



## 4.1 AESTHETICS

This section evaluates the existing visual and aesthetics resources on the Development Site and in the surrounding area and evaluates the potential effects that implementation of the Development Project may have. This section also evaluates the potential loss of existing visual resources, potential effects on public views, visual compatibility with existing uses, and light and glare impacts.

While development of the Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC) Site is not anticipated at this time, a programmatic discussion of potential impacts to aesthetics that may result from future development of that site is provided in **Chapter 5.0** of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### 4.1.1 Scoping

The City of Banning (City) received nine comment letters during the public review period of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). None of the letters received had comments pertaining to visual and aesthetics resource impacts that could be generated by the Development Project.

No comments pertaining to visual and aesthetic resources were received during the Scoping Meeting that occurred on Thursday, February 18, 2021.

### 4.1.2 Methodology

The Development Project's potential aesthetic impacts have been assessed pursuant to the thresholds of significance in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. In addition, the Development Project's compliance with regulatory requirements set forth in **Section 4.1.4**, below, including consistency with goals and policies established in the City of Banning General Plan and development and design standards related to aesthetics in the City's Municipal Code, where applicable, and the Specific Plan, are also evaluated.

Key views from public vantage points are used in the analysis to show pre-project visual conditions and simulate post-project conditions at the Development Site and surrounding area. Key views were taken from public right-of-way and not from private property. Overall, the analysis in this section evaluates aesthetic changes that may occur because of Development Project implementation.

**Figure 4.1-1: Key View Locations** presents the seven vantage points from which key view photographs were taken and illustrate the representative view from that location. **Figure 4.1-2a: Key View 1, Figure 4.1-2b: Key View 2, Figure 4.1-2c: Key View 3, Figure 4.1-2d: Key View 4, Figure 4.1-2e: Key View 5, Figure 4.1-2f: Key View 6, and Figure 4.1-2g: Key View 7** respectively, illustrate each of the seven key views selected for this analysis as seen under existing conditions and with Development Project renderings/simulations. The Development Project renderings/simulations are conceptual representations of future development under the Specific Plan.

Information in this section is based on photographs of the Development Site taken during field surveys and site visits; renderings of the proposed Development Project on the Development Site; utilization of Google Maps Street Views; and the City of Banning General Plan Land Use Element and Open Space and Conservation Element and applicable Ordinances.



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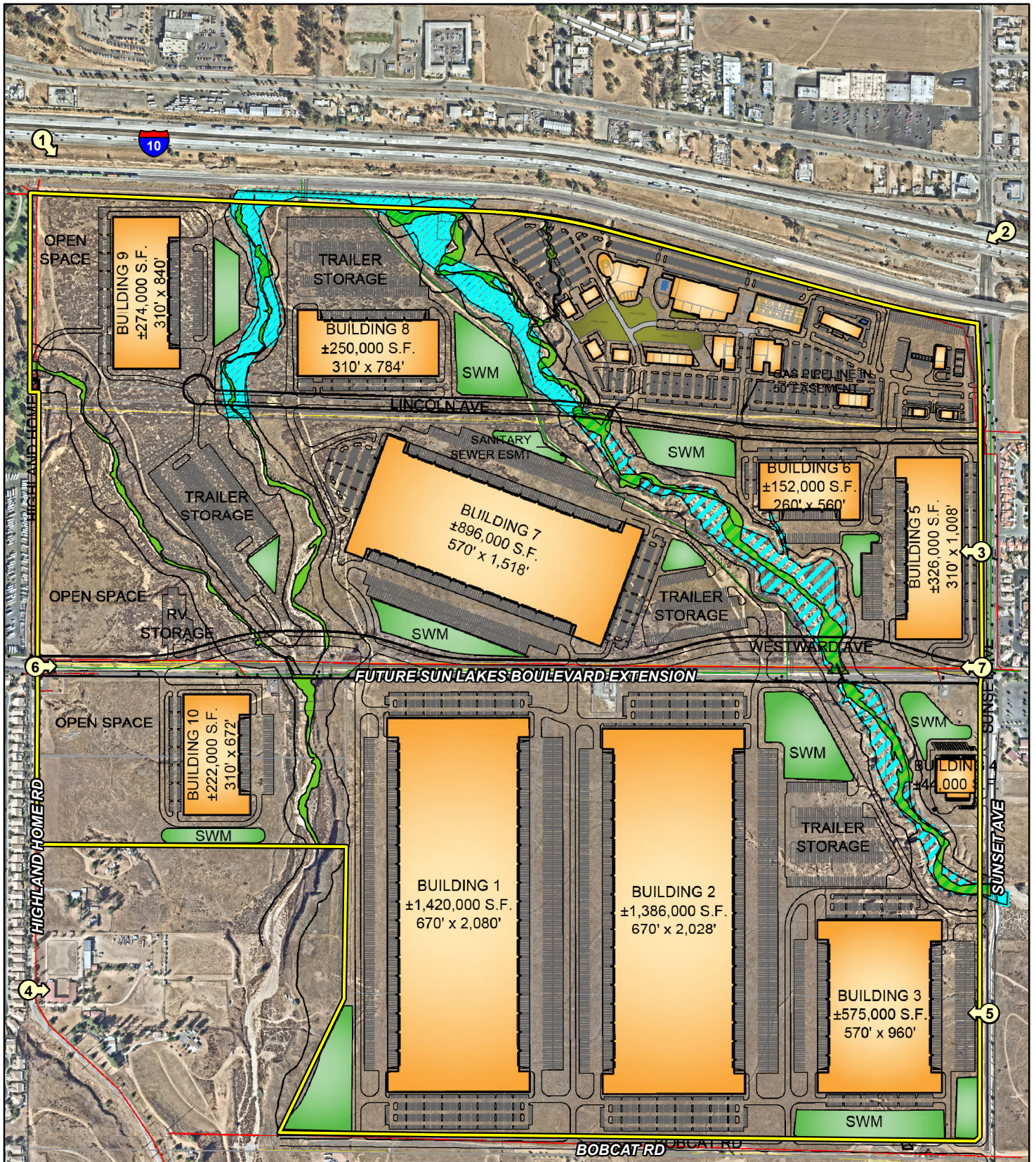


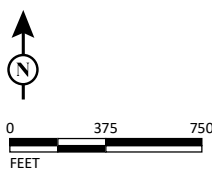


FIGURE 4.1.1

LEGEND  
 Project Location  
 Key View Locations



SOURCE: Nearmap Imagery (10/12/2020)  
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**Existing View 1** - Existing view from eastbound I-10 looking southeast toward Development Site.



**Simulation View 1** - View of Project features from eastbound I-10 looking southeast toward Development Site.

FIGURE 4.1-2a



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**Existing View 2** - Existing view from westbound I-10 looking southwest toward Development Site.



**Simulation View 2** - View of Project features from westbound I-10 looking southwest toward Development Site.

FIGURE 4.1-2b



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**Existing View 3** - Existing view of Development Site looking west from Sunset Avenue, just south of Navajo Drive.



**Simulation View 3** - View of Project features looking west toward Development Site from Sunset Avenue, just south of Navajo Drive.

FIGURE 4.1-2c



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**Existing View 4** - Existing view of Project site from 14350 South Highland Home Road looking east toward Development Site.



**Simulation View 4** - View of Project features looking east toward Development Site from 14350 South Highland Home Road.

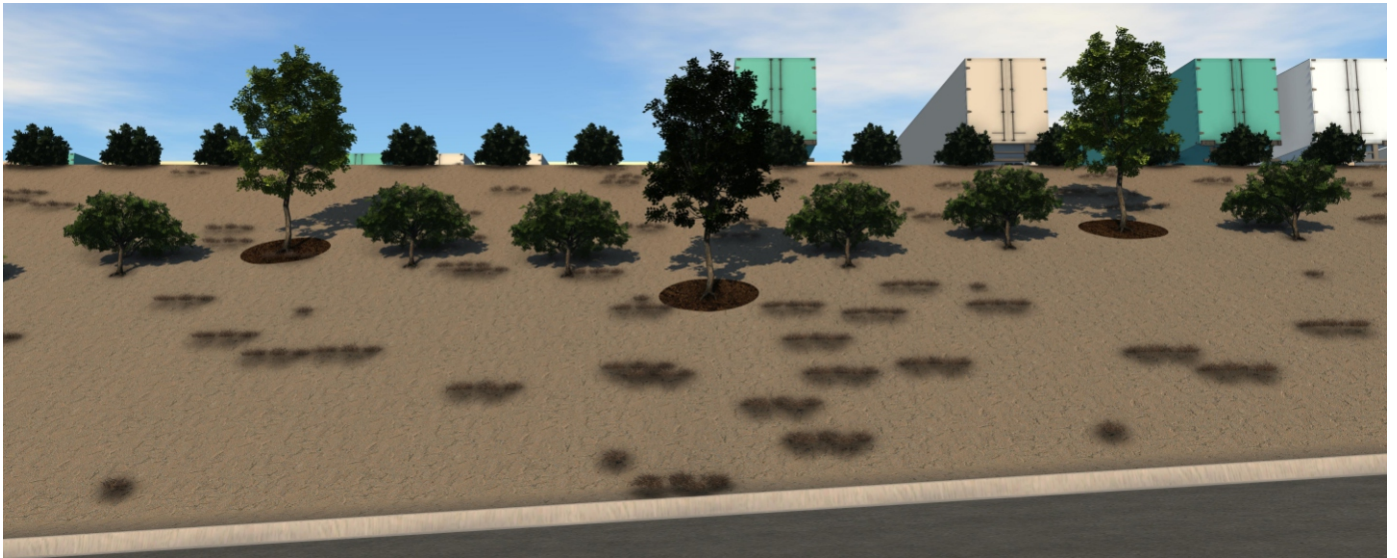
FIGURE 4.1-2d



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**Existing View 5** - Existing view of Development Site, looking west, from Sunset Avenue, approximately 700 feet north of Bobcat Road.



**Simulation View 5** - View of Project features, looking west, from Sunset Avenue, approximately 700 feet north of Bobcat Road.

FIGURE 4.1-2e



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**Existing View 6** - View of the Development Site, looking east, from Sun Lakes Boulevard, at the western boundary of the Development Site.



**Simulation View 6** - View of the Development Site, looking east, from Sun Lakes Boulevard, at the western boundary of the Development Site.

FIGURE 4.1-2f



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**Existing View 7** - View of the Development Site, looking west, from the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Westward Avenue.



**Simulation View 7** - View of the Development Site, looking west, from the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Westward Avenue.

FIGURE 4.1-2g



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#### 4.1.2.1 Key Concepts and Terminology

The assessment of aesthetic impacts involves a qualitative judgment by the lead agency supported by reasonable explanations. This analysis identifies and examines factors that contribute to potential aesthetic impacts that may be caused by implementation of the Development Project. The potential aesthetic impacts of the Development Project have been assessed based on consideration of several factors, including scale, mass, proportion, and applicable regulations described below.

The analysis focuses on aesthetic-related changes either to the Development Site or surrounding area that may result from development of the Project. This would include evident changes in scenic vistas and viewsheds, potential conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, changes to scenic resources along designated scenic roads, and the introduction of new sources of light and glare.

The viewshed impact analysis evaluates Development Project impacts from three viewing distance zones, as explained below. Views from private properties are not protected under CEQA; therefore, views from private properties are not considered viewing points for the purpose of this analysis.

**Existing Environmental Setting.** The 533.8-gross-acre (0.83 square mile) Development Site is located in the City of Banning, which spans a total of 23.24 square miles, in western Riverside County. The Development Site is generally located south of Interstate 10 (I-10), north of Bobcat Road, west of Sunset Avenue, and east of Highland Home Road, and within Sections 7 and 18; Township 3 South; Range 1 East; and within the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) 7.5-minute *Beaumont, California* quadrangle. Approximately 280.1 acres of the Development Site are within the jurisdictional limits of the City of Banning and approximately 253.7 acres lie within the Sphere of Influence of the City of Banning in unincorporated Riverside County. The City lies within the San Gorgonio Pass area, an east-west trending valley situated in-between the San Bernardino Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountains.

The Development Site is undeveloped and has been historically used for agricultural practices (dryland farming and grazing). Grazing no longer occurs north of the future Sun Lakes Boulevard (SLB) extension but does occur intermittently south of the alignment. Vegetation communities located within the Development Site consist of non-native grassland, California buckwheat scrub, and Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub (RAFSS). The topography of the site is generally flat, trending downward from northwest to southeast. Three deeply incised existing natural drainages (from east to west: Pershing Wash, Smith Creek, and Highland Wash) and associated features are located within the Development Site. The existing high point is located at 2,522 feet above mean sea level (amsl) measured in the northwest corner of the Development Site, and a low point located at 2,399 feet amsl at the Pershing Wash bed in the southeast corner of the Development Site.

The Development Site is situated in an area previously part of the Stewart Ranch and adjacent to and west of the Barker Ranch, which had extended onto portions of the Development Site. The Stewart Ranch complex was removed in the mid-1980s. On-site remnant features of the Barker Ranch were removed in the early 2000s to accommodate the installation of a City wastewater pipeline.



The current General Plan land use designations and zoning classifications for the Northern Portion of the Development Site include General Commercial, Low Density Residential (0 to 5 dwelling units/acre), Medium Density Residential (0 to 10 dwelling units/acre), High Density Residential (12 to 18 dwelling units/acre), and Open Space-Resource. The Southern Portion of the Development Site has current Riverside County General Plan land use designations and zoning classifications of low density residential (LDR) and A-1, Light Agriculture, respectively.

The Development Site has previously been considered for development in the mid-2000s under the *Five Bridges Specific Plan (FBSP)*, which envisioned development of a master-planned community of up to 2,160 residential units, a 51.6-acre commercial center, dedication of land for a fire station, and park and open space uses. As the FBSP was never adopted, the changes in land use and the development associated with the FBSP did not occur.

Existing land uses on parcels surrounding the Development Site include:

- **North:** The UPRR and associated right-of-way are located directly north of the Development Site. Sunset Avenue is grade separated from the UPRR and maintains access with Interstate-10 (I-10) through a full interchange. Commercial uses are located along W. Ramsey Street (between Sunset Avenue and Highland Home Road) north of I-10. General Plan and Zoning designations to the north include Public Facilities- Railroad/Interstate and General Commercial (north of I-10).
- **West:** The Sun Lakes Specific Plan area (SLSP), located west of the project area, is a 975-acre area generally bounded by I-10 on and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Row to the north, Highland Springs Road on the west, Highland Home Road to the east, and vacant land to the south. The Sun Lakes Community is a master-planned, age-restricted residential development centered on the Sun Lakes Country Club. Within the SLSP are single family and multifamily residences (duplexes and townhomes), golf courses, and recreational facilities. Within the SLSP, an assisted living facility is located north of Sun Lakes Boulevard and a recreational vehicle storage area is located directly west of the Development Site, north of the future SLB Extension. This area west of the project site is heavily developed and includes commercial and office uses. The SLSP was recently amended to allow Retail/Service, Business/Warehouse, and Office/Professional uses on a portion of the SLSP between I-10 and Sun Lakes Boulevard. General Plan and Zoning designations to the west in the Sun Lakes Specific Plan include General Commercial, Business Park, High Density Residential, Open Space – Parks, Medium Density Residential, Professional Office, and Open Space-Resources.
- **East:** Business park, light industrial and storage uses intermingled with larger lot residential uses are located east of Sunset Avenue and north of Lincoln Street. Several single-family residential neighborhoods have developed east of Sunset Avenue, south of Lincoln Street. The MSJCD San Gorgonio Campus is located east of Sunset Avenue and south of Westward Avenue. Scattered rural residential uses are located further west of the MSCJ property. The Rancho San Gorgonio Specific Plan (RSGSP), an approximately 831-acre master-planned community, is located east of Sunset Avenue across from the Southern Portion of the Development Site. General Plan and Zoning designations to the east include Rancho San Gorgonio Specific Plan, Public Facilities, Medium Density Residential, and General Commercial.



- **South:** Large-lot residential uses and agricultural operations (ranching/grazing) are located south of Bobcat Road. Riverside County General Plan and Zoning designations to the south include Agricultural (AG) and A-1, Light Agriculture, respectively.

The City comprises a total of 14,823 acres, extending easterly from Highland Springs Avenue to Fields Road, and from the San Bernardino County line on the north to Bobcat Road on the south. The City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) includes eight separate areas on the north and south ends of the City, totaling 5,436 acres. According to the United States Census Bureau, the City of Banning is located within the Riverside-San Bernardino, CA Urbanized Area.<sup>1</sup> As described in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15387 and defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, an "urbanized area" is a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more people, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. Because the City qualifies as an urbanized area per CEQA and U.S. Census Bureau definition, the Development Site is also located within an urbanized area.

#### 4.1.3 Existing On-Site Municipal and Utility Uses

Structures on site include city-owned wells, an agricultural storage shelter, and a number of easements for streets, utilities, gas and oil pipelines, landscaping, and communications systems, which are all located on the proposed Development Site. None of these structures are considered of historical significance.

#### 4.1.4 Regulatory Setting

##### 4.1.4.1 Federal Regulations

No federal policies or regulations pertaining to aesthetics are applicable to the Development Project.

##### 4.1.4.2 State Regulations

**Caltrans Scenic Highway Program.** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program protects the natural scenic beauty of the State's highways and corridors through its designated scenic highways throughout the State.<sup>2</sup> Caltrans defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that traverses an area of outstanding scenic quality, containing striking views, flora, geology, and other unique natural attributes. Other considerations given to a scenic highway designation include how much of the natural landscape a traveler may see and the extent to which visual intrusions degrade the scenic corridor.

The Development Site is not located in the vicinity of a State Scenic Highway. According to the List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways published by Caltrans, State Route 243 (SR-

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. Riverside-San Bernardino, CA Urbanized Area No. 75340. Website: [https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC\\_RefMap/ua/ua75340\\_riverside--san\\_bernardino\\_ca\\_DC10UA75340\\_000.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ua75340_riverside--san_bernardino_ca_DC10UA75340_000.pdf) (accessed August 12, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2008. Scenic Highway Guidelines. Website: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/scenic-hwy-guidelines-04-12-2012.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2020).



243) from mile marker 0 to 28.2 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.<sup>3</sup> This portion of SR-243 is approximately 2 miles east of the Development Site. The Development Site is bounded by urbanized areas on three different sides.

#### 4.1.4.3 Regional Regulations

The Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) serves to protect valuable biological resources (critical habitat areas) within Riverside County. These criteria habitat areas also exhibit desirable rural/open space visual qualities which provide relief from development intensities and characteristics of the built urban environment. On the Development Site, areas considered to be conservation areas will be preserved and protected, consistent with the policies and programs outlined in the MSHCP. Refer to **Section 4.4** for further discussion.

#### 4.1.4.4 Local Regulations

**Riverside County General Plan.** The Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element provides policies related to Scenic Corridors as detailed below:

- LU 14.3** Ensure that the design and appearance of new landscaping, structures, equipment, signs, or grading within Designated and Eligible State and County scenic highway corridors are compatible with the surrounding scenic setting or environment.
- LU 14.4** Maintain an appropriate setback from the edge of the right-of-way for new development adjacent to Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways based on local surrounding development, topography, and other conditions.
- LU 14.5** Require new or relocated electric or communication distribution lines, which would be visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways, to be placed underground.
- LU 14.6** Prohibit offsite outdoor advertising displays that are visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways.
- LU 14.7** Require that the size, height, and type of on-premises signs visible from Designated and Eligible State and County Scenic Highways be the minimum necessary for identification. The design, materials, color, and location of the signs shall blend with the environment, utilizing natural materials where possible.

**City of Banning General Plan.** Although the City of Banning's General Plan acknowledges State Route 243 (SR-243) as a designated State Scenic Highway, the Development Site is located approximately 2 miles from the nearest segment of SR-243, and more than 5 miles from any portion of the highway designated as a State Scenic Highway and is therefore not immediately within the vicinity of a

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<sup>3</sup> California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2015, last modified July 2019. List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Website: [https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019\\_a11y.xlsx](https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019_a11y.xlsx) (accessed November 11, 2020). (*Spreadsheet will download when URL is activated.*)



designated State Scenic Highway. As described in Chapter 3 – Community Development, within the City of Banning’s General Plan; it is acknowledged that the Open Space and Conservation Element follows the guidelines set forth in California Government Code 65560, which requires discussion of areas particularly suited for parks and recreational purposes, including areas with links between major recreation and open space reservations, trails, and scenic highways.

Under the City’s Open Space and Conservation Element, the following goals and policies have been incorporated to preserve elements such as Scenic Highways.

- Goal 1:** Open space and conservation lands that are preserved and managed in perpetuity for the protection of environmental resources or hazards, and the provision of enhanced recreational opportunities and scenic qualities in the City.
- Policy 3:** Development in all land use categories shall be of the highest quality.
- Policy 5:** The City shall preserve permanent open space edges or greenbelts that define the physical limits of the City and provide physical separation between adjoining neighborhoods.

#### 4.1.5 Thresholds of Significance

The City has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, significance determinations utilized in this section are from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Section I of Appendix G to the CEQA Guidelines, the Development Project would result in a significant impact to aesthetics if the Development Project or any Development Project-related component would:

- Threshold 4.1-1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Threshold 4.1-2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- Threshold 4.1-3:** In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- Threshold 4.1-4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

##### 4.1.5.1 Scenic Vistas

#### ***Threshold 4.1-1: Would the Development Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?***

Development projects have the potential to impact scenic vistas in two ways: 1) a development could physically alter a designated scenic resource (e.g., disturb or develop upon a designated ridgeline, hillside, or other designated scenic resource) or 2) could block a view corridor or “vista” of the scenic



resource from public view. Important factors in determining whether a project would block scenic vistas include the project's proposed height, mass, and location relative to surrounding land uses and travel corridors.

The City has not designated any portion of the Development Site as a scenic resource. Accordingly, the Development Project will not physically alter a designated scenic resource.

With respect to the ability of the Development Project to block a scenic vista, the Development Site and the City of Banning are located in a valley situated approximately 41 miles south of the San Bernardino Mountains and approximately 25 miles northwest of Mount San Jacinto Peak. Both mountain ranges, along with their foothills rising from the valley floor constitute the most prominent scenic vistas in the vicinity of the Development Site and City of Banning. The Little San Bernardino Mountains are also visible to the east of the Development Site and City. Two of the highest peaks in southern California are visible from the Development Site: San Gorgonio Mountain in the San Bernardino Mountains, the highest peak in southern California (11,503 feet), is approximately 13 miles north of the Development Site and is visible from nearly the entire Development Site. San Jacinto Peak in the San Jacinto Mountains (10,834 feet) is approximately 15 miles southeast of the Development Site. The western foothills of the San Jacinto mountains begin approximately 1.5 miles south of the southern portion of the Development Site (SOI). However, the City has not designated these mountain ranges or foothills as scenic vistas. Nevertheless, the discussion below analyzes whether the Development Project would affect surrounding views or affect the existing visual character or adjacent land uses and the Development Site as seen from public locations. The public locations from which the Development Site is currently visible consist of the I-10 and the roadways surrounding the Development Site (Sunset Avenue and Highland Home Road, and Bobcat Road). In addition, to account for the future development of the SLB Extension, this analysis considers views of the Development Project that seek to replicate views from locations near the future SLB Extension looking west from the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Westward Avenue, and east from the intersection of Sun Lakes Boulevard and Highland Home Road.

**Key View Analysis.** Figures 4.1-2a through 4.1-2g, Key Views 1 through 7, respectively, illustrate each of the seven key views selected for this analysis as the most representative views at which the Development Site is visible from public right of way locations along roadways and Interstate 10 adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Development Site. To determine impacts related to aesthetics, views in the existing condition are compared to Development Project conceptual renderings. The conceptual renderings are derived from the Development Standards in the Specific Plan and are illustrative of typical development that is projected to occur upon Development Project implementation and are representative of the scale, mass, and proportion of future development on the Development Site. The following discussion describes the seven key views in their existing and post-buildout condition to analyze impacts associated with Development Project implementation.

**Key View 1, Figure 4.1-2a.** Key View 1 depicts the view of the Development Site from the eastbound lanes of I-10 approximately 0.98 mile east of the Highland Springs Avenue freeway entrance under existing conditions and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Site). Key View 1 represents the view of the Northern Portion of the Development Site as seen by motorists traveling eastbound on I-10 as one passes just north of the Development Site.





***Existing Conditions.*** In the foreground, one can see I-10 that traverses eastbound adjacent to the Development Site. In this view, the view of the eastbound lanes transitions into a view of the shoulder which is occupied by dirt and natural vegetation. The middle ground setting at this location provides motorists traveling eastbound along I-10 views of trees, powerlines, power poles, fencing, and advertisement signs. From this area, motorists looking towards the Development Site have views of the San Jacinto Mountain Range 2 miles to the south (to the foothills), and the 10,834-foot-tall Mount San Jacinto Peak, 16 miles to the southeast, in background views.

***Development Project Renderings.*** With Development Project buildout, motorists traveling eastbound on I-10 north of the Development Site would have partial views of a low profile 274,000-square-foot industrial building (Building 9) on the northwest corner of the Development Site. As I-10 in this location is higher in elevation than the Development Site and views of the site are partially blocked by the vegetated shoulder of the freeway, only a small portion of conceptual Building 9 on the Development Site would be visible. The rendering of the Development Project at this Key View location (conceptual at this point) shows that this specific industrial building would be painted to match the paint color palette provided in the Chapter 4 – Design Guidelines listed within the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan, so that it would blend in with the natural vegetation and mountain backdrop. Though the San Jacinto Mountain Range as well as Mount San Jacinto Peak would be somewhat blocked, it should be noted that views of foothills and peaks would still be retained and would be visible.

As discussed in **Chapter 3.0** of this EIR, the Battery Energy Storage Systems Facility (BESS) would be located on the Development Site. This would be a privately owned and operated 65 megawatt-hours (MWh) BESS proposed to be constructed on the Development Site to support storage of energy by the City of Banning Electrical Utility. The facility would be a permitted use and may be constructed anywhere within the industrial zoned areas of the Development Site. However, it is anticipated to be located in proximity to the planned electrical substation located in PA 7. No off-site electricity transmission is anticipated from the BESS. The visual character of this facility would be similar to that of the electrical substation, with battery storage blocks, electrical equipment and transmission lines, as well as an approximately 85-foot tower. While this tower's height is substantial, it would be a thin, metal tower, and would not significantly obstruct key views discussed in this section. This facility is not portrayed in any of the key view simulations, as a location for this facility within the Development Site is not defined at this time. If located in proximity to the City-proposed electrical substation, it would be located at the northwest corner of the Development Site. This would make it most visible from Key View 1.

The Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan includes architectural and landscape design standards establishing lot and building standards such as minimum lot area, maximum building coverage, height, setback, signage and equipment screening requirements. The Specific Plan also establishes design guidelines applicable to the Development Project. Although implementation of the Development Project would change the visual character of the Development Site, compliance with these development standards and design guidelines would ensure that future development on the Development Site is thematically consistent



and has a unified design. Listed below are select sections from the Specific Plan that would be applicable to the design features being implemented on the Development Site.

- **Development Standards and Design Guidelines:** Chapter 3 – Development Standards and Chapter 4 – Design Guidelines from the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan provide detail on both the General Development Criteria for the entire Specific Plan area and Design Guidelines which intend to establish the quality and character of the built environment for the master-planned development area of Sunset Crossroads. Adherence to these provisions is intended to ultimately result in consistent and coherent architectural and landscape architecture expression across the Specific Plan area, while allowing for flexibility in response to continuously evolving building design. The Development Project would be required to adhere to the General Development Criteria and permitted uses in Chapter 3 of the Specific Plan, and to be consistent with Design Guidelines set forth in Chapter 4 of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan also states that through implementation of the guidelines provided, all projects subject adhering to these standards and criteria will also implement the intent of goal and policies related to preservation of scenic views and the integrity of overall landscape aesthetics, as listed in the City of Banning General Plan.
- **Signage Design Guidelines:** Section 4.5 of the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan provides signage design guidelines proposed for the project area. As stated in the Specific Plan, signs will identify “Sunset Crossroads” and its building occupants and ensure the efficient circulation of vehicle traffic within the Development Site by identifying vehicular entry points and directing vehicles to their on-site destinations. Also, signage will enhance the pedestrian experience through the design of way finding components: directories, directional signage, and destination identifiers.

The Specific Plan requires preparation of a Specific Plan Sign Program prior to issuance of the first occupancy permit to provide adequate and appropriate project, pylon street, building, tenant identification, pedestrian path, and wayfinding signage for the anticipated variety of building sizes, designs, and uses to ensure that all project signage is designed with a single vision and theme. All building signage should be in scale with and in proportion to, the primary building facades so that the signage is not ‘overpowering’ and does not dominate the overall appearance. Ultimately, signage associated with the Development Project will cause very minor, if any, visual obstructions as they will typically be associated with development of any new buildings. Development of new buildings will pose the greatest potential impact to surrounding views due to their larger size. However, the potential impacts related to the construction of new buildings associated with the Development Projects are analyzed below and appropriate mitigation measures are provided where necessary.

The architectural style of industrial uses within the Development Site emphasizes a contemporary design. Conceptually, Building 9 would be characterized by simple and distinct cubic masses with interlocking volumes of wall planes, colors, and materials that would create visual appeal and conformity across the entire Development Site. All of



these elements would minimize the impact of the Development Project as seen from the I-10. Moreover, because the I-10 is not a designated scenic highway, the mountain ranges and foothills that are visible from the Site are not designated as scenic vistas. The Development Project will be required to adhere to Specific Plan Development Standards and to implement Design Guidelines that will result in coherent and consistent architectural and landscape design. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 1, would not have a substantial adverse effect on views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation would be required.

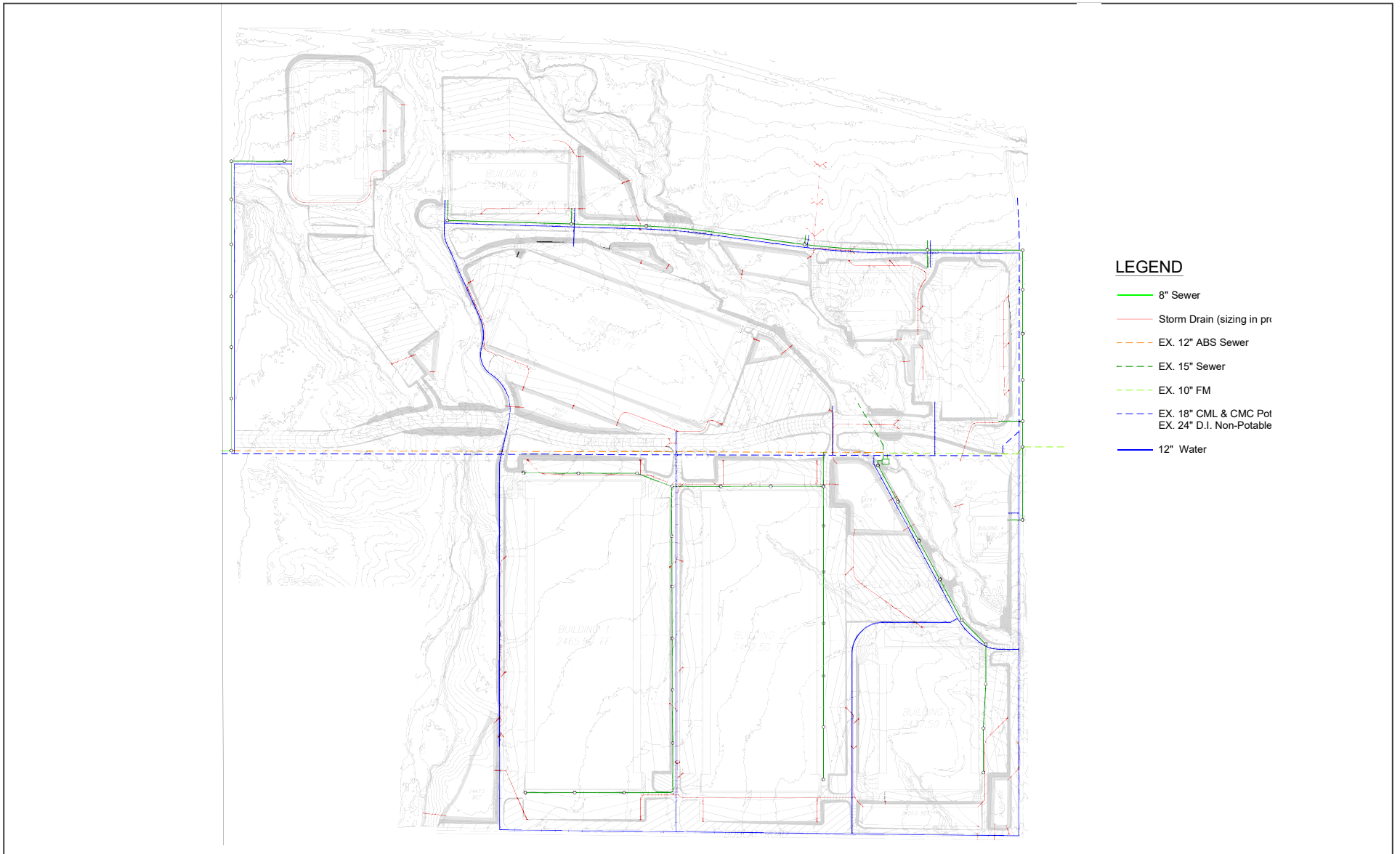
**Key View 2, Figure 4.1-2b.** Key View 2 depicts the view of the Development Site from the westbound lanes of I-10 at the Sunset Avenue overcrossing under existing conditions and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). Key View 2 represents the view of the Northern Portion of the Development Site in the foreground as seen by motorists traveling eastbound on I-10 as one passes just north of the Site.

*Existing Conditions.* In the foreground, one can see the lanes of westbound I-10 and a concrete jersey barrier separating westbound traffic from eastbound traffic. The middle ground of the Key View shows vehicles traveling eastbound on I-10, trees beyond the freeway, an open/unoccupied parcel, and street utility structures supporting utility lines (see **Figure 4.1-3, Public On-Site Utility Features**). Motorists in this area looking towards the Development Site have distant views of the western side lower foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range which are approximately 1 mile from the Site, and approximately 2 miles from this location.

*Development Project Renderings.* Motorists traveling westbound along I-10 approaching the Development Site would have views of general commercial and industrial buildings within Planning Areas (PAs) 1, 6, and 7 of the Site. The simulation from this viewpoint shows a conceptual rendering of the 125-room, 90,000-square-foot hotel, and other general commercial buildings totaling to a maximum size of 268,400 square feet. Dock loading areas and semi-truck parking/loading areas would also be visible to motorists at this vantage point. Distant views of the Development Site on its western end, approximately 1 mile from this viewpoint, are also visible to motorists from this viewpoint. Conceptual renderings of low-rise industrial buildings on the western side of the Development Site shown on Key View 2 can be seen from this position by motorists on I-10. The open, vacant land of the Development Site would be replaced by industrial/general commercial development that would change the existing characteristics of the area. The western foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range, approximately 2 miles from I-10, would still be visible from this viewpoint. However, views of the lower portion of the foothills would be obstructed by the buildings associated with the Development Project. The proposed hotel would be a maximum of 60 feet tall (5 stories), taller than the other industrial/general commercial buildings on the Site. However, from this viewpoint, the height and massing of the hotel building would blend in with the industrial buildings behind it as these buildings would be developed on elevated pads. This type of design gives viewers the visual sense that buildings across the site are generally the same height.



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**LEGEND**

- 8" Sewer
- Storm Drain (sizing in pr
- - - EX. 12" ABS Sewer
- - - EX. 15" Sewer
- - - EX. 10" FM
- - - EX. 18" CML & CMC Pot  
EX. 24" D.I. Non-Potable
- 12" Water

**LSA**



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 4.1-3

*Sunset Crossroads*  
Public On-Site Utility Features



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The Specific Plan also establishes design guidelines applicable to the Development Project. Although implementation of the Development Project would change the visual character of the Development Site, compliance with these development standards and design guidelines would ensure that future development on the Site is thematically consistent and has a unified design. The architectural style of industrial uses within the Site emphasizes a contemporary design. The goal of the General Commercial Architectural Guidelines of the proposed Project is to promote visual compatibility and individuality within the Site. As described in Section 4.4 – General Commercial Architectural Guidelines, of the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan, the architectural styles that would be used for the general commercial area within the Site have historical precedence in Southern California and throughout the world and are capable of contemporary interpretation and variation in a modern master planned development. The intent of the architectural style for the general commercial area is to avoid monotonous architecture while encouraging the application of detail and materials authentic to the spirit and visual character of the Development Project. The industrial, general commercial, and hotel buildings on the Site in this view would be characterized by simple and distinct cubic masses with interlocking volumes of wall planes, colors, and materials that would create visual appeal and conformity across the entire Development Site. Chapter 4 Design Guidelines, of the Specific Plan, ensures that the architecture of the buildings throughout the Development Site is consistent with the existing architecture in the Development Site vicinity. The color palette would match surrounding structures and the earth tones that are predominant in the existing environment. All of these elements would minimize the impact of the Development Project as seen from the I-10. Moreover, because the I-10 is not a designated scenic highway and the mountain ranges and foothills that are visible from the Site are not designated as scenic vistas. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 2, would not substantially adversely affect views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View 3, Figure 4.1-2c.** Key View 3 depicts the view of the Development Site from Sunset Avenue approximately 0.1 miles south of Lincoln Street, looking west towards and across the Development Site under existing conditions and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). This view represents what motorists on Sunset Avenue and residents living in the residential neighborhood just east of Sunset Avenue would see as one looks towards the Development Site.

***Existing Conditions.*** In the foreground, one can see the shoulder area of Sunset Avenue transitioning to natural vegetation and a fence demarking the eastern boundary of the Development Site. The middle ground at this Key View shows naturally vegetated (grass and some short trees), and the relatively flat topography of the unoccupied Development Site. The background from this Key View offers views of the westernmost foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range approximately 1.5 miles south of the Development Site as they reduce in elevation and meet the valley floor. Distant views of electrical transmission line towers are also available in the background from this Key View. Overall, there are no views of scenic resources, memorable topography, or scenic vistas from this vantage point under existing conditions.



***Development Project Renderings.*** As shown in this rendering, the Sunset Avenue streetscape from I-10 to the SLB Extension is a 110-foot right-of-way. The westerly portion of the right of way consists of a 9-foot median and 34 feet of paving, with a 4-foot curb-adjacent landscaped parkway and an 8-foot-wide parkway-adjacent Class 1 bikeway. The Development Project will construct only the west half-width of this roadway, including the median plus 10 feet. Beyond the new sidewalk, a vegetated area developed to a maximum slope ratio of 2:1 would be installed as the topography transitions upslope to the development pads of the Site. Development Project-related landscaping consisting of short trees, and shrubbery would be installed on this slope to provide an aesthetic transition between natural area and the proposed buildings on the Site. A surface parking area is shown between the vegetated slope and buildings that would be developed in this area. Under the Specific Plan guidelines, included below, the parking area would allow for landscaping or low, decorative walls or a combination thereof. This portion of the Development Project, PA 2, would be developed with a low-rise, 326,000-square-foot industrial building (Building 5) as shown in the rendering at this Key View. Development of Building 5 at this Key Viewpoint would block motorists' and residents' (directly east of Sunset Avenue) views of the westernmost foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range as they reduce in elevation and meet the valley floor.

#### **Parking and Circulation Standards**

- A. Pedestrian linkages between uses in commercial developments should be clearly separate from vehicular circulation patterns and should including distinct pedestrian access.
- B. Parking aisles should be separated access driveways whenever possible.
- C. Whenever possible, the driveway's throat should be extended to set back the parking spaces from the street.
- D. Whenever possible, project planning should include joint driveways providing access to more than one site.
- E. Parking areas shall be landscaped in accordance with the requirements of this Zoning Ordinance.
- F. Shared parking is desirable whenever practical.
- G. Interior circulation should always incorporate logical direction of travel to avoid vehicle conflicts.
- H. Access to parking areas should be from side streets whenever possible, or from driveways to the rear or to the side (between structures) of the subject structure. When access from a primary roadway is required, enhanced paving should be provided to clearly locate sidewalks within the entry drives.
- I. The access to parking areas should be located as far from street intersections as possible. Access points should be limited to only the number necessary for efficient circulation. Public works standards for separation between driveways, and for separations between driveways and intersections shall be enforced.
- J. Large expansive parking lots should be avoided.
- K. Pedestrian circulation should be designed to minimize the need to cross parking aisles and landscape areas.





- L. The parking area should be located behind or between existing structures and link the structures to the street sidewalks.
- M. Large parking area should be divided into connected smaller lots by buildings and landscaping and raised concrete areas.
- N. Large parking areas should be located at least forty feet from the curb. In larger projects, this distance may be greater, to accommodate vehicle cueing.
- O. Whenever possible, parking areas are discouraged along the street; however, should parking be located along the street, a combination of walls, and/or berms, and/or landscape material must be provided to screen parking areas from the adjacent street. The screening should be between thirty-six inches and forty-eight inches, except when a drive-through aisle is being screened, in which case a higher screen is necessary to hide the vehicles. Lowered grades in parking lots may also be used to accomplish this.

As indicated above, the Specific Plan includes architectural and landscape design standards establishing lot and building standards such as minimum lot area, maximum building coverage, height, setback, signage and equipment screening requirements. The Specific Plan also establishes design guidelines applicable to the Development Project. Chapter 4 Design Guidelines of the Specific Plan describes height limits and color palette requirements for the Development Project, including those visible from this Key View. Although implementation of the Development Project would change the visual character of the Development Site, development of the Development Project compliance with these development standards and design guidelines would ensure that future development on the Site is thematically consistent and has a unified design. The industrial buildings at this Key Viewpoint would be characterized by simple and distinct cubic masses with interlocking volumes of wall planes, colors, and materials that would create visual appeal and conformity across the entire Site Per Chapter 4 – Design Guidelines, of the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan; the following design features will be incorporated in order to develop a clean, contemporary visual environment as designated in the Specific Plan:

- Appropriate primary exterior building materials will include concrete and similar materials, as well as tilt-up panels. The primary materials will be accented by secondary materials including but not limited to natural or fabricated stone, fire resistant wood siding (horizontal or vertical), and metal.
- Trim details may include metal finished in a consistent color, plaster, or concrete elements finished consistently with the building treatment.
- Material changes shall occur at intersecting planes, preferably at the inside corners of change of wall planes, or where architectural elements intersect.
- Primary exterior building colors will be light and warm tones designated from the color palette provided in the Specific Plan. Darker and/or more vibrant accent colors shall be provided in focal point areas, such as around building entrances and near outdoor gathering spaces.



- Bright primary colors, garish use of color and arbitrary patterns or stripes that will clash with the color palette are discouraged, except in signage logos.
- Exposed downspouts, service doors and mechanical screen colors should be the same color as the adjacent wall.

Although views of the lower portion of the westernmost foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range as they reduce in elevation and meet the valley floor, as shown in the left side of the existing view for Key View 3, would be blocked, the top of the foothills, as well as the higher mountains and peaks above would remain fully visible. This would not be considered significant as the foothills are an unremarkable characteristic of the local topography. Furthermore, the City of Banning has not designated these topographical features as scenic vistas. For these reasons, and because the mountain ranges and foothills that are visible from this Viewpoint are not designated as scenic vistas, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 3, would not have a substantial adverse effect on views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View 4, Figure 4.1-2d.** Key View 4 depicts the view of the Development Site from South Highland Home Road, looking east across the property at 14350 Highland Home Road, towards the Development Site, approximately 0.5 miles from the Site, under existing and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). This view represents what motorists traveling north- and southbound along Highland Home Road and residents in the residential neighborhood just west of Highland Home Road would see while looking east towards the Development Site.

***Existing Conditions.*** In the foreground from this Key Viewpoint, one can see a mason wall/ranch-style fence demarking the parcel boundary of 14350 Highland Home Road. The middle ground at this location provides views of a fenced-in animal corral as well as some ornamental trees landscaping the property. In the background, one can see accessory buildings associated with the property at 14350 Highland Home Road and beyond those buildings semi-obstructed views of the San Jacinto Mountain Range (approximately 2 miles to the right side of the pictured viewpoint) and the San Bernardino Mountain Range (approximately 4 miles to the left side of the pictured viewpoint).

***Development Project Renderings.*** This rendering of the Development Project shows minimal changes to the background of this viewpoint. Limited views of the conceptual 1,420,000-square-foot industrial building (Building 1) on the Development Site can be seen from this Key Viewpoint. The low profile of Building 1 would not block distant views of the San Jacinto Mountain Range or the San Bernardino Mountain Range any more than compared to existing conditions.

The Development Project includes architectural and landscape design guidelines that provide design standards for the development of the Site. Although implementation of the Development Project would change the visual character of the Site, compliance with these design guidelines would ensure that future development on the Development Site is of high quality and would maintain the overall vision of the Development Project. The architectural



style of industrial uses within the Development Site emphasizes a contemporary design. Building 1 at this Key Viewpoint would be characterized by simple and distinct cubic masses with interlocking volumes of wall planes, colors, and materials that would create visual appeal and conformity across the entire Development Site. As described above, existing distant views of the San Jacinto Mountains and San Bernardino Mountains would not be further obstructed with implementation of the Development Project from this viewpoint because of the elevation of these mountain ranges and their distance from the Development Site. Further, the mountains that are visible from the Site are not designated as scenic vistas. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 4, would not have a substantial adverse effect on views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View 5, Figure 4.1-2e.** Key View 5 depicts a view of the Development Site from Sunset Avenue, approximately 500 feet north of Bobcat Road, looking west, under existing and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). This view represents what motorists traveling on Sunset Avenue approximately 0.5 miles west of the Development Site, looking east toward the Development Site, would see when looking west towards the Development Site.

*Existing Conditions.* The foreground from this Key Viewpoint shows natural vegetation that is just west of Sunset Avenue and a dirt road cut along the shoulder area. The middle ground at this Key Viewpoint offers views of the Development Site in its existing conditions covered with natural vegetation and some trees (cypress and oaks). The topography of the Development Site is relatively flat but does have small elevation variations as seen from this Key Viewpoint. The background from this Key Viewpoint offers distant views of the western foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range (approximately 3 miles from this View Site) as they decrease in elevation to the valley floor (left side of the photograph) and the western foothills of the San Bernardino Mountain Range as they decrease in elevation to the valley floor (right side of photograph). Overall, the view from this Key Viewpoint offers unremarkable views of the Development Site and distant topographical features.

*Development Project Renderings.* As shown in this rendering, curbing would be installed along the western side of the improved Sunset Avenue. Beyond the curb, no sidewalk would be installed; however, the Sunset Avenue right-of-way would transition to a slope (maximum 2:1 slope ratio) landscaped with various trees and shrubs up to the development pad of the Development Project. At the top of the vegetated slope, limited views of a 575,000-square-foot industrial building (Building 3) would be visible. Parked or loading semi-trucks would be visible from this Key Viewpoint, as the eastern side of Building 3 would have loading docks and a truck court. Implementation of the Development Project in this area would partially block views of the western foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain Range as they decrease in elevation to the valley floor and the western foothills of the San Bernardino Mountain Range as they decrease in elevation to the valley floor. However, the tops of these foothills, and the rest of the larger mountain range above them, would remain visible from this Key View through construction and operation of the Development Site. Although views of these topographical features would be partially blocked, this would not be considered significant as



the foothills are an unremarkable characteristic of the local topography, and the City of Banning has not designated these topographical features as scenic vistas. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 5, would not substantially adversely affect views of scenic vistas. Impacts would *be less than significant*, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View 6, Figure 4.1-2f.** Key View 6 depicts a view of the Development Site from Sun Lakes Boulevard, looking west, under existing and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). This view assumes construction of the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension by the City (which would provide public views) and represents what motorists traveling on Sun Lakes Boulevard approximately 0.5 miles west of the Development Site, looking east toward the Development Site would see.

*Existing Conditions.* The foreground from this Key Viewpoint shows the Sun Lakes Boulevard and South Highland Home Road intersection. The middle ground at this Key Viewpoint offers views of the Existing ROW, including unpaved portions of Western Avenue that traverses the Development Site, and the Development Site in its existing conditions covered with natural vegetation and some trees (cypress and oaks). The topography of the Development Site is relatively flat but does have small elevation variations as seen from this Key Viewpoint. The background from this Key Viewpoint offers distant views of nearby commercial and industrial buildings. Overall, the view from this Key Viewpoint offers unremarkable views of the Development Site and distant topographical features.

*Development Project Renderings.* As shown in this rendering, the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension (SLB) has been developed by the City as a four-lane road that will connect Sunset Avenue to South Highland Home Road. The SLB Extension will have two travel lanes in each direction which will be separated by a landscaped median. The SLB Extension is not part of the proposed Project but is considered as a related project in this EIR. Grading of the Development Site would occur south of the SLB Extension (Grading Phase 1) and north of the SLB Extension (Grading Phase 2). Completion of the SLB Extension would allow access to the Development Site via Sunset Avenue on the east and Highland Home Road on the west. A planned park and open space would be located to the north of the portion of the SLB Extension visible from this viewpoint. Buildings comprising part of the Development Project are set back from this roadway but would be visible north and south of the Sun Lakes Boulevard. These buildings would partially affect views of the mountains at the right of the roadway (south), obstructing portions of the view of the lowest portion of the mountains. The peaks and most of the mountainsides would still be visible from the roadway. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 5, would not substantially adversely affect views of scenic vistas. Impacts would *be less than significant*, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View 7, Figure 4.1-2g.** Key View 7 depicts a view of the Development Site from the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Westward Avenue, looking west, under existing and proposed conditions (with simulations depicting the Development Project). As with Key View 6 above, the simulation assumes construction of the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension by the City and represents



what motorists traveling on Sun Lakes Boulevard approximately 0.5 miles east of the Development Site, looking west toward the Development Site, would see.

***Existing Conditions.*** The foreground from this Key Viewpoint shows the Sun Lakes Boulevard and Sunset Avenue intersection. The middle ground at this Key Viewpoint offers views of the Development Site in its existing conditions covered with natural vegetation and some trees (cypress and oaks) and pipeline signage and electrical poles. The topography of the Development Site is relatively flat but does have small elevation variations as seen from this Key Viewpoint. The background from this Key Viewpoint offers distant views of commercial and industrial buildings. Overall, the view from this Key Viewpoint offers unremarkable views of the Development Site and distant topographical features.

***Development Project Renderings.*** As shown in this rendering, Sun Lakes Boulevard (SLB) (refer to **Appendix A, Figure 4.1-2g**) has been developed by the City as a four-lane road that will connect Sunset Avenue to South Highland Home Road. From this location, the proposed buildings are set back on both sides of the road, north and south. As with the other locations throughout the Development Site, Project structures will partially obstruct views of the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains. However, from the viewpoint, only the lower portion of the mountains and foothills would be obstructed. The rest of the foothills and mountain slopes would remain visible. Therefore, implementation of the Development Project, as shown in Key View 5, would not substantially adversely affect views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation would be required.

**Key View Summary.** Key Views 1 through 7 provided above illustrate development that is planned to occur with approval of the Development Project and, in certain cases, construction by the City of the SLB Extension. Although the Development Project would obstruct some views of the San Jacinto Mountain Range, the San Bernardino Mountain Range, and the western foothills of both of these mountain ranges from some public vantage points, the City has not designated these topographical features as scenic vistas and as such, no significant impact would occur to scenic resources. Viewpoints were analyzed in the above discussion and include motorists traveling on I-10, Sunset Avenue, and South Highland Home Avenue, looking towards the Development Site. Visual impacts for motorists looking towards the Development Site would be temporary as they drive along I-10 and surrounding roads. Motorists on the west side of the Development Site looking east across the Site would continue to have limited views of the San Jacinto Mountain Range and San Bernardino Mountain Range as the uses of the Development Project would not obstruct these vistas above and beyond what is occurring under existing conditions. The characteristics of the Development Site would change from a vacant property occupied by natural grasslands and drainage areas to one occupied by surface parking lots, industrial and general commercial buildings, open space areas, natural drainage areas, a neighborhood park, and bicycle/pedestrian trails. The Development Project includes design guidelines for on-site development, open space areas, and also includes a landscaping plan that would ensure consistency with the City's General Plan goals and policies regarding aesthetics, as included in Section 4.6 Landscape Design Guidelines, of the Specific Plan. The plant palette for the Development Site was selected to complement and enhance the setting of the site, while ensuring the conservation of the Development Site's natural vegetation and habitats. The design guidelines



and landscaping plan would also ensure the Site is developed with consistent visual characteristics of the surrounding uses. For these reasons, implementation of the Development Project would not have a substantial, adverse effect on views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation would be required.

**Freeway Oriented Freestanding Sign.** The Development Project would also include the placement of a maximum 80-foot tall, 30-foot-wide, freeway-oriented freestanding sign, on the north side of the Development Site. Additional signs would be placed throughout the Development Site; however, the freeway-oriented freestanding sign would be taller than surrounding buildings and has the potential to partially block views of vistas of the San Jacinto foothills from the freeway-oriented Key Views 1 and 2, and of the San Bernardino foothills from Development Site-oriented Key Views 3-5. **Figure 4.1-4: Project Freeway-Oriented Freestanding Sign** shows the visual characteristics of the freeway-oriented sign, the sign's estimated maximum dimensions, and the location of the sign on the northern boundary of the Development Site. The sign would be oriented towards motorists on I-10 and may consist of fabricated aluminum, a faux Corten color finish with the Development Project logo, a stone veneer base, landscaping around the base, and individually illuminated channeled letters (no neon illumination or video/high definition (HD) signs). The freeway-oriented freestanding sign has the potential to partially block motorist's views of the San Jacinto Mountains and its western foothills; however, the design, location and size of the sign would make this a minimal temporary obstruction as motorists drive past the Development Site on westbound and eastbound I-10. Overall, implementation of the freeway-oriented freestanding sign as part of the Development Project would not adversely affect views of scenic vistas. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.

**Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures:** No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

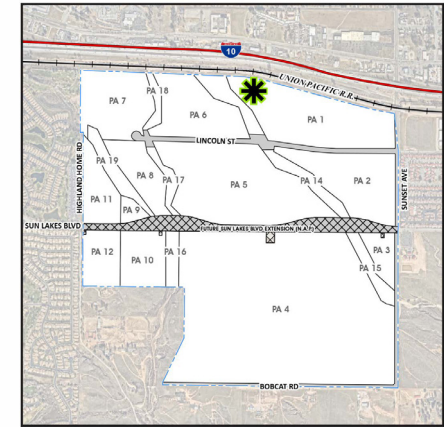
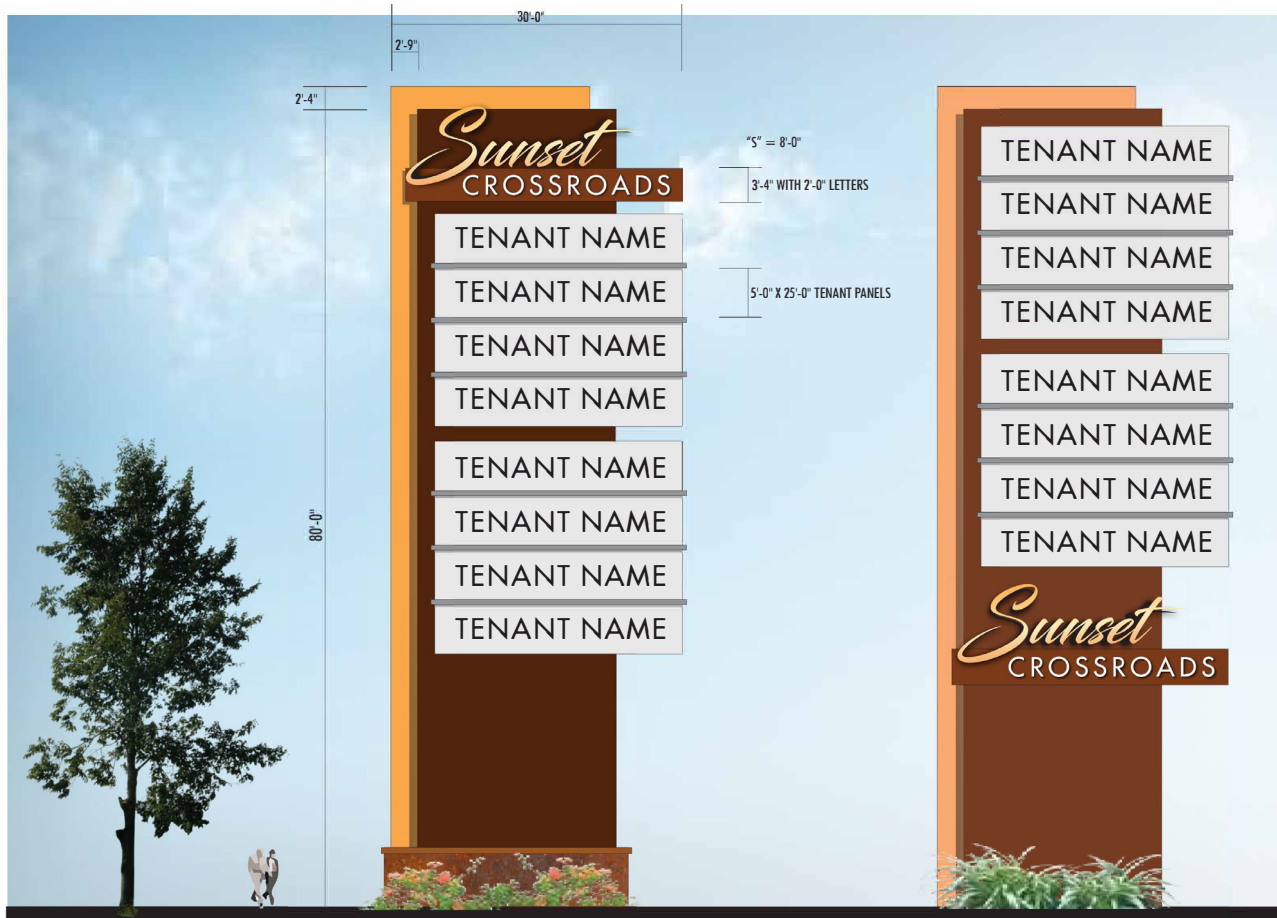
**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.

#### 4.1.5.2 *Damage Scenic Resources within a State scenic highway*

**Threshold 4.1-2: Would the Development Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?**

The Caltrans Scenic Highway Program identifies SR-243 (approximately 2 miles east of the Development Project) between I-10 and State Route 74 as both an Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.<sup>4</sup> Due to intervening topography, distance, existing buildings, and vegetation (i.e., trees), the proposed Development Project is not visible from SR-243. Neither are areas on the Development Site for the future development of an electrical substation (PA 7) or reverse osmosis facility (PA 12). PAs 4, 7, and 12, where these facilities would be located, are not within, adjacent, or near a State-designated scenic highway.

<sup>4</sup> Caltrans. Scenic Highways. Website: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways> (accessed August 13, 2021).



 - Potential Location

KEY MAP 

**Note:**  
 This Exhibit is for conceptual and illustrative purposes only.  
 The final locations, design, and materials for monumentation and signs will be determined at the time of implementing project(s) and/or a Sign Program.

FIGURE 4.1-4



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There are no City or County designated Scenic Corridors that cross or are near/adjacent to the Development Site and no scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings on or in the vicinity of the Development Site. As such, implementation of the Development Project and any future development within the Development Site would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway. **No impact** would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

**Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:** No impact.

**Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures:** No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** No impact.

#### 4.1.5.3 *Degrade the Existing Visual Character*

***Threshold 4.1-3: In non-urbanized areas, would the Development Project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?***

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Banning is located within the Riverside-San Bernardino, CA Urbanized Area<sup>5</sup>. As described in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15387 and defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, an “urbanized area” is a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more people, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. Because the City qualifies as an urbanized area per CEQA and the U.S. Census Bureau, and because of annexation, the entirety of the project area will be located within the City, and therefore will also be entirely classified to be located within an urbanized area. Existing land use designations on the Development Site under the City General Plan include residential, open space and general commercial. Existing zoning classifications on the Development Site include residential, open space, general commercial, and agriculture, although zoning designations would be replaced by the proposed Specific Plan. The Southern Portion of the Development Site lies within the County General Plan and is designated as rural residential. However, this area is within the City’s sphere of influence, and would be annexed into the City with implementation of the Specific Plan. Implementation of the Development Project would require a General Plan Amendment, adoption of the Specific Plan and annexation of the Southern Portion of the Development Site into the City to implement a Specific Plan that would change existing land use and zoning to general commercial, industrial, open space-parks, and open space-resource.

**General Plan.** The City of Banning General Plan is intended to guide future growth and development within the City. The General Plan lists the following goals and policies pertaining to aesthetics that

<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau. Riverside-San Bernardino, CA Urbanized Area No. 75340 Website: [https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC\\_RefMap/ua/ua75340\\_riverside--san\\_bernardino\\_ca/DC10UA75340\\_000.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ua75340_riverside--san_bernardino_ca/DC10UA75340_000.pdf) (accessed August 12, 2021).



would be applicable to the Development Project. The following provides a consistency discussion pertaining to these goals and policies:

- **Goal 1:** Open space and conservation lands that are preserved and managed in perpetuity for the protection of environmental resources or hazards, and the provision of enhanced recreational opportunities and scenic qualities in the City.
  - **Consistent:** As described above, the Specific Plan would guide design and landscaping features for uses developed on the Development Site. Scenic qualities within the surrounding area of the Development Project are expected to be maintained with only minor obstructions due to Project implementation. Open space would be preserved on the Development Site through incorporation of park facilities within the Development Project. Additionally, three existing drainage features on the Development Site would be preserved. For additional discussion regarding the parks and open space within the Development Project, refer to **Section 4.16** of this EIR. Overall, the Development Project would be consistent with this policy and the City of Banning General Plan.
  
- **Policy 3:** Development in all land use categories shall be of the highest quality.
  - **Consistent:** As described above, the Specific Plan would guide design and landscaping features for uses developed on the Site. Commercial and industrial buildings would consist of contemporary aesthetics, which would provide architectural styling with attractive detailing, steel accents, and light-toned color palette. These design features would be consistent with zoning code and General Plan requirements pertaining to aesthetics and visual characteristics. Overall, the Development Project would be consistent with this policy and the City of Banning General Plan.
  
- **Policy 5:** The City shall preserve permanent open space edges or greenbelts that define the physical limits of the City and provide physical separation between adjoining neighborhoods.
  - **Consistent:** As described above, the Specific Plan would guide design and landscaping features for uses developed on the Site. The Development Project is not expected to impact or obscure open space edges or greenbelts that define physical limits of the City. For additional discussion regarding the parks and open space, including buffer areas, within the Development Project, refer to **Section 4.16**, and **Section 4.11**, of this EIR. Overall, the Development Project would be consistent with this policy and the City of Banning General Plan.

The Development Site is currently undeveloped, and grading/other construction activities will permanently alter the visual character of the Development Site. However, visual impacts from construction would be temporary, and with implementation of the above-described best management practices, regulatory compliance measures, and mitigation measures, impacts would be less than significant. As previously discussed, the visual character of surrounding views would be maintained during construction and operation. Building height and signage would partially obstruct views of the San Jacinto and San Bernardino mountains, as noted in Threshold 4.1-1 above. These views are defining features of the San Gorgonio pass region where the Development Site is located.



The visual character and quality of the Site and surrounding area would be preserved and enhanced through the application of the architectural and landscape design guidelines of the Development Project. The architectural and landscape design guidelines guide the quality and aesthetic value of future commercial and industrial buildings as a result of implementation of the Development Project. Any development undertaken as a result of implementation of the Development Project would be required to comply with the development standards and architectural and landscape design guidelines contained in the Specific Plan. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

**Zoning.** The Specific Plan does not supersede municipal code requirements regarding lighting. Section 17.24.100 of the City’s municipal code describes lighting requirements applicable to the Development Project. All lighting in the Development Project would conform to brightness and directionality requirements outlined in the City’s zoning and municipal code, minimizing flashing lights on signage and overflow lighting impacting residential land uses on the east, west, and rural south sides of the Development Site. For details regarding the Development Standards and municipal codes for lighting at the Development Site, refer to the Signage Design Guidelines from the Specific Plan discussed in Threshold 4.1-5 below. For details regarding the Development Standards for signage at the Development Site, refer to the Signage Design Guidelines from the Specific Plan discussed in Threshold 4.1-1 above. Therefore, with adherence to the Specific Plan guidelines and the City’s zoning and municipal codes, implementation of the Development Project would neither substantially degrade the visual character of the Site nor conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

Chapter 17.96 of the Banning Municipal Code provides uniform procedures for the adoption and implementation of Specific Plans. Implementation of the Specific Plan associated with the Development Project would result in land use changes that would be consistent with the City of Banning General Plan. The Specific Plan addresses the entire Development Project and would be subject to approval by the City’s Planning Commission, as well as adoption by the City Council. The Specific Plan is intended to guide development and land uses for the Development Site. Upon approval of the Development Project, the Specific Plan would become a part of the City’s Zoning Code and the land use changes would become effective.

The Specific Plan includes development standards and architectural and landscape design guidelines that are intended to provide design direction and standards for the development of the general commercial, industrial, open space – resource, and open-space park uses of the Site. Compliance with these design guidelines would ensure that future design and development associated with the Development Project are of high quality and would maintain the overall vision of the Development Project. A cohesive design theme would be created for the land uses identified by the Specific Plan to maintain design continuity throughout the Site. The 392.0 acres of industrial land uses associated with the Development Project would feature contemporary aesthetics, which would provide architectural styling with attractive detailing, steel accents, a light-toned color palette, and timeless features. The design elements in the Specific Plan are included to reduce the visibility and intensity of the commercial and industrial activities, including walls, landscaping, and building design. Internal signs would be modern, lighting would be focused and directed on uses on the Site to avoid spillover, and landscaping would be colorful and drought tolerant. Overall, although development would change



the visual character of the Development Site, it could be viewed as improving the visual character when compared to the existing drab natural vacant conditions of the Site. Elevated structures on the Development Site, including the freeway-oriented signage and BESS tower, as discussed above, would not, or only partially, obstruct existing views, as shown in the key view simulations. Accordingly, the Development Project would be consistent with City regulations governing scenic quality, including those outlined in the City of Banning General Plan Land Use Element and the City's Municipal Code, and impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

**Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.

**Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures:** No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.

#### 4.1.5.4 *Substantial Light or Glare*

***Threshold 4.1-4: Would the Development Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?***

The Development Site is currently undeveloped and therefore is not illuminated at night. Surrounding development generates light near the Development Site; however, much of this light is directed onto these adjacent parcels and does not spill over onto the Development Site. Since the Development Site is undeveloped, there are no structures on site that generate glare during daytime hours. Increases in artificial lighting from development may alter natural outdoor daytime light levels, and excessive night lighting can lead to skyglow which can interfere with the operation of astronomical observation.

Constructing and operating the Development Project would introduce new sources of light. Most construction activities on the Development Site will occur during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. per City Zoning Code guidelines. Any construction-related illumination during evening and nighttime hours would consist of the minimum lighting required for safety and security purposes only and would occur only for the duration required for the temporary construction process. All lighting shall incorporate City of Banning standards set forth in Section 17.24.100 (Outdoor Lighting) of the City's Zoning Ordinance, measures to aid in reducing light pollution, or as approved by the Community Development Director. Low-level security lighting may be provided for the park, tot lot playground, trails, parking lot, and restrooms. The trails and parking lot may include bollard lighting while the tot lot playground and restrooms may include security lighting. The Specific Plan's Outdoor Lighting Guidelines also indicate that the Development Site would minimize glare and "spill over" light onto public streets. As a project design feature, night lighting will be directed away from the conserved areas to protect species within the conserved areas from direct night lighting. Shielding shall be incorporated in the Development Project designs to ensure that ambient lighting in the conserved areas is not increased. With implementation of this project design feature and due to the limited nature of nighttime construction lighting, light resulting from construction activities would not substantially impact sensitive uses, substantially alter the character of off-site areas surrounding the Site nor interfere with the performance of an off-site activity. For further detail, please reference Section 4.04, Biological Resources. Therefore, construction of the Development Project would not



create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and light impacts associated with construction would be ***less than significant***.

The Development Project would introduce new sources of light on the Development Site through development of general commercial, industrial, and open space-parks uses on the Site. The Development Site would be divided into 19 PAs. PA 1 would permit a maximum of 268,400 square feet of leisure, retail, and entertainment development to occur as well as a freeway accessible 125-room hotel and a complete Travel Center. PAs 2 through 10 would allow for the maximum development of 5,450,000 square feet of industrial development while PAs 11 and 12 would include a 5.0-acre passive park with associated trails and a passive trail system, respectively. Low-level security lighting may be provided for the park, tot lot playground, trails, parking lot, and restrooms. The trails and parking lot may include bollard lighting while the tot lot playground and restrooms may include security lighting. Low-level security lighting may be provided for the park, tot lot playground, trails, parking lot, and restrooms. The trails and parking lot may include bollard lighting while the tot lot playground and restrooms may include security lighting. PAs 13 through 19 would remain as undisturbed open spaces except for required road and infrastructure crossings. Overall, the Development Project would add new sources of daytime glare and nighttime lighting to an area that is not generating glare or day or nighttime illumination. To reduce lighting on the Site, the Specific Plan requires all new development that would be built on the Site to adhere to applicable City of Banning outdoor lighting standards on building facades as well as in surface parking lots, parks, trails, and other walkways throughout the site. The Development Project requires any development that occurs on the Site to adhere to the following Specific Plan guidelines pertaining to light and glare:

- Minimize glare and “spill over” light onto public streets, open space, I-10, and adjacent properties by using downward-directed lights and/or cutoff devices on outdoor lighting fixtures, including spotlights, floodlights, electrical reflectors, and other means of illumination for structures, parking, loading, unloading, and similar areas.
- Select all lighting fixtures used in the Specific Plan area from the same—or complementary—family of fixtures with respect to design, materials, fixture color, and light color. Use of light emitting diode (LED) lighting is encouraged.
- Lights should be unbreakable plastic, recessed, or otherwise designed to reduce the problems associated with damage and replacement of fixtures.
- Neon and similar types of lighting are prohibited except as part of advertising signage within the Development Site.
- Locate all electrical meter pedestals and light switch/control equipment in areas with minimum public visibility or screen them with appropriate plant materials.
- Illuminate parking lots, loading dock areas, pedestrian walkways, building entrances, and public sidewalks to the level necessary for building operation and security reasons. Dimmers and motion detectors are permitted.



- Along sidewalks and walkways, the use of low-mounted fixtures (ground or bollard height) is encouraged.
- Use exterior lights to accent entrances, plazas, activity areas, and special features.
- To illuminate parking lots or parking structures and their pedestrian links that provide more than five parking spaces of use by the general public, provide a minimum coverage of one foot-candle of light with a maximum of eight foot-candles on the parking or walkway surface, unless otherwise approved by the City of Banning for visibility and security.
- To illuminate aisles and passageways within a building complex, provide a maximum of one-half to one foot-candle of maintained lighting.
- High pressure sodium (HPS) light fixtures are prohibited for site lighting.
- All sign lighting shall be consistent with the Sign Program and Signage Design Guidelines outlined in the Specific Plan

Development Project implementation of these requirements would meet the City's standards pertaining to lighting and glare by adhering to the policies outlined in the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan which meet City requirements, and therefore would reduce the generation of lighting and glare to levels that are similar to what is occurring at adjacent and nearby parcels.

The Mount Palomar Observatory is located approximately 39 miles south of the Development Site. The Mount Palomar Observatory requires dark skies (minimal light pollution) to operate adequately; therefore, the County of Riverside has adopted Ordinance 655, Regulating Light Pollution. The intent of this ordinance is to restrict the permitted use of certain light fixtures emitting into the night sky undesirable light ways, which have a detrimental effect on astronomical observation and research at Mount Palomar Observatory. Ordinance 655 establishes two zones around the Mount Palomar Observatory that dictate the type of lighting that can be used in new development to reduce nighttime light pollution. Zone A is a circular area 15 miles in radius centered on Palomar Observatory, and Zone B is a circular area 45 miles in radius centered on Palomar Observatory (encompassing Zone A), both of which provides lamp type and shielding requirements for lighting fixtures. The Development Project is located in Zone B; however, the City of Banning has not officially adopted Riverside County Ordinance 655. Nevertheless, the Specific Plan provides lighting guidelines that would be implemented by the Development Project requiring compliance with County Ordinance 655 to reduce nighttime light pollution.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Development within Zone B established by the Riverside County Ordinance 655 is required to implement the following lighting standards: Class I- Color Rendition Important Low Pressure Sodium Lamp = Allowed; Others above 4050 Lumens = Allowed if fully shielded; Others 4050 Lumens and Below = Allowed. Class II – Parking Lots, Walkways, Security Low Pressure Sodium Lamp = Allowed; Others above 4050 Lumens = Prohibited; Other 4050 Lumens and Below = Allowed. Class III-Decorative Low Pressure Sodium = Allowed; Others above 4050 Lumens = Prohibited; Others 4050 Lumens and Below = Allowed.



Implementation of the Development Project would not create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, the Development Project would have a *less than significant impact* related to this issue. No mitigation is required.

**Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.

**Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures:** No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Less than Significant Impact.



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