhair Trees, and over 100 other trees in addition to shrubs, perennials, and grasses. An irrigation system will be installed to ensure the landscaping becomes established.

Standard Conditions

No standard conditions are required.

Mitigation Measures

- MM 1-1 Prior to issuance of demolition or grading permits, the City of Anaheim Public Utilities Department shall submit final plans indicating tree removal and a final landscape plan to the City of Anaheim Planning Department for review and approval.

4.1.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Implementation of the mitigation program recommended in this section would mitigate impacts to a level considered less than significant.