

3.3 Scenic Resources

This section describes effects on scenic resources from implementation of the proposed Project. The section describes existing environmental conditions in the affected area, identifies and analyzes environmental impacts, and recommends measures to reduce or avoid adverse impacts from construction, operation, and maintenance activities. Existing laws and regulations relevant to scenic resources and how they would be applied to the proposed Project are described. In some cases, compliance with existing laws and regulations would reduce or avoid impacts that might otherwise occur with implementation of the Project.

During the scoping period for the EIR (February 26 through March 27, 2015), written comments were received from agencies, organizations, and the public. These comments identified various substantive issues and concerns relevant to the EIR analysis. The following substantive issues related to scenic resources were raised during scoping and are addressed in this section.

- Project design should avoid view-blocking barriers or floodwalls and include graffiti control.
- Project should comply with the Public Access Vision Plan for the *Santa Clara River Parkway Plan* as implemented by the *Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan*.

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

3.3.1.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed Project area is located along the Santa Clara River within unincorporated Ventura County lands adjacent to the City of Oxnard and across the river from the City of Ventura. Along Reach 1, there are agricultural fields and the Bailard Landfill to the south, and the river corridor and agricultural fields to the north. This reach extends east just past the Victoria Avenue bridge. Victoria Avenue is a main thoroughfare that provides the primary public viewing opportunities of Reach 1 for motorists and pedestrians. However, this is a four-lane road with a speed limit of 55 miles per hour. Therefore, this road is not regularly used by pedestrians. Generally, this area is visually characterized by open fields and vegetation along the river corridor. Along Reaches 2 and 3, the River Ridge Golf Course is to the south, and the river corridor and Ventura Municipal Golf Course are to the north. Views of Reaches 2 and 3 from the south are available from the River Ridge Golf Course; however, this is a private course so public viewing is not available. From the area north of Reaches 2 and 3, the river corridor is visible from the Ventura Municipal Golf Course, Victoria Avenue, Olivas Park Drive, and Highway 101; however, views of the Project area are not clear due to distance, vegetation, and uneven terrain. There are no existing pedestrian or bicycle facilities along Reaches 1, 2, and 3.

At the eastern end of the proposed Project site, residential development is located just south of Reach 4 (across N. Ventura Road), and commercial development is located east of Reach 4. The area along the proposed Project alignment with prominent public viewing locations is N. Ventura Road, which is a main road, thus signifying that Reach 4 is located in an area of high visibility to local motorists and pedestrians. There is a row of tall eucalyptus trees, an access road, and a low block wall between N. Ventura Road and the Santa Clara River in Reach 4. In addition, there is an informal pedestrian trail along the northwest side of N. Ventura Road in Reach 4, which would be temporarily closed to the public during approximately half of the Project's Reach 4 construction period (approximately 6 months, as the land-side floodwall is built). Temporary exclusionary fencing and signage would be erected at the entrances to this section of the pedestrian trail notifying the public of the temporary closure. A

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temporary detour for pedestrians would be available. Along the southeast side of N. Ventura Road, there is a pedestrian path and a garden wall, ranging from six to eight feet in height, which separates the single-family two-story homes in the South Bank neighborhood from the public rights-of-way, i.e., the pedestrian path and N. Ventura Road. This segment ends where the UPRR bridge and N. Ventura Road intersect, and Highway 101 is located approximately 750 east of the end of Reach 4. The UPRR bridge and the area surrounding the bridge consist of railroad and flood control infrastructure (El Rio Drain) that are covered in graffiti.

According to the Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (Guidelines), scenic resources consist of aesthetically pleasing natural physical features (Ventura County, 2011). Of the features listed within the County's guidelines, the proposed Project site includes a river (the Santa Clara River) and native habitat within and along the river. As stated in Section 3.2 (Biological Resources), portions of the Santa Clara River are considered critical habitat for southern steelhead, and a variety of State and federally listed species are known to occur in and near the river corridor and adjacent uplands.

In addition to the County's scenic resources, Highway 101 is a State-designated scenic resource since it is designated by Caltrans as an Eligible Scenic Highway. The Ventura County General Plan identifies the viewsheds of lakes and State- or County-designated scenic highways as being worthy of special protection. These areas are designated as Scenic Resource Areas. As shown in the County's Resource Protection Map, the proposed Project area is not within or near a designated Scenic Resource Area (Ventura County, 2010).

As noted above, community members expressed concern about potential graffiti on the proposed floodwall in Reach 4. Based on reconnaissance visits to the Project area, some existing walls and structures in the immediate are marked with graffiti; particularly in the area surrounding Reach 4 where the UPRR bridge and infrastructure-related walls and structures are located.

3.3.1.2 Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards

California Department of Transportation – California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code.

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. These highways are identified in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. A list of California's scenic highways and a map identifying their locations is available from the Caltrans Scenic Highway Coordinators.

For a specific route to be included on a list of highways eligible for scenic highway designation, it must be added to the list prior to being considered for official designation. A highway may be designated scenic depending on the extent of the natural landscape that can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

When a local jurisdiction nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must also identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. A scenic highway designation protects these scenic values of an area. Jurisdictional boundaries of the nominating agency are also considered, and the agency must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such

regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances make up the scenic corridor protection program.

To receive official designation, the local jurisdiction must follow the same process required for official designation of State Scenic Highways. The minimum requirements for scenic corridor protection include:

- Regulation of land use and density of development,
- Detailed land and site planning,
- Control of outdoor advertising (including a ban on billboards),
- Careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping, and
- Careful attention to design and appearance of structures and equipment.

Ventura County General Plan

The County's General Plan sets forth the goals, policies, and programs the County will implement to manage future growth and land uses, and embodies the vision for the future of unincorporated Ventura County. The following goals and policies are from the Scenic Resources section (Section 1.7) of the Goals, Policies and Programs document of the General Plan (Ventura County, 2015).

Goals

1.7.1-1 Preserve and protect the significant open views and visual resources of the County.

1.7.1-2 Protect the visual resources within the viewshed of lakes and State and County designated scenic highways, and other scenic areas as may be identified by an area plan.

Policies

1.7.2-1 Notwithstanding Policy 1.7.2-2, discretionary development which would significantly degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views of visual resources shall be prohibited unless no feasible mitigation measures are available and the decision-making body determines there are overriding considerations.

1.7.2-2 Scenic Resource Areas shall be subject to the Scenic Resource Protection (SRP) Overlay Zone provisions and standards set forth in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance, which include the following:

- (1) Any request for grading, structures, or vegetation removal per the standards of the SRP Overlay Zone shall be evaluated through a discretionary permit.
- (2) Removal, damaging, or destruction of protected trees shall be in compliance with the County's "Tree Protection Regulations" of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.
- (3) All discretionary development shall be sited and designed to:
 - a. Prevent significant degradation of the scenic view or vista;
 - b. Minimize alteration of the natural topography, physical features, and vegetation;
 - c. Utilize native plants indigenous to the area for re-vegetation, whenever possible;
 - d. Avoid silhouetting of structures on ridge tops that are within public view;
 - e. Use colors and materials that are designed to blend in with the natural surroundings;

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f. Minimize lighting that causes glare, illuminates adjacent properties, or is directed skyward in rural areas.

- (4) No on-site freestanding advertising signs in excess of four feet in height and no freestanding off-site advertising signs shall be permitted.

1.7.2-4 The Planning Division shall continue to implement the landscaping requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the “Guide to Landscape Plans” to enhance the appearance of discretionary development.

Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan

In 1991, the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) and the California State Coastal Conservancy (CCC) initiated a management plan for the Santa Clara River and its resources (City of Oxnard, 2011). In response, the City of Oxnard is pursuing the opportunity for a multi-use trail system along the stream bank protection and levee system on the southern bank of the Santa Clara River (City of Oxnard, 2011). The Santa Clara River Trail (SCRT) Master Plan project study area encompasses the southern bank of the Santa Clara River from Central Avenue in the northeast down to N. Victoria Avenue in the southwest as well as connections to W. Gonzales Road, currently a bicycle route to the Pacific Ocean. The following are the goals that apply to the Santa Clara River and the proposed Project:

1. Create a safe and attractive trail fully accessible to a wide variety of non-motorized activities for recreation and transportation.
2. Provide connectivity to existing or planned trails, schools, parks, and other key destinations.
3. Trail design, construction and long-term use should respect adjacent properties and ecosystems.
4. Respect the functional role of the Santa Clara River.

3.3.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The assessment of scenic resource impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective, even when done in a consistent and rigorous manner. There are no absolute standards or quantifications of aesthetic values. However, following widely-recognized professional practice, certain broad principles, described below, are applied in this analysis to characterize the visual resource baseline and potential Project impacts.

First, visual impacts are a function of the existing visual quality of the Project landscape setting. Impacts to landscapes of high visual quality are more likely than impacts to settings of poor quality.

Second, visual impacts are a function of the sensitivity and response of viewers to visual change. Where there are no viewers, no impacts can occur, and the intensity of impacts is partly a function of the sensitivity and concern of viewers to project-caused visual changes. Viewer sensitivity is generally evaluated in terms of such measures as degree and duration of viewer exposure, viewer distance zone, number of viewers, viewer activity types, and corresponding viewer scenic expectations; public policies expressing special concern with particular scenic features or values, including designated scenic vistas or road corridors; and other factors reflecting viewer concern and response.

Lastly, the level of impact is determined by the degree of project-caused visual change. This is generally described in terms of the anticipated level of visual contrast and dominance, as well as potential for blockage of scenic views. Visibility of a project feature per se is not typically identified as a significant

impact. Rather, a substantial level of visual change, experienced by viewers with high levels of sensitivity to visual change, is normally recognized as a prerequisite to significant visual impact, except under unusual circumstances.

In addition, consistency with adopted local policies is considered in the evaluation of impacts. While this assessment considers County policies in the assessment of scenic resource impacts, the determination of consistency with goals and policies is made by the decision-makers as part of their review and consideration of a Project.

3.3.2.1 Criteria for Determining Impact Significance

According to the Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (Ventura County, 2011), a project has the potential to create a significant impact to scenic resources if it:

- Is located within an area that has a scenic resource that is visible from a public viewing location; and,
- Would physically alter the scenic resource either individually or cumulatively when combined with recently approved, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects; or
- Would substantially obstruct, degrade, or obscure the scenic vista, either individually or cumulatively when combined with recently approved, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

In addition, a project would result in a potentially significant environmental impact if it is inconsistent with any of the applicable policies of the Ventura County General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs.

3.3.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts

Scenic Resources Visible from Public Viewing Locations

Impact SR-1: Construction and O&M activities in the Project area would be visible from public viewing locations.

As stated in the environmental setting above, the Santa Clara River and the native habitat within and surrounding the river are considered scenic resources by the County's environmental guidelines. Therefore, construction and O&M activities associated with the proposed Project would occur directly adjacent to scenic resources along Reaches 1 through 4.

Option 1B – Minimum Levee System (Preferred) with Reach 4 Floodwall

Construction of Reaches 1 and 3 would consist of levee improvements in an area that is immediately surrounded by agricultural lands, two golf courses, and open space. Activities along Reach 1 would be visible by motorists and pedestrians from N. Victoria Avenue. However, construction and O&M activities would be temporarily visible, and would not be located in one area along the levee for extended periods of time. In addition, the speed limit along N. Victoria Avenue is 55 miles per hour and there are no stop signs or traffic lights located at the intersection of the river and N. Victoria Avenue. As such, this road is not commonly used by pedestrians, and motorists would pass the proposed Project area at high speeds such that Project activities would not be highly noticeable by the public. Finally, as the levee is an existing land use, the levee improvements would not result in a dramatic difference in the existing landscape. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic resources within Reaches 1 and 3 would not be significant.

Under Option 1B, no improvements to the existing levee would occur in Reach 2. Instead, the existing golf course drainage swale at the northwest end of the River Ridge Golf Course, located at the mid-

point of Reach 2, would be filled in to close a potential path for floodwater to escape from the Santa Clara River and reach residential areas located south of the golf course. Filling the golf course swale would essentially eliminate Reach 2 as a levee system, and avoid the construction requirements to improve the levee to meet FEMA criteria. The drainage swale would be visible by golfers at the River Ridge Golf Course; however, as a private club, this course is not considered a public viewing location. North of the drainage swale, the Ventura Municipal Golf Course is a public course, which is considered a public viewing location. The southern boundary of the Ventura Municipal Course is located over 1,500 feet from where construction and O&M activities would occur. Due to this distance, along with the vegetation in the open space between the two golf courses, the visual impacts of construction and O&M activities would not be significant from the public golf course. The closest road is W. Vineyard Avenue, which is approximately 1,000 feet south of the drainage swale area. Public views of this area from W. Vineyard Avenue would be limited due to the distance and the varying terrain within the River Ridge Golf Course. Therefore, the potential impacts along the Reach 2 area would not be significant.

The area surrounding Reach 4 includes residential development south of the proposed floodwall and, to the north, the Santa Clara River and open natural space are in the immediate vicinity. Construction and O&M activities associated with Reach 4 would be visible to motorists and bicyclists using N. Ventura Road, and to users of the landscaped pedestrian pathway on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road and the informal pedestrian trail along the northwest side of N. Ventura Road. In addition, the east end of Reach 4 would end approximately 750 feet from Highway 101. Although Highway 101 is not an official scenic highway, it is eligible for the State Scenic Highway System (Caltrans, 2012). Construction activities at the east end of the floodwall in Reach 4 would be visible from the southbound lanes of Highway 101. However, the highway is raised in this area with a crossing over N. Ventura Road, which decreases visibility of the proposed Project area. The construction staging area at the east end of the River Ridge Golf Course would be approximately 0.75 mile west of Highway 101, which would not be visible from the highway; the easternmost staging area at the El Rio Drain would be obscured by the UPRR bridge. Construction activities would be temporarily visible to the public during the approximately 27-month construction period. Therefore, the limited visibility from the highway and the temporary nature of construction would result in a less-than-significant visual impacts from public views along Reach 4.

Once construction is complete, the floodwall would be visible to the public from N. Ventura Road and from Highway 101. However, O&M activities along the floodwall would be temporary and would not create a long-term change to scenic resources. Therefore, potential impacts would not be significant.

Overall, due to the temporary nature of the construction and O&M activities, the impacts to scenic resources from public viewing locations would not be significant (Class III). The impacts associated with the permanent features of the Project are discussed below under Impact SR-2.

Option 1A – Full Levee System with Reach 4 Floodwall

Impact SR-1 under Option 1A would be the same as Option 1B as Reach 2 is not visible from a public viewing location. Therefore, due to the temporary nature of the construction and O&M activities, the impacts to scenic resources from public viewing locations under Option 1A would not be significant (Class III).

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary for this impact.

Alteration of Scenic Resources

Impact SR-2: Implementation of Reach 4 would alter scenic resources in the Project area by introducing new structures and resulting in the removal of native habitat.

As stated in the environmental setting above, the Santa Clara River and the native habitat within and surrounding the river are considered scenic resources by the County's environmental guidelines. Therefore, construction and O&M activities associated with Reach 4 of the proposed Project would occur directly adjacent to scenic resources. However, the proposed Project activities within Reaches 1, 2, and 3 would consist of levee improvements in an area that is immediately surrounded by agricultural lands, two golf courses, and open space, which would generally not be visible from public viewing locations. In addition, the levee along these reaches is an existing land use, so improvements would not result in a dramatic difference in the existing landscape. Therefore, potential impacts to scenic resources within Reaches 1, 2, 3 would not be significant and are not discussed further in this impact analysis.

Option 1B – Minimum Levee System (Preferred) with Reach 4 Floodwall

From the west end of Reach 4, the floodwall would be constructed on the river side of N. Ventura Road for approximately 968 feet and would have a visible height of approximately six feet. The wall would be offset from the roadway approximately 17.5 feet to accommodate the future 16-foot-wide SCRT with an adjacent curb and gutter. Where the curb and gutter already exist, the floodwall would be offset by 16 feet. On the river side of the floodwall, a soil cement maintenance access road would be installed to a width of 15 feet from the base of the slope adjacent to the floodwall to permit regular facility inspections. At this time, the exact location of the SCRT is unknown. However, whether the SCRT bikeway is placed on the river side or land side of the floodwall, the proposed Project would leave enough space to accommodate the proposed bikeway and would not conflict with the SCRT Master Plan. Under Option 1B, regardless of the placement of the future bikeway, the construction of a 968-foot-long floodwall would result in a permanent visual change for trail users in comparison to the current open view of the river corridor.

The floodwall would cross N. Ventura Road at the high point in the road. A six-foot high flood gate would be installed at this roadway crossing, which would be located underground except in the event of rising flood waters at which point the flood gate would rise. The floodwall would then continue east along the top of the existing slope on the southeast side (landside) of N. Ventura Road for approximately 888 feet, then transition to a 40-foot-long earthen embankment abutting and perpendicular to the south UPRR embankment. A similar 40-foot-long earthen embankment would be constructed on UPRR land northeast of the railroad embankment to tie into the flood protection structure to be constructed by The Village development. The floodwall would vary in height from six feet down to four feet near the El Rio Drain. To prepare the site for installation of the floodwall, approximately 1.2 acres of existing vegetation would be cleared along the alignment.

Installation of the 968-foot-long segment of floodwall on the western end of Reach 4 would introduce a new six-foot-tall structure that would permanently alter the viewshed of the scenic resources in the Project area (i.e., the Santa Clara River and surrounding open space). As such, this component of the proposed Project would alter views experienced by motorists traveling along N. Ventura Road, users of the informal pedestrian pathway on the northwest side of N. Ventura Road, users of the pedestrian pathway on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road, and residents on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road (from second-story windows). This view of Reach 4 is depicted in Figures 3.3-1 and 3.3-2.



Figure 3.3-1a: Existing view of Reach 4 on N. Ventura Road looking northeast towards the UPRR bridge and Highway 101



Figure 3.3-1b: Visual simulation looking northeast of the Reach 4 floodwall on the south side (land side) of N. Ventura Road and the flood gate installed within the street (at lowered position)

Figure 3.3-1
Proposed Project Reach 4, N. Ventura Road Looking Northeast



Figure 3.3-2a: Existing view of Reach 4 on N. Ventura Road looking west



Figure 3.3-2b: Visual simulation looking west of the Reach 4 floodwall on the north side (river side) of N. Ventura Road

Source: MBI, 2015.

Figures 3.3-2
Proposed Project Reach 4, N. Ventura Road Looking West

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Figure 3.3-1a¹ shows the existing conditions from N. Ventura Road looking northeast towards the UPRR bridge and Highway 101. As seen in this photo, the existing viewshed along the northwest side of N. Ventura Road (left side of photo) consists of open natural space, including a row of tall eucalyptus trees and adjacent weedy annuals along the shoulder between the road and the river. On the southeast side of N. Ventura Road (right side of photo), the existing viewshed comprises a concrete rock slope, adjacent landscaping (shrubs in the foreground and trees in the background), and a garden wall partly screened by the landscaping. Figure 3.3-1b is the same location with a visual simulation of Reach 4 showing the flood gate installed within the street, the future SCRT on the left (northwest side of N. Ventura Road), and the proposed land side floodwall on the right (southeast side of N. Ventura Road). This simulation also shows that landscaped shrubs on the right side of the photo would be removed to construct the floodwall, but the landscaped trees in the background would be preserved. The eucalyptus trees on the river side (left side of photo) would be preserved, but the weedy vegetation next to them would be covered by the new SCRT.

Figure 3.3-2a shows the existing conditions from N. Ventura Road looking southwest, which includes a short existing wall and a row of tall eucalyptus trees along the river side of the road (top of photo). Figure 3.3-2b provides a visual simulation showing the proposed river side floodwall and adjacent SCRT along with the removal of the eucalyptus trees and the existing low wall. The simulations provided in Figures 3.3-1b and 3.3-2b indicate that noticeable visual changes would occur along Reach 4 due to the vegetation removal and the presence of the proposed floodwall.

The proposed Project would accommodate the future bike path planned as part of the City of Oxnard's Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan on the northwest side of N. Ventura Road. A community comment suggested that the bike path be placed on the river side of the floodwall. Implementation of this suggestion would decrease visual impacts to recreationists along this portion of Reach 4. However, due to the confirmed presence of endangered least Bell's vireo breeding territories, a recreational trail on the river side would create a permanent new source of disturbance in close proximity to occupied habitat; to avoid such impacts, the SCRT would be placed between the river side floodwall and N. Ventura Road. Therefore, the views of the river and open space would be completely obstructed by the floodwall, which would result in significant and unavoidable visual impacts (Class I).

Installation of the 888-foot-long floodwall at the east end of Reach 4 would be located on the southeast (land) side of N. Ventura Road (as shown in Figure 3.3-1b). The previously described garden wall and a wide landscaped sidewalk separate the homes from N. Ventura Road, providing both a noise and visual barrier between the homes and this highly traveled road. Figure 2-4 includes a cross section (Section G-G) of the floodwall showing that the existing six-foot garden wall on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road would be either the same height as or up to two feet taller than the proposed floodwall, which would decrease in height from west to east (six feet down to four feet) near the El Rio Drain. Therefore, views from residences along N. Ventura Road would not be obstructed by the portion of the floodwall that would be located along the southeast side of N. Ventura Road. Regardless, local residents and motorists would experience altered views on the southeast side of the road due to the visual changes associated with the removal of the landscaped shrubs and the presence of a four- to six-foot land side

¹ There are two comments to note regarding the visual simulation – (1) the simulation gives the impression that the proposed floodwall along the land side is taller than the existing garden walls, but the two walls would both be approximately six feet in height, and (2) the simulation provides a vision of the intended future condition with the proposed Project and bike path on the river side of the street. The bike path is not part of the proposed Project; however, it is part of the City of Oxnard's Santa Clara River Trail (SCRT) Master Plan. As such, Figure 3.3-1b shows that the proposed Project design would allow for implementation of the City's plans.

floodwall. In addition, the placement of the floodwall on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road would partially enclose this 888-foot segment of the existing pedestrian pathway, which would obstruct the viewshed of the river for users of this pathway. Pedestrians using the sidewalk at the base of the existing concrete rock riprap slope would be able to view the river in the northwest direction, but views toward the southwest, where the river side floodwall is proposed, would be obstructed. There are no mitigation measures that could lessen this impact; therefore, this impact is significant and unavoidable (Class I).

The County's General Plan includes Goal 1.7.1-1, which aims to preserve and protect the significant open views and visual resources of the County, and Policy 1.7.2-1, which aims to prohibit discretionary development that would significantly degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views. The proposed Project has the potential to alter and obscure views of the Santa Clara River and the surrounding scenic resources. The determination through this analysis is that this impact would be significant and unavoidable; therefore, Reach 4 of the proposed Project would not comply with Goal 1.7.1-1 and Policy 1.7.2-1.

Overall, Impact SR-2 represents significant and unavoidable impacts to scenic resources. There are no mitigation measures that could avoid the alterations to views of scenic resources and the resultant impacts to the viewshed of the Santa Clara River and the surrounding natural open space. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

Option 1A – Full Levee System with Reach 4 Floodwall

Impact SR-1 under Option 1A would be the same as Option 1B. The difference between the two options is Reach 2, which would not be significantly affected by proposed Project activities under this impact. The design of the Reach 4 floodwall would be the same under Options 1A and 1B. Therefore, the impacts to scenic resources under Option 1A would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

Impact SR-3: Implementation of the Reach 4 floodwall could result in increased graffiti that would degrade the quality of surrounding scenic resources.

As discussed under Impact SR-2, the height of the floodwall would vary from four to six feet. Any graffiti placed on the proposed floodwall could be visible to the residences and users of the pedestrian pathway located on the southeast side of N. Ventura Road, the informal pedestrian route along the northwest side of N. Ventura Road, and to motorists traveling along N. Ventura Road. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the Project Description, graffiti on the floodwall would be removed as a part of regular maintenance. The VCWPD promptly removes graffiti with obscene comments or scenes; less offensive graffiti, such as tags, are removed as the VCWPD's budget allows. The VCWPD also implements a Graffiti Abatement Program, which works with volunteers to locate and remove graffiti from property owned by VCWPD (VCWPD, 2013). Under this program, the Graffiti Abatement Coordinator works with non-profit organizations and neighbors to address graffiti throughout the County by forming neighborhood graffiti patrols; working with each respective city's law enforcement; and recruiting and training volunteers to assist with graffiti reporting and removal in their own neighborhoods (VCWPD, 2013). Therefore, it is likely that graffiti would not immediately be removed and would present an adverse visual impact to local residents.

In addition to the provision for graffiti removal, Mitigation Measure SR-1 (*Graffiti Avoidance*) below recommends the use of textured walls or murals to avoid issues of persistent graffiti along the floodwall. With implementation of this measure, graffiti impacts would not be significant (Class II).

Mitigation Measures

SR-1 **Graffiti Avoidance.** The intent of this mitigation measure is to require the VCWPD to incorporate design features to avoid graffiti on the floodwall along Reach 4. Potential options include incorporating textured patterns on the wall, adding a mural or other artistic motif, providing vegetative screening, or application of an anti-graffiti coating which aids in the graffiti removal process (allows graffiti to be washed off). Prior to Project construction, the VCWPD shall coordinate with the City of Oxnard to develop a design plan for the floodwall, which is located within the City's jurisdiction.

Obstruction or Degradation of Scenic Vistas

Impact SR-4: Implementation of Reach 4 would obstruct and alter the views of the Santa Clara River in the Project area by introducing new structures and resulting in the removal of native habitat.

Option 1B – Minimum Levee System (Preferred) with Reach 4 Floodwall

The analysis under Impact SR-2 discusses the potential effects to scenic resources in the Project area (i.e., the Santa Clara River and the surrounding open space that includes native habitat) from implementation of the proposed Project. The analysis of Impact SR-2 discusses how the public's view would be affected by alterations of these scenic resources and also discusses the potential impacts to views along Reach 4. In summary, the visual changes that would occur due to the presence of the proposed floodwall and vegetation removal would result in significant and unavoidable visual impacts to motorists, pedestrians, and residents along the Reach 4 segment of N. Ventura Road. As such, implementation of the floodwall in Reach 4 would also result in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I) to views of the Santa Clara River and the surrounding open space.

Option 1A – Full Levee System with Reach 4 Floodwall

As discussed above, Impact SR-1 under Option 1A would be the same as Option 1B. The difference between the two options is Reach 2, which would not significantly obstruct the viewshed of the Santa Clara River. The design of the Reach 4 floodwall would be the same under Options 1A and 1B; therefore, the impacts to the viewshed of the Santa Clara River under Option 1A would be the same as Option 1B (Class I).

Mitigation Measures

No feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce this impact.

3.3.2.3 Cumulative Impacts

Introduction

The geographic area of analysis for cumulative impacts to scenic resources is limited to a 0.5-mile area surrounding the proposed Project. This area is defined because at distances greater than 0.5 mile, visual changes of the Project begin to blend in with existing views and would likely be shielded from view by existing development.

Based on this geographic extent, the following cumulative projects are identified within a 0.5-mile area from the Project (refer to Figure 3-1):

- The Village (Wagon Wheel Development)
- Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan
- Ventura/Vineyard Homes
- Ravello Holdings (mixed-use residential and commercial development)
- SCR Bridge Mitigation Planning Project
- SCR-1 Levee
- Bailard Landfill Gas Project
- Olivas Park Drive Extension Project

Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

The overall visual quality of the area immediately north of the Project is open natural space within the Santa Clara River channel with commercial development and a golf course (Ventura Municipal Golf Course) on the opposite side of the river. The area to the south is predominantly single-family residences, a golf course (River Ridge Golf Course), and agricultural lands. The eight identified cumulative projects that could combine with the proposed Project extend along the length of the Project alignment and, therefore, are not concentrated in any one portion of the Project area. The potential for cumulative impacts during construction is limited, as cumulative projects would need to be constructed simultaneously with the proposed Project in order for a temporary cumulative impact to occur. While construction activities would include the presence of heavy equipment, because views of activities and equipment would be temporary, cumulative visual impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. However, the long-term visual changes associated with the cumulative projects listed above include large-scale commercial and residential developments that would substantially alter the existing visual conditions in the surrounding area. The proposed Project would make a substantial contribution to long-term visual changes along the Project alignment due to the proposed floodwall and vegetation removal along Reach 4. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative visual impacts is considered significant and unavoidable.

3.3.2.4 Impact Significance Summary

Table 3.3-1, below, provides a summary of each identified direct and indirect impact and associated mitigation measures to reduce or avoid the impact, if warranted. Mitigation measures are required for each significant impact, but are not required for impacts that are not significant. Table 3.3-1 also indicates the significance conclusion for each identified impact. For cumulative impacts, the proposed Project's contributions to visual impacts during construction were determined not to be cumulatively considerable; however, the long-term visual change to the Project area would be cumulatively considerable resulting in a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact.

3.3
Scenic Resources

Table 3.3-1. Summary of Scenic Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures		
Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Significance Conclusion
Impact SR-1: Construction and O&M activities in the Project area would be visible from public viewing locations.	No mitigation measures are required.	Class III
Impact SR-2: Implementation of Reach 4 would alter scenic resources in the Project area by introducing new structures and resulting in the removal of native habitat.	No feasible mitigation is available.	Class I
Impact SR-3: Implementation of the Reach 4 floodwall could result in increased graffiti that would degrade the overall view of the surrounding scenic resources.	SR-1: Graffiti Avoidance.	Class II
Impact SR-4: Implementation of Reach 4 would obstruct the viewshed of the Santa Clara River in the Project area by introducing new structures and resulting in the removal of native habitat.	No feasible mitigation is available.	Class I

Class I: Significant impact; cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant. A Class I impact is a significant adverse effect that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Class I impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Class II: Significant impact; can be mitigated to a level that is not significant. A Class II impact is a significant adverse effect that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the application of feasible mitigation measures presented in this EIR/EIS.

Class III: Adverse; less than significant. A Class III impact is a minor change or effect on the environment that does not meet or exceed the criteria established to gauge significance.

Class IV: Beneficial impact. A Class IV impact represents a beneficial effect that would result from project implementation.