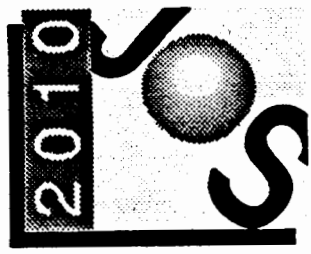


Chapter 15,  
**Aesthetics**



## Chapter 15. Aesthetics

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the existing aesthetic conditions of the region and project sites and identifies impacts of expansion of the JOS service area. Information for this assessment was gathered from relevant county and city policy documents, information received from the Districts, and a visit to the project sites on January 19, 1994. Photographs were taken during the site visit to document existing site conditions. As described in Chapter 1, "Introduction," this EIR provides project-specific CEQA compliance for full secondary treatment and solids processing at the JWPCP. Other elements of the 2010 Plan are analyzed on a program level when site-specific information is unavailable or locations of sites are not identified.

The evaluation of existing conditions of aesthetic resources requires the application of a process that objectively identifies the visual features, or resources, of a landscape; assesses the character and quality of those resources relative to overall regional visual character; and identifies the sensitivity of people to visual resources in the landscape.

The approach used for this visual assessment is adapted from the FHWA's visual impact assessment system (Federal Highway Administration 1983), in combination with other established visual assessment systems. The process involves identification of the following:

- visual character and quality of the region;
- visual character and quality of the local settings of the project sites, including important nearby locations with views of the project sites (e.g., roads, freeways, residential areas, recreation areas);
- general viewer groups and their sensitivity;
- criteria for determining significance for visual impacts;
- impacts and the levels of significance of visual impacts of the proposed project alternatives; and
- mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

## SETTING

The visual character and quality of the regional setting and the project sites are evaluated using criteria for visual landscape relationships that are recognized as valid and reliable (Federal Highway Administration 1983). These criteria include vividness, intactness, and unity and are defined as follows:

- **Vividness** is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking or distinctive visual patterns.
- **Intactness** is the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements; this factor can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.
- **Unity** is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole; it frequently attests to the careful design of individual components in the landscape. (Federal Highway Administration 1983.)

The appearance of the landscape is described using the relationship criteria described above and the dominance elements of form, line, color, and texture. These dominance elements are defined by USFS and are "the simplest visual recognition parts which make up the characteristic landscape" and the basic components used to describe visual character and quality for most visual assessments (U.S. Forest Service 1974, Federal Highway Administration 1983).

Viewer sensitivity or concern is based on the visibility of resources in the landscape, the proximity of viewers to visual resources, the elevational position of viewers relative to visual resources, the frequency and duration of views, the number of viewers, and the type and expectations of individuals and viewer groups.

The criteria for identifying importance of views are related in part to the position of the viewer relative to the resource. An area of the landscape that is visible from a particular location (e.g., an overlook) or series of points (e.g., a road or trail) is defined as a viewshed. To identify the importance of views of resources, a viewshed may be broken into distance zones of foreground, middle ground, and background. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant it is and the greater is its importance. Although distance zones in viewsheds may vary between different geographic regions or types of terrain, a commonly used set of criteria identify the foreground distance zone as within  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the viewer, the middle ground zone as extending from the foreground zone to 3 to 5 miles from the viewer, and the background zone extending from the middle ground zone to infinity (U.S. Forest Service 1974). Also, resources that are higher in elevation than the viewer tend generally to take on greater visual importance than resources at a lower elevation than the viewer.

Visual sensitivity also depends on the number and type of viewers and the frequency and duration of views. Generally, visual sensitivity increases with an increase in total numbers of viewers, the frequency of viewing (e.g., daily or seasonally), and the duration of views (i.e., how long a scene is viewed). Also, visual sensitivity is higher for views by people engaging in recreational activities (e.g., picnicking, playing sports, hiking, biking, or camping), and homeowners. Visual sensitivity tends to be lower for people driving as part of their work or commuting to and from work (Federal Highway Administration 1983, U.S. Forest Service 1974, USSCS 1978). Views from recreation trails and areas, scenic highways, and scenic overlooks are generally assessed as having high visual sensitivity.

## Regional Setting

The visual character of the JOS service area provides a context and frame of reference for assessing the visual quality of the project sites. The regional landscape of the JOS service area is, for the most part, densely urban. Natural landscape features are generally subordinate to the area's urban character. The county general plan states: "The County of Los Angeles has a rich and diverse natural environment whose beauty has attracted people and, with them, new development." The urban character of the Los Angeles area is recognized as an important feature that distinguishes it from other large metropolitan areas. Distinguishing elements include its extensive freeway system and great variety of ornamental vegetation.

The regional landscape consists of a broad coastal plain bordered by forested mountains to the north and ocean to the south and west. The coastal plain, which is mostly urbanized, slopes gently to the south and is punctuated by low hills and bluffs. Several important rivers and tributary streams flow generally south from the mountains across the coastal plain. Coastal salt marshes occur in small areas along the coast and are visually important because of their high visibility and scarcity in the region.

Views of the San Gabriel mountains to the north can be dramatic and vivid from the coastal plain, especially in winter and after storms when the mountains are snow capped and the air is clear. Poor air quality due to smog, fog, and haze often limits the extent and quality of views throughout the region.

Most rivers, streams, and drainages in the urbanized coastal plain are contained in concrete-lined channels. Streamside or other naturally occurring vegetation is scarce in the region. Where it does exist, it is an important visual element in the regional landscape. Views of streamside and other naturally occurring vegetation in the coastal plain are often vivid. Most existing vegetation in the coastal plain is urban landscaping and street trees.

Because the area is so heavily urbanized, the unity and vividness of urban form and elements are important criteria for defining visual character and quality. However, throughout much of the region, the extensive urbanization also creates a generally low degree of intactness. Many diverse land uses are mixed throughout the region, providing little

design cohesiveness and low unity of design elements. Numerous high-voltage power lines and freeways are highly visible linear elements in the generally level and open coastal plain. These elements generally criss-cross the landscape, reducing any strong sense of design order or cohesiveness in the regional landscape. Freeways are dominant visual elements in the region; they also are one of the most important vantage points for viewing the area for both residents and visitors. Other streets and roads also are important locations for viewing the landscape of the region.

### **Relevant Plans and Policies**

The JOS service area's visual character and quality is recognized as an important resource within the county and area communities. Important relevant goals and policies for visual resource protection in local community planning documents are identified below.

#### **County of Los Angeles General Plan**

The county general plan, published in 1993, contains several policies that identify the importance of recognizing and protecting visual resources in the region. These are presented below.

##### **General Goals and Policies for Environmental Protection**

Policy 15. Protect areas that have significant natural resources and scenic values, including significant ecological areas, the coastal zone and prime agricultural lands.

Policy 21. Stress the development of community parks, particularly in areas of greatest deficiency, and take advantage of opportunities to preserve large natural and scenic areas.

##### **Revitalization**

Policy 33. Protect and enhance the visual uniqueness of natural edges and encourage superior design of major entryways.

##### **Land Use Quality and Compatible Design**

Goal: To encourage high-quality design in all development projects, compatible with, and sensitive to, the natural and manmade environment.

Policy 14. Assure that new development is compatible with the natural and manmade environment by implementing appropriate locational controls and high quality design standards.

Policy 15. Protect the character of residential neighborhoods by preventing the intrusion of incompatible uses that would cause environmental degradation such as excessive noise, noxious fumes, glare, shadowing and traffic.

### **Efficient Use of Land**

Goal: To encourage more efficient use of land, compatible with, and sensitive to, natural ecological, scenic, cultural and open space resources.

The county general plan also identifies policies for protecting visual character and quality in scenic highway corridors; however, no county-designated scenic highways are located near any of the proposed project sites in the region.

### **City of Carson General Plan Elements**

Various elements of the City of Carson General Plan contain goals and policies for maintaining and improving the visual quality of the community. These goals and policies would apply to project improvements for the JWPCP, which is located within the City of Carson.

**Land Use, Open Space, Public Services and Facilities, and Recreation Elements.** The Open Space Element of the City of Carson General Plan, published in 1982, states that no areas of outstanding scenic value and no scenic highways exist within the city. However, the element contains the following goals and objectives that pertain to managing the community's visual character.

8. Maintain existing street planting and maintenance programs for visual relief with emphasis placed on major and secondary highways in residential and commercial areas.

13. Promote attractive landscaping on commercial and industrial developments and utilize landscaping buffers for screening incompatible land uses.

19. Ensure the City's continued economic well-being and increase property values by making it an attractive and suitable place to live, work, conduct business and be educated.

**Historic Preservation, Fine Arts, Conservation, Scenic Highway, Parkway and Raised Median Elements.** The Scenic Highway Element, published in 1981, states (on page 16): "While there are no designated scenic highways in Carson, the City has adopted as one of its objectives the beautification of views along its roads." Relevant goals and programs identified in this element for managing visual quality include the following:

3. Providing parkway trees along local streets and highways.

4. Providing landscaped median dividers on selected streets and highways.

The Parkway Element, also published in 1981, states on page 19: "The City of Carson is committed to the maximum utilization of the parkway strips as a means of beautifying the overall view from the streets and highways and screening traffic from adjacent land uses." The plan designates the major city streets surrounding the JWPCP as areas for parkway landscaping that would be maintained by the property owner. These areas include the south side of Sepulveda Boulevard, the west side of Main Street, the north side of Lomita Boulevard, a small area southwest of the intersection of Figueroa Street and Lomita Boulevard, and both sides of Figueroa Street.

### **Joint Water Pollution Control Plant**

The JWPCP is located in an area containing industrial, commercial, and residential land uses. Portions of the plant are visible from the surrounding streets and neighborhoods. The heavily traveled Harbor Freeway (I-110) runs north and south adjacent to the site's west side. Much of the site is highly visible from the elevated I-110, especially to northbound traffic. The plant is visible from other heavily traveled streets (e.g., Sepulveda Boulevard, Lomita Boulevard, and Figueroa Street) and other local streets near the site. A portion of the southeast side of the site is visible from a residential neighborhood south of Lomita Boulevard.

Intactness, vividness, and unity for the area are low because of the diverse forms and structures in the area. Little substantial vegetation exists around or on the site. Some sparse vegetation provides screening along a concrete channel on the site's west side between the plant and I-110. This vegetation softens the industrial character of the area, but it is not extensive enough to substantially improve intactness, vividness, or unity of views of the JWPCP and its surroundings. A small wetland with a few large riparian trees and tall shrubs exists at the northwest side of the site. This area is visible from several westside locations, including I-110. A railroad line runs east-west through the site; it is used for industrial purposes and carries no recreational passengers. Adjacent to the site to the east is a non-operational oil refinery plant with many large cylindrical storage tanks and other industrial equipment visible onsite. These facilities, which are not being maintained, contribute substantially to the generally low visual quality of the area immediately around the JWPCP.

The JWPCP project site contains numerous tanks and industrial structures. The structures vary greatly in form and are generally less than 40 feet high. They are painted mostly in subdued earth tones, primarily tan. The JWPCP is moderately unified in design by its generally consistent color scheme and industrial character. Light-colored and metallic materials used throughout the plant site create glare. Night lighting for security and operations also creates nighttime light and glare that is visible from the nearby travel routes and the residential neighborhood to the southeast. In several portions of the JWPCP site, flowers and nursery plants are being raised as part of commercial operations. Although colorful, these areas are not vivid because of the appurtenant structures and equipment present.

## **Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant**

The area around the Los Coyotes WRP consists mostly of residential land with some industrial and commercial areas and park land nearby. The site is bordered on the east and south by major freeways: the north-south San Gabriel Freeway (I-605) on the east and the east-west Artesia Freeway (SR 91) on the south. A major heavily traveled freeway interchange connects the two freeways southeast of the site. The freeways are at about the same level as the plant site, and portions of the plant are visible from the freeways. Traffic typically moves past the site rapidly, affording short duration views; however, traffic slowdowns occur frequently in peak rush-hour traffic and longer duration views are then likely. Primary travel by motorists is for business and work; a small volume of traffic past the site may be recreationists with expectations for a higher quality visual experience. The plant is not clearly visible from other streets or neighborhoods in the area. A buffer of tall trees in a parklike setting on the south side of the plant partially screens the plant from views from State Route 91. A golf course and driving range borders the plant site to the north and west. Portions of the plant site are visible from this recreation area. The channeled San Gabriel River is adjacent to the golf course to the west.

Vividness and unity for the area are low because of the diverse forms and structures in the area. Intactness of the area is generally medium in the immediate vicinity of the site because land uses are somewhat cohesive, consisting of freeways and recreational areas. The buffer of trees along the south end of the plant site performs the important function of visually screening and buffering the site from views from the adjacent freeway. This buffer contributes appreciably to the medium intactness rating of views from the south. The Los Coyotes WRP contains numerous industrial structures that are generally low in height. Structures are painted mostly in subdued earth tones. Light-colored and metallic materials used throughout the plant site create a large amount of daytime glare. Night lighting for security and operations also creates some nighttime light and glare that is visible from the nearby travel routes.

## **San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant**

The San Jose Creek WRP is located in an area containing residential and park areas and industrial and commercial structures nearby. The site is bordered on the north and west by the San Gabriel River and on the south and east by I-605 and the east-west Pomona Freeway (SR 60). A major heavily traveled freeway interchange connects the two freeways on the south side of the site. The freeways are elevated above the site and portions of the plant are visible from the freeways. Traffic typically moves past the site rapidly, affording short duration views; however, traffic slowdowns occur frequently in peak rush-hour traffic and longer duration views are then likely. Primary travel by motorists is for business and work; a small volume of traffic past the site may be recreationists with expectations for a higher quality visual experience. The plant is partially visible from some residences in the area. A golf course across San Jose Creek has some views of the plant site.



Vividness and unity for the area are low because of the diverse forms and structures in the area. Intactness of the area is generally medium in the immediate vicinity of the site because land uses are somewhat cohesive, consisting of the freeways, residences, and recreational areas. The San Jose Creek WRP contains numerous industrial structures that are generally low in height. Structures are painted mostly in subdued earth tones. Light-colored and metallic materials used throughout the plant site create a large amount of daytime glare and contrast with the open green lawn areas. The green lawn areas contribute substantially to the medium intactness rating of the site. Night lighting for security and operations creates some nighttime light and glare that is visible from the nearby travel routes.

### **Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant**

The area surrounding Whittier Narrows WRP contains mostly recreation, park, and open space land. The site is bordered on the west by the Rio Hondo, on the south by San Gabriel Boulevard, and on the east by Rosemead Boulevard (SR 19). A dense buffer of trees and shrubs and a strip of open land separates the plant site from SR 19, effectively screening the plant from view. The plant does not appear to be visible from any other public areas nearby. A small riparian area and a small equipment storage area are located just to the west of the plant site. The WRP plant, riparian area, and equipment storage area may be partially visible from some residences and streets across the Rio Hondo.

Unity for the area is medium because the area consists mostly of open space and recreational land and the extensive riparian and vegetated areas near the plant site are scarce in the region. Vividness is also medium because of the extensive natural vegetation in the area. Intactness of the area is generally high in the immediate vicinity of the site because land uses are generally cohesive. Only the plant and a nearby equipment storage area may slightly reduce the area's intactness. The Whittier Narrows WRP contains industrial structures that are generally low in height. The plant is elevated about 15 feet to minimize damages due to flooding. Structures are painted mostly in subdued earth tones. Light-colored and metallic materials used throughout the plant site create a large amount of daytime glare and contrast with their mostly vegetative surroundings. Night lighting for security and operations creates some nighttime light and glare that may be visible from the nearby areas.

## **IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE 2010 PLAN ALTERNATIVES**

### **Methodology and Assumptions for Impact Analysis**

The degree of impact depends on both the magnitude of change to the visual character and quality of the visual resource and viewers' responses to and concern for those

changes. This general process is similar for all established federal procedures for visual assessment (Smardon et al. 1986) and may be applied to visual assessment for other projects and areas. The impact analysis follows a standard, descriptive approach used by the FHWA (1983) for visual analysis. This analysis addresses visual impacts at a project level for the JWPCP and a program level for the other facilities. The project-level analysis identifies specific impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project alternatives at the JWPCP and specific mitigation measures designed to reduce the visual impacts either to less-than-significant levels or as otherwise identified. The program level analysis for the other facilities will be less specific in its discussion of both the impacts and mitigation measures.

### **Criteria for Determining Significance**

Criteria for determining the significance of impacts are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Guidelines applicable to visual impacts state that a project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located or have a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effect. Visual impacts for this project are considered significant if the project:

- substantially reduces the visual quality of existing views from important viewing locations (e.g., nearby residential areas, freeways, and streets that receive high public use and recreation areas, such as parks and golf courses) or
- conflicts with stated goals or policies that address protecting visual quality in adopted general plans of the county or city in which the project is located.

Visual quality would be reduced by introducing into the landscape new elements in terms of form, line, color, or texture that negatively affect visual vividness, intactness, or unity of important or sensitive views. Visual quality could be reduced by removing existing vegetation or other elements that screen or soften views of existing industrial features of the various facilities or by introducing or removing elements that substantially increase the effects of light and glare on surrounding areas. Goals and policies in adopted community general plans identified above under "Setting" address the importance of protecting visual quality of the area for views from freeways and other high-traffic-volume travel routes and residential areas.

### **Comparison of Alternatives**

Table 15-1 at the end of this chapter shows that the impacts associated with Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 are similar to those associated with Alternative 1, with some variation. This variation is described below for each alternative.

## Alternative 1: Upgrade JWPCP/Expand Los Coyotes WRP/San Jose Creek WRP

### Construction Impacts

**Impact: Temporary, Short-Term Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Construction at the JWPCP.** Under Alternative 1, construction of new facilities and modification of existing facilities at the JWPCP would involve excavating areas within the JWPCP site and along Figueroa and Main Streets; siting equipment and equipment storage and staging areas; storing excavated material and debris; siting temporary construction offices, fences, sanitary facilities, and possibly other appurtenant structures; removing vegetation; constructing temporary access roads; and grading. Activities could result in increased dust and visible particulates in air and increased light and glare from lighting for security and construction. Impacts of construction would be temporary and would terminate following completion of construction, removal of equipment and materials, and cleanup of storage and construction areas.

This impact is considered significant during the 11-year period during which construction activities would occur because the visual quality of the facilities would be substantially reduced in visually sensitive areas. Visual quality would be reduced by introducing new elements in terms of form, line, color, or texture that negatively affect the visual unity of important or sensitive views from the Harbor Freeway, public streets running through or adjacent to the project site, or nearby residences. Visual quality could be reduced by removing existing vegetation or other elements that screen or soften views of existing industrial features of the various facilities or by introducing or removing elements that substantially increase the effects of light and glare on surrounding areas.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measures would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

- **Mitigation Measure 15-1. Locate staging and storage areas outside of visually sensitive areas or screen them from view where feasible.**

The Districts propose to locate staging, equipment storage, and construction material storage areas outside visually sensitive areas, where feasible, or screen these areas from general viewing. Screening may be accomplished using natural wood fencing or other fencing that is similar in color to existing surrounding facilities. Fencing would be of a height and type that effectively screens at least 50% of views of the stored equipment and materials throughout construction. Fencing may be used in combination with other techniques that would effectively accomplish at least 50% screening, including berms or planted vegetation.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-2. Minimize excavation, clearing, and grading activities.**

The Districts propose to minimize excavation, clearing, and grading activities by limiting these activities to the areas and time required to perform construction. Existing trees and other vegetation would be protected and left undisturbed wherever possible. Excavated material and debris would be removed from the site immediately following excavation or clearing activities. Fugitive dust and other airborne particulates would be minimized using standard erosion control and dust reduction techniques required by the city for construction.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-3. Restore graded areas close to original contours and revegetate cleared areas.**

The Districts propose to restore disturbed areas, including temporary construction access roads, by revegetating cleared areas and restoring graded areas as closely as possible to their original contours. Restoration activities for each location would begin immediately following cleanup of the disturbed area.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-4. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures during construction.**

The Districts propose to minimize the sources of light and glare by using a minimal amount of light sources and operating the lighting for the least time necessary to accomplish construction activities safely and securely. Also, the Districts propose to locate and orient light fixtures to minimize their visibility from sensitive viewing locations. Light fixtures that orient light only on areas where it is needed and that effectively shield stray light from other areas offsite would be used.

**Impact: Temporary, Short-Term Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Construction at the Los Coyotes and San Jose Creek WRPs.** Under Alternative 1, construction of new facilities and modification of existing facilities at the Los Coyotes and San Jose Creek WRPs would involve modifications of existing facilities similar to those described above for the JWPCP. This impact is considered significant for reasons described above for the JWPCP.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measures would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. These mitigation measures are described above for the JWPCP.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-1. Locate staging and storage areas outside of visually sensitive areas or screen them from view where feasible.**
- **Mitigation Measure 15-2. Minimize excavation, clearing, and grading activities.**

- **Mitigation Measure 15-3. Restore graded areas to close to original contours and revegetate cleared areas.**
- **Mitigation Measure 15-4. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures during construction.**

### **Impacts of Treatment Plant Operations**

**Impact: Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Introduction of New Elements at the JWPCP.** As part of expansion of treatment plant operations and biosolids processing, new facilities would be constructed and existing facilities would be modified at the JWPCP. New facilities and facilities to be modified are identified in Figure 2-8. Although industrial facilities are currently located in the JWPCP site area, many of the new facilities would be visible from important viewing locations, including the Harbor Freeway, public streets surrounding and running through the project area, and nearby residential areas. Some structures would appear new with their immediate surroundings because of contrasts in form, line, color, or texture. Visual unity of views could be reduced by introduction of new elements such as very tall structures or large groups of massive structures. Very tall structures would include the proposed cryogenic plant (74 feet high) east of Figueroa Street and north of Lomita Boulevard; this facility would be visible from the freeway, public streets, and possibly the nearby residential area south of Lomita Boulevard. Groups of large structures would include the group of five digesters, flare station, and related facilities near the Harbor Freeway and just north of Lomita Boulevard and the group of seven digesters west of Figueroa Street and just north of the rail line. Both clusters of facilities would be visible from the freeway and public streets.

This impact is considered significant because visual quality of existing views from important areas would be substantially reduced by the introduction of elements that are new with their surroundings and that would negatively affect the visual unity of important or sensitive views from the Harbor Freeway, public streets running through or adjacent to the project site, or nearby residences.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measures would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

- **Mitigation Measure 15-5. Partially screen new elements from public view where feasible.**

The Districts propose to partially screen new elements from views from public travel routes. Screening may be accomplished using vegetation, berms, fencing, or other acceptable techniques and combinations of techniques that would effectively screen at least 30% of views of the new elements within 10 years of completion of construction of the new facilities. Fencing that may be used would be of a type similar in color to existing surrounding facilities or of natural wood and should be used in combination with planted and maintained vegetation.

Screening would be used between the complex of proposed digesters and Figueroa Street north of the rail line, the digesters and other structures and the north side of Lomita Boulevard east of the freeway and west of Figueroa Street, and along the west side of Figueroa Street for about 300 feet north of its intersection with Lomita Boulevard. Visual screening also would be used along the west sides of both digester clusters to help reduce visual impacts of views from the freeway; this screening would consist mostly or completely of trees that, at maturity, would reach sufficient heights to provide effective screening.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-6. Minimize use of reflective materials and avoid use of bright and high-contrast colors.**

The Districts propose to minimize the use of reflective materials (e.g., shiny metals and glass) and avoid using colors that are bright or contrast strongly with nearby surroundings for materials and surfaces of new facilities. Colors would maintain visual unity by being consistent with color schemes for existing facilities and emphasizing earth tones and subdued colors that blend with surrounding elements.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-7. Maintain structures at minimum necessary heights and reduce large-scale elements to smaller component elements as feasible.**

The Districts propose to maintain structures at the minimum heights and masses necessary to accomplish their intended functions. Where feasible, tall or massive elements would be reduced to smaller components to help reduce visual contrasts of form, line, and texture.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-8. Establish parkway planting strips and improve existing greenbelt areas.**

The Districts propose to establish parkway planting strips along streets in areas designated in the Parkway Element for the City of Carson general plan and improve existing greenbelt areas (City of Carson 1981). Parkway strips would consist of planting vegetation for the full width of land between the street curb and the JWPCP property line along designated streets. The proposed parkway strips would include planting trees on the north and south sides of Lomita Boulevard and on Figueroa Street south of Lomita Boulevard and planting trees around the perimeter of the Wilmington Jay-Cee athletic field. The Districts would also provide water to irrigate the athletic field (see Figure 15-1).

Planted areas would be irrigated and maintained by the Districts. Trees with low water requirements, ground covers, and low shrubs would be an integral part of all parkway planting strips.

**Impact: Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Increased Light and Glare at the JWPCP.** As part of expansion of treatment plant operations and biosolids processing, some areas and facilities would receive new lighting. Increased lighting at the JWPCP may reduce visual quality by increasing light and glare that may be visible from public views from travel routes and nearby residential areas. Visual quality may be reduced at the JWPCP by a reduction in visual unity that may be objectionable to the general public. Visual unity may be reduced by the increased visibility of these elements for reasons described above in this section for the JWPCP. Light and glare also may be increased by removal of existing screening vegetation as described below.

This impact is considered significant because visual quality of existing views from important areas would be substantially reduced by the increased light and glare. Also, reduction of visual quality of these views would conflict with adopted goals and policies of local community general plans.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measure would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

- **Mitigation Measure 15-9. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures.**

The Districts propose to minimize the sources of light and glare by using a minimal amount of light sources and operating the lighting for the least time necessary for operations, safety, and security. Also, the Districts would locate and orient light fixtures to minimize their visibility from sensitive viewing locations. Light fixtures would be used that orient light only on areas where it is needed and that effectively shield stray light from other areas offsite.

**Impact: Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Removal of Existing Vegetative Screening at the Los Coyotes WRP.** As part of expansion of treatment plant operations under Alternative 1, vegetation that screens the plant facilities from public views from the SR 91 on-ramp would be removed or reduced. Removal or reduction of vegetative screening would reduce visual quality by increasing visibility of industrial features and elements that may appear new to the general public. Visual unity may be reduced by the increased visibility of these elements for reasons described above in this section for the JWPCP. Light and glare may also be increased by removal of existing screening vegetation.

This impact is considered significant because the vegetation provides important screening and buffering, and maintaining the visual quality of existing views and the visual unity of important or sensitive views from important viewing areas would be negatively affected.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measures would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation measures 15-6, 15-7, and 15-9 are described above.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-6. Minimize use of reflective materials and avoid use of bright and high-contrast colors.**
- **Mitigation Measure 15-7. Maintain structures at minimum necessary heights and mass and reduce massive elements to smaller component elements as feasible.**
- **Mitigation Measure 15-9. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures.**
- **Mitigation Measure 15-10. Partially screen new elements from public view.**

The Districts propose to partially screen new elements from views from public travel routes. Screening may be accomplished using vegetation, berms, fencing, or other acceptable techniques and combinations of techniques that would effectively screen at least 30% of views of the new elements within 10 years of completion of construction of the new facilities. Fencing that may be used would be of a type that is similar in color to existing surrounding facilities or of natural wood and would be used in combination with planted and maintained vegetation.

Screening would be used between SR 91 and the WRP facilities. Visual screening would consist mostly or completely of trees that, at maturity, would reach sufficient heights to provide effective screening.

### **Impacts of Biosolids Disposal and Reuse**

**Impact: Minimal Potential for Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Biosolids Disposal and Reuse.** Implementation of the 2010 Plan would involve composting, land application, and landfilling activities. These activities could result in degradation of visual quality from the creation of new sites. However, the Districts will use only sites that are properly permitted and have mitigated thoroughly all site-specific impacts through the preparation of site-specific environmental documents or compliance with federal, state, or local land use regulations.

**Mitigation.** No mitigation is required.



## **Alternative 2: Upgrade JWPCP/Expand Los Coyotes WRP**

Under Alternative 2, impacts at the JWPCP would be the same as under Alternative 1. No impacts would occur at the San Jose Creek WRP. Impacts at the Los Coyotes WRP would be similar to those described under Alternative 1, except that expansion would not require the removal of a tree-lined buffer between the WRP and SR 91. Additional impacts would occur from the construction of sewer lines. The impacts are described below.

**Impact: Temporary, Short-Term Reduction in Visual Quality during Construction of Sewer Lines.** Visual impacts during construction activities could result from introduction of new equipment and from clearing and grading activities. However, the Districts will minimize construction times for each segment of sewer and employ standard construction procedures to minimize any construction nuisance. This impact is considered less than significant.

**Mitigation.** No mitigation is required.

## **Alternative 3: Upgrade JWPCP/Expand Whittier Narrows WRP**

Under Alternative 3, impacts at the JWPCP would be the same as under Alternatives 1 and 2. No impacts would occur at the Los Coyotes or San Jose Creek WRPs. Impacts at the Whittier Narrows WRP are described below.

**Impact: Temporary, Short-Term Reduction in Visual Quality Resulting from Construction at the Whittier Narrows WRP.** Construction of new facilities and modification of existing facilities at the Whittier Narrows WRP would involve the removal of ornamental plantings at the nursery adjacent to the plant located on land leased from the Districts. These plantings currently screen the Whittier Narrows WRP from Rosemead Boulevard and from view by the general public. This impact is considered significant for reasons described above under Alternative 1.

**Mitigation.** Implementation of the following mitigation measures would be required to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. These mitigation measures are described above under Alternative 1.

- **Mitigation Measure 15-1.** Locate staging and storage areas outside of visually sensitive areas or screen them from view where feasible.
- **Mitigation Measure 15-2.** Minimize excavation, clearing, and grading activities.
- **Mitigation Measure 15-3.** Restore graded areas to close to original contours and revegetate cleared areas.
- **Mitigation Measure 15-4.** Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures during construction.

**Alternative 4: Upgrade JWPCP/Expand Los Coyotes WRP/  
San Jose Creek WRP/Whittier Narrows WRP**

Under Alternative 4, impacts at the JWPCP and the San Jose Creek WRP would be the same as under Alternative 1, impacts on sewer lines and at the Los Coyotes WRP would be the same as under Alternative 2, and impacts at the Whittier Narrows WRP would be the same as under Alternative 3. No additional impacts would occur under this alternative.

**No-Project Alternative**

Under the No-Project Alternative, no new facilities would be constructed and no changes in the visual environment would occur.

Table 15-1. Comparison of Aesthetic Impacts by Alternative

Impacts and Mitigation Measures	Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		Alternative 4				
	JWPCP	LC	SJC	JWPCP	LC	Sewers	JWPCP	WN	JWPCP	LC	SJC	WN	Sewers
<b>Construction Impacts</b> Impact: Temporary, short-term reduction in visual quality resulting from construction at the JWPCP (S) Mitigation Measure 15-1. Locate staging and storage areas outside of visually sensitive areas or screen them from view where feasible Mitigation Measure 15-2. Minimize excavation, clearing, and grading activities Mitigation Measure 15-3. Restore graded areas close to original contours and revegetate cleared areas Mitigation Measure 15-4. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures during construction	✓			✓			✓		✓				
Impact: Temporary, short-term reduction in visual quality resulting from construction at the Los Coyotes and San Jose Creek WRPs (S) Mitigation Measures 15-1 through 15-4		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓		
Impact: Temporary, short-term reduction in visual quality during construction of sewer lines (LT) No mitigation is required						✓							✓
Impact: Temporary, short-term reduction in visual quality resulting from construction at the Whittier Narrows WRP (S) Mitigation Measures 15-1 through 15-4								✓				✓	

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LT = less than significant. S = significant.

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Impacts and Mitigation Measures	Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		Alternative 4				
	JWPCP	LC	SJC	JWPCP	LC	Sewers	JWPCP	WN	JWPCP	LC	SJC	WN	Sewers
<b>Impacts of Treatment Plant Operations</b> Impact: Reduction in visual quality resulting from introduction of new elements at the JWPCP (S) Mitigation Measure 15-5. Partially screen new elements from public view where feasible Mitigation Measure 15-6. Minimize use of reflective materials and avoid use of bright and high-contrast colors Mitigation Measure 15-7. Maintain structures at minimum necessary heights and reduce large-scale elements to smaller component elements as feasible Mitigation Measure 15-8. Establish parkway planting strips and improve existing greenbelt areas	✓			✓			✓		✓				
Impact: Reduction in visual quality resulting from increased light and glare at the JWPCP (S) Mitigation Measure 15-9. Minimize sources of light and glare and use glare-reducing light fixtures	✓			✓			✓		✓				
Impact: Reduction in visual quality resulting from removal of existing vegetative screening at the Los Coyotes WRP (S) Mitigation Measures 15-6, 15-7, 15-9 Mitigation Measure 15-10. Partially screen new elements from public view		✓											
<b>Impacts of Biosolids Disposal and Reuse</b> Impact: Minimal potential for reduction in visual quality resulting from biosolids disposal and reuse (LT) No mitigation is required	✓			✓			✓		✓				

No significant and unavoidable aesthetics impacts would occur.

LT = less than significant. S = significant.