3.1 Aesthetics

Aesthetics, as addressed in CEQA, refers to visual considerations in the physical environment. Aesthetics analysis, or visual resource analysis, is a systematic process to logically assess visible changes in the physical environment and the anticipated viewer response to those changes. This section describes the existing landscape character of the study area, identifies significant visual resources, existing views of the study area from various on-the-ground vantage points, visual characteristics of the proposed Project, and landscape changes that would be associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Project as seen from various vantage points.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

3.1.1.1 Existing Landscape Setting and Viewer Characteristics

The following setting for aesthetics and visual resources was derived in part from the Section 3.1 (Aesthetics) of the Applicant-Prepared Environmental Document (APED) (ICF, 2015). The visual characteristics of the proposed Project area are typical of an established coastal urban environment and beach community in southern California which include sandy beaches; a pedestrian/bicycle boardwalk; and a mixture of residential, commercial, recreational, and open space development along the coastline and inland. Fishing vessels and other commercial vessels, tankers, and private sailboats are visible offshore but are usually at least 300 yards from shore.

The City includes about 1.43 square miles and is located at the center of the county's South Bay coastline (Hermosa Beach, 2015). Natural resources identified in the general plan's Conservation Element include water resources and sand beach. The City's coastline extends to the northern and southern City limits for about 1.8 miles and is part of the beach complex that rings the Santa Monica Bay. It is one the widest beaches on the public shoreline and is used as a regional recreational resource. The Hermosa Pier is 1,228 feet long and provides year-round fishing opportunities. Pier Avenue, which extends east of the Pier, contains a mix of commercial and retail properties, storefronts, and restaurants between the Strand and Hermosa Avenue.

Elements of the urban landscape range from backdrops of gentle hill and beach foregrounds to man-made structures and associated landscaped and hardscaped areas. The majority of the City is highly developed with a mix of residential, commercial, recreational, and open space development consisting of residential houses, condos, and apartments; restaurants and retail outlets; and banks, hotels, and public facilities. A pedestrian walkway referred to locally as the Strand, runs along the beach and includes an adjacent bike bath between the beach and developed areas. The Strand extends north towards Manhattan Beach and south towards Redondo Beach where the existing visual character and setting is similar to that of the proposed Project area.

Existing sources of light along the Strand, including those near the proposed landing sites, consist primarily of lampposts used to light the pedestrian walkway and bike path, as well as exterior lighting associated with residential development along the waterfront. Glare may occur as a result of glass and other reflective materials used in adjacent residences and properties. Street lamps are the primary source of nighttime illumination in the area.

A scenic vista typically refers to a view that is visually or aesthetically pleasing and frequently seen by the public, including, but not limited to, natural lands or developed and undeveloped natural areas.

As noted in the Local Coastal Program (LCP), the City's topography affords views of the Pacific Ocean from several areas. Although no scenic vistas are designated within the LCP, there are expansive 180-degree views of the beach and coastline, north to Manhattan Beach Pier and south to Hermosa Beach Pier from the boardwalk and areas adjacent to the boardwalk that could be considered scenic. On clear days, the Santa Monica Mountains are visible to the north and Santa Catalina Island is visible to the west.

Viewer groups are broadly characterized as having public or private views. Public views, such as views from a neighborhood park or public roadway, are available to all visual receptors. Private views, however, are exclusive to property owners and their guests or members; the properties involved can be residences and private facilities (e.g., religious institutions or a community area of a homeowners' association). Public and private views along the Strand, including those near the proposed landing sites at Neptune Avenue and 25th Street, are very similar. Public and private viewsheds near the proposed PFE facility sites are also similar to one another. The level of sensitivity of beach commuters and the public is generally considered to be high because visitors come, often from long distances, specifically to enjoy the recreation opportunities and scenic beauty that are specific to coastal areas. Permanent residents are considered to have moderate to high levels of sensitivity as viewers because they have greater time to view the environment around them over a long period of time. The visual sensitivity from specific views is discussed further in the following section.

3.1.1.2 Visual Sensitivity–Visual Change Methodology

Under this methodology, the proposed Project was viewed from various public roads and vantage points to develop an overall assessment of the existing landscape character, visual quality, and viewing conditions. Then, at Key Observation Points (KOPs or viewpoints), the existing landscape was characterized (for visual quality, viewer concern, and viewer exposure) and photographed. The selected KOPs are considered representative of views of the Project in the immediate Project area. Each of the factors considered in the evaluation of the existing landscape under the Visual Sensitivity–Visual Change methodology is discussed below.

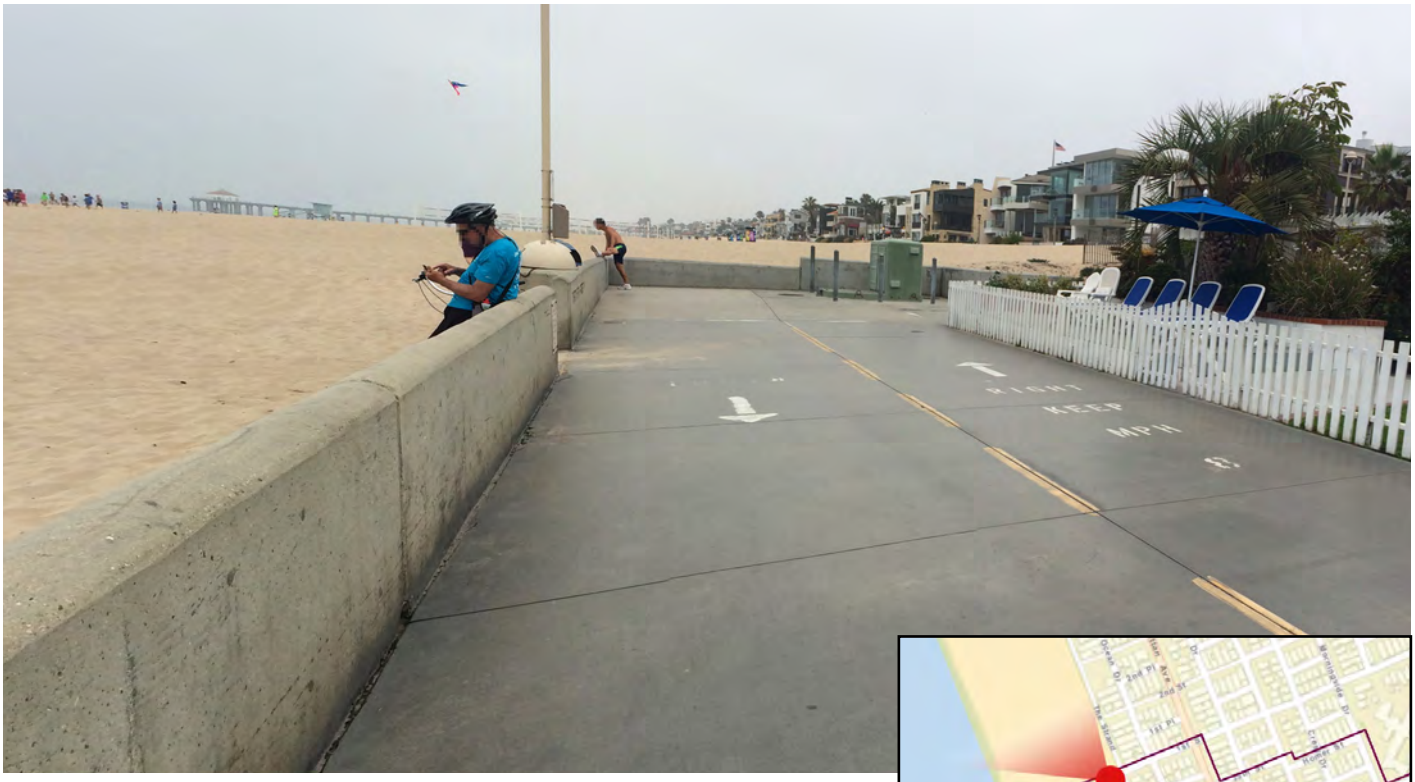
Project Viewshed and Key Observation Points

The Project viewshed is defined as the areas and locations from which the proposed Project would be seen. This section discusses: (1) the existing visual quality of the proposed Project area; (2) viewer concern; and (3) viewer exposure to the proposed Project, leading to a rating of overall visual sensitivity.

This visual sensitivity assessment focuses on the cable landing sites as they are the construction components that would have the greatest overall visibility. The other terrestrial components include the buried conduit system and the PFE facilities. The viewshed of the cable landing sites would be from the beach, the Strand, the private residences along the east side of the Strand, and views from public streets along the site locations. Residents along the buried conduit routes would have views of construction activities; however, as the cables would be located underground, the viewshed would not be altered upon completion of construction. Similarly, the PFE facilities would be constructed within an existing commercial building and/or within a new 740 square-foot structure at the City of Hermosa Beach maintenance yard in an area characterized by commercial and industrial uses. Given the proposed location of the PFE facilities within existing structures or within an industrial area, the PFE facilities would not result in noticeable visual changes. Therefore, the four KOPs below focus on the visual changes associated with the cable landing sites. Refer to Figure 3.1-1, which provides an overview of the four KOP locations, and Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-5, which provide photographs of the existing conditions and visual simulations of the cable landing sites.

Figure 3.1-1

KOP Location Map



Existing Conditions- The Strand at 35th Street looking northwest

Visual Simulation- The Strand at 35th Street looking northwest

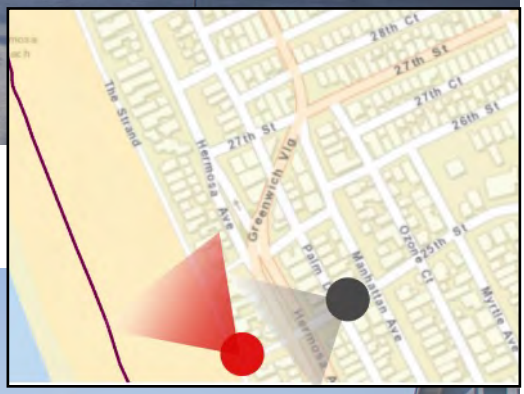
NOT TO SCALE

Featured KOP Location

Nearby KOP Location

Figure 3.1-2
Neptune Ave Preferred Landing Site

Existing Conditions- The Strand at 25th Street looking northwest



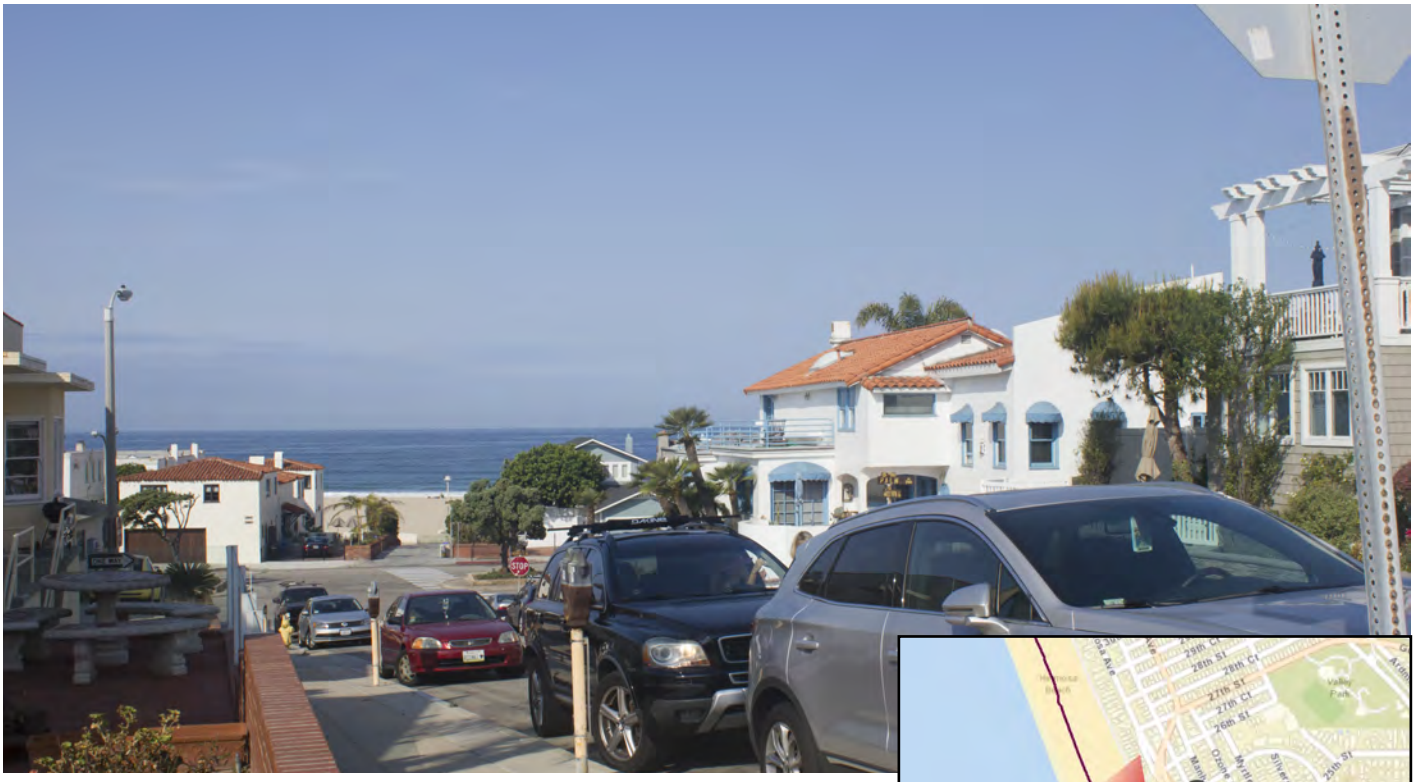
Visual Simulation- The Strand at 25th Street looking northwest

NOT TO SCALE

Featured KOP Location

Nearby KOP Location

Figure 3.1-3
25th Street Preferred Landing Site



Existing Conditions- 25th Street looking west

Visual Simulation- 25th Street looking west

NOT TO SCALE

Featured KOP Location

Nearby KOP Location

Figure 3.1-4
25th Street Alternative Bore Site

Existing Conditions- Longfellow Ave looking west

Visual Simulation- Lonfellow Ave looking west

NOT TO SCALE

Featured KOP Location

Nearby KOP Location

Figure 3.1-5
Longfellow Ave Alternative Bore Site

Visual Quality is a measure of the overall impression or appeal of an area as determined by particular landscape characteristics such as landforms, rockforms, water features, and vegetation patterns, as well as associated public values. The attributes of variety, vividness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony, and pattern contribute to visual quality classifications of indistinctive (Low), common (Moderate), and distinctive (High). Visual quality is studied as a point of reference to assess whether a given project would appear compatible with the established features of the setting or would contrast noticeably and unfavorably with them.

Viewer Concern addresses the level of interest or concern of viewers regarding an area's visual resources (rated from Low to High) and is closely associated with viewers' expectations for the area. Viewer concern reflects the importance placed on a given landscape based on the human perceptions of the intrinsic beauty of the existing landforms, rockforms, water features, vegetation patterns, and even cultural features.

Viewer Exposure describes the degree to which viewers are exposed to views of the landscape (rated Low to High). Viewer exposure considers landscape visibility (the ability to see the landscape), distance zones (proximity of viewers to the subject landscape), number of viewers (Low to High), and the duration of view (Brief to Extended). Landscape visibility can be a function of several interconnected considerations including proximity to viewing point, degree of discernible detail, seasonal variations (snow, fog, and haze can obscure landscapes), time of day, and/or presence or absence of screening features such as landforms, vegetation, and/or built structures. Even though a landscape may have highly scenic qualities, it may be remote, receiving relatively few visitors and thus, have a lower degree of viewer exposure. Conversely, a subject landscape or project may be situated in relatively close proximity to a major road or highway used by a substantial number of motorists and yet still result in relatively low viewer exposure if the rate of travel speed on the roadway is high and viewing times are brief, or if the landscape is partially screened by vegetation or other features. Often, it is the subject area's proximity to viewers, or distance zone, that is of particular importance in determining viewer exposure. Landscapes are generally subdivided into three distance zones based on relative visibility from travel routes or observation points. Distance zones typically include foreground, middleground, and background. However, the actual number of zones and distance assigned to each zone is dependent on the existing terrain characteristics and public policy and often is determined on a project-by-project basis.

Overall Visual Sensitivity is a concluding assessment as to an existing landscape's susceptibility to an adverse visual outcome (rated Low to High). A landscape with a high degree of visual sensitivity is able to accommodate only a low degree of adverse visual change without resulting in a significant visual impact. A landscape with a low degree of visual sensitivity is able to accommodate a higher degree of adverse visual change before exhibiting a significant visual impact. Overall visual sensitivity is derived from a comparison of existing visual quality, viewer concern, and viewer exposure.

KOP 1 – Neptune Beach Landing Site

Figure 3.1-2 presents the existing conditions and a life-size scale view of the beach landing site during the construction period from KOP 1, looking north from the Strand towards Neptune Avenue approximately 100 feet south of the construction site. The Strand and single-family homes are in the foreground and middleground in the middle and on the right side of the image. On the left side of the image, an open sandy area and the wall separating the beach and the Strand are in the foreground. As shown in the existing conditions image, there is an uninterrupted view of the sand beach, Pacific Ocean, the Manhattan Beach Pier and the Roundhouse Aquarium in the distant background. On a

clear day, the Santa Monica Mountains would also be visible from this viewpoint looking north. On the right side of the image, the single-family residences that line the east side of the Strand are in the background. The visual simulation shows the construction site in the middleground and background on the left and in the center of the image.

Visual Quality. *High.* The landscape to the right is urban in character, with single-family residences that are positioned with the intention of providing beachfront views. The Strand is a popularly used pedestrian thoroughfare for residents and visitors, which provides a full view of the Pacific Coast while also providing a designated space for recreation activities. The sand beach in the center and on left side of the image is public space that is consistently used by recreationists. The sand beach is considered a visual resource by the city, and ocean views are generally considered high in visual quality.

Viewer Concern. *High.* The existing conditions consist of uninterrupted views of the beach and Pacific Ocean that are expected by residents and visitors. Views of the construction activities would be covered by construction fencing, with dimensions of approximately 60 feet by 200 feet and between 6 to 8 feet in height, which would block views of the ocean from observation points surrounding the entire site. In addition, the construction area is large enough to present to an industrial character to an area that currently consists of natural open space and residential development.

Viewer Exposure. *High.* This beach landing site would be visible in the foreground, middleground and background views as pedestrians travel along The Strand, which sustains varying traffic volumes throughout the daylight hours. Therefore, the number of viewers would generally be high and the duration of views would also be high since viewers would be pedestrians or recreationists who would pass the landing site at low speeds, and the permanent residents would sustain the altered views for the duration of construction.

Overall Visual Sensitivity. *High.* For viewers in the vicinity of KOP 1, combining the equally weighted High visual quality, High viewer concern, and High viewer exposure results in an overall rating of High for visual sensitivity of the visual setting and viewing characteristics.

KOP 2 – 25th Street Landing Site

The purpose of Figure 3.1-3 is to present the existing conditions and a simulated life-size scale view of the 25th Street beach landing site during the construction period from KOP 2, which is the view looking north from the Strand towards 25th Street, approximately 90 feet southeast of the construction site. As a pedestrian thoroughfare, the Strand is in the foreground, middleground and background in the middle and on the right side of the image. On the left side of the image, an open sandy area and the wall separating the beach and the Strand are in the foreground. As shown in the existing conditions image, there is an uninterrupted view of the sand beach, Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains in the distant background. The visual simulation shows the construction site in the middleground and background on the left and in the center of the image. The right edge of the image shows the single-family residences that line the east side of the Strand.

Visual Quality. *High.* The landscape to the right is urban in character, with single-family residences that are positioned with the intention of providing beachfront views. The Strand is a popularly used pedestrian thoroughfare for residents and visitors, which provides a full view of the Pacific Coast while also providing a designated space for recreation activities. The sand beach on left side of the

image is public space that is consistently used by recreationists. The sand beach is considered a visual resource by the city, and ocean views are generally considered high in visual quality.

Viewer Concern. *High.* The existing conditions consist of uninterrupted views of the beach and Pacific Ocean that are expected by residents and visitors. Views of the construction activities would be covered by construction fencing, with dimensions of 100 feet by 150 feet and between 6 to 8 feet in height, which would block views of the ocean from observation points surrounding the entire site. In addition, the construction area is large enough to present to an industrial character to an area that currently consists of natural open space and residential development.

Viewer Exposure. *High.* This beach landing site would be visible in the foreground, middleground and background views as pedestrians travel along the Strand, which sustains varying traffic volumes throughout the daylight hours. As the beach is a popular destination for local residents and visitors, the number of viewers would be high and the duration of views would also be moderate since viewers would be pedestrians and recreationists who would pass the landing site at low to medium speeds, respectively. The permanent residents who live within the vicinity of the landing site would sustain the altered views for the duration of construction.

Overall Visual Sensitivity. *High.* For viewers in the vicinity of KOP 2, combining the equally weighted High visual quality, High viewer concern, and High viewer exposure results in an overall rating of High for visual sensitivity of the visual setting and viewing characteristics.

KOP 3 – 25th Street

Figure 3.1-4 presents the existing conditions and a life-size scale view of the proposed construction site from KOP 3, looking west toward the beach and Pacific Ocean. The view in the foreground captures the proposed construction site from the sidewalk where pedestrians would pass the site. The foreground, as well as the middleground, also include residences and the existing on-street parking conditions. In the background, the view includes obstructed views of the beach and Pacific Ocean.

Visual Quality. *Moderate* (Foreground, Middleground), *High* (Background). The landscape is urban in character at the foreground and middleground, with the beach and Pacific Ocean in the background. The sidewalk, public street and residences are the immediate views from this KOP, which generally do not consist of high visual qualities; however, the beach and ocean views in the background provide a scenic view and a backdrop of visual interest in contrast to the urban land uses.

Viewer Concern. *High*. Although the urban uses in the foreground to middleground are the most immediate views, the view of the beach and ocean are desirable views for pedestrian and residents from this KOP. Views of the construction activities would be covered by construction fencing, with dimensions of approximately 40 feet by 200 feet and between 6 to 8 feet in height, which would block views of the ocean from observation points surrounding the entire site. The visual changes associated with the proposed construction site would obstruct this view from this KOP.

Viewer Exposure. *High*. The surrounding residential area is medium to high-density which results in numerous permanent residents who would view this construction site for the duration of construction. In addition, due to the proximity to the beach and the local commercial shops, this area is also used for visitor parking; however, the duration of views for visitors would be low as they passed the site to proceed to their destination. Nonetheless, the overall number of viewers would be high as this is an area of high pedestrian traffic.

Overall Visual Sensitivity. *High*. For viewers in the vicinity of KOP 3, combining the equally weighted Moderate visual quality of the foreground and middleground, High visual quality of the background, High viewer concern, and High viewer exposure results in an overall rating of High for visual sensitivity of the visual setting and viewing characteristics.

KOP 4 – Longfellow Avenue

Figure 3.1-5 presents the existing conditions and a life-size scale view of the proposed construction site from KOP 4 approximately 210 feet east of the construction site. This view is looking west toward the beach and Pacific Ocean. The view in the foreground captures the residences and the existing on-street parking conditions. The middleground includes the proposed construction site as seen from the elevated view a block east of the site. The background consists of obstructed views of the Pacific Ocean.

Visual Quality. *Moderate* (Foreground and Middleground), *High* (Background). The landscape is urban in character at the foreground and middleground, with the Pacific Ocean in the background. The public street, residences and commercial shops are the prominent views from this KOP, which generally do not consist of high visual qualities; however, the ocean views in the background provide a scenic view and a backdrop of visual interest in contrast to the urban land uses.

Viewer Concern. *High*. Although the urban uses in the foreground to middleground are the most immediate views, the view of the Pacific Ocean is a desirable view for pedestrian and residents from this KOP. Views of the construction activities would be covered by construction fencing, with dimensions of approximately 40 feet by 200 feet and between 6 to 8 feet in height, which would block views of the ocean from observation points surrounding the entire site. The visual changes associated with the proposed construction site would obstruct this view from this KOP.

Viewer Exposure. *High*. The surrounding residential and commercial development is medium to high-density which results in numerous permanent residents who would view this construction site for the duration of construction. In addition, due to the proximity to the beach and the local commercial shops, this area is also used for visitor parking; however, the duration of views for visitors would be low as they passed the site to proceed to their destination. Nonetheless, the overall number of viewers would be high as this is an area of high pedestrian traffic.

Overall Visual Sensitivity. *High*. For viewers in the vicinity of KOP 3, combining the equally weighted Moderate visual quality of the foreground and middleground, High visual quality of the background, High viewer concern, and High viewer exposure results in an overall rating of High for visual sensitivity of the visual setting and viewing characteristics.

3.1.2 Regulatory Setting

3.1.2.1 Federal

No federal regulations are applicable to aesthetics and visual resources.

3.1.2.2 State

California Scenic Highway Program

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.

As shown on the website for the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no designated or eligible scenic highways in the vicinity of the proposed Project (Caltrans, 2011).

3.1.2.3 Local

City of Hermosa Beach General Plan

The City of Hermosa Beach General Plan, adopted in 1979, includes elements that address the aesthetic environment and visual resources of the City.

Conservation Element

The objective of the Conservation Element is to preserve and enhance the natural environment consistent with human needs. Two nature resources have been identified in the city: Water Resources and Sand Beach. According to the Conservation Plan, the city includes within its boundaries approximately 5.4 square miles (14 square kilometers) of ocean area and a sand beach of between 250 and 450 feet (76 and 137 meters) in depth that abuts the ocean area.

None of the policies within this element apply to the proposed Project.

Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element includes policies and programs that address scale and form, historic preservation, traffic ways, and business districts. Under the policies and programs for Trafficways, the following apply to the proposed Project:

> Policy 3: Promote visual continuity through tree planting, consistent use of low shrubs and ground cover, and removal of visually disruptive elements on major City streets.
>
> Program 10: Accelerate the program of placing utility lines underground.

City of Hermosa Beach Local Coastal Plan

In accordance with the California Coastal Act of 1976, the City of Hermosa Beach established a master plan for the preservation and enhancement of its coastal environment, known as the Local Coastal Plan (LCP) (Hermosa Beach, 2004). Section V of the LCP addresses coastal recreational access and aims to maintain a high level of recreational access to the coast and its recreational facilities. Section VI addresses coastal development and design and seeks to develop facilities that serve the needs of coastal visitors and city residents as well as preserve and enhance coastal overviews, key view point areas, and open space.

3.1.3 Impact Analysis

3.1.3.1 Methodology/Approach

The assessment of scenic resource impacts involves qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective, even when done in a consistent 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.

3.1.3.2 Significance Thresholds

An impact related to aesthetics would be considered significant if the proposed Project would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on the existing landscape character and visual quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
- Substantially damage scenic resources within a scenic highway viewshed or a national scenic trail viewshed (including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings).
- Conflict with applicable adopted local, State, or federal plans, policies, regulations, or standards applicable to the protection and management of visual resources.
- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

3.1.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Landscape Character and Visual Quality

Impact A-1: Construction activities at the cable landing sites would temporarily degrade the visual quality of the surrounding areas.

The cable landing sites are the components of the Project's construction activities that would create the most substantial visual impacts. The two preferred cable landing sites (KOPs 1 and 2) would be located on the beach, which would temporarily degrade the visual quality of the open natural beach areas for viewers from the beach, Strand, and private residences along the east side of the Strand. The two optional locations for the cable landing sites (KOPs 3 and 4) would be visible from the surrounding streets, sidewalks, and residences. As discussed in the setting information above, KOPs 1 through 4 (shown in Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-5) are areas of high visual sensitivity where pedestrian and vehicular traffic are fairly constant.

As shown in the figures, during the construction period, temporary fencing would be erected around the cable landing sites. As stated in the APED, the applicant would install fencing (and berms at the beach sites) at the perimeter of the cable landing sites, which would block direct ground-level views of the construction activities and equipment. Mitigation Measure A-1 below would make this into a requirement. Regardless of this measure, implementation of the proposed Project would result in temporary construction activities and fenced areas that would temporarily alter and degrade the visual landscape of the surrounding areas. In addition, portions of the construction equipment and activities may still be visible through small gaps in the fencing or over the fencing from elevated viewpoints, particularly from the upper stories of residences that surround the fenced sites. This impact would be short term (i.e., 4 weeks) at each cable landing site location; nonetheless, considering the high quality and high visual sensitivity of the areas surrounding the sites, impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).

Mitigation Measures

A-1 **Screen Cable Landing Sites.** Prior to the issuance of construction permits, the applicant shall provide designs for temporary berms and fencing around the cable landing sites to minimize visual impacts to the satisfaction of the Hermosa Beach Community Development Department. At a minimum, a chain-link fence and privacy screening shall be installed.

Impact A-2: Construction of the buried conduit system and PFE facilities would temporarily degrade the visual quality of the surrounding areas.

Construction activities to install the terrestrial conduit system in public street rights-of-way would temporarily be visible to local residents and visitors. Conventional boring may be used to a limited extent, and short segments of the terrestrial conduit system could be installed using trenching methods where boring is infeasible or undesirable. However, approximately 90 percent of terrestrial conduit installation is expected to utilize trenchless construction rather than utility trenching. The activities associated with this component of construction would require views of construction equipment such as a bore machine, backhoe, and pickup truck. The applicant has proposed construction hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 6 days a week, for a total of five weeks (four weeks for the buried conduit installation and one week for the innerduct and cable pulling). However, views of

these construction activities would occur for limited periods of time along the conduit system routes, usually no more than one day at any location.

In addition to the temporary nature of these impacts, the construction activities would occur within public street rights-of-way surrounded by residential and commercial development. Under the Visual Sensitivity–Visual Change Methodology, this type of urban development can be considered to have moderate to low visual qualities. As the surrounding area is located within a popular beach community, the visual quality could be considered moderate. As such, the temporary construction activities would not result in adverse impacts to an area with moderate visual qualities. Therefore, due to the temporary nature of the construction activities, and the moderate visual qualities in the surrounding areas of the buried conduit system route, the impacts associated with these construction activities would not be significant (Class III).

The permanent terrestrial components of the proposed Project include underground fiber-optic lines and the four proposed PFE facilities. The fiber-optic lines would be underground and, therefore, not result in aesthetic impacts. The proposed 740-square-foot PFE facilities would be located either within commercial buildings or inside the City of Hermosa Beach maintenance yard on 6th Street. While the use of the maintenance yard would likely require the construction of a new structure to house the PFE facility, this structure would be generally consistent with other structures in the yard. The maintenance yard is bordered by existing industrial and commercial uses, some of which are two-story structures. A new 740-square foot PFE facility at the maintenance yard would only utilize a small portion of the site, and would not create a noticeable change to the existing character of the surrounding area. Because the PFE facilities would be placed within existing commercial structures, or at a public facility within a commercial/industrial area, the addition of these facilities would not substantially alter or degrade the existing visual quality of the surrounding areas. Therefore, the aesthetic impacts associated with the PFE facilities would not be significant (Class III).

Impact A-3: Off-shore construction activities would temporarily degrade the visual quality and views of the Pacific Ocean.

The marine equipment needed for cable laying includes marine vessels that would be located approximately 4,000 feet from the shoreline. As stated in the Chapter 2 (Project Description), the exact vessels to be used in the Project are not known at this time. The construction support vessels would likely be ships of opportunity hired locally and depending on availability at the time of construction, and the size of the vessels would range from 100 to 200 feet. The existing view of the ocean typically includes numerous personal and commercial vessels. Therefore, the temporary addition of the vessels for cable-laying would not be an uncommon view and this impact would not be significant (Class III).

Light or Glare

Impact A-4: Lighting associated with Project construction would create new sources of nighttime illumination that would be visible from surrounding residences.

As stated in Chapter 2 (Project Description), during the construction period, the applicant is proposing to work during daylight hours 7 days a week for all terrestrial construction activities, except terrestrial conduit installation and terrestrial innerduct and cable pulling. For the terrestrial conduit installation, the applicant has proposed construction hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., six days a week, for four weeks. The applicant has proposed construction hours for the terrestrial innerduct

and cable pulling of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., six days a week, for one week. As described, these construction activities are anticipated to occur during the day and nighttime lighting would not be required. However, construction activities may occur during the night if the cable pulling process is slower than anticipated or if problems are encountered. Once cable pulling starts, it cannot be stopped until the process is complete. Under a prolonged cable pulling scenario, nighttime lighting would be required (ICF, 2015). Nighttime Project-related activities may also be necessary to keep the bore pipe from seizing in the hole through a brief 30-minute operation of the bore equipment once per night; lighting would be utilized for approximately 45 minutes during this procedure (ICF, 2015).

In order to minimize the adverse effects from periodic nighttime lighting, Mitigation Measure A-4 (Nighttime Lighting Guidelines) is recommended to minimize glare and illumination outside of the construction site, while providing a safe work environment. Mitigation Measure A-4 would reduce nighttime lighting impacts to a less-than-significant level (Class II).

A-4 **Nighttime Lighting Guidelines.** The amount of lighting used by construction crews will be limited to the amount necessary to safely perform the required work. Lighting would consist of temporary portable/maneuverable flood lights, a generator, and a light-directing screen. When in operation the temporary flood lighting will be directed towards the work area to minimize illumination of areas beyond the immediate work areas, and minimize reflected glare and illumination of the nighttime sky to the maximum extent practicable. When not in immediate use the temporary flood lights will be directed downward or turned off.

Scenic Highways and National Scenic Trails

The only State Highway within the incorporated limits of Hermosa Beach is Pacific Coast Highway (U.S Highway 1). According to the California Department of Transportation, U.S. Highway 1 is not designated a State Scenic highway through the City of Hermosa Beach. In addition, the proposed Project would not affect any national scenic trails. Therefore, no State or federally-designated highways or trail would be affected by the proposed Project, and there would be no impact.

Conflicts with Plans, Policies, Regulations, or Standards Applicable to Visual Resources

Section 3.1.2, *Regulatory Setting,* provides the plans, policies and regulations that apply to visual resources. No federal or State regulations apply, and the only local policy that applies to the proposed Project is a program to accelerate the undergrounding of utility lines. As the proposed Project would be consistent with this program, there would be no conflicts with applicable plans, policies and regulations and, therefore, there would be no impact under this criterion.

Effects on Scenic Vistas

Impact A-5: During construction, the cable landing sites would obstruct scenic views of the beach and coastline.

As described for Impact A-1, the cable landing sites are the components of the construction activities that would create the most substantial visual impacts. Although there are no formally designated scenic vistas in the areas surrounding the proposed construction sites, as discussed in the setting information above, KOPs 1 through 4 are areas of high visual sensitivity where pedestrians, recreationists, and private home owners have scenic views to the beach and coastline. As shown in the visual simulations presented in Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-5, during the construction period,

temporary fencing would be erected around the cable landing sites. As stated in the APED, the applicant would install berms and fencing around these areas, which would block direct ground-level views of the construction activities and equipment. In particular, the two preferred cable landing sites (KOPs 1 and 2) would be located on the beach, which would obstruct views of beach and coastline for viewers from the Strand and from private residences along the east side of the Strand. The two alternative options for the cable landing sites (KOPs 3 and 4) would not obstruct views from the Strand; however, views of the beach and coastline from the surrounding streets, sidewalks, and residences would be obstructed by the fenced areas.

Although construction activities would occur for only a period of several weeks and would result in temporary obstructions to scenic views for visitors and residents along the beach, these areas are highly desirable views, so these temporary impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). Implementation of Mitigation Measure M-1 (*Screen Cable Landing Sites*) would help screen views of directional boring activities at the cable landing sites, but would not reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

A-1 **Screen Cable Landing Sites.** See above for the full text of this measure.

3.1.3.4 Cumulative Effects

Introduction

The geographic area of analysis for cumulative impacts to scenic resources is limited to projects within 500 feet of the area surrounding the proposed Project construction components. This area is defined because the City of Hermosa Beach is a densely developed urban area, and at distances greater than 500 feet the 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 TI Office Space located at 824 1st Street (Map Number 10 in Figure 3-1) is approximately 250 feet west of the southern end of the proposed Project and would be the only cumulative project that would be visible from a construction area associated with the proposed Project.

The Clash Hotel (Map Number 8 in Figure 3-1) is also within 500 feet from a bird's eye view, but the traveling distance is approximately 700 feet and around the corner from the Option 3 route for the fiber-optic line. Construction of the proposed Project and Clash Hotel would not be visible at the same time from the same viewers. Therefore, the Clash Hotel project is not included in the discussion below.

Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

The cable landing sites are the components of the construction activities that would create the greatest visual impacts, and the four PFE facilities are the permanent terrestrial components of the proposed Project that could result in visual impacts. As the fiber-optic lines would be underground, there would be no visual impacts associated with these components of the proposed Project. The overall visual quality of the areas immediately surrounding the Project construction sites are high due to the views of the beach and coastlines; however, there are no cumulative projects located within 500 feet of the proposed cable landing sites, so there would be no cumulative visual impacts associated with the cable landing sites.

The areas surrounding the potential sites for PFE facilities are commercial or residential areas, which do not consist of high visual qualities. The one cumulative project identified above would be located approximately 250 feet from the southern potential PFE site identified as 102 PCH on Figure 3-1. Effects from construction of this project could combine with effects of the proposed Project to result in cumulative visual impacts during the construction periods. However, the TI Office Space is a 300-square-foot project that would not result in a lengthy construction period. In addition, construction of the PFE facilities would be located within a commercial building. While construction activities would include the presence of heavy equipment, views of activities and equipment would be temporary. Therefore, cumulative visual impacts would not be significant.

3.1.3.5 Summary of Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Significance Conclusions

Table 3.1-1, below, provides a summary of the Project's significant impacts (Class I or Class II) related to aesthetics. The table also indicates the mitigation measures proposed to reduce these significant impacts.

Table 3.1-1. Summary of Aesthetics Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Significance Conclusions

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Significance Conclusion
Impact A-1: Construction activities at the cable landing sites would temporarily degrade the visual quality of the surrounding areas.	A-1 Screen Cable Landing Sites.	Class I
Impact A-4: Lighting associated with Project construction would create new sources of nighttime illumination that would be visible from surrounding residences.	A-4 Nighttime Lighting Guidelines	Class II
Impact A-5: During construction, the cable landing sites would obstruct scenic views of the beach and coastline.	A-1 Screen Cable Landing Sites.	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.