3.3 Aesthetics/Visual Quality

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on aesthetics and the visual quality of the environment. This evaluation includes an assessment of the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, and cumulative effects of the Proposed Action on scenic vistas, scenic resources, and the existing visual character and quality of the project site and surroundings. The evaluation is based on observations in the field, review of topographic maps of the area, and visual simulations developed for selected viewpoints.

3.3.1 Affected Environment

3.3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The following discussion describes the existing visual setting within the SV 100K study area.

Key Viewsheds

General Characteristics

The visual setting is described in terms of key viewsheds. The visual quality of a viewshed is based on the aesthetic character of the area and includes the following physical characteristics:

- slope or mass of the landform
- distinct vegetation communities
- appearance of water
- variety in landscape character
- unique geologic features
- important historic landmarks or resources.

Viewsheds with a high visual quality include physical characteristics such as natural landforms with high vertical relief, and a variety of vegetative types with different forms, colors, textures, and patterns. These viewsheds are typically located at higher elevations and capture certain slope aspects that lend unobstructed direct or panoramic views of the natural landscape. Viewsheds with moderate visual quality have interesting, but not dominant or exceptional, landforms and natural features. The perceptual quality would include a varied but unbalanced composition, and the natural landform becomes a secondary or intermittent resource in the viewshed. Viewsheds with low visual quality have few or no interesting landforms, few vegetation types, the absence of water, and few color variations. In these cases, the landscape has been transformed such that only vestiges of the natural terrain remain or are visible.

The visual sensitivity of a viewshed is based on the ability of a particular area to absorb changes in the character or quality. A viewshed with a high sensitivity level would include dominant forms of shape or structure, curvilinear line, and dominant color and texture, and would be
naturally intact. Highly sensitive areas are those where the proposed improvements would be very visible and produce a contrasting visual impact. Viewsheds with low sensitivity to change typically have a lower visual quality, and the addition of elements would not create any significant impacts on the overall appearance of the area. Typically, viewsheds in urbanized areas are more able to absorb changes due to variation and contrast in bulk, scale, orientation, and color that already exist in the environment; a project will often add incrementally to the background viewshed and blend in, but not drastically change it. Viewsheds that are composed mainly of natural landforms and features, however, are less able to absorb any changes because the conversion of open space to development typically creates a distinct, noticeable alteration in topography and color compared to the surrounding natural area, resulting in the natural environment looking less intact and the change more visually apparent. Existing visual conditions for principal visible components in the key viewsheds surrounding the SV 100K study area are described below.

Key Viewsheds in the SV 100K Study Area

Four viewsheds were selected to define the visual character of the SV 100K study area. Figure 3.3-1 is a key map of these viewsheds, with corresponding site views provided in Figures 3.3-2 through 3.3-5.

**Viewshed 1 – Upper Moreno Valley**

The Upper Moreno Valley viewshed includes the valley floor and steep rocky slopes at the northern end of Moreno Road (Figure 3.3-2). The visual terminus of the viewshed is the existing San Vicente Dam, which blends in well with the surrounding slopes. Two residences are located within this viewshed; however, they do not have views of the dam area due to the orientation of the residences. One is set into the hillside, and the other faces away from the dam.

**Viewshed 2 – SR-67**

The SR-67 viewshed includes the low, narrow canyon on both sides of SR-67, extending from Vigilante Road on the south to the Foster Truck Trail on the north (Figure 3.3-3). Substantial grading was completed for the highway and associated right-of-way. The slopes are vegetated with oaks, mixed chaparral, and nonnative grasses, and interspersed with large boulder outcrops. Approximately 15 homes are located east of SR-67; none of these have views of San Vicente Dam. SR-67 in the project area is designated as a third-priority scenic route by the County General Plan. In the project area, there are no designated scenic turnouts or vistas along the segment of SR-67 adjacent to the SV 100K study area.

**Viewshed 3 – Eucalyptus Hills (Lower Elevation)**

The Eucalyptus Hills area encompasses large residential lots, providing a low-density, rural character (Figure 3.3-4). Residents in this viewshed have distant views of the downstream side of the dam.
**Viewshed 4 – Eucalyptus Hills (Upper Elevation)**

The Eucalyptus Hills area encompasses large residential lots, providing a low-density, rural character (Figure 3.3-5). Residents in this viewshed have distant views of the downstream side of the dam.

### 3.3.1.2 Regulatory Setting

The Water Authority is mandated by its principal act, the County Water Authority Act (Stats. 1943, c. 545) to provide water to meet the needs of member agencies in its service area. As defined under this Act, the Water Authority is not subject to local land use plans, policies, and ordinances. Furthermore, water supply facilities are exempt from local zoning per California Government Code Section 53091(d) and (e). According to Section 53091 of the California Government Code, zoning ordinances do not apply to the location or construction of facilities used for the production, generation, storage, or transmission of water. Refer to Section 3.9.1.2 (Regulatory Setting, Land Use and Planning for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS for a discussion of the plans and policies that support the provision of water infrastructure.

### 3.3.2 Project Design Features

General Conditions and Standard Specifications that will be included in the project construction documents to reduce aesthetics/visual quality impacts associated with construction of the Proposed Action are summarized in Section 1.9.1 (Introduction, Aesthetics/Visual Quality) of this EIR/EIS. In addition, the Proposed Action would include design features to minimize aesthetics/visual quality impacts. These design and construction features could include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- Vegetation removal will occur as late in the construction process as possible to minimize the amount of time between removal of the vegetation and refilling of the reservoir.
- Rock outcrops will be preserved whenever practicable. It is anticipated that irregular surfaces between the dam and the adjacent slopes will be created by the construction blasting process.
- All temporarily disturbed areas will be graded to be compatible with the surrounding topography, where practicable.
- All areas temporarily cleared of vegetation for the construction zone and staging area (e.g., not future inundation areas above 650 AMSL) will be revegetated at the completion of the project. The selection of plant materials will be compatible with the character of the viewshed. A landscape architect or restoration ecologist, experienced in southern California landscapes, will be consulted during preliminary design to recommend appropriate plant and fencing materials in the areas to be revegetated.
- Lighting will consist of low-sodium or similar lighting equipped with shields to focus light downward on the appropriate subject.
3.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects

3.3.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential aesthetic/visual quality impacts are based on applicable criteria in the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR §§15000-15387), Appendix G. A significant aesthetic/visual quality impact would occur if the Proposed Action would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Damage a scenic resource, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings.
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns.

3.3.3.2 Impact Analysis

Methodology

The aesthetics/visual quality impact analysis began with establishing viewer characteristics, which included: (1) identification of the types of viewers (viewer groups); (2) general estimation of the number of potential viewers (low, medium, high); (3) relative assessment of viewer sensitivity to change (low, medium, or high); and (4) estimation of viewing duration (short or intermittent, occasional views for up to a few hours per day, or extended views on a regular basis). In assessing viewer sensitivity to change, viewer activity and awareness were considered. Activities such as commuting in heavy traffic can distract an observer from many aspects of the visual environment. Conversely, recreational driving or relaxing in a scenic environment can encourage an observer to look at the view more closely and at greater length, thereby increasing the observer’s attention to detail. Sensitivity is also determined by how much the viewer has at stake in the viewshed. Typically, people who own property in an area are more sensitive to change than those just passing through.

After viewer characteristics were established, visible components of the Proposed Action were simulated using the photographs of the key viewsheds determined in the field (Figures 3.3-2 through 3.3-5). Key viewpoints were selected by a combination of the greatest number of potential viewers, the highest scenic quality found within the area, and the most sensitive areas subject to change. Impact categories include visual quality, landform quality, view quality, and community character.
The majority of the visible components of the Proposed Action would occur on the downstream or southerly side of the existing dam. These activities include the actual construction zone and staging area that would be used to process the RCC to raise the main dam and construct the two saddle dams, and the on-site quarry options. Visible components associated with the upstream side of the dam include lowering of the reservoir water level, the new marina, and construction of a new outlet tower.

The following analysis is based on ESP key views that have been updated to reflect current development conditions since it was approved in 1996. Four key viewpoint locations were selected to provide a representation of typical views of San Vicente Dam from surrounding neighborhoods and sensitive receptors, one from each of the four viewsheds described above. Figure 3.3-1 provides a map of the four selected key viewpoints. The proposed marina relocation and Marina Quarry Option would be located internal to the reservoir and would not be visible from any of the downstream representative key viewpoints (Figures 3.3-2 through 3.3-5); therefore, it does not appear in the photographs.

Analysis

**Threshold 1: Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista**

SR-67 in the vicinity of the SV 100K study area is designated by the County General Plan as a third-priority scenic highway in the Lakeside Community Plan. Third-priority routes do not have a specific timeline for preparation of corridor studies, as they meet only one of the four criteria of the Scenic Highway Element’s Scenic Highway System Priority List. There are no designated scenic turnouts or vistas along the segment of SR-67 within the SV 100K study area that offer views to a scenic resource. Therefore, there would be no impacts on a scenic vista along SR-67 due to the Proposed Action.

Due to the distances, elevation differences, and intervening topography, recreational users of Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Canyon Regional Open Space Park, Oak Oasis County Park, Boulder Oaks Open Space and El Capitan Open Space Preserve County Oak Oasis would not be able to see the dam construction zone or the higher dam. Therefore, there would be no impacts on a scenic vista from surrounding open space preserves due to the Proposed Action.

*The Proposed Action would not have a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas along SR-67 and from surrounding open space preserves. Therefore, there would be no impacts of the Proposed Action.*

**Threshold 2: Damage a scenic resource, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway**

As noted above, SR-67 is designated as a third-priority scenic highway in the vicinity of the SV 100K study area. The Proposed Action would not damage the following scenic resources within the SR-67 viewshed: trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.
Oak trees are considered a scenic resource, but the removal of these trees in the area of the Southeast Quarry Option would not be visible from SR-67. The Proposed Action would also include the preservation of rock outcroppings, wherever practicable, as a project design feature (refer to Section 3.3.2 above). Nevertheless, it is expected that some rock outcroppings would be altered by quarrying operations (including blasting). However, most of the outcroppings that would be affected would not be visible from surrounding areas, including SR-67; the exception would be the Southeast Quarry Option, which would be partially visible (Figure 3.3-5). Impacts on rock outcroppings from the Southeast Quarry Option would be limited to a small area of the hillside at the lower elevations; the rest of the topography would remain in its natural state with substantial outcroppings. In addition, there are no historic buildings within the SV 100K footprint that would be affected by the Proposed Action (refer to Section 3.7 [Cultural Resources for the Proposed Action] of this EIR/EIS). Therefore, impacts on scenic resources (i.e., oak trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) due to the Proposed Action, as viewed from SR-67 (a third-priority scenic highway), would be less than significant.

The Proposed Action would not damage scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings, within or visible from SR-67 (a third-priority scenic highway). Therefore, impacts of the Proposed Action would be less than significant.

**Threshold 3: Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings**

San Vicente Dam is barely visible to viewers within all four viewsheds described in Section 3.3.1.1 above. Although residential viewers have a high sensitivity to change in the visual environment, views of the dam are limited to residences in the following areas: (1) approximately 15 homes that are slightly elevated above the west side of SR-67; and (2) scattered residences in the higher elevations of the Eucalyptus Hills community approximately 1 to 2 miles west of the dam. These views are either partially screened by natural terrain and/or vegetation (for the homes on the west side of SR-67), or are so distant that the dam is barely noticeable (for the homes in the Eucalyptus Hills community). The key viewpoints of the downstream side of the dam site are presented in Figures 3.3-2 through 3.3-5. These views were photographed from different distances and orientations to represent a variety of viewing conditions from the four viewsheds. Viewpoint 1 in Figure 3.3-2 presents the existing view from the intersection of Vigilante Road and Moreno Avenue. Viewpoint 2 (Figure 3.3-3) depicts typical views of the dam from SR-67, Viewpoint 3 (Figure 3.3-4) represents views looking across SR-67 from lower elevations of Eucalyptus Hills, and Viewpoint 4 (Figure 3.3-5) represents views from residential areas in Eucalyptus Hills to the west. Viewpoints 2 through 4 provided the clearest views of the dam and, therefore, were developed into visual simulations of the raised dam to demonstrate pre-and post-project conditions (Figures 3.3-3 through 3.3-5).

**Impacts from Visual Changes on Downstream Side of the Dam**

Primary visible components of the Proposed Action that would contribute to potential visual quality impacts on the downstream side of the dam include raising the main dam a total of 117
feet, constructing two saddle dams on a low ridge to the west of the main dam, and possible excavation associated with the on-site southeast quarry option downstream of the dam. Excavation associated with the on-site southwest quarry option would not be clearly visible from any viewshed because this quarry site would occur on a southeast-facing slope. At most, views of this quarry option from the west would consist of a slight lowering of the ridgeline as shown in the simulations on Figures 3.3-3 through 3.3-5. In addition, visual changes as a result of the dam footprint, construction zone, and staging area include the clearing of vegetation (primarily eucalyptus and pepper trees, potentially oak trees, as well as a small amount of southern willow riparian scrub and nonnative grasses), and the presence of large trucks, equipment, batch plants, and a conveyor system. Specific analysis of impacts in each viewshed is presented below.

Viewshed 1 – Upper Moreno Valley
Residents and motorists in the Upper Moreno Valley viewshed would have limited views of the downstream side of the dam footprint, construction zone, and staging area. Although their sensitivity to change is high, the quantity of viewers in this viewshed is low due to the large parcel size and dispersed nature of the residential development in this area. However, Figure 3.3-2 shows the pre-dam raise conditions, which demonstrate that the existing dam is barely visible. Therefore, the incremental change in the height of the main dam and the addition of the two saddle dams would blend into the background of this viewpoint. The potential area of scarification from the southeast quarry option would constitute a small portion of the viewshed, where visible, and would not change the overall composition of the viewshed (rural with mountain backdrop and outcrops). In addition, the southeast quarry option would be partially screened by existing terrain and vegetation. With the planned incorporation of project design features (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), the change in the existing landform would be further minimized. The southwest quarry option would not be visible from this viewpoint. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on the existing visual character/quality of the Upper Moreno Valley and its surroundings would be less than significant.

Viewshed 2 – SR-67
Motorists traveling north on SR-67 would have limited views of the downstream side of the raised dam from several locations, but these views would be from a moving vehicle as there are no designated scenic turnouts or viewing vista areas on this segment of SR-67. Although the quantity of drivers would be high, their viewing duration would be low and their sensitivity to change would be moderate. Figure 3.3-3 shows a representative view from northbound SR-67, looking northeast toward the raised dam. The proposed minor addition to the height of the main dam and the construction of two saddle dams would barely be detectable to SR-67 motorists due to the distance and orientation of the dams relative to the highway. The southeast and southwest quarry options would be visible from this viewpoint. However, the potential area of scarification from the southeast quarry option would constitute a small portion of the viewshed and would not change the overall composition of the viewshed (rural with mountain backdrop and outcrops). In addition, the area along SR-67 from which the southwest quarry option would be visible is a small portion of the drivers’ experience along the road, and with the planned incorporation of project design features (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), the change to the existing landform and the drivers’ experience would be further minimized. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action
on the existing visual character/quality of SR-67 and its surroundings would be less than significant.

**Viewshed 3 – Eucalyptus Hills (Lower Elevation)**

Residents in this viewshed have distant views of the downstream side of the dam. The number of residential viewers is moderate; they have long-term views of the dam, and their sensitivity to change is high due to the orientation and spacing of residences. However, views of the dam and construction staging area would be completely blocked, partially screened, or restricted to secondary background elements from these vantage points due to the large intervening distance (Figure 3.3-4). From this viewpoint, the southeast on-site quarry option would be visible in the background, but the dam construction zone would be restricted to distant background views and partially screened by existing terrain, structures, or vegetation. Where visible, the potential area of scarification from the southeast quarry option would constitute a small portion of the viewshed and would not change the overall composition of the viewshed (rural with mountain backdrop and outcrops). With the planned incorporation of project design features (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), the change to the existing landform would be further minimized. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on the existing visual character/quality of Eucalyptus Hills (Lower Elevation) would be less than significant.

**Viewshed 4 – Eucalyptus Hills (Upper Elevation)**

Residents in this viewshed have distant views of the downstream side of the dam. The number of residential viewers is moderate; they have long-term views of the dam, and their sensitivity to change is high due to the orientation and spacing of residences. However, views of the dam and construction staging area would be completely blocked, partially screened, or restricted to secondary background elements from these vantage points due to the large intervening distance (Figure 3.3-5). From this viewpoint, the southeast quarry option and the dam construction zone would be restricted to background views and partially screened by existing terrain, structures, or vegetation. The new outlet tower would not be visible to ridgeline communities because it would be located at the foot of the dam inside the reservoir. Where visible, the potential area of scarification from the southeast quarry option would constitute a small portion of the viewshed and would not change the overall composition of the viewshed (rural with mountain backdrop and outcrops). With the planned incorporation of project design features (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), the change to the existing landform would be further minimized. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on the existing visual character/quality of Eucalyptus Hills (Upper Elevation) would be less than significant.

As described in the analysis for Threshold 1, due to the distances, elevation differences, and intervening topography, recreational users of surrounding open space preserves (e.g., Sycamore Canyon/Goodan, Oak Oasis, Boulder Oaks and El Capitan Open Space Preserves) would not be able to see the dam construction zone or the higher dam. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on the existing visual character/quality from surrounding open space preserves would be less than significant.
Impacts from Visual Changes on Upstream Side of the Dam

Visible components of the Proposed Action that would contribute to potential visual quality impacts on the upstream side of the dam include reservoir drawdown, new outlet tower, and quarry operations at the marina site, if that on-site quarry option were selected.

The viewers most sensitive to visual changes from the Proposed Action on the upstream side of the dam are the residential communities on ridgelines above San Vicente Reservoir: Eucalyptus Hills, Lake San Vicente, and Foster Canyon. However, these communities have distant partial views of the reservoir, and their sensitivity to visual change is moderate to low due to the large intervening distances (over a mile). Recreational users would not have views of the reservoir because it would be closed to the public during construction. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on recreational views of the reservoir would be less than significant.

Changes to the upstream side of the reservoir during construction would include lowering the pool level by approximately 30 feet, to an elevation of approximately 590 feet AMSL, to allow for construction of the new inlet/outlet works. The drawdown would result in an increase in the width of the unvegetated ring that surrounds the reservoir. However, this larger ring would be barely noticeable from the residential communities above the reservoir due to the large intervening distances between the residences and the reservoir. Because the drawdown would be temporary, lasting only the 3-5 years during the dam raise, it would not have a long-term negative impact on the RCA classification of the reservoir. Therefore, impacts from the drawdown on the RCA classification of the existing reservoir would be less than significant.

Quarry operations at the marina site would be short-term, because the area would subsequently be graded and the new marina would be constructed in this location. The new marina would be landscaped and designed to be an attractive recreational amenity. Therefore, impacts from the quarry operations at the marina site on the upstream side of the dam would be less than significant.

Due to the distances, elevation differences, and intervening topography, recreational users of County Boulder Oaks and San Vicente Highlands Open Space Preserves would not be able to see the new outlet tower on the upstream side of the main dam. Only the southeast corner of these areas would offer views of the drawdown and the Marina Quarry Option. As analyzed above for residences, construction views would be temporary, and the new marina would be an attractive recreational amenity. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action on upstream views from surrounding open space preserves would be less than significant.

_The Proposed Action would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings. The incremental increase in dam height would be barely detectable when compared to the existing dam. Moreover, resident and motorist views of the site would be restricted or screened; and the saddle dams, on-site quarry options, and dam construction zones would blend into the background with respect to views from the downstream_
side of the dam. Therefore, impacts from the Proposed Action due to visual changes on the downstream side of the dam would be less than significant.

The construction activities and improvements required for the Proposed Action would be barely noticeable because of the long viewing distances and the temporary nature of the activity (e.g., reservoir drawdown), or because facilities would be internal to the reservoir and not visible from surrounding areas. In addition, the new marina would be an attractive recreational amenity. Therefore, impacts of the Proposed Action due to visual changes on the upstream side of the dam would be less than significant.

Threshold 4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns

There is potential for lighting impacts because the dam raise and related aggregate production activities at the borrow area (“quarry”) would be a continuous 24/7 operation, extending through the night. The proposed construction schedule would require the use of night lighting for work performed during nighttime hours (e.g., RCC placement and aggregate production) to ensure the safety of working crews and employees. As a project design feature to be included in the contractor specifications (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), construction night lighting would be directed and shielded to minimize lighting impacts. The shielding would prevent construction lighting from the Proposed Action being a new source of substantial light that would adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Therefore, impacts from construction lighting to day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns would be less than significant.

Permanent security lighting on the dam would be similar to the existing dam, and would be minimal and be directed downward. The raised dam would be gray, typical of concrete and similar to the color of the existing dam. The reflectivity of the downstream surface of the dam would be no greater than the existing dam, and with the terraced effect of the RCC layers, reflectivity may actually be less than that of the existing dam. In addition, the raised dam would continue to be recessed deep into San Vicente Creek canyon and oriented away from any land uses and roadways that could otherwise be affected by daytime reflections from the RCC dam surface. Therefore, permanent impacts from light and glare to day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns would be less than significant.

The Proposed Action would not introduce a new permanent source of light and glare into the area that would affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns. Implementation of the project design features to shield construction lighting would reduce Proposed Action light and glare impacts on surrounding residents. Therefore, impacts of the Proposed Action would be less than significant.

3.3.3.3 Mitigation Measures

Impacts on aesthetic/visual quality would be less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.
3.3.3.4 Residual Impacts after Mitigation

No residual impacts would occur.

3.3.4 Cumulative Effects

3.3.4.1 Other CIP Projects

The PEIR for the Regional Water Facilities Master Plan concluded that development of the recommended water delivery, storage, and treatment facilities would result in cumulative adverse impacts on aesthetic resources in the region. Adverse aesthetic impacts would result from the construction of visible aboveground and partially buried facilities such as pump stations, treatment plants, and other ancillary facilities. It was also concluded that, in general, the facilities would occur in heavily modified urban and industrial settings or adjacent to existing facilities. The cumulative aesthetic/visual quality impacts of projects located in rural or open space areas were concluded to be of the greatest concern as they have the potential to create substantial visual contrasts with their settings. Implementation of program-level mitigation measures was anticipated to reduce cumulative aesthetic/visual impacts to below a level of significance. Those program-level mitigation measures, such as placing facilities belowground, using architectural designs, textures, and colors that complement the surrounding natural areas, and landscaping are applied to all Water Authority projects located within visually sensitive areas.

As described in Section 3.2 (Cumulative Projects for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, the Slaughterhouse Terminal Reservoir would be the only CIP project with the potential to contribute cumulative impacts when combined with the Proposed Action because the projects are located within two miles of one another. Slaughterhouse Terminal Reservoir is incorporated into the cumulative aesthetics/visual quality analyses in Section 3.3.4.3 below.

3.3.4.2 ESP Projects

ESP project components that would be in the vicinity of the Proposed Action would include the San Vicente Pipeline, the San Vicente Pump Station and the San Vicente Surge Control Facility. The ESP EIR/EIS concluded that the surrounding extraction projects, including the Baxter project, would result in significant impacts on the existing landform and visual environment in the vicinity of San Vicente Dam. The ESP EIR/EIS further noted that construction associated with the San Vicente study area “would cumulatively contribute to visual impacts associated with the extraction projects. Motorists along SR-67, south and east along Vigilante Road and Moreno Avenue, and residents west of SR-67 would be impacted.” Cumulative visual quality impacts of the ESP were concluded to be significant. The above conclusions regarding visual impacts for the ESP projects are incorporated into the cumulative aesthetics/visual quality analyses in Section 3.3.4.3 below.
The San Vicente Surge Control Facility, located just west of the existing dam, at the right abutment, has the greatest potential to add to visual impacts of the Proposed Action. The visual impacts of the partial above-ground, 3-million-gallon concrete tank and on-site paving and fencing associated with the surge control facility were concluded to be not significant because the addition of these features would be noticeable but would not dominate the landscape or stand out as developed uses in an otherwise pristine environment (Final Supplemental Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the San Vicente Surge Control Facility, February 2005).

3.3.4.3 Other Planned Projects with CIP and ESP Projects

This section evaluates the cumulative aesthetics/visual quality impacts of the Proposed Action when considered in conjunction with the other planned projects listed in Table 3.2-1 (Cumulative Projects for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, and incorporates the cumulative aesthetics/visual quality impacts associated with the CIP and ESP projects described above. The following cumulative aesthetics/visual quality analysis addresses each of the four significance thresholds listed in Section 3.3.3.1 above.

The permanent aesthetics/visual quality impacts of the Proposed Action were concluded to be less than significant due to the restricted/screened views of project components and project design features to minimize the effects of night lighting. Except for the Baxter project (Major Use Permit 89-033-03), the remaining cumulative projects in Table 3.2-1 (Cumulative Projects for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS are geographically separated from the Proposed Action such that the Proposed Action’s contribution to cumulative visual impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative Threshold 1: Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista

The Proposed Action consists of a dam raise and new marina with associated support facilities. By its nature, most the potential visual impacts would be from the dam raise itself or the associated construction and quarry mining operations. As described in Section 3.3.3.2 above, impacts from the Proposed Action on scenic vistas along SR-67 (designated by the County General Plan as a third-priority scenic highway in the Lakeside Community Plan) and from surrounding open space preserves in the County would be less than significant. Several cumulative projects are anticipated along SR-67 in the Proposed Action study area and have a greater potential to affect views from SR-67 due to their scale or type of development, such as five mining projects and a number of residential subdivisions (e.g., Lakeside Ranch [1] and Major Use Permit 78-083 for mining expansion [18]) (refer to Figure 3.2-1). These cumulative projects would convert large tracts of undeveloped land into additional mining or new residential uses and have a greater potential to affect views from SR-67 in the area than the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Proposed Action’s contribution to a cumulative impact on views from SR-67 would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.
**Cumulative Threshold 2: Damage a scenic resource, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway**

The Proposed Action includes aggregate production from a borrow area for construction of the on-site dam raise. Due to the nature of aggregate production operations, which includes blasting, it is expected that some rock outcroppings would be altered or removed by this activity. As described in Section 3.3.3 above, most of the outcroppings that would be affected would not be visible from surrounding areas, including SR-67. Where the Southeastern quarry option would be visible, views would be limited to a small area of the hillside at the lower elevations; the rest of the topography would remain in its natural state with substantial outcroppings and sparse vegetation. Therefore, impacts on rock outcroppings from the Proposed Action quarrying options would be less than significant. In addition, there are no historic buildings within the SV 100K footprint that would be affected by the Proposed Action (refer to Section 3.7 [Cultural Resources for the Proposed Action] of this EIR/EIS).

Several cumulative projects are anticipated in the area that, when combined with the Proposed Action, could result in impacts on rock outcroppings that are cumulatively considerable. These projects include five mining projects and a number of residential subdivisions (e.g., Lakeside Ranch [1] and Major Use Permit 78-083 for mining expansion [18]) (refer to Figure 3.2-1). These cumulative projects would convert large tracts of undeveloped land into additional mining or new residential uses and have more of a potential to affect views from SR-67 in the area than the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Proposed Action’s contribution to a cumulative impact on views from SR-67 would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

**Cumulative Threshold 3: Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings**

As discussed in Section 3.3.3.2 above, the construction activities and improvements required for the Proposed Action would be barely noticeable because of the long viewing distances and the temporary nature of the activity (e.g., reservoir drawdown), or because facilities would be internal to the reservoir and not visible from surrounding areas. In addition, the new marina would be an attractive recreational amenity. Due to the distances, elevation differences, and intervening topography, recreational users of surrounding open space preserves (e.g., Sycamore Canyon/Goodan, Oak Oasis, Boulder Oaks and El Capitan Open Space Preserves) would not be able to see the dam construction zone or the higher dam. Therefore, impacts of the Proposed Action due to visual changes on the upstream side of the dam would be less than significant.

Several cumulative projects are anticipated in the area that, when combined with the Proposed Action, could result in impacts on the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings. Projects that would convert large tracts of land or include substantial grading into natural terrain would have the most potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings, such as five mining projects and a number of residential subdivisions (e.g., Lakeside Ranch [1] and Major Use Permit 78-083 for mining.
expansion [18]) (refer to Figure 3.2-1). The grading for the Proposed Action would be limited to the various quarry options, the marina construction zone and the dam raise construction zone. Overall, the Proposed Action would convert a relatively small amount of land to improve an existing use that has been in the community for over 60 years, compared to the anticipated large subdivisions and mining operations. Therefore, the Proposed Action’s contribution to a cumulative impact on degrading the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surrounding would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

**Cumulative Threshold 4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns**

As discussed in Section 3.3.3.2 above, the Proposed Action would not introduce a new permanent source of light and glare into the area that would affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns. Implementation of the project design features to shield construction lighting would reduce Proposed Action light and glare impacts on surrounding residents. Therefore, impacts of the Proposed Action from light or glare would be less than significant.

The Proposed Action would not generate long-term lighting impacts due to the nature of the project as a dam raise and marina expansion. Post-construction, there would be minimal lighting on the dam (security lighting), and the color of the expansion would be similar to the existing dam. As a project design feature to be included in the contractor specifications (refer to Section 3.3.2 above), construction night lighting would be directed and shielded to minimize lighting impacts. Therefore, the Proposed Action’s contribution to a cumulative impact related to creating a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns would not be cumulatively considerable, and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

The Proposed Action would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, would not damage a scenic resource, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway, would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings, or would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views or normal sleep patterns. Therefore, cumulative impacts due to the Proposed Action for these activities, when combined with the short-term (construction-related) and long-term (operational) aesthetic impacts associated with the Slaughterhouse Terminal Reservoir (CIP), San Vicente Pipeline (ESP), San Vicente Pump Station (ESP) and other planned cumulative projects listed in Table 3.2-1 (Cumulative Projects for the Proposed Action) of this EIR/EIS, would be less than significant.
KEY MAP OF SAN VICTENTE DAM RAISE VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS

Figure 3.3-1

LEGEND

# Key Viewpoint Locations

- Marina On-site Quarry Option
- Southwest On-site Quarry Option
- Southeast On-site Quarry Option
- Proposed Dam Raise

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2006
Viewpoint 1: Existing view looking northeast from the intersection of Vigilante Road and Moreno Road.

Source: PBS&J, 2006
Viewpoint 2: Existing view looking northeast from the northbound shoulder of SR-67.

Viewpoint 2: Simulated view looking northeast from the northbound shoulder of SR-67.
Viewpoint 3: Existing view looking northeast from residence on Johnson Lake Road in Eucalyptus Hills near SR-67.

Viewpoint 3: Simulated view looking northeast from residences on Johnson Lake Road in Eucalyptus Hills near SR-67.

**Viewshed 3: Eucalyptus Hills (Lower Elevation)**

*Figure 3.3-4*  
*SOURCE: PBS&J, 2006*
Viewpoint 4: Existing view looking northeast from residence on Johnson Lake Road in Eucalyptus Hills.

Viewpoint 4: Simulated view looking northeast from residences on Johnson Lake Road in Eucalyptus Hills.

**VIEWSHED 4: EUCALYPTUS HILLS**

(Upper Elevation)

**FIGURE 3.3-5**

SOURCE: PBS&J, 2006