5.7 AESTHETICS/LIGHT & GLARE

Visual resources information in this section was compiled from site photographs and site surveys conducted by RBF Consulting on June 22, 2001 and December 1, 2004. Project impacts on the aesthetic character of the site from grading activities and building construction are analyzed and evaluated in relation to existing and surrounding site conditions. Consideration of public scenic views, introduction of new sources of light and glare, and compatibility of the proposed project with adjacent local aesthetic resources are included in this section. Construction-related impacts are addressed in Section 5.9, CONSTRUCTION RELATED IMPACTS. As the proposed off-site pipelines and underground pump station would be subsurface, there are no anticipated long-term aesthetic impacts.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

AESTHETICS

On-Site

The existing site's aesthetic quality can be characterized as low to non-existent, considering that the site is located within an industrial fuel oil storage tank area formerly used in conjunction with the AES Huntington Beach Generating Station (HBGS). The approximately eleven-acre site (seven acres for the desalination facility and four acres for the product water storage tank area) is currently developed with three fuel storage tanks. These fuel oil storage tanks exist on-site and are 205 feet in diameter and 40 feet in height. The exterior shell of all three tanks is composed of a non-reflective metal surface. Containment berms of approximately 10 to15 feet in height surround the perimeter of each tank. The site is fully developed, with no unique vegetation or other visual resources (refer to Exhibit 3-2, *SITE VICINITY MAP* and Exhibit 5.7-1, *DESALINATION FACILITY SITE PHOTOGRAPHS*).

Off-Site

Views of the HBGS are available from numerous areas surrounding the project site, including: Huntington-By-The-Sea Mobile Home Park (located to the west); Beach Boulevard (located to the west); limited locations along Hamilton Avenue (located to the north); limited locations along Huntington State and Huntington City Beaches; and from the vicinity of the intersection of Magnolia Street and Pacific Coast Highway. However, since the proposed project is located behind the main HBGS structures and surrounded by 10-foot by 15-foot high earthen berms, views of the project from the surrounding area are limited. Surrounding adjacent land uses include the HBGS to the southwest, a wetland area to the southeast, the Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) flood channel to the east, a fuel oil storage tank to the north, and an electrical switchyard to the west. Additional surrounding land uses include Pacific Coast Highway to the south, the Pacific Holdings storage tank facility to the east, Ascon/Nesi Landfill to the northeast, commercial, industrial, recreational, and residential uses to the north, and Newland Street, Huntington-By-The-Sea Mobile Home Park, and Cabrillo Mobile Home Park to the west (refer to Exhibit 5.7-1, *DESALINATION FACILITY SITE PHOTOGRAPHS*). The Pacific Ocean, Huntington State Beach, and Huntington City Beach are located south of the subject site and can be characterized as high in aesthetic value. Uses surrounding the proposed pipeline route and underground pump stations vary depending upon the location, although uses generally consist of residential with some open space, commercial, school, recreational and medical (Fairview State Hospital in the City of Costa Mesa) uses (refer to Exhibit 5.7-2 *PIPELINE ALIGNMENT PHOTOGRAPHS*, and Exhibit 5.7-3 *BOOSTER PUMP STATION SITE PHOTOGRAPHS*).

LIGHT AND GLARE

On-Site

The current uses on-site produce minimal light and glare due to the lack of high intensity lighting and absence of reflective surfaces on existing facilities. A minimal amount of nighttime security lighting currently exists on-site. Lighting fixtures are located sporadically throughout the project site, on poles and mounted on the existing storage tanks.

Off-Site

Existing off-site sources of light and glare surrounding the project site, proposed pipeline alignments, and proposed underground pump station sites include street lighting, automobile headlights, and nighttime security lighting. Facility lighting and nighttime security lighting are utilized at the Edison Community Center and Edison High School situated northeast of the project site, while Beach Boulevard (a major arterial located west of the project site) produces light and glare as a result of heavy automobile traffic and street lighting.

IMPACTS

Significance thresholds in this Section are based on the CEQA Appendix G Environmental Checklist Form as indicated below.

Significance Criteria

A potentially significant impact to aesthetics would occur if the project caused one or more of the following to occur:

- ~ Have a substantial adverse affect 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; and/or
- ❖ Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The significance of an aesthetic impact, in terms of this project, can be determined by examining anticipated project effects from a number of different vantage points, including construction-related visual disruption, observer position, and changes to the existing visual character of the area.

For a discussion of short-term, construction-related aesthetic impacts, refer to Section 5.9, *CONSTRUCTION RELATED IMPACTS*.

SITE CHARACTER

The project site exists as part of a fuel oil storage tank facility within an industrial area. Prominent industrial facilities within the vicinity include the HBGS and the Pacific Holdings storage tank facility. The existing project site can be described as low to non-existent in aesthetic value, as the existing fuel storage tanks are as large as 40 feet in height and 205 feet in diameter, and lack aesthetic or architectural enhancements. Currently, no aesthetic screening exists around the proposed project

site. The proposed project would improve the aesthetic character of the site vicinity by replacing the existing dilapidated storage tanks with multiple buildings/structures featuring contemporary

Exhibit 5.7-1
Desalination Facility Site Photographs

Exhibit 5.7-2
Pipeline Alignment Photographs

Exhibit 5.7-3
Booster Pump Station Site Photographs

architectural design features and significant amounts of landscaping and aesthetic screening techniques in order to minimize any potential impacts of the project on the surrounding community. A visual simulation of the proposed project is provided in Exhibit 5.7-4, *DESALINATION FACILITY VISUAL SIMULATION – MAGNOLIA STREET* and Exhibit 5.7-5, *DESALINATION FACILITY VISUAL SIMULATION – NEWLAND STREET*. Although the proposed aboveground product water storage tank (which would be approximately 250 feet in diameter with a maximum height of 30 feet) would add to the aesthetic impact of the proposed project in regards to surrounding uses and local roadways, the tank would be constructed of non-glare producing materials. When considering that the tank (30 feet high above grade) would replace a dilapidated fuel oil storage tank (40 feet high) with a product water tank featuring contemporary design features, aesthetic screening, and landscaping, impacts in this regard would be considered less than significant. In addition, as the proposed off-site pipelines and underground pump station would be subsurface, there are no anticipated long-term aesthetic impacts associated with these improvements.

Landscaping improvements would be focused primarily on the eastern, western, and northern portions of the subject site (refer to Exhibit 3-16, *CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN*). Landscaping selection would match that of the HBGS perimeter. Landscaping within the northern portion of the subject site would consist of Melaleuca quinquenervia (Cajeput Tree), *Eucalyptus lehmannii* (Lehmans Mallee), *Callistemon viminalis* (Weeping Bottle Brush Tree), turf, and ornamental drought/salt tolerant shrub and ground cover. Additional landscaping within the eastern portion of the project site would consist of a native wetlands planting area, situated east of the administrative building. Landscaping is also proposed along the western boundary of the product water tank site, along Newland Street, and would include evergreen street trees, accent palm trees, and shrub/groundcover plantings. The project would adhere to all City requirements with regard to building heights, landscaping, lighting, setbacks and lot coverage. Therefore, the project is considered to represent a positive impact relative to change in the existing on-site character.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Existing on-site lighting is limited to sporadic light fixtures mounted on poles and on the existing fuel storage tanks. In addition, the site is void of reflective surfaces capable of producing significant amounts of glare. Additional light fixtures may be necessary for long-term operational use for both the desalination facility and product water storage tank, although any new lighting would be subject to City design standards and would utilize directional lighting techniques and low wattage bulbs (without compromising site safety or security) in order to direct light downwards and minimize light spillover. Project implementation may also result in a minimal amount of additional reflective surfaces on proposed structures, and from vehicles utilizing the facility. However, the resulting glare effects would be relatively minor when compared to existing levels of glare in the site vicinity. Additional lighting or glare-inducing surfaces would not occur as a result of water transmission pipeline or underground booster pump station implementation, as both the pipeline alignment and underground pump station would occur underground. This impact is considered less than significant with implementation of standard design practices and required mitigation.

MITIGATION MEASURES

SITE CHARACTER

ALG-1 For areas visible by adjacent existing or proposed residential areas, exterior mechanical equipment shall be screened from view on all sides, and rooftop mechanical equipment shall be set back 15 feet from the exterior edges of the building. Equipment to be screened includes, but is not limited to, heating, air conditioning, refrigeration equipment, plumbing lines, duct-work and transformers. Said screening shall be architecturally compatible with the building in terms of materials and colors. If

screening is not designed specifically into the building, a rooftop mechanical equipment plan showing screening must be submitted for review and approval with the application for building permit(s).

LIGHT AND GLARE

ALG-2 If outdoor lighting is included, light intensity shall be limited to that necessary for adequate security and safety. All outside lighting shall be directed to prevent "spillage" onto adjacent properties and shall be shown on the site plan and elevations.

UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

None have been identified.

Exhibit 5.7-4
Desalination Facility Visual Simulation – Magnolia Street

Exhibit 5.7-5
Desalination Facility Visual Simulation – Newland Street