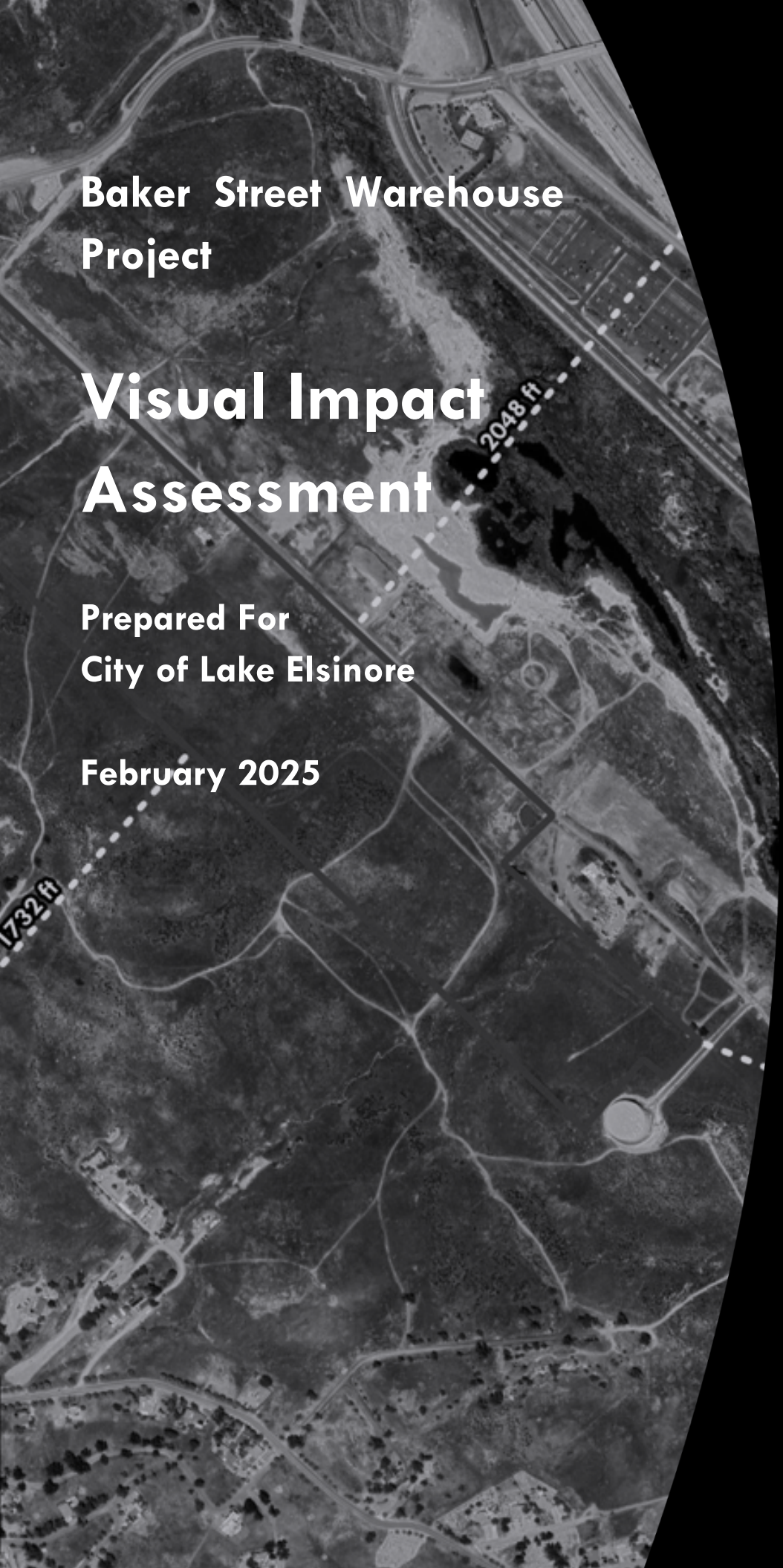

Baker Street Warehouse Project

Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared For
City of Lake Elsinore

February 2025

Prepared By:

EPD SOLUTIONS, INC

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3333 Michelson Drive, Suite 500
Irvine, CA 92612

EPDSolutions.com

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Prepared By: Danielle Thayer
Contact: danielle@epdsolutions.com

February 2025

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Figures

Tables

1 INTRODUCTION

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) evaluates the proposed Baker Street Warehouse Project ("Project" or "proposed Project"), which includes the construction of two warehouse buildings on a 65.81-acre site, 23.04 acres of associated offsite improvements, 33.65 acres of biological restoration with a 2.72 acre temporary construction buffer area. This assessment focuses on the visual changes that would occur from implementation of the Project and determines if those changes have a potential to be significant.

1.1 Project Location

The Project site is located southwest and southeast of the intersection of Baker Street and Pierce Street in the City of Lake Elsinore, in Riverside County, California. Regional access to the Project site is provided by Interstate 15 (I-15), located 0.40 miles east of the site. Local access to the site is provided from Baker Street and Pierce Street. The existing site and surrounding area are shown in Figure 1, *Regional Location,* and Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*.

The Project site would encompass areas of onsite development, offsite roadway improvements, and habitat restoration. Figure 3, *Aerial*, provides an aerial photograph of the Project site as delineated by the following:

- The following Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) would encompass proposed 65.81 acres of onsite improvements: 378-020-014, 378-020-015, 378-020-016, 378-020-028, 378-020-029, 378-020-030, 378-020-031, 378-020-036, 378-020-037, and 378-020-048.
- The following APNs would include 33.65 acres of proposed restoration area as part of the Project: 378-020-024, 378-020-033, 378-020-034, 378-020-040, 378-020-041, and 378-020-054.
- The following APNs would provide for 21.15 acres of Project-related offsite improvements: 378-020-012, 378-020-038, 378-020-039, 378-020-042, 378-020-043, 378-114-064, 389-080-058, and 389- 080-013.

Additionally, 2.72 acres of land between Baker Street and the proposed habitat restoration area would serve as a temporary construction disturbance buffer.

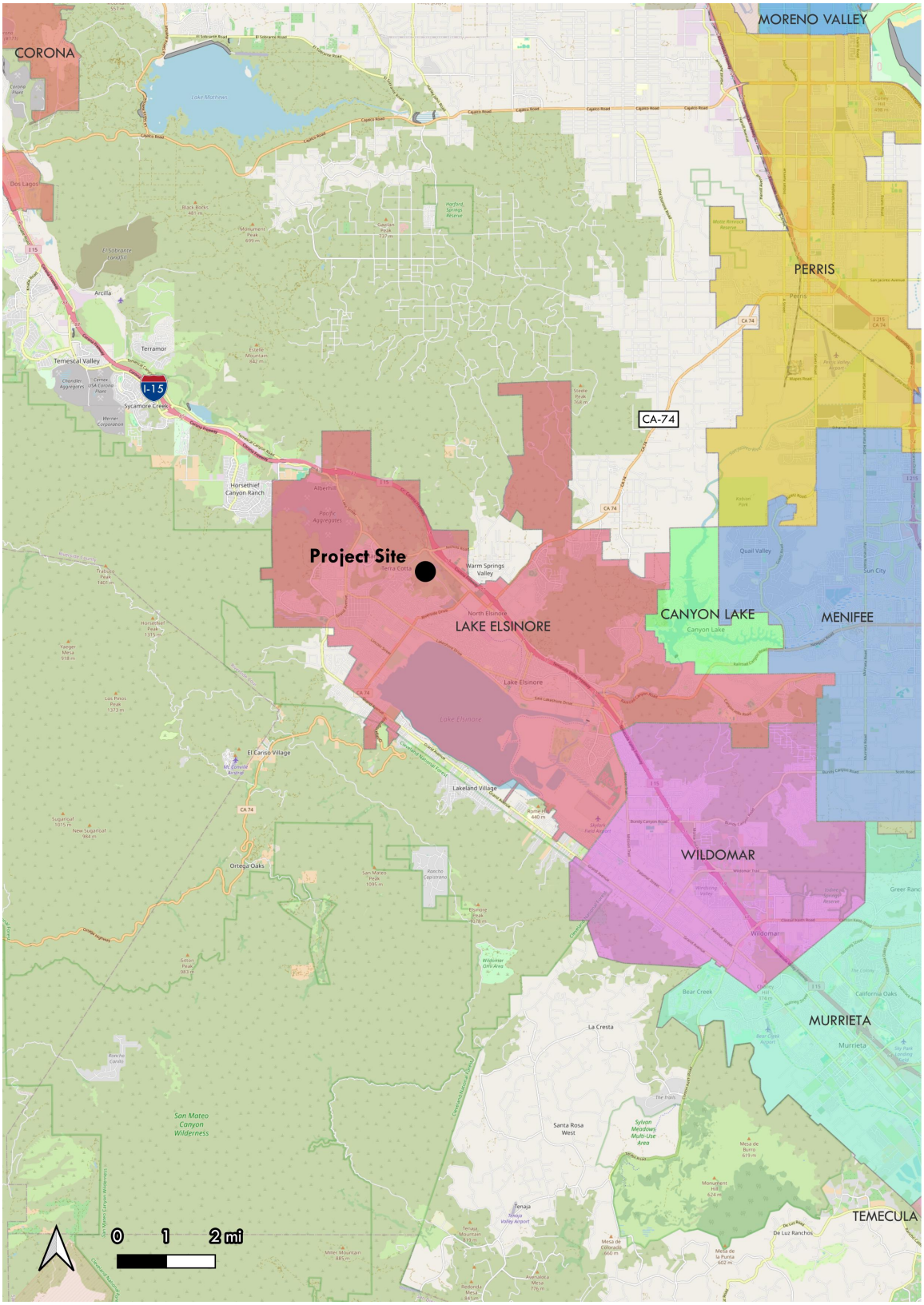
1.2 Existing Land Use and Zoning

The Project site is currently undeveloped and vacant. See Figure 4, *Existing Site Photos*. The Project site has General Plan land use designations of Limited Industrial and Floodway (see Figure 5, *Existing General Plan Land Use*), and zoning designations of Limited Manufacturing (M-1), General Manufacturing (M-2), and Open Space/Floodway (OS) (see Figure 6, *Existing Zoning*). The Limited Industrial land use designation provides for industrial parks, warehouses, manufacturing, research and development, public and quasi-public uses, and compatible uses at a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.45.

1.3 Surrounding General Plan and Zoning Designation

The surrounding land uses are described in Table 1 along with the General Plan land use and zoning designations.

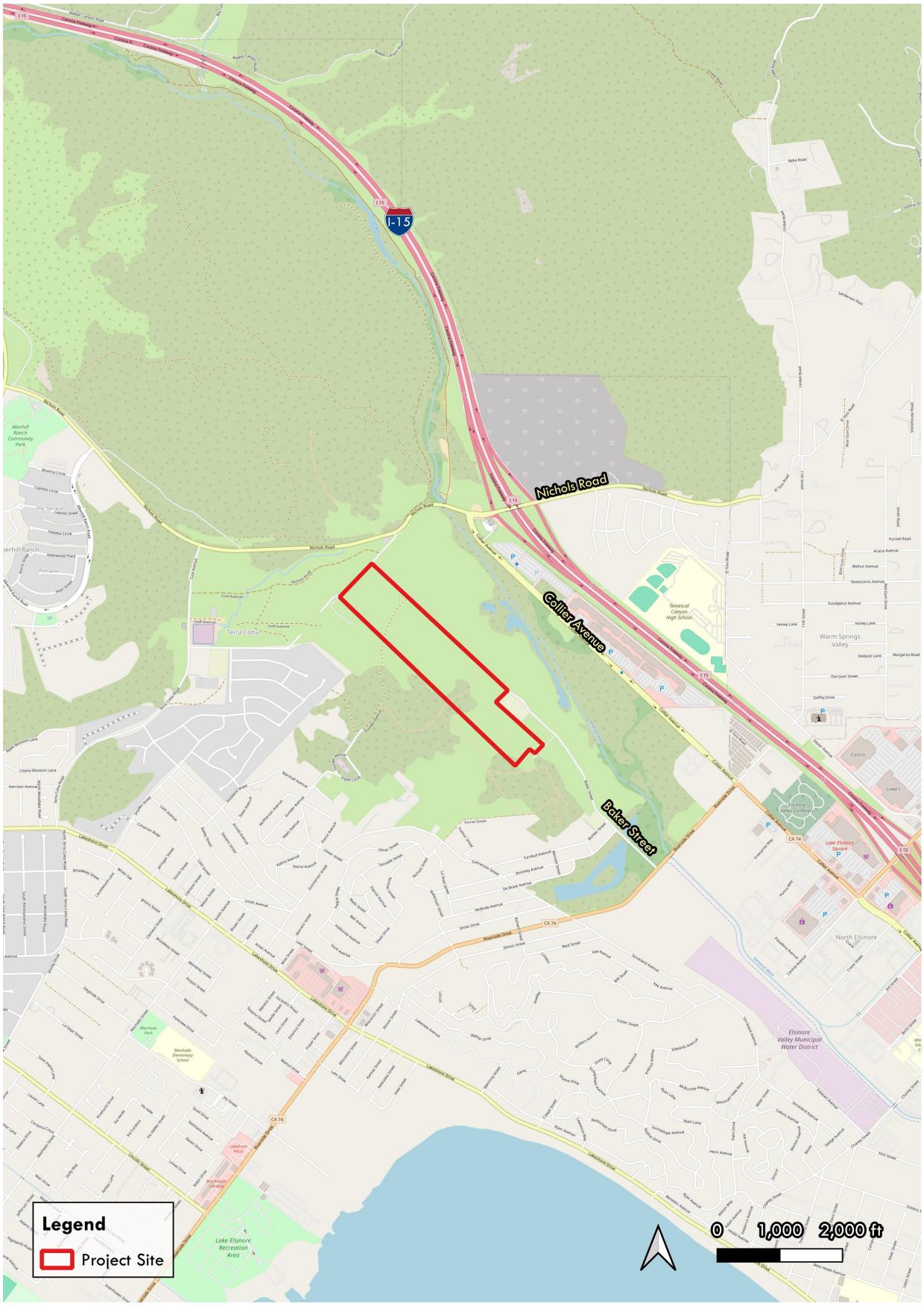
Regional Location



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 1

Local Vicinity



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 2

Aerial

Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 3

Existing Site Photos

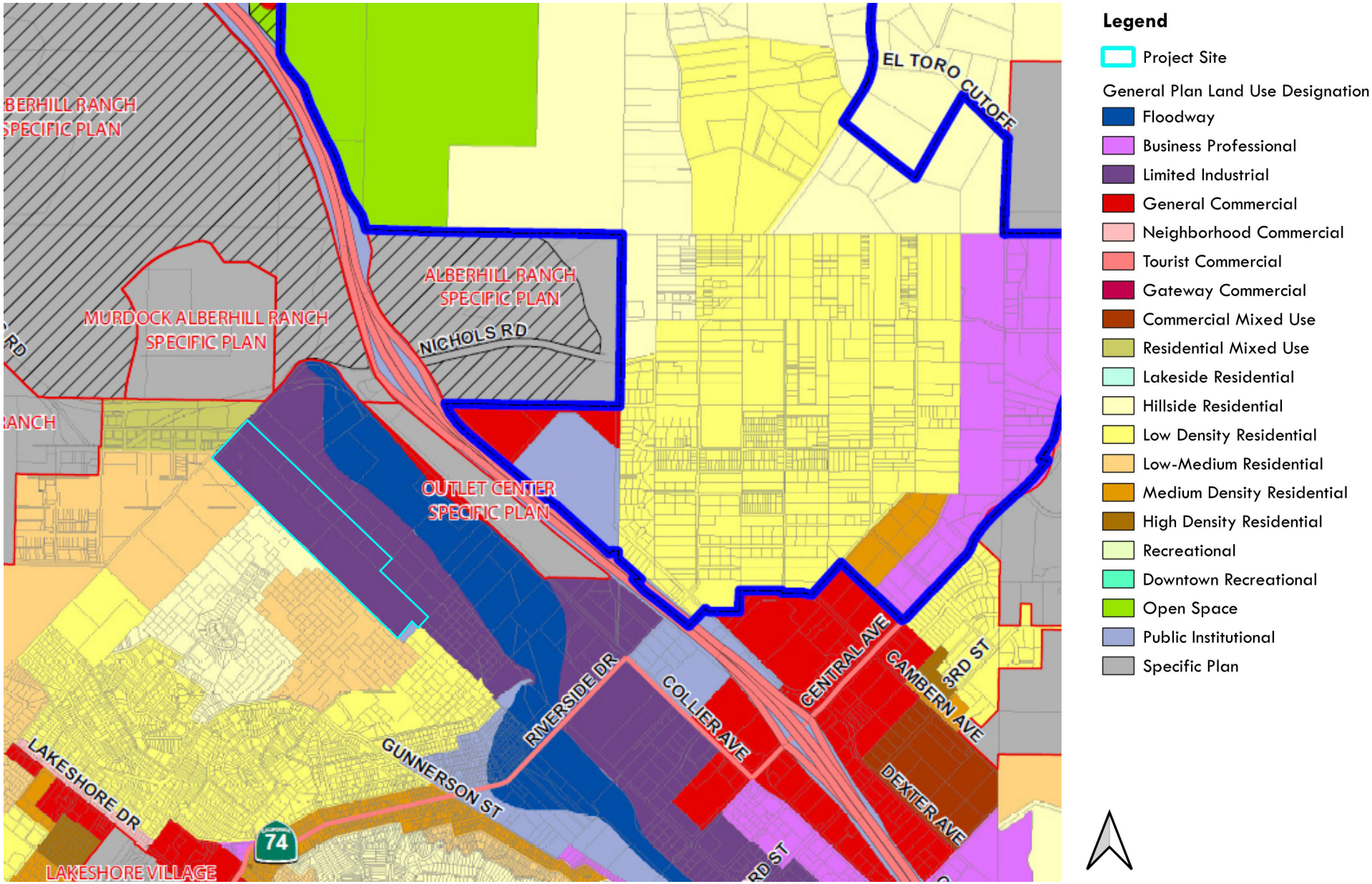
Photograph 1: Aerial view of the Project site looking north from the southern end. The photo depicts existing Baker Street.

Photograph 2: Aerial view of the Project site looking south from northern end. The photo depicts the intersection of Baker Street and Pierce Street in the bottom of the photo with Baker Street extending to the south.

Photograph 3: Aerial view depicting the proposed RCA Conserved Land.

Source: *Biological Technical Report for the Baker Industrial Project* (Exhibit 12), by Glenn Lukos Associates, Inc. 2023.

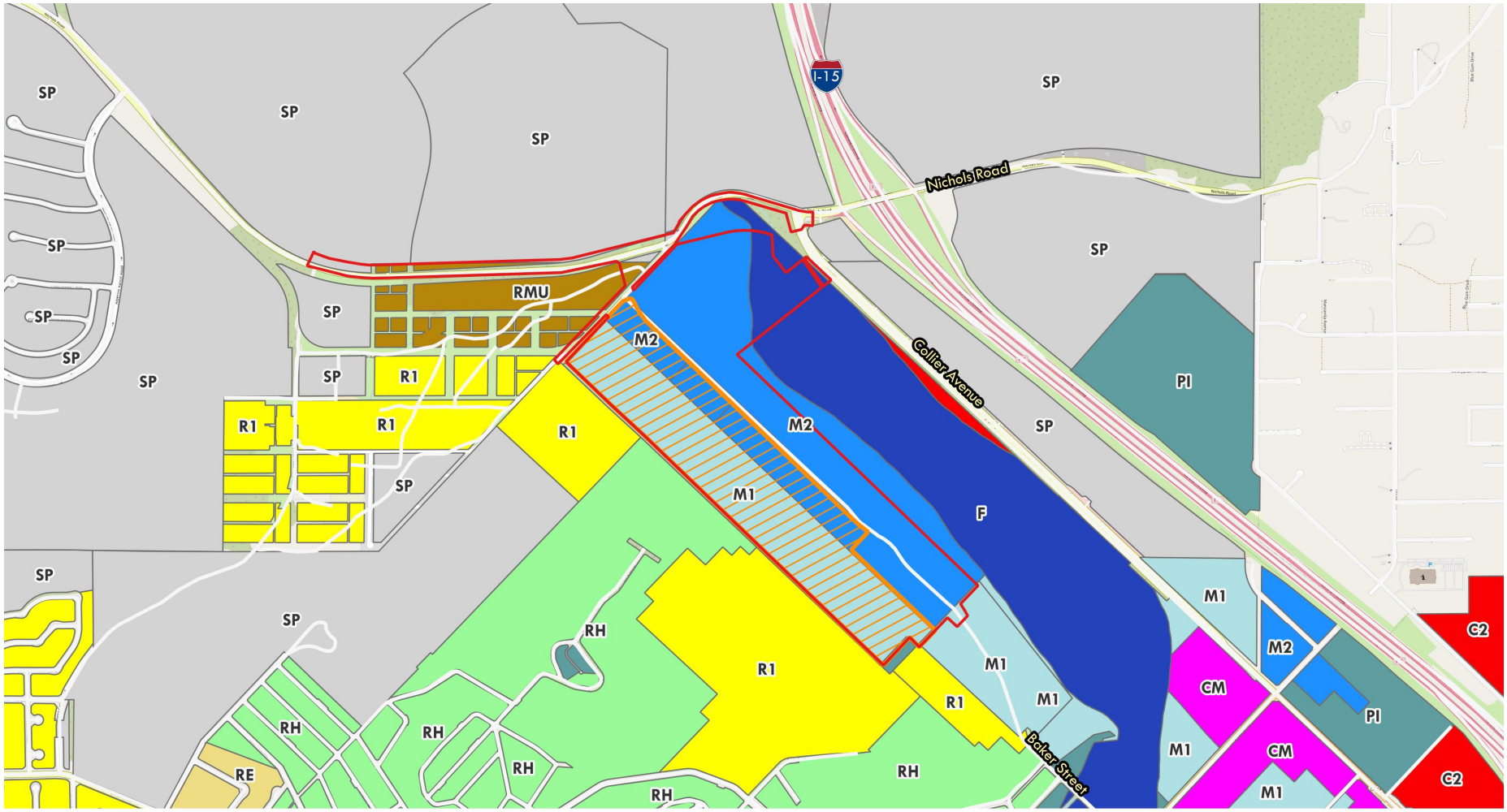
Existing General Plan Land Use



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 5

Existing Zoning



Legend

- Disturbance Area
- Project Site

Zoning Designations

- C2 - General Commercial
- CM - Commercial Manufacturing
- F - Floodway
- M1 - Limited Manufacturing
- M2 - General Manufacturing
- PI - Public/Institutional
- R1 - Single Family Residential
- RE - Residential Estate
- RH - Hillside Single Family Residential
- RMU - Residential Mixed Use
- SP - Specific Plan

0 1,000 2,000 ft

Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 6

Table 1: Surrounding Existing Land Use and Zoning Designations

	Existing Use	General Plan	Zone
Northeast	Vacant and undeveloped land/open space	Floodway, Specific Plan (Outlet Center)	Open Space/Floodway (OS), Specific Plan (Outlet Center)
Southeast	Non-conforming residence, institutional facility, open space	Limited Industrial, Public Institutional	Limited Manufacturing M-1, Public/Institutional (PI)
Southwest	Vacant and undeveloped land. Two single family homes are located adjacent to the southwest most corner of the site.	Low-Medium Residential, Hillside Residential	Single Family Residential (R-1), Hillside Single Family Residential (RH)
Northwest	Vacant and undeveloped land.	Residential Mixed Use	Residential Mixed Use (RMU)

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Overview

The Project site is approximately 123.33 acres and the proposed Project includes the following:

- Onsite Development Area – 65.81 acres:
    - Development of a 212,028-square-foot (SF) warehouse (Building 1) with a 5,000 SF ground-level office space and 5,000 SF office mezzanine, and a 788,423 SF warehouse (Building 2) with a 10,000 SF ground-level office space and 10,000 SF office mezzanine. Both buildings are proposed to have a maximum building height of 50 feet. The development also includes approximately 466 vehicle parking stalls and approximately 391 trailer parking stalls. The proposed warehouses are designed as high-cube buildings with the flexibility to accommodate up to 10 percent manufacturing and 10 percent cold storage uses.
    - Access to the development would be accessible via four new driveways: three proposed along Baker Street and one proposed along Pierce Street. In addition, the two buildings would be accessible internally under a reciprocal access agreement via a drive aisle proposed at the rear of Building 2 that would extend to Building 1 for access to Pierce Street.
- Offsite Improvement Areas – 23.04 acres:
    - Right-of-way (ROW) improvements on Baker Street and Pierce Street and the realignment of Baker Street to Nichols Road. Proposed offsite improvements would include full buildout of Baker Street and Pierce Street consistent with the General Plan Circulation Element, new pavement, new sidewalks, and new parkways with landscaping.
- Restoration Area – 33.65 acres to be used for future conservation and habitat restoration activities.
- Construction/Improvements Buffer – 2.72 acres:
    - Land between Baker Street and the proposed habitat restoration area to serve as a disturbance buffer to ensure that ROW improvements would not encroach into the restoration area.

2.2 Industrial Development

The industrial/onsite development area of the Project consists of construction and operation of two new warehouse buildings totaling a combined 1,000,451 SF. Building 1 would include 23 dock doors along the southwest side of the building. Building 2 would include 110 dock doors along the northeast side of the building. Building 1 would be located at the northwestern end of the site and Building 2 would be located at the southeastern end of the site. A breakdown of the building specifications is provided in Table 2, *Proposed Building Specifications*. The conceptual site plan is provided as Figure 7, *Disturbance Areas,* and Figure 8, *Conceptual Site Plan*. Building elevations are shown in Figure 11, *Building Elevations*.

Table 2: Proposed Building Specifications

	Warehouse SF	Ground Floor Office SF	Mezzanine Office SF	Total SF	FAR Coverage	Truck Trailer Parking	Vehicle Parking
Building 1	202,028	5,000	5,000	212,028	38.74%	31	172
Building 2	768,423	10,000	10,000	788,423	33.99%	360	294
Total	**970,451**	**15,000**	**15,000**	**1,000,451**	**34.90%**	**391**	**466**

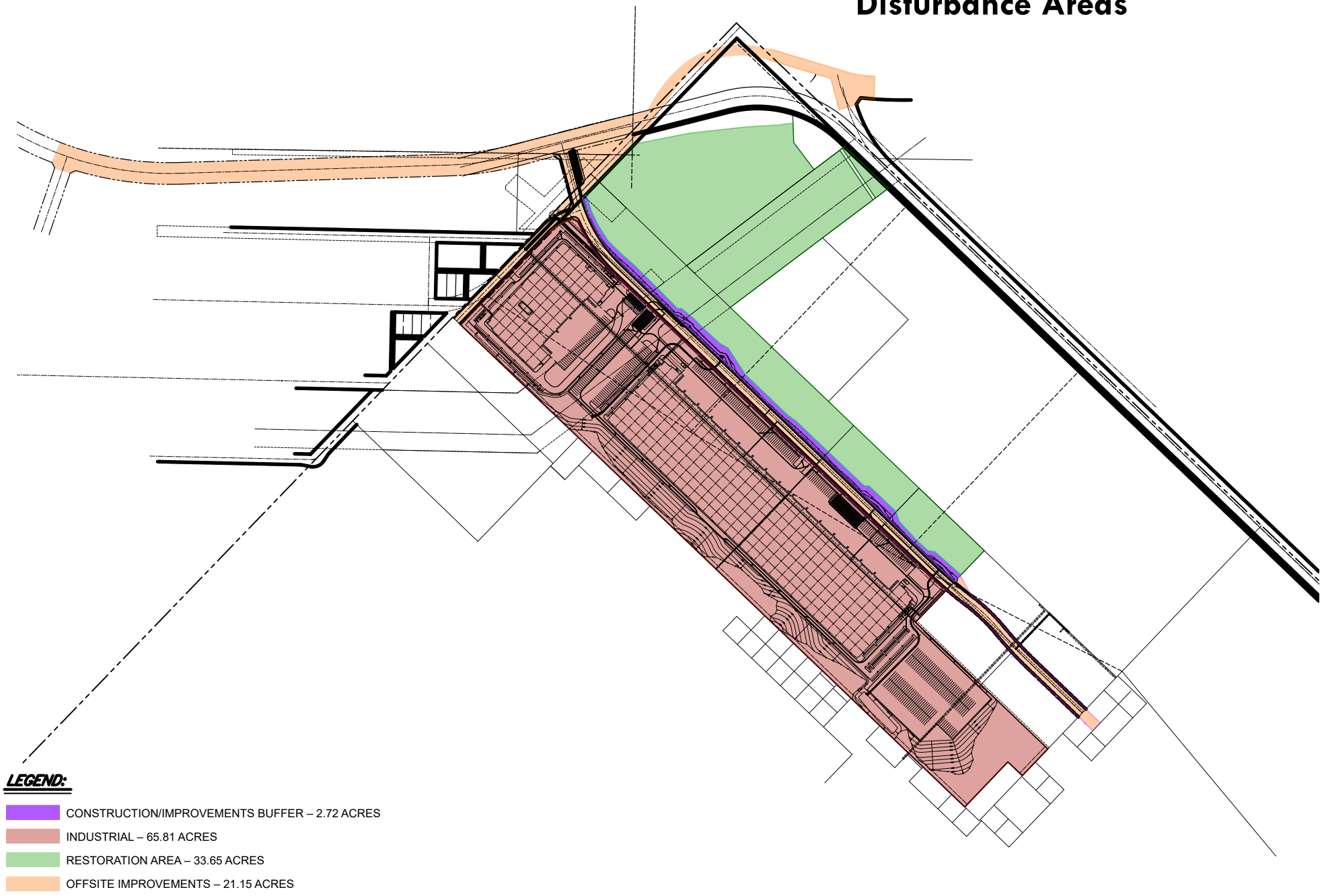
Notes: SF = square feet

The proposed Project would be accessible via four new driveways. Three driveways would be constructed along Baker Street and one driveway would be along Pierce Street. Building 1 would be accessible via the vehicle driveway along Pierce Street and one 53-foot truck access driveway along Baker Street. Building 2 would be accessible via two driveways along Baker Street. Trucks would utilize the northern and southern most 50-foot driveways to access the Building 2. In addition, the two buildings would be accessible via a reciprocal access agreement as the drive aisle behind the rear of Building 2 would extend to the Building 1 site for access to Pierce Street. The reciprocal access agreement would largely be intended to provide a secondary point of emergency access for Building 2.

As shown in Table 2, the proposed Project includes a total of 466 vehicle parking stalls combined between the two proposed buildings. Building 1 would have 172 vehicle parking stalls located along the northeastern, northwestern, and southwestern perimeters of the site. Building 1 would also have 31 trailer stalls located opposite the dock doors at the southwestern end of the building.

Building 2 would have 294 associated vehicle parking stalls located largely to the southwest of the building, and a few stalls will be located northeast of the building. Additionally, Building 2 would have 360 trailer parking stalls located to the northwest and northeast of the building. The Project also proposes a trailer parking lot as part of Building 2 at the southeast end of the site which would include 136 trailer parking stalls. Loading and unloading activity within the truck court of both buildings would be secured by a gate at all points of entry.

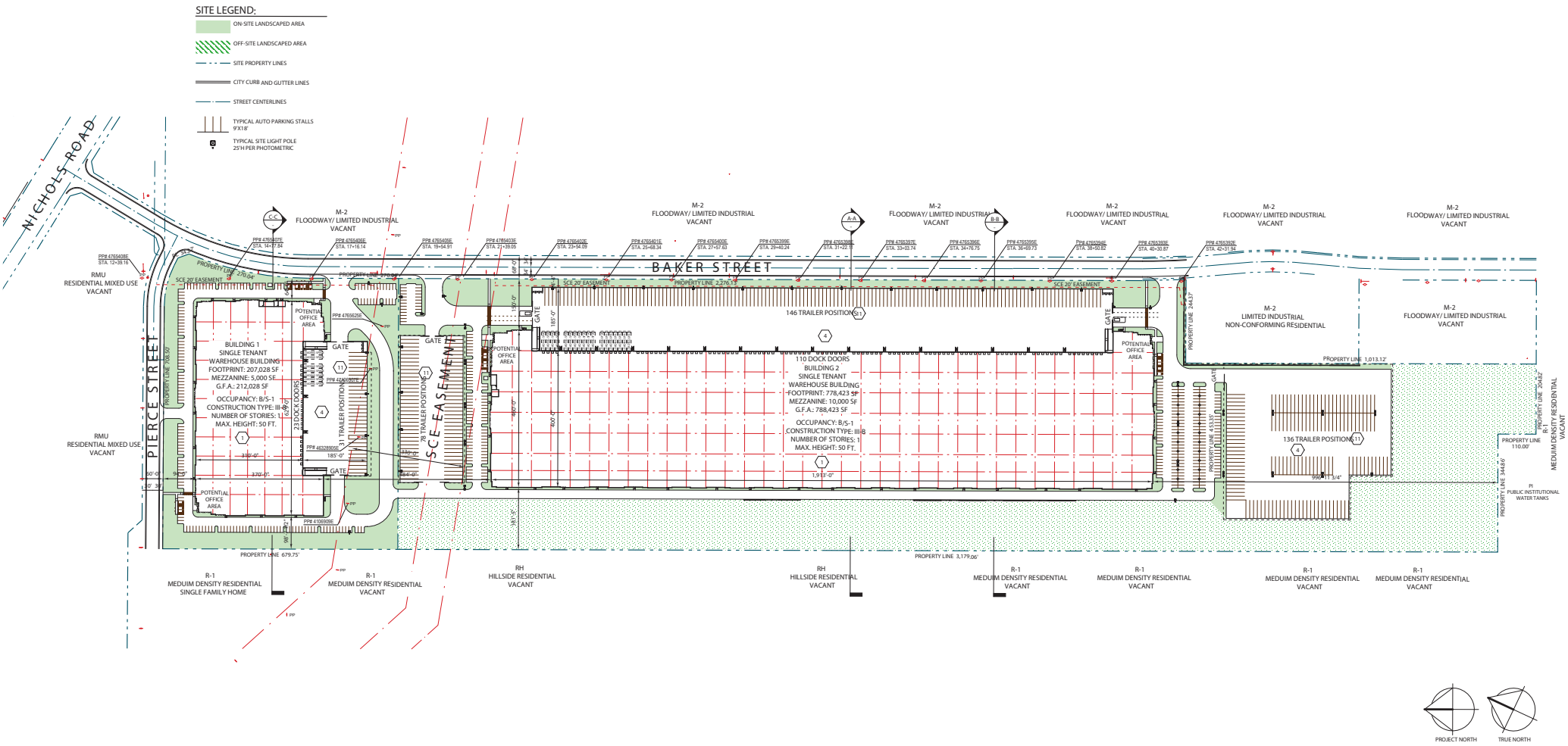
Disturbance Areas



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 7

Conceptual Site Plan



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 8

The Project has been designed to screen loading and unloading activities from adjacent residential land uses. Building 1 is designed for the truck court to be screened from the adjacent residences west of the building. Building 2 is designed for loading and unloading activity to be located northeast of the building to screen truck activities away from the residentially related land uses southwest of the building. The proposed Project also includes landscaping along Baker Street to screen the Project from the ROW. The Project site would contain a total site landscape coverage of 30.94% (see Figures 9 and 10). Additionally, although this analysis does not consider impacts to private property, the site is designed to utilize hills to the southwest to screen the site from the adjacent residential properties.

The Project includes an onsite lighting plan that provides the required lighting levels for normal operation onsite, as required by the City's Municipal Code. Exterior lighting would be downward facing to prevent unnecessary foot candles outside of the Project boundary. In addition, the Project lighting would be designated to shield the habitat restoration area to preclude potential lighting effects. The Project includes installation of new public streetlights. The City of Lake Elsinore requires public streetlights every 200 feet on both sides of newly constructed public roadways per Lake Elsinore standards 503 and 508.

The onsite development portion of the Project has a General Plan land use designation of Limited Industrial and is zoned for M-1 and M-2. As part of the Project, the M-1 designated portion of the site is proposed to be amended to M-2 to achieve consistent zoning of the proposed development area.

The Project includes a tentative parcel map to merge the 10 proposed development parcels into 2 parcels so that Building 1 and Building 2 would each be located on a single parcel. A breakdown of the site areas for the three new parcels is provided in Table 3, *Site Acreages*.

Table 3: Site Acreages

Site	Acreage
Building 1	12.565
Building 2	53.247

Table 4 and Table 5 below shows the proposed Project's consistency with the City of Lake Elsinore's development standards with the M-2 zone.

Table 4: Building 1 Consistency with M-2 Development Standards

Development Standard	Required	Provided
Parking[1]	Office: 1/250 SF Warehouse 1-20K SF: 1/500 SF Warehouse 20,001 SF+: 1/100 SF 212 spaces required	172 spaces
FAR	0.45	0.39
Maximum Structure Height[2]	45'	46'
Front Setback (to building or parking area)	Shall average 20', but not be less than 15'. 10' reduction to parking may be allowed	15' from parking lot, 95' from building

Development Standard	Required	Provided
	by City Council if a decorative wall, artwork, or public amenity is installed.	
Interior Setback	N/A unless adjacent to residential use or public right-of-way in which the front setback requirement applies	48' from parking lot, 98' from building
Landscape Coverage	12%	25.94%

[1] Parking Study was approved to allow for the reduction of required parking stalls. Project to be subject to the following parking requirement – 1 space for each 1,000 SF of floor area for the first 40,000 SF, and 1 space for each 4,000 SF of gross floor area for the portion over 40,000 SF; and 1 for each facility vehicle
[2] Project applying for a Conditional Use Permit to exceed building height

Table 5: Building 2 Consistency with M-2 Development Standards

Development Standard	Required	Provided
Parking[1]	Office: 1/250 SF Warehouse 1-20K SF: 1/500 SF Warehouse 20,001 SF+: 1/100 SF 788 spaces required	295 spaces
FAR	0.45	0.34
Maximum Structure Height[2]	45'	Will Meet Standard
Front Setback (to building or parking area)	Shall average 20', but not be less than 15'. 10' reduction to parking may be allowed by City Council if a decorative wall, artwork, or public amenity is installed.	24' from parking lot, 147' from building
Interior Setback/Side Setback	N/A unless adjacent to residential use or public right-of-way in which the front setback requirement applies	181' from building
Landscape Coverage	12%	32.12%

1 Parking Study was approved to allow for the reduction of required parking stalls. Project to be subject to the following parking requirement – 1 space for each 1,000 SF of floor area for the first 40,000 SF, and 1 space for each 4,000 SF of gross floor area for the portion over 40,000 SF; and 1 for each facility vehicle
2 Project applying for a Conditional Use Permit to exceed building height

The proposed buildings are designed to function as two high cube warehouse buildings with the flexibility to provide 10% manufacturing and 10% cold storage. The buildings would be painted concrete in shades of cream and grey, aluminum canopies, and stone formliner accents. The building exterior would contain green reflective-glazed windows (see Figure 11, *Building Elevations*). Typical operational characteristics include employees traveling to and from the site, delivery of materials and supplies to the site and truck loading and unloading. The Project is assumed to operate 24/7; however, this may shift depending on tenant as hours of operation, which are currently unknown.

Landscape Plan - Buildings 1 and 2

LEGEND

1. ENHANCED CONCRETE PAVING AT DRIVE AISLE ENTRIES
2. P.I.P. CONCRETE STEPS WITH HANDRAILS
3. P.I.P. CONCRETE RAMP WITH HANDRAILS
4. GUARDHOUSE
5. SECURITY GATE
6. AUTO PARKING
7. TRAILER PARKING
8. NATIVE HYDROSEED SLOPE
9. TRANSFORMER
10. GRAVEL BAND
11. PERIMETER FENCE
12. PERIMETER WALL
13. RETAINING WALL

SCE APPROVED PROPOSED PLANT PALETTE (PER SCE RIGHT TREE RIGHT PLACE BROCHURE)

TREES

SYMBOL	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE / FORM	HT. X SPRD. X CAL. (MIN.)	WATER USE	DESCRIPTION
	ARBUTUS X 'MARINA'	MARINA STRAWBERRY TREE	24" BOX STD.	8'H X 5'W	M	FLOWERING TREE
	CERCIS CANDENSIS 'FOREST PANSY'	FOREST PANSY RED BUD	24" BOX STD.	8'H X 5'SP X 4"C	M	FLOWERING TREE
T	HETEROMELES ARBUTIFOLIA	TOYON	15 GAL.	1.5'-2" H X 2' SP	L	SMALL ACCENT TREE
	JUNIPERUS CALIFORNICA	CALIFORNIA JUNIPER	15 GAL.	5'H X 3'SP	L	SMALL ACCENT TREE
	LOPHOSTEMON CONFERTUS	BRISBANE BOX	24" BOX STD.	8'H X 3'SP X 4"C	M	VERTICAL EVERGREEN
	PINUS ELDARICA	MONDELL PINE	24" BOX STD.	6'H X 3'SP.	L	EVERGREEN SCREEN
	PINUS HALEPENSIS	AFGHAN PINE	24" BOX STD.	6'H X 3'SP.	L	EVERGREEN SCREEN
	PLATANUS RACEMOSA	CALIFORNIA SYCAMORE	36" BOX	10'HT. X 4'SP.	M	DECIDUOUS CANOPY TREE
	QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA	CALIFORNIA LIVE OAK	36" BOX	14' H X 6'SP.	L	EVERGREEN CANOPY TREE
	QUERCUS DUMOSA	SCRUB OAK	24" BOX STD.	6' H X 3' SP.	L	SMALL SCREENING TREE

SCE APPROVED PROPOSED PLANT PALETTE (PER SCE RIGHT TREE RIGHT PLACE BROCHURE)

SHRUBS, GRASSES, & GROUNDCOVERS

SYMBOL	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	SPACING	WATER USE	DESCRIPTION
	CARISSA M. 'GREEN CARPET'	DWARF NATAL PLUM	1 GAL.	30" O.C.	M	EVERGREEN LOW SHRUB
	COTYLEDON ORBICULATA	PIG'S EAR	1 GAL.	18" O.C.	L	SUCCULENT ACCENT
	DIANELLA 'LITTLE REV'	LITTLE REV FLAX LILY	1 GAL.	24" O.C.	L	UPRIGHT ACCENT
	HESPERALOE PARVIFOLIA	RED YUCCA	5 GAL.	36" O.C.	L	UPRIGHT ACCENT
	ECHEVERIA AGAVOIDES 'LIPSTICK'	ECHEVERIA	4" POTS	8" O.C.	L	SMALL SUCCULENT
	HESPERALOE 'BRAKELIGHTS'	BRAKELIGHTS YUCCA	5 GAL.	30" O.C.	L	UPRIGHT ACCENT
	RHAPHIOLEPIS INDICA 'CLARA'	INDIAN HAWTHORN	5 GAL.	36" O.C.	M	EVERGREEN SHRUB
	SALVIA GREGGII	AUTUMN SAGE	5 GAL.	36" O.C.	L	FLOWERING SHRUB
	WESTRINGIA 'WYNYABBIE GEM'	COAST ROSEMARY	5 GAL.	36" O.C.	L	EVERGREEN HEDGE

GRASSLAND HYDROSEED MIX

	NATIVE GRASSLAND MIX					

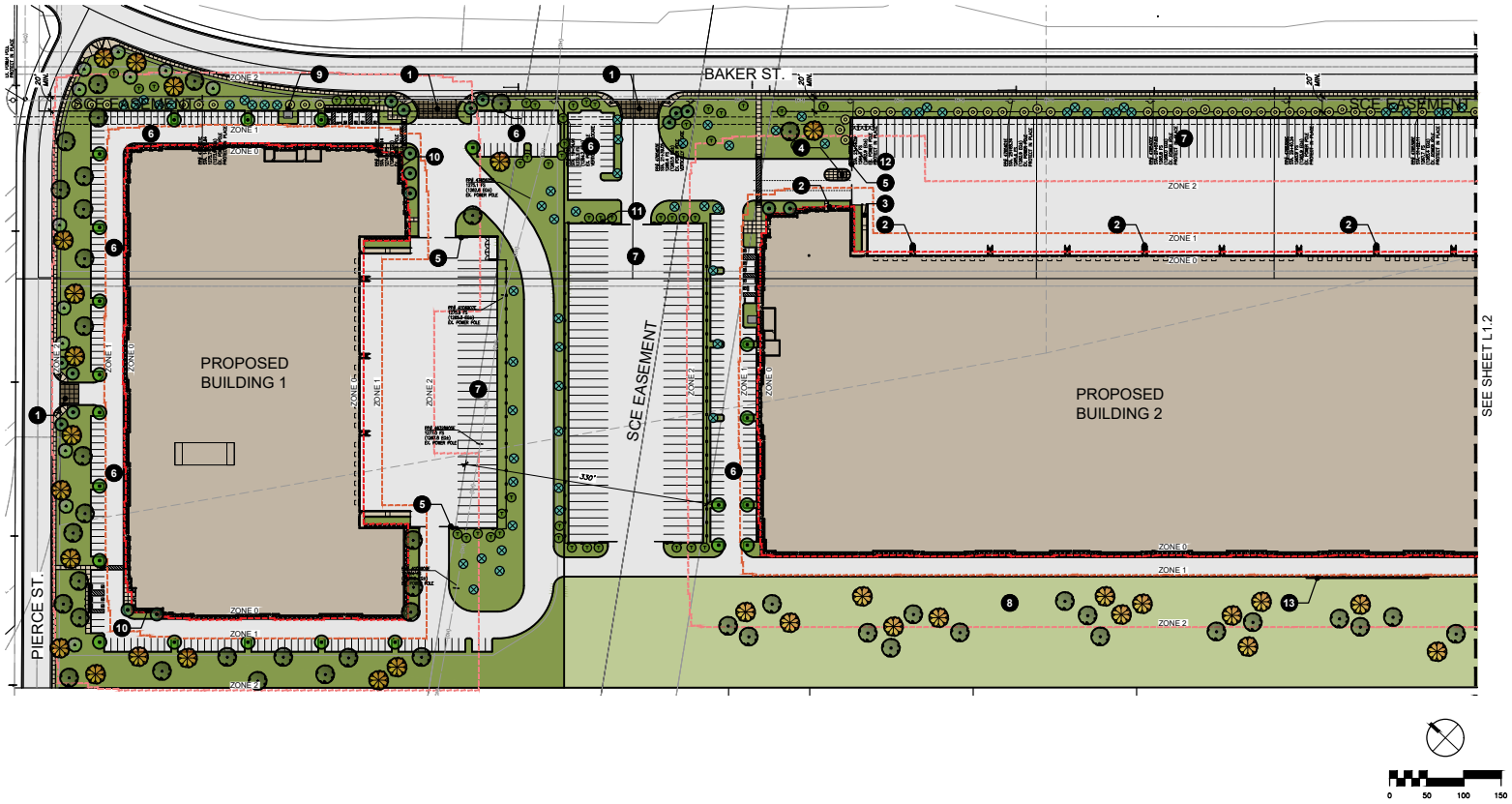
WATER USE KEY:
VL = VERY LOW WATER USE, L = LOW WATER USE, M = MODERATE WATER USE, H = HIGH WATER USE. WATER USE STATED IS PER 'WATER USE CLASSIFICATION OF LANDSCAPE SPECIES' (ALSO REFERRED TO AS WUCOLS IV) FOR THE CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE

DEFENSIBLE ZONE LEGEND

ZONE 0 – EMBER RESISTANT ZONE (EXTENDS 5 FEET FROM BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES)

ZONE 1 – LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN ZONE (EXTENDS 30 FEET FROM BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES)

ZONE 2 – REDUCE FUEL ZONE (EXTENDS FROM 30 FEET TO 100 FEET OUT FROM BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES, OR TO THE PROPERTY LINE.



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 9

Landscape Plan - Building 2 cont.

LEGEND

1. ENHANCED CONCRETE PAVING AT DRIVE AISLE ENTRIES
2. P.I.P. CONCRETE STEPS WITH HANDRAILS
3. P.I.P. CONCRETE RAMP WITH HANDRAILS
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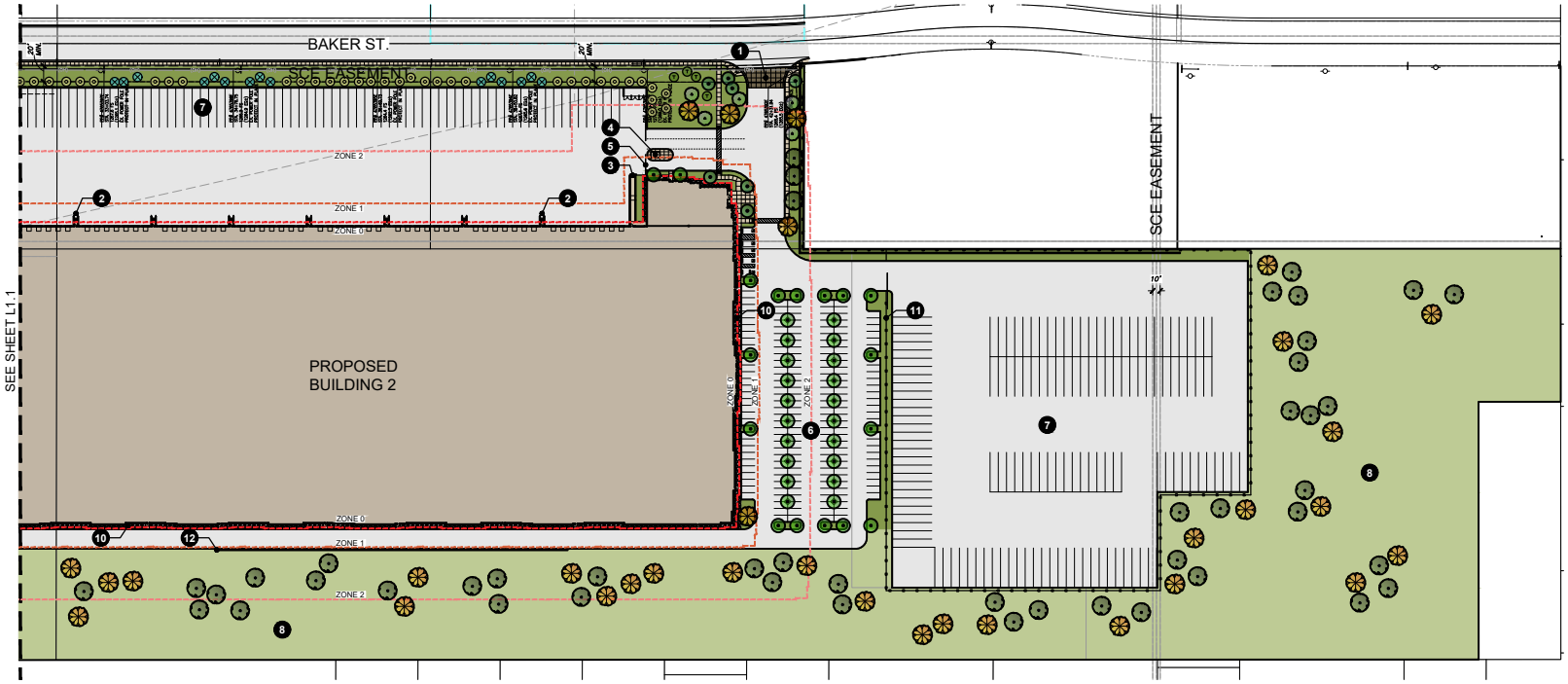
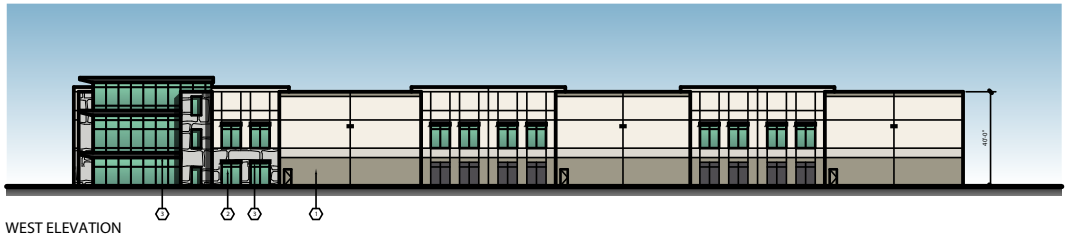


Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 10

Building Elevations

EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

FINISH SCHEDULE:

1. FIELD COLOR
SHERWIN WILLIAMS -
SW7102 WHITE FLOUR

2. LIGHT ACCENT COLOR
SHERWIN WILLIAMS -
SW9166 DRIFT OF MIST

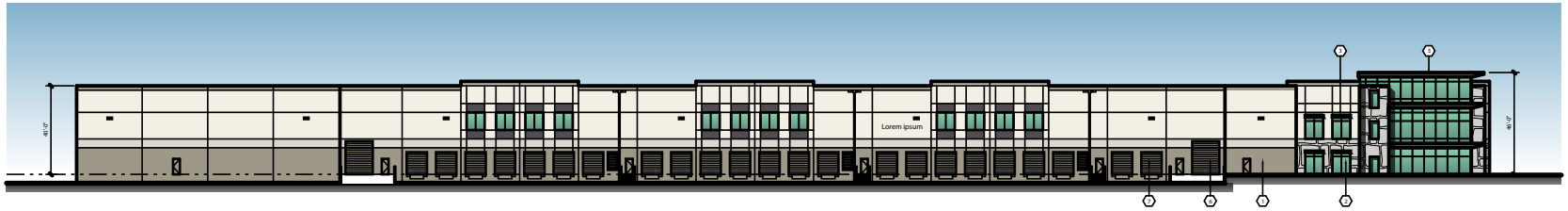
3. DARK ACCENT COLOR
SHERWIN WILLIAMS -
SW9126 HONED SOAPSTONE

4. DARK ACCENT COLOR
SHERWIN WILLIAMS -
SW9154 PERLE NOIR

5. FORMLINER COLOR
SHERWIN WILLIAMS -
SW/167 POLISHED CONCRETE
FITZGERALD FORMLINER -
17014 COLONIAL STONE FORMLINER

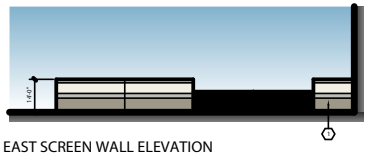
6. ALUMINUM CANOPY COLOR
ALUCOBOND - STEEL CITY SILVER MICA

7. GLASS - PRIMARY WINDOW
GREEN REFLECTIVE GLAZING
CHARCOAL GREY MULLIONS



SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



EAST SCREEN WALL ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

2.3 Offsite Improvement Areas

The proposed Project includes ROW improvements along Baker Street and Pierce Street.

Baker Street is currently an unimproved dirt road with a 60-foot-wide ROW. The Project would dedicate 4 feet on each side of Baker Street to the ultimate 68-foot ROW required by the City's Collector roadway designation per the General Plan Circulation Element. The Baker Street Collector roadway section consists of a 6-inch curb and gutter, a 5 feet wide sidewalk within a 10-foot parkway and 22 feet of pavement from the centerline to the lip of gutter on each side of the street.

Baker Street is proposed to be elevated an average of 5 feet above its existing elevations to support drainage conveyance and flood protection within the public ROW. The northeast parkway of Baker Street would slope downward from the proposed 5-foot-wide sidewalk to drain towards the northerly parcels.

Existing Pierce Street varies in ROW width along the Project's frontage. The ultimate ROW for Pierce Street is 60 feet. The ultimate street section would include a 6-inch curb, standard gutter, 5-foot-wide sidewalk within an overall 10-foot parkway and 18 feet of pavement from the centerline to the lip-of-gutter on each side of the street. Pierce Street would also be improved southwest past the Project frontage to connect to Hoff Avenue to provide a second means of emergency access. This section of Pierce Street is proposed to be paved within the existing ROW, creating a 24-foot-wide roadway.

As part of the proposed Project, Baker Street would be extended to connect to Nichols Road. The Project would need to obtain right of way from the adjacent property owner to implement the improvement. Additionally, a permanent lift station is proposed to replace the temporary lift station at the intersection of Pierce Street and Nichols Road. The proposed Project is accounted for in the lift station's Preliminary Design Report approved by the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District.

2.4 Habitat Restoration Area

As shown in Figure 7, *Disturbance Areas*, opposite the Industrial Development Area, on the other side of Baker Street, is 33.65 acres of the Project site that is proposed for habitat restoration activities. This area would be designated for future conservation efforts.

2.5 Construction/Improvements Buffer

The Construction/Improvements Buffer (Construction Buffer) would be located within the Project area between the Baker Street ROW improvements and the Habitat Restoration Area. The Construction Buffer is included as part of the Project to ensure that any disturbance adjacent to the ROW improvements would not encroach onto the Habitat Restoration Area. This Construction Buffer would be separate parcel from the Habitat Restoration Area.

2.6 Discretionary Approvals, Permits, and Studies

The following discretionary approval, permits, and studies are anticipated to be necessary for implementation of the proposed Project:

City of Lake Elsinore

- Design Review
    - The Project is required to undergo a Design Review "to ensure that new development occurs in a manner which enhances the character and quality of surrounding properties and that the scale, special relationship and architectural treatment of structures including materials, colors, and design, visually contribute to the area and environment in which they are located." The Planning Commission would be the approving authority for the Design Review.
- Conditional Use Permits
    - The proposed use of the Project is an allowable use in the M-2 zone. However, projects located within 300 feet of a residential district require a Conditional Use Permit. Therefore, as the Project is within 300 feet of a residential district, the Project would seek the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.
    - The proposed buildings would exceed the 45-foot maximum building height allowance as Building 1 would be a maximum of 46 feet and Building 2 would be a maximum of 50 feet. Therefore, the Project would seek the approval of a Conditional Use Permit to exceed the M-2 height standard.
- Tentative Parcel Map
    - The Project includes a Tentative Parcel Map to merge the 10 parcels that are proposed for industrial development into 2 separate parcels. Building 1 and Building 2 would each be located on a single parcel.
- Zone Change
    - The onsite development portion of the Project has a General Plan land use designation of Limited Industrial and is zoned as M-1 and M-2. The Project would amend the zoning of the M-1 portion of the site to be M-2 to have consistent zoning within the development area.
- Environmental Impact Report
    - As part of the Project, an Environmental Impact Report would be required. The Project's potential impacts on aesthetics would be analyzed under CEQA, as described under Section 7 below.

3 REGULATORY SETTING

3.1 Caltrans State Scenic Highway

The goal of the California Scenic Highway Program is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California. California contains several distinct landscape regions and the merits of a particular landscape are considered within the context of its own region. Regardless of landscape region, the highway should traverse an area of outstanding scenic quality, containing striking views, flora, geology, or other unique natural attributes. Therefore, Caltrans evaluates the merits of a nominated highway on how much of the natural landscape a traveler sees and the extent to which visual intrusions impact the "scenic corridor." Visual intrusions may be natural or constructed elements, viewed from the highway, that adversely affect the scenic quality of a corridor (California Department of Transportation, n.d.).

State highways nominated for scenic designation must first be on the statutory list of highways eligible for scenic designation in the State Scenic Highway System. These highways are identified in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. Once a state route is in Streets and Highways Code Section 263, it may be nominated for official designation by the local governing body with jurisdiction over the lands adjacent to the proposed scenic highway.

3.2 Lake Elsinore General Plan

The City's current General Plan was adopted with certification of a Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH Number 2005121019) on December 13, 2011, through adoption of Resolution Number 2011-070. Since 2011, the City has undergone efforts to study market conditions and update their General Plan to address the dramatic changes in development conditions within and surrounding the city over the past decade. At the time that this document was drafted, the City had not yet published an updated draft of the General Plan Update.

The General Plan includes text describing the City's Goals and Policies associated with each General Plan Element and illustrations mapping the generalized locations of future land uses. Goals are general statements outlining the City's values or intent for particular topics and are open-ended visionary expressions. Policies are statements that help guide the City's actions. State Law mandates that nine elements be addressed in the General Plan: land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, noise, safety, environmental justice, and air quality. Identified optional elements include a healthy community element.

The 2011 General Plan Chapter 4, *Resource Protection and Preservation*, includes information regarding the city's scenic resources and goals and policies related to preservation of locally and regionally important aesthetic features. The City and the Sphere of Influence (SOI) surrounding Lake Elsinore are located in a valley with panoramic views of the Santa Ana Mountains to the southwest, rolling hills to the east, and a valley that sweeps to the north and south (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011a, pp. 4-71). The visual character of the area is dominated by Lake Elsinore, which is accentuated by the area's topography and visible from several areas within the City. Other scenic resources include the Cleveland National Forest, rugged hills, mountains, ridgelines, rocky outcroppings, streams, vacant lands with native vegetation, buildings of historical and cultural significance, parks, and trails. The General Plan states that as the City continues to urbanize, it

will be important to maintain a healthy balance between the natural and built environment. The General Plan states that the goals and policies are intended to protect and enhance the area's rich array of aesthetic resources. Relevant policies contained in the Resource Protection and Preservation Element that relate to aesthetics are identified below.

Policy 3.3: Development on steep slopes in public or private property shall require contour grading.

Policy 11.1: For new developments and redevelopment, encourage the maintenance and incorporation of existing mature trees and other substantial vegetation on the site, whether naturally-occurring or planted, into the landscape design.

Policy 12.1: Encourage development designs and concepts that provide public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines through proper siting, building design, and landscape design.

Policy 13.2: Discourage extractive uses or development that entails excessive light and glare visible from private and public viewpoints.

Policy 13.3: Require grading plans for any hillside development to include specifications for revegetation and new planting to minimize hillside scarring.

The Community Form Element of the General Plan contains the goals and policies focusing on (among other topics) urban design and community character. Relevant policies contained in the Community Form Element that relate to aesthetics are identified below.

Policy 1.1: Promote innovative site design, and encourage the preservation of unique natural features, such as steep slopes, watercourses, canyons, ridgelines, rock formations, and open space with recreational opportunities.

Policy 3.2: Encourage new commercial and/or industrial developments incorporate buffers which minimize the impacts of noise, light, visibility, or activity and vehicular traffic on residential uses and MSHCP conservation areas.

3.3 Lake Elsinore City Council Policy No. 400-16 "Good Neighbor Policy"

This policy provides a framework for larger-scale warehousing, logistics and distribution projects to be designed and operated in order to mitigate negative impacts on sensitive receptors and the environment and to preserve and advance the City Council's vision as set forth in the City's General Plan and Dream Extreme 2040 Plan. This policy is meant to apply Best Management Practices ("BMPs") to help minimize potential impacts to sensitive receptors and will be used in addition to applicable requirements of the City's Zoning Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This policy does not replace the need for preparation of appropriate project specific environmental review and application of any necessary mitigation measures. This policy provides a series of development and operational criteria that can be implemented to supplement project-level mitigation measures in order to adequately mitigate impacts related to warehousing, logistics and distribution land uses on sensitive receptors.

3.4 Lake Elsinore Municipal Code

The City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Section 17.112 includes development standards for nonresidential development within the City. Section 17.140, M-2 General Manufacturing District, contains development standards specific to development proposed within the M-2 zone. Development standards provide requirements related to lighting, landscaping, fencing and walls, parking, and other design principles. Buildings within the M-2 zone are limited to 45 feet and an average of 20-foot setbacks (with 15 feet as the minimum).

Section 117.112.040, *Lighting*, specifies that all outdoor lighting fixtures in excess of 60 watts shall be oriented and shielded to prevent direct illumination above the horizontal plane passing through the luminaire and prevent any glare or direct illumination on adjacent properties or streets. Due to the City's proximity to the Mount Palomar Observatory, the use of low-pressure sodium lighting shall be encouraged.

Further, per Section 17.112.110, *Design*, the City of Lake Elsinore is primarily a rural-residential community. Accordingly, commercial and industrial development should be designed to reflect the residential nature and character of the City and to recognize and maintain the development patterns, landscape features, materials and forms that are fundamental to the City's environmental setting. A visitor to the City should not sense a great distinction between land use zones but rather should find such similar attributes as well-landscaped yard areas and attractive and visually interesting buildings providing a harmonious transition between districts.

3.5 Urbanized Area

For an incorporated city, Public Resources Code Section 21071(a) defines an "urbanized area" as being an incorporated city that meets one of the following criteria:

1. Has a population of at least 100,000 persons.
2. Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.

The Project site is located within the City of Lake Elsinore, an incorporated city in Riverside County. According to the United States Census Bureau, the City of Lake Elsinore was estimated to have a population of 73,017 in 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023). The adjacent City of Murrieta had an approximate population of 111,878 persons in 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Therefore, based on criteria (2), the Project is located within an urbanized area as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21071(a).

4 METHODOLOGY

This assessment describes the existing visual setting and aesthetic character of the Project site and vicinity and evaluates the potential for the Project to impact scenic vistas, visual character and quality, and light and glare. This analysis focuses on changes in views from public viewpoints and provides an assessment of whether aesthetic changes from implementation of the Project would result in substantially degraded aesthetic conditions.

The analysis in this section is based, in part, on the following documents and resources:

- City of Lake Elsinore General Plan, 2011
- City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code
- Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2015
- Manual 8431 - Visual Resource Contrast Rating, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1986
- Scenic Highway Guidelines, California Department of Transportation, 2012
- Manual 8431 - Visual Resource Contrast Rating, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1986
- City of Lake Elsinore General Plan, 2011
- City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code

5 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The visual existing setting is characterized by several factors that make up the visual quality of a landscape. These terms have specific meanings and provide a framework for the visual assessment that follows.

Aesthetic resources include a combination of numerous elements, such as landforms, vegetation, water features, urban design, and/or architecture, that provide an overall visual impression that is pleasing to, or valued by, its observers. Factors important in describing the aesthetic resources of an area include visual character, scenic resources, and scenic vistas. These factors together not only describe the intrinsic aesthetic appeal of an area, but also communicate the value placed upon a landscape or scene by its observers.

Scenic resources are visually significant hillsides, ridges, water bodies, and buildings that are critical in shaping the visual character and scenic identity of the area and surrounding region.

Scenic vistas are defined as panoramic views of important visual features, as seen from public viewing areas. This definition combines visual quality with information about view exposure to describe the level of interest or concern that viewers may have for the quality of a particular view or visual setting.

Visual character broadly describes the unique combination of aesthetic elements and scenic resources that characterize a particular area. The quality of an area's visual character can be qualitatively assessed considering the overall visual impression or attractiveness created by the particular landscape characteristics. In urban settings, these characteristics largely include land use type and density, urban landscaping and design, architecture, topography, and background setting.

5.1 Existing Conditions

Project Vicinity

The Project site is located in the northwestern portion of the City in a developing area near I-15 and the Nichols Road interchange. The Lake Elsinore Outlet Mall is located to the east and northeast of the site along the I-15 roadway. Topographically diverse areas of rolling hills with various regional power lines are located to the northwest, west, south, and southeast of the Project site; and a riparian habitat area is located to the northeast and east of the site. These features limit views of the site from offsite locations. The undeveloped areas surrounding the site contain paved and dirt roads, infrastructure including cell towers and a water storage tank. The developed areas located farther south, southwest, and northwest (past the undeveloped areas) consist of single-family residential tracts that are under construction and lower density rural residential areas. Long distance background views of the mountains can be seen from various public roadway locations in the Project vicinity.

Project Site

The Project site encompasses 24 parcels totaling approximately 123.33 acres. The site has a sloping topography from the southwest portion of the site to the northeast portion of the site, associated with the hills south of the site.

The Project site consists of vacant land formerly utilized for agriculture. The area currently contains naturally occurring vegetation which consists of low-lying shrubs and grasses. Remnants of a single-family residence

(i.e., demolition debris) are within the parcel addressed as former 17111 Baker Street (EnviroApplications, Inc., 2023). Additionally, portions of chain-link fence are within the former 17377 Baker Street parcel. There are also several dirt trails located throughout the site that connect to and continue through the adjacent parcels. Unpaved dirt roads transect the Project site north of parcel 378-020-037 and south of parcel 378-020-028. Steel power poles are located along the Project frontage on Baker Street. There are also existing power poles that run southwest to northeast through the site as well.

Vacant and undeveloped land bound the Project site, except for rural residential properties adjacent to parcel 378-020-016 (to the northwest), as well as parcels 378-020-037 and 378-020-048 (to the southeast) (see Figure 3, *Aerials*)

5.2 Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas are panoramic views of important visual features, as seen from public viewing areas. Scenic resources within and surrounding the City include the lake, portions of the Cleveland National Forest, rugged hillside land, distant mountains and ridgelines, rocky outcroppings, streams, vacant land with native vegetation, parkland, and buildings of historical and cultural significance such as the cultural center, bathhouse, and military academy (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, pp. 3.3-2). Further, designated scenic vistas within the City of Lake Elsinore and surrounding Sphere of Influence (SOI) include Lake Elsinore, urban areas surrounding the lake, and the rugged vacant hills in the northern and eastern portion of the City (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, pp. 3.3-2).

The Project site is located in the northwestern portion of the City of Lake Elsinore, which has limited views of surrounding scenic resources and natural features, including the Santa Ana Mountains to the south as well as hillside to the north. The Project site does not currently provide public views of surrounding scenic resources. Adjacent roadways provide views of mountains and hillsides to motorists. Long distance background views of the surrounding mountains to the north and hills to the south are intermittently available from public vantage points along Baker Street and I-15 traveling west and east, and along Nichols Road traveling north and south. Views of surrounding mountains and hillsides are partially obstructed by surrounding commercial and residential development, utility lines, trees, and the natural uneven topography of the area.

The visual character of the City is dominated by Lake Elsinore, which is the largest natural lake in Southern California (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011a, pp. 4-73). Due to the importance of the lake, the City prepared a map as part of their General Plan illustrating the portions of the city where the viewshed potentially contains views of Lake Elsinore based on the topography at the time of preparation of the General Plan. The Project site was identified as outside of the Lake Elsinore viewshed. As shown on the topographical map, Figure 12, *Lake Elsinore Topography*, Lake Elsinore is not visible from the Project site due to obstruction of the hills to the southeast of the Project site. Areas further north and east of the Project site are identified as potentially containing views of the lake.

5.3 Scenic Highways

The Project site is nearby two eligible State Scenic Highways, SR-74 and I-15 (California Department of Transportation, 2024). SR-74 is located approximately 2,600 feet east of the site and I-15 is located approximately 650 feet northeast of the site. However, neither I-15 nor SR 74 have been formally

nominated for designation by the County or City for State Scenic Highway status. No roadways in the City of Lake Elsinore have been formally designated as scenic at the time of preparation of this report.

5.4 Visual Character and Quality

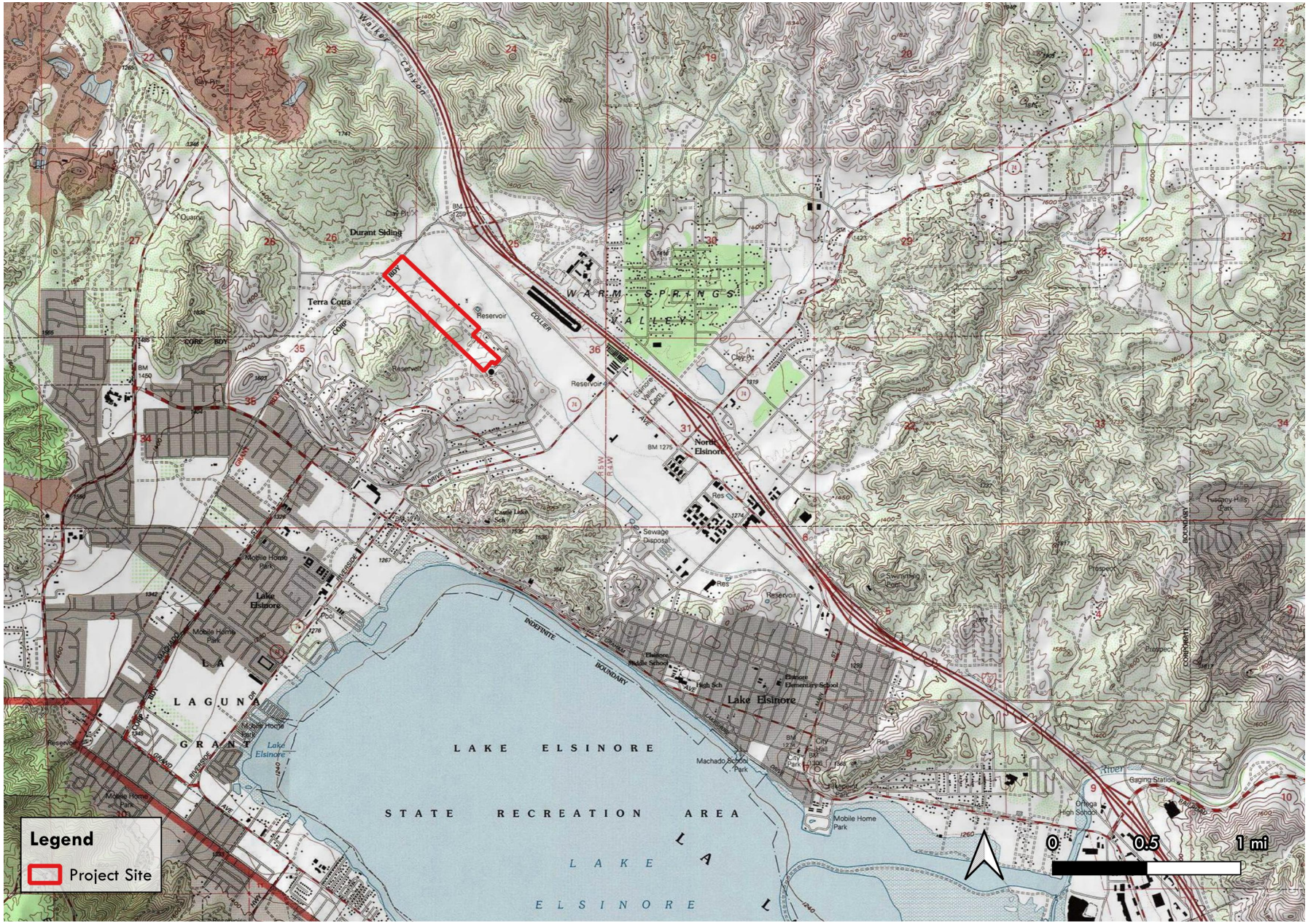
The Project site is located within a low-lying area within a topographically diverse area. The site is undeveloped and vegetated with grasses and shrubs. Surrounding land uses are disturbed and developed with utilities, rural residential, construction of new residential tracts, and commercial development along the I-15 freeway corridor. The topography varies on the site from slightly hilly to flat, sloping generally from southwest to northeast. Elevations at the Project site range from approximately 1,400 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) at the southwestern boundary of Project site to 1,250 feet AMSL at the northeastern limits of the proposed restoration area (Glenn Lukos Associates, Inc., 2023). Portions of the site contain semi-disturbed views of the surrounding foothills and mountain ridgelines. Due to the topography changes and rolling hills views of the site are limited from some of the surrounding areas.

5.5 Light and Glare

The Project site is undeveloped and does not include any sources of nighttime lighting. However, sources of nighttime lighting in the vicinity of the site includes illumination from vehicle headlights, streetlights offsite exterior industrial/commercial lighting, and interior illumination passing through windows. Sensitive receptors relative to lighting and glare include motorists and passing by the Project site and adjacent residents.

Glare can emanate from many different sources, some of which include direct sunlight, sunlight reflecting from cars or buildings, and bright outdoor or indoor lighting. Glare in the Project vicinity is generated by building and vehicle windows reflecting light. However, there are no substantial buildings or structures near the Project site that presently generate substantial glare since most of the buildings are limited to one-story to two-story structures that are constructed of non-reflective materials and are not surfaced with a substantial number of windows adjacent to one another that would create a large reflective area.

Lake Elsinore Topography



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 12

6 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Visual impacts are simply changes to the environment (measured by the compatibility of the impact) or to viewers (measured by sensitivity to the impacts). Together, the compatibility of the impact and the sensitivity of the impact yield the degree of the impact to visual quality (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2015).

- Compatibility of the Impact: Defined as the ability of environment to absorb the proposed project as a result of the project and the environment having compatible visual characters. The proposed project can be considered compatible or incompatible. By itself, compatibility of the impact should not be confused or conflated with the value of the impact.
- Sensitivity to the Impact: Defined by the ability of viewers to see and care about a project's impacts. The sensitivity to impact is based on viewer sensitivity to changes in the visual character of visual resources. Viewers are either sensitive or insensitive to impacts. By itself, the sensitivity of the impact should not be confused or conflated with the value of the impact.
- Degree of the Impact: Defined as either a beneficial, adverse, or neutral change to visual quality. A proposed project may benefit visual quality by either enhancing visual resources or by creating better views of those resources and improving the experience of visual quality by viewers. Similarly, it may adversely affect visual quality by degrading visual resources or obstructing or altering desired views.

The following analysis assesses potential visual impact as determined through evaluation of photo-simulations through use of the Project CAAD model and the visual change that would occur as a result of the proposed Project. Visual analysis is provided for the six key views selected as representative of the most prominent and sensitive views of the Project site.

6.1 Key Views

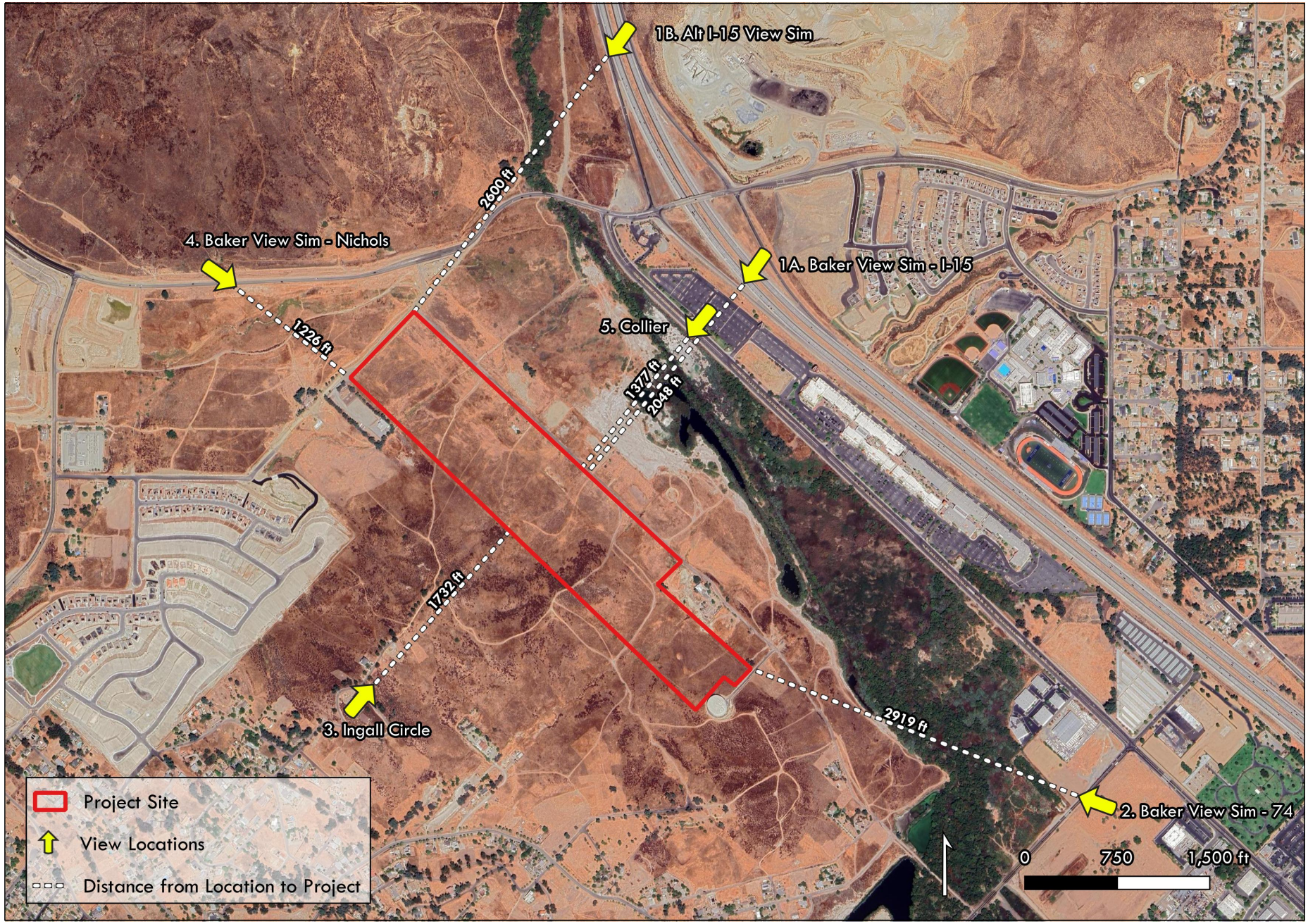
Several key views were selected to represent the visual change of the Project site from surrounding public viewpoints from implementation of the proposed development. The key views that were selected are shown in Figure 13, *Key Views*. In addition, several views were considered but eliminated from further analysis as described below.

Adjacent Residential Lots: Future residential development is currently under construction approximately 1,100 feet southwest of the site near Nichols Road and Terra Cotta. However, since the residential use is considered private, and aesthetic impacts on future residential uses is not analyzed under CEQA, this view was eliminated.

Outlets at Lake Elsinore: The Outlets at Lake Elsinore, a commercial center, is approximately 1,500 feet to the northeast of the Project site. This site is also considered private and aesthetic impacts on private property are not considered under CEQA. Thus, this view was eliminated. However, the views from the outlets would be the same, but with increased distance, as the views from Collier Avenue, which are evaluated below. Thus, this view was eliminated.

Baker Street: While Baker Street is a publicly accessible dirt road, it is primarily a residential access point, with minimal traffic from one resident utilizing the section running along the northeast side of the proposed warehouse buildings. Although substantial topographic changes and the presence of buildings would be visible from this location, public visibility would be negligible, given the limited accessibility and use of the road. Thus, this view was eliminated.

Key Views



Baker Street Project
City of Lake Elsinore

Figure 10

Key View #1A – Interstate 15 (I-15)

This viewpoint of the Project site is located on I-15, south of Nichols Road and north of SR-74 facing the southwest. This portion of I-15 is currently designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway. The view is oriented southwest and is approximately 2,048 feet northeast from the Project site. The foreground view includes desert scrub and brush and the freeway ramp. The middle ground view includes treetops, power poles and powerlines, white fencing, a hill with a water tank, and limited views of tops of cars that are parked within a parking area directly southwest of the freeway ramp. The view of the parking area is mostly obstructed due to it being below the freeway grade and the surrounding tree cover. Long distance background views include the mountains, a graded hillside, and developed areas on hillsides amongst vegetation. The middle ground hill rises behind the tree cover to meet the long-distance background view of the mountains line in the distance. High powerlines and utility poles are also visible throughout the background. The view shows an area that is mostly undeveloped with the tops of some small structures visible from within the lower grade area and among the distant mountain views. A water tank is present near the top of the hill.

Figure 14: Key View #1A – I-15 Existing Conditions

Key View #1B – Interstate 15 (I-15)

This viewpoint of the Project site is from the Nichols Road exit ramp going southbound on the I-15. The view is approximately 2,600 feet to the northeast of the Project site, facing southwest towards the site. As previously mentioned, this portion of I-15 is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway. The immediate foreground of the viewshed includes the offramp striped asphalt and the gravel ROW. The grey gravel transitions to sparse brown and green brush and scrub as the landscape slants away from the elevated grade of the roadway. A large streetlight is erected on the side of the ramp. The ROW is bordered by a wire fence that is setback approximately 60 feet from the edge of the roadway. Behind the wire fence, the middle ground landscape views include rolling hills with a patch of dense deciduous tree cover to the west. The elevated Nichols Road alignment transects the background horizontally, visibly extending from the 1-15 ramp and then becoming hidden behind shrubs and trees as the view moves to the west. The top of a gas station is visible directly behind the elevated Nichols Road alignment. Straight, vertical utility poles line the Nichols Road, contrasting the organic shapes and textures of the hillside. The background views are of distant mountains and treetops.

Figure 15: Key View #1B – I-15 Existing Conditions

Key View #2 – State Route 74 (SR-74)

This view is from the northbound lane of SR 74, approximately 550 feet south of Collier Avenue. The view is oriented to face the Project site approximately 2,900 feet to the west. This portion of SR-74 is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway. The foreground of the view includes the striped asphalt of SR-74. The immediate roadway ROW is covered with gravel. Beyond the ROW, the ground is bare with sparse dried grasses and appears to have been recently graded. The view is diagonally transected by a chain link fence with dense green vegetation behind it. A cream-colored box-shaped industrial/warehouse building is visible on the right (directionally northwest of the viewpoint), which is partially obstructed by trees. Larger hills are visible in the long-distance background views, rising over the foreground. The hills are predominately visually obstructed by dense tree cover.

Figure 16: Key View #2 – SR-74 Existing Conditions

Key View #3 – Ingall Circle

This viewpoint is located on Ingall Circle, a local roadway that serves rural residential properties southwest of the Project site. The viewpoint is approximately 1,700 feet southwest of the Project site and represents the nearest and most unobstructed public vantage point within the residential community nearest to the Project site. The Project site is located behind the hillside that is slanting from the south to the north in this view. Vegetation of brown dried grasses, as well as several individual trees, frame the view. A portion of a driveway that extends from Ingall Circle to two single family residential lots is visible to the left (directionally northeast). Several cars are parked along the roadway and in an unseen driveway, predominantly obstructed by trees in the foreground of the view. A wooden deck protrudes from the hillside with an unpaved parking area that backs up to the deck where an RV is parked. A grey blue three-level single family residential home is on the hillside behind the trailer and foreground trees. A white fenced deck wraps around the second and third levels of the house. Beyond the hill, in the middle ground views, development (residential and nonresidential) is visible along the valley floor. Long-distance views of mountains line the backdrop of the viewshed.

Figure 17: Key View #3 – Ingall Circle Existing Conditions

Key View #4 – Nichols Road

This viewpoint is located on Nichols Road, approximately 1,250 feet east of Terra Cotta Road and 1,900 feet west of the Pierce Road intersection. The viewpoint is approximately 1,200 feet northwest of the Project site. This view point represents the highest exposure from Nichols Road to the Project site driving eastbound. This is because the legal posted speed of Nichols Road is 50 miles per hour (mph). Per FHWA guidelines, the viewshed of a motorist traveling 45 mph is approximately 65 degrees (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2015). The Project site begins about 70 degrees to the right of an eastbound motorist's viewpoint, based on the angle of Nichols Road. Beyond this point, the Project site would fall outside the motorist's peripheral viewshed, even though the motorist's proximity to the site becomes closer. Westbound motorists on Nichols Road would not have a significant view of the Project site, as the road angles away from the site, providing only an obtuse-angle or rearview perspective.

The foreground of the view includes striped asphalt of Nichols Road. Beyond the asphalt, the middle ground views include the Project site, trees, and a hillside that slopes from the right to the left (directionally west to east). The hill is covered in dried brown grasses and sparsely covered with a few green shrubs. The unseen Pierce Street is setback approximately 1,000 feet. A stand of trees can be seen that completely screen views of two single family residences. Utility poles and powerlines line an unseen dirt road to the right (directionally east). The large vertical utility poles and powerlines contrast the organic horizontal lines of dense tree coverage in the distance. Long-distance views include hills and mountains, and white, grey, and reflective materials of buildings that can be seen between areas of trees.

Figure 18: Key View #4 – Nichols Road Existing Conditions

Key View #5 – Collier Avenue

This viewpoint is located on Collier Avenue, approximately 1,100 feet southeast of the Nichols Road intersection. The viewpoint is approximately 1,377 feet northeast of the Project site. The majority of Collier Avenue contains vegetation along the roadway, which obstructs views to the Project site. This portion of Collier Avenue is adjacent to a clearing of vegetation where views to the Project site are the least obstructed. The foreground of the view includes striped asphalt of Collier Avenue, a concrete sidewalk, and a half wall that is painted with a light blue and dark blue mural which mimic the outline of the mountains in the background and compliment the blue sky. Tops of trees and shrubs rising from the unseen swale on the other side of the half wall can be seen extending a few feet higher than the wall. Beyond the half wall, the middle ground views include the Project site, trees, and a hill directly center of the view. The hill is prominent and draws the eye center and upward. The hill is covered in dried brown grasses and sparsely covered with a few green shrubs. A few smaller hills roll across the bottom of the primary hill. The background includes mountain ridgelines, which draws the eye horizontal from the top of the forefront hill. White, grey, and reflective materials of buildings can be seen to the right of the hill in the foothills of the distant mountains.

Figure 19: Key View #5 – Collier Avenue Existing Conditions

6.2 Viewer Sensitivity

Visual change of a landscape is understood through the experience of the viewer groups that interact with the viewshed of the landscape. It is understood that different types of viewers may place different importance on visual quality and have different sensitivities to visual change. To determine viewer sensitivity, evaluate three attributes for viewer exposure (proximity, extent or number of viewers, and duration) and three for viewer awareness (attention, focus, and protection) in the context of viewer's assumed preferences for natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence.

Table 6: Viewer Sensitivity Matrix

Viewer Type	Attributes	Visual Quality Preferences
Viewer Exposure	Proximity	Are some viewers closer than others to the impacts? How are impacts affected by distance zones? Which impacts are particularly visible?
	Extent	How many people, and who are affected by the impacts? Which viewer groups are the most affected and why? Are some viewer groups unaffected?
	Duration	How lengthy are the viewing periods? Does the length of time viewing the impact lessen or increase the visibility of the impact to a particular view group? Which viewer groups are affected by dynamic views? How are they affected?
Viewer Awareness	Attention	For which viewer groups are the views in this corridor routine? For which are they unique?
	Focus	Is there a particular visual resource that is an iconic focal point or are views more general?
	Preference	Is the view sensitive based on the viewers' expected visual quality preference?

Source: (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2015)

Motorists

Motorist viewer groups for the Project include motorists traveling along I-15, SR-74, Ingall Circle, Collier Avenue, Baker Street, and Nichols Road. Motoring travelers move at higher speeds in comparison to other modes of transportation. Groups of motorists within a vehicle are able to discuss what they see from the vehicle. By necessity, the driver of a motor vehicle focuses less on the view outside the vehicle. The driver's primary interest is in Project coherence, although landscape resources can be used for wayfinding. Good harmony between the natural landscape and a cohesive built environment can increase driver attentiveness (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2015).

Motorists can be further defined by their purpose for traveling or their mode of propulsion. Tourists are people who are traveling on a highway, primarily for enjoyment, usually to a pre-determined destination. These types of trips tend to be more adventuresome, cover longer distances, and take more time than commuting trips. Touring travelers frequently are traveling in groups with both a driver and passengers. Touring travelers are equally interested in Project coherence, cultural order, and natural harmony. I-15 and

SR-74 are eligible State Scenic Highways and are used by tourist motorists. This group of motorists engage in passive, dynamic views, but may be more focused and sensitive to changes in the surrounding landscape. This viewer group is considered to have **moderate sensitivity**.

Commuter motorists are regular travelers of the same route. The frequency of the travel may vary, but there tend to be peaks—such as morning and evening rush hours and holidays. Most commuting occurs as short trips in urban areas between home and work. These commutes tend to be by single drivers. Other types of commuting involve longer distances, travel through rural or even wilderness settings, and involve passengers as well as drivers. Such trips may include commuting to a favorite or frequent destination, such as a campground, cabin, sports arena, or relative's home. Such trips are considered to be commuting because as they are repeated, the trips tend to become routine and not new or novel. Commuters, like all travelers, are particularly interested in Project coherence. They are also interested in landscape as it relates to wayfinding. Commuter motorists with views of the Project site include motorists on I-15, SR-74, Ingall Circle, Pierce Street, Baker Street, Collier Avenue, and Nichols Road. This group likely makes up the majority of the viewer population of the Project site.

Specifically, the City of Lake Elsinore is served by two regional highways, I-15, running north to south, and SR-74, running east to west. Commuter motorists on these routes include truck drivers transporting interstate and regional goods, local residents and employee populations, and regional commuters travelling to and from the greater Los Angeles and the Inland Empire and San Diego County (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, pp. 3.4-2). Local roadways, including Collier Avenue, Baker Street, and Nichols Road, predominately serve nearby residents making home-based trips as well as some commercial-based trips generated from commercial uses along the freeway corridor. Ingall Circle serves a very small residential population in a limited rural residential community. These viewer groups are likely single passengers and have a primary focus on the road rather than the surrounding landscape. The views of these motorists and dynamic and passive with little interest in surroundings, except for wayfinding and navigation. This viewer group is considered to have **low sensitivity**.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Collier Road features Class II bike lanes and sidewalks, providing views of the Project site for both bicyclists and pedestrians. The Riverside County Transportation Commission supports alternative transportation options by offering free "park and ride" lots throughout the area, including locations at Ortega Market (15887 Grand Avenue), the Lake Elsinore Outlet Mall (at Collier Street and Nichols), and a public parking lot at Dexter Street and SR 74 (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011a). Bicyclists and pedestrians using these facilities are typically commuting to and from local commercial areas, residences, and the park and ride lot at the Outlet Mall. While these viewers may be more focused on reaching their destinations than on their surroundings, they have longer exposure to the environment compared to motorists. As a result, this group tends to be more sensitive to visual changes. Therefore, this viewer group is considered to have **high sensitivity**.

Surrounding Land Uses

"Neighbors" within surrounding land uses are viewers who occupy land adjacent or visible to the proposed Project. Neighbors for purposes of this analysis can be defined by land-use, including: retail, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and civic neighbors. As mentioned previously, CEQA only considers a

Project's visual impacts on **public views,** and therefore, visual impacts to privately-owned residential properties are not considered pursuant to CEQA.

Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point. As described under Section 6.1, *Key Views*, the neighboring properties, including residential uses and the Outlets at Lake Elsinore shopping center are considered private property. The Project does not contain any publicly-available land uses adjacent or within the vicinity of the Project site. Therefore, the Project does not contain any "neighbors" with public views of the Project site, other than the motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians that utilize surrounding roadways described above. Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.

6.3 Visual Contrast

The construction and operation of the Project would result in the contrast experienced by viewer groups in the surrounding areas. For purposes of this report, the magnitude of contrast ranges from "None" to "High" and is criteria is derived from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Visual Resource Contrast Rating system, as outlined in BLM Manual H-8431 (U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1986). While the BLM has no jurisdiction over the Project, BLM visual resource assessment guidance has been generally accepted throughout the industry and by the City of Lake Elsinore as an appropriate methodology for determining the severity of visual changes associated with the proposed Project.

The basic philosophy underlying BLM's methodology is to measure the degree to which an activity affects the visual quality of a landscape depends on the visual contrast created between a project and the existing landscape. The contrast can be measured by comparing the project features with the major features in the existing landscape. The basic design elements of form, line, color, and texture are used to make this comparison and to describe the visual contrast created by the project. This assessment process provides a means for determining visual impacts and for identifying measures to mitigate these impacts. The level of contrast between the project and the existing landscape was evaluated from the selected Key Views. This level of contrast determines the degree to which the project would affect the intrinsic visual character and, in turn, the scenic quality of the landscape.

Table 7: Criteria for Degree of Contrast

Degree of Contrast	Criteria
None	The element contrast is not visible or perceived.
Weak	The element contrast can be seen but does not attract attention.
Moderate	The element contrast begins to attract attention and begins to dominate the characteristic landscape.
Strong	The element contrast demands attention, cannot be overlooked, and is dominant in the landscape.

Source: (U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1986)

Key View #1A – Interstate 15 (I-15)

As previously mentioned, I-15 is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway; therefore, an analysis of potential view impacts from I-15 is included. The proposed buildings are located within middle ground views and sit at a lower grade than the viewpoint. Views of the proposed Project buildings' east elevations are largely obstructed by the natural grade differential and existing ornamental trees of the commercial center in the midground. Portions of Building 1 are visible through breaks in tree coverage, while only a portion of Building 2's roofline is visible within the view.

The building's long horizontal roofline parallels the lines of the roadway and fencing in the foreground while simultaneously contrasting the organic lines of the hill and mountains in background. Contrast between the building's architecture and the natural form of the background is further accentuated by the building's geometrically-uniform long rectangular windows. The building's smooth bright cream and grey exterior is pronounced against the darker brown and green earth tones within the backdrop and foreground. The smooth texture of the building façade is visibly different from the surrounding environment, which is marked by the rough texture of the soil and scrub in the foreground, trees and hillside in the midground, and mountains in the background. The fence, power poles, and roadway intersects the landscape, similarly, providing a contrast in color and texture to the surrounding natural environment. The proposed buildings are relatively small in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features, which generally dominate the viewshed. The development adds new visual interest of urban development to the landscape but is generally consistent with the quality of the view, as the view contains foreground views of the freeway on-ramp, fencing, and power poles; and distant views of existing buildings in the background, signage for the neighboring commercial center, and utility lines and parking structures supporting surrounding development. Although not visible from this view, the proposed structures would be similar to the Lake Elsinore outlet buildings that are long, linear, beige and khaki that are adjacent to I-15 and immediately south of this view. However, the proposed Project buildings would be set further back and would be partially screened from view as shown in Figure 20.

Level of contrast would be moderate and consistent with the level of contrast of other development near the site.

Figure 20: Key View #1A – I-15 With Project

Key View #1B – Interstate 15 (I-15)

As previously mentioned, I-15 is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway; therefore, an analysis of potential view impacts from I-15 is included. The proposed buildings is within middle ground views and sit at a slightly elevated grade than this viewpoint from the I-15. Views of the proposed Building 2's east elevations are predominately unobstructed and visible from the roadway, while Building 1 is completely obstructed by dense tree cover to the north and visual limitation of the viewshed. Several ornamental and native trees provide visual screening, breaking up the long eastern building façade.

The building's long rectangular shape draws the viewer's eye on a diagonal towards a central focal point where the roadway and horizon merge. The grade of the building falls within alignment of the existing parking lot and gas station on a raised pad with vegetated slope. The straight symmetrical lines of the building structure contrast the rugged lines of the hilly and mountainous landscape but accent the straight white lines of the striped roadway. Contrast between the building's architecture and the natural form of the background is further accentuated by the building's geometrically-uniform long rectangular windows. The building's smooth cream and grey exterior is pronounced against the darker brown and green earth tones within the backdrop and foreground. The smooth texture of the building façade is visibly different from the surrounding environment, which is marked by the rough texture of the soil and scrub in the foreground, trees and hillside in the midground, and mountains in the background. The roadway intersects the landscape, similarly, providing a contrast in color and texture to the surrounding natural environment. Due to the setback from the I-15 and the height of the hills and mountains in the background, the proposed building is relatively small in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features and roadway, which generally dominate the viewshed. Although the Project would increase views of urban development to the landscape, the Project would be generally consistent with the quality of the view, as the view contains street lighting, fencing, a gas station, a water tank on the hillside, and utility lines and parking structures supporting surrounding development. However, because views of the Project buildings would contrast with the predominant views that are of trees, hills, and mountains, the level of contrast would be moderate.

Level of contrast would be moderate, which is consistent with views within the City from southbound I-15.

Figure 21: Key View #1B – I-15 With Project

Key View #2 – State Route 74 (SR 74)

As previously mentioned, SR-74 is designated as an eligible State Scenic Highway; therefore, an analysis of potential view impacts from SR-74 is included. The Project site is located approximately 2,900 feet to the west of SR-74. Views of the site are completely obstructed by dense tree coverage between the viewpoint and proposed buildings. The yellow outline shows the scaled model of the Project buildings to identify the location and scale relative to the viewer traveling along SR-74. As the buildings would not be viable no contrast in views would occur.

Level of contrast would be none.

Figure 22: Key View #2 – SR 74 With Project

Key View #3 – Ingall Circle

The Project is almost completely obstructed by the hill's topography. The dramatic grade differential between the hilltop viewpoint at the nearest and most unobstructed public vantage point within the residential community and underlying valley where the buildings are proposed greatly diminish visibility of the Project site. The yellow outline shows the scaled model of the Project buildings to identify the location and scale in relative to the view. A very small southern portion of Building 2's roof can be seen in the middle ground views behind the hill. The Project building generally blends in with the valley floor amongst other developments and is barely perceptible compared to the overall viewshed, which is dominated by the sprawling valley and long distance mountain views.

As the Project would be minimally visible and blends into the existing viewshed, the level of contrast would be weak.

Figure 23: Key View #3 – Ingall Circle With Project

Key View #4 – Nichols Road

The proposed buildings would sit at a slightly elevated grade and 1,200 feet back from the roadway. The view is oriented to directly face the northern end of Building 1. The view of Building 1 is predominately unobstructed and visible from the roadway. Building 2 is mostly unseen behind Building 1 with the exception of a small portion of the building's western façade and roof. Green and pink ornamental shrubs that are part of the proposed landscaping line the building, providing a buffer between the building and surrounding natural grasses and shrubs.

The building's rectangular shape offers a stark contrast to the visual frame, which does not contain any development surrounding the Project site except for two small rural residences that are screened by trees to the west of the building. Views of the undeveloped hillside grassland under the existing setting are blocked by the proposed industrial building that would become a focal point. However, due to the setback from the roadway and the height of the hills and mountains in the background, the proposed building would be moderate in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features that would continue to generally dominate the viewshed.

The Project would result in new views of urban development to the landscape. The straight symmetrical lines of the building structure would contrast with the rugged lines of the hilly and mountainous landscape but accent the straight white and yellow lines of the striped roadway. Contrast between the building's architecture and natural form of the background is further accentuated by the building's geometrically-uniform long rectangular windows. The building's smooth cream and grey exterior is pronounced against the darker brown and green earth tones within the backdrop and foreground. The smooth texture of the building façade is visibly different from the surrounding environment, which is marked by the rough texture of grasses and scrub in the foreground, trees and hillside in the midground, and mountains in the background. The roadway runs at a parallel skew to the landscape, similarly, providing a contrast in color and texture to the surrounding natural environment as the building. The proposed building is relatively small in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features and roadway, which generally dominate the viewshed, but much larger than the two rural single-family residences to the west. This provides a contrast in the overall character of the view. Distant development is visible within the hillside of the mountain side of the background and utility poles can be seen traversing the horizon of the view. However, these features are located in long-distance background views and are minimally intrusive, causing a visual disconnect between the developed site, surrounding natural hillside, and distant development.

The elevation of Nichols Road is approximately 1,310 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The existing grade of the Project site varies across the two proposed building areas. For Building 1, the existing elevation ranges from 1,286 feet to 1,265 feet amsl, with an average elevation of 1,276 feet amsl. After the proposed grading and building construction, the ground elevation for Building 1 would range from 1,283.1 feet to 1,280 feet amsl. Thus, the elevation of Building 1 would be between 26.9 and 30 feet lower than Nichols Road, which would reduce the visual height and mass of the building from Nichols.

Likewise, for Building 2, the existing grade ranges from 1,381 feet to 1,262 feet amsl, with an average elevation of 1,322 feet amsl. The proposed grade for Building 2 is a consistent elevation of 1,285.4 feet amsl, which would be 24.6 feet lower than Nichols Road. Therefore, under proposed Project conditions, the building pads would be below Nichols Road that would result in a visual reduction in height and mass of the building structure, and be visually set within the surrounding topography, as shown in Figure 24.

Due to the Project's level of change to the middle ground views, the level of contrast would be strong.

Figure 24 – Key View #4 – Nichols Road With Project

Key View #5 – Collier Avenue

The proposed buildings would sit at a slightly elevated grade compared to Collier Avenue. Building 1 would be 1,283.1 feet to 1,280 feet amsl and Building 2 would be 1,285.4 feet amsl compared to Collier Avenue's elevation of 1,268 amsl. Building 1 would be 15.1 feet higher than Collier Avenue and Building 2 would be 17.4 feet higher than Collier Avenue. However, the proposed buildings would be 1,377 feet from Collier Avenue and building height would be slightly reduced in scale due to the large setback distance. The view is oriented to directly face the northeastern facade of Buildings 1 and 2. The view of Building 1 is predominately obstructed by vegetation along Collier Avenue. Building 2 is predominately visible with a few minor obstructions from the tops of trees and shrubs adjacent to Collier Avenue.

Views of the undeveloped hillside under the existing setting are obstructed by the proposed warehouse buildings that would become a focal point. However, due to the setback from the roadway, the proposed buildings would be minimal in scale compared to the hill in the backdrop that would continue to rise above the building roofline and generally dominate the viewshed. The mountain ridgelines in the background would remain unobstructed by the proposed buildings.

The Project would result in new views of urban development to the landscape. The building's long rectangular shape draws the eye horizontal, mimicking the lines of the half wall in the foreground and mountains in the background. The straight symmetrical lines of the building structure would complement the horizontal directionality of the mountains and half wall. The straight geometrical lines of the building roofline and windows would contrast with the rugged lines of the hilly and mountainous landscape but accent the straight line of the half wall and roadway. Contrast between the building's architecture and natural form of the background is accentuated by the building's geometrically-uniform long rectangular windows. The building's smooth cream and grey exterior is pronounced against the darker brown and green earth tones within the backdrop and foreground. The smooth texture of the building façade is visibly different from the surrounding environment, which is marked by the rough texture of grasses and scrub in the foreground, trees and hillside in the midground, and mountains in the background. Distant development is visible within the hillside of the in the background and utility poles can be seen traversing the horizon of the view. However, these features are in long-distance background views and are minimally intrusive, and do not cause a visual disconnect between the developed site, surrounding natural hillside, and distant development.

Due to the Project's level of change to the middle ground views, the level of contrast would be strong.

Figure 25 – Key View #5 – Collier Avenue With Project

6.4 Visual Impacts Summary

Table 8, below, provides a summary of visual impact as a result of the proposed Project. Visual impact is determined by viewer sensitivity and visual contrast.

Public views of the Project by motorists range in sensitivity from low to moderate, and views of the Project by pedestrians and bicyclists sensitivity would be high. The Project would result in visual contrast that ranges from none to strong, dependent on the viewpoint. Views from I-15 would result in an overall impact of moderate due to a combination of low and moderate viewer sensitivity (a combination of commuter and tourist motorists) with an observable moderate visual contrast. Since views of the Project site are completely obstructed from SR-74, the Project would result in no impact. Views from Ingall Circle are mostly obstructed by the natural topography and viewers would be a limited number of residential and commuter motorists; therefore, the overall visual impact from Ingall Circle would be considered low. The views from Collier Avenue and Nichols Road would experience the greatest visual contrast as a result of the Project, qualifying as "strong." However, motorists travelling along Nichols Road and Collier Avenue would be predominantly residential and commuter motorists and viewer sensitivity would be low. Therefore, overall visual impact to viewers on Nichols Road and Collier Avenue would be moderate. Conversely, bicyclists and pedestrians traveling on Collier Avenue would have high exposure to strong visual contrast, qualifying the visual impact as high.

Table 8: Visual Summary Impact by Key View

Visual Change	Viewer Sensitivity	Visual Contrast	Impact
Key View #1A – Interstate 15 (I-15)	Low/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Key View #1B – Interstate 15 (I-15)	Low/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Key View #2 – State Route 74 (SR-74)	Low/Moderate	None	None
Key View #3 – Ingall Circle	Low	Weak	Low
Key View #4 – Nichols Road	Low	Strong	Moderate
Key View #5 – Collier Avenue	Low/High	Strong	High

7 CEQA ANALYSIS

Appendix G of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines indicates that a project could have a significant effect if it were to:

AE-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista

AE-2 Substantially damage scenic resources, including, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway

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

AE-4 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

The following provides an aesthetics impact analysis according to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.

7.1 Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas are panoramic views of important visual features, as seen from public viewing areas. As identified previously, the City has a primary interest in protecting views of Lake Elsinore (the lake) as a scenic resource within the region. Further, designated scenic vistas within the City of Lake Elsinore and surrounding Sphere of Influence (SOI) include Lake Elsinore, urban areas surrounding the lake, and the rugged vacant hills in the northern and eastern portion of the City (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, pp. 3.3-2). The Project site does not provide views of the lake, and the Project site is not within a protected viewshed of the lake. However, the Project site is near the northern portion of the city and public viewpoints from adjacent and nearby roadways provide long-distance views of the hillside and distant mountains.

Key views of the Project site where impacts of the Project to scenic vistas could potentially occur are identified in Section 6.1, and include views from I-15, Ingall Circle, and Nichols Road. Views of the Project site from SR-74 were also analyzed and identified to be completely obstructed by the natural topography and surrounding tree coverage. Therefore, the Project would have no potential for impact to scenic vistas from SR-74.

Construction

Project construction could result in temporary visual impacts. Construction is anticipated to occur over 16 months and would include onsite construction over 65.81 acres, offsite roadway improvements over 23.04 acres along Baker Street, restoration of the proposed conservation area that covers 33.65 acres with a construction buffer of 2.72 acres between Baker Street and the proposed habitat restoration area. Construction activities and the staging of construction equipment could result in temporary visual intrusion to the surrounding landscape. However, impacts would be temporary, and all equipment would be removed and disturbed areas would be restored to similar or improved conditions following Project completion. Additionally, the Project would be subject to the City's 'Good Neighbor Policy,' which applies to warehousing, logistics, and distribution uses with buildings 250,000 square feet or larger. The policy includes construction

best practices designed to minimize potential impacts on surrounding land uses, which the Project would be required to implement. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, City staff would review the Project for consistency with the Good Neighbor Policy, and relevant requirements would be incorporated into the Project's construction plans, as appropriate. Therefore, Project construction would result in less than significant impacts on a scenic vista.

Operation

The proposed onsite development would introduce new permanent visual components to the exiting visual setting, while offsite improvements, restoration improvements, and construction buffer activities would only result in potential temporary visual changes or minor permanent visual changes, such as roadway widening and improvements.

Proposed onsite development would occur within 65.81 acres. The Project would include development of two new warehouse buildings totaling a combined 1,000,451 SF. Building 1 would be 212,028 SF and include 23 dock doors along the southwest side of the building. Building 2 would be 788,423 SF and include 110 dock doors along the northeast side of the building. Building 1 would be located at the northwestern end of the site and Building 2 would be located at the southeastern end of the site. The proposed parking lot on the east side of Buildings 1 and 2 would be setback from Baker Street a minimum of 24 feet and the proposed buildings would be setback a minimum of 147 feet. The parking lot and drive aisle is setback a minimum of approximately 48 feet from the western boundary shared with neighboring residential; Building 1 is setback approximately 98 feet and Building 2 is setback approximately 181 feet from the property line.

As previously described, the Project would be visible from I-15, Ingall Circle, and Nichols Road. The Project has been designed to screen loading and unloading activities away from nearby residential land uses. Building 1 is designed for the truck court to be screened from the residences west of the building. Building 2 is designed for loading and unloading activity to be located northeast of the building in order to screen truck activities away from the residential land uses southwest of the building. Additionally, the site design allows for the topography surrounding the site to provide screening; as the hills abutting the site to the southwest screen the site from the residentially zoned properties southwest of the site. The proposed Project would also include landscaping on the site and along Baker Street that would provide a variety of tree species to screen the Project from the ROW. The Building 1 parcel would contain 25.94 percent landscape coverage and the Building 2 parcel would contain 32.12 percent landscape coverage for a total site landscape coverage of 30.94 percent of the proposed development area.

Views of the Project site from the portion of I-15 adjacent and nearest to the Project site contain visual disruption of the hillside landscape due to existing development along I-15, including the gas station, commercial center, power lines, and surrounding parking lots (as seen in Figure 14, *Key View #1A – Existing Conditions*). Views of the hillside from I-15 would be further obstructed by the proposed Project (as shown in Figure 20, *Key View #1A – With Project*). However, the proposed buildings would sit at a lower grade than the exit ramp parallel to the I-15, northeast of the Project site, and the buildings would be largely obstructed by the natural grade differential and existing ornamental trees. Portions of Building 1 would be visible through breaks in tree coverage, while only a portion of Building 2's roofline would be visible within the view. Further, while the proposed buildings would add a new visual urban element to the existing viewshed, the Project would not result in an impact to views of "rugged vacant hills" since elements of existing development to the northeast, including signage, parked cars, power lines, and gas station, disrupt existing

hillside views. Additionally, the Project would not obstruct mountain views behind the Project site due to the buildings' setbacks, siting, and height. Further, the views of the proposed structures from I-15 would be similar to other developed areas of the City from I-15 adjacent to Key View #1A. Therefore, the Project would not result in significant impacts to a scenic vista from I-15.

The view from I-15 at Key View #1B includes the scenic mountain pass looking southeast towards the Project site. The view includes a natural and undeveloped hillside landscape with panoramic mountain views in the background with urban characteristics such as wire fencing, streetlights, power lines, and a gas station (as seen in Figure 16, *Key View #1B – Existing Conditions*). As shown in Figure 21, *Key View #1B – With Project*, the proposed buildings would be located within middle ground views and would sit at a slightly elevated grade than the viewpoint from I-15. The view of Building 2's east elevation would be predominately unobstructed and visible from the roadway, while Building 1 would be completely obstructed by dense tree cover to the north. The proposed Building 2 would result in a horizontal visual obstruction of the base of the hill that sits behind the Project site, but it would not encroach upon views of the top portions of the hills or the mountains behind the hills. Similar to View #1A, the Project would not result in an impact to views of "rugged vacant hills" since elements of existing development to the northeast, including streetlights, signage, parked cars, powerlines, and the gas station, disrupt existing hillside views. Further, the views of the proposed structures from I-15 would be similar to other developed areas of the City from I-15. Therefore, the Project would not result in significant impacts to a scenic vista from I-15.

The viewpoint from Ingall Circle is oriented northeast towards the Project site from the top of a hill (see Figure 18, *Key View #3 – Existing Conditions*). The view includes a hilltop that extends from Ingall Circle to a driveway containing two single family residential units. The hilltop provides an expansive view of mountains and the valley floor between the base of the hill and surrounding mountains. Residential and nonresidential development is visible within the valley and mountain foothills. The buildings would be constructed northeast of the hill. The Project would be almost completely obstructed by the hill's topography. The dramatic grade differential between the hilltop viewpoint and underlying valley where the buildings are proposed would greatly diminish visibility of the Project site. The yellow outline in Figure 23, *Key View #3 – With Project*, shows the location and scale of the buildings behind the hill from the viewpoint. A very small southern portion of Building 2's roof would be visible along the side of the hill. The building would generally blend into the background and would not be noticeable compared to the overall viewshed, which is dominated by the hill, sprawling valley, and distant mountain views. The Project would not result in significant impacts to a scenic vista from Ingall Circle.

The middle ground view of the Project site from Nichols Road includes a hill with two single family residences on the top with trees and a hillside that slopes from west to east (see Figure 19, Key View #4 – Existing Conditions). The long-distance views of distant mountains and development between areas of trees. Power poles and powerlines are located in the midground transecting the flat vegetated area and in front of the hill. The proposed buildings would be located over 1,200 feet away and at a slightly elevated grade than the viewpoint from the roadway (see Figure 24, *Key View #4 – With Project*). The view is oriented to directly face the northern side of Building 1. The view of Building 1 is predominately unobstructed and visible from the roadway. Building 2 is mostly unseen behind Building 1 except for a small portion of the building's western façade and roof. Proposed landscaping includes trees and shrubs around the building, to visually screen the development and provide a buffer between the building and surrounding area.

The Project would result in new views of urban development to the landscape. Due to the setback from the roadway and the height of the hills and mountains in the background, the proposed building would be

moderate in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features that would continue to generally dominate the viewshed. While the Project would result in a contrast to the existing visual setting, the proposed buildings would not result in a significant impact to views of "rugged vacant hills", a visual resource as identified by the City of Lake Elsinore General Plan (see Sections 3.2 and 5.2 above), since the Project is not within the line of sight of rugged vacant hills from this viewpoint. Since Nichols road would not result in substantial impacts to visual resources identified by the City of Lake Elsinore or Caltrans, the Project would not result in impacts to a scenic vista from Nichols Road. Furthermore, the Project would be subject to the City's 'Good Neighbor Policy,' which outlines requirements for development screening, site placement, and additional review for buildings proposed within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, City staff would evaluate the Project for consistency with this policy. Overall, Project operation would not cause an adverse visual effect to a scenic vista. Therefore, Project operation would result in less than significant impacts.

7.2 Scenic Highways

The Project site is nearby to two eligible State Scenic Highways, SR-74 and I-15 (California Department of Transportation, 2024). SR-74 is located approximately 2,600 feet east of the site and I-15 is located approximately 650 feet northeast of the site. However, neither I-15 nor SR 74 have been formally nominated for designation by the County or City for State Scenic Highway status. No roadways in the City of Lake Elsinore have been formally designated as scenic at the time of preparation of this report.

The Project site and offsite improvement areas do not contain historic buildings or prominent rock outcroppings (CRM TECH, 2024). The Project would include restoration of a conservation area directly adjacent to the northeast of the proposed buildings, which could include the addition of trees and vegetation.

As discussed in the General Plan Resource Protection and Preservation Element, designated local scenic resources in the city include views of vacant rugged hills and views of the lake (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011a).The General Plan includes policies that aim to protect these designated local scenic resources. As discussed previously, the Project site would not be visible from SR-74. However, the Project would be visible from the I-15 corridor, with the most prominent view of the site from a portion of I-15 northwest of the Project site where visual obstruction would be minimal (see Figures 20 and 21). The proposed buildings would be relatively small in scale compared to the surrounding topographic features, which would generally dominate the viewshed. While the proposed buildings would add a new visual element to the existing viewshed, the new views would be consistent with views within the City from southbound I-15 in the Project vicinity. Additionally, the Project would not obstruct mountain views due to the buildings' proposed setbacks, siting, and height. Therefore, the Project would result in a less-than-significant impact on scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.

7.3 Visual Character

As discussed previously, the Project site is located within an "urbanized area," as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21071; therefore, this analysis focuses on the Project's consistency with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The nearest visible view of the Project would be from Baker Street. While Baker Street is a publicly accessible dirt road, it is primarily a residential access point, with minimal traffic and only one residence utilizing the

section running along the northeast side of the proposed warehouse buildings, as discussed previously. The Project would result in a noticeable visual change with the introduction of large warehouse buildings to a currently vacant parcel that is surrounded by mostly vacant land. However, the Project would be consistent with the intent and design standards of the Project site, as described below. Future views from Baker Street are illustrated below in Figure 26.

Figure 26. Baker Street Rendering

Tables 4 and 5 in Section 2, *Project Description*, provide a consistency analysis for the proposed Project with the applicable M-2 development standards of the Project site. Table 9, Consistency Analysis, presents an evaluation of the Project against applicable aesthetics-related policies from the City's General Plan. As demonstrated in Table 9, below, the Project as proposed would be consistent with all identified policies related to aesthetics and visual resources and therefore, substantial conflicts with City regulations and policies are not anticipated. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

Table 9: Consistency Analysis

General Plan Community Form Element	Project Consistency
Policy 1.1: Promote innovative site design, and encourage the preservation of unique natural features, such as steep slopes, watercourses, canyons, ridgelines, rock formations, and open space with recreational opportunities.	**Consistent.** The Project would be located within a mostly flat grassy undeveloped area adjacent to surrounding steep slopes. The Project would be designed to accommodate the existing topography of the Project site and adjacent area. Contour grading would be provided from the proposed grading wall to the property line at a maximum slope of 2:1 in compliance with City hillside development policy. Additionally, the Project would not be constructed within a watercourse, canyon, or existing recreational open space. Therefore, the Project is consistent.
Policy 3.2: Encourage new commercial and/or industrial developments incorporate buffers which minimize the impacts of noise, light, visibility, or activity and vehicular traffic on residential uses and MSHCP conservation areas.	**Consistent.** The Project would be required to comply with the City's Good Neighbor policy, which includes BMP for the siting and development of warehouse uses near sensitive receptors. Additionally, the Project would be consistent with lighting requirements and light would be aimed downward and shielded from spilling over onto adjacent land uses. The Project would implement 33.65 acres of habitat restoration on existing habitat between the Project site and highway. This area would be designated for future conservation efforts. The Construction/Improvements Buffer (Construction Buffer) would be located within the Project area

General Plan Community Form Element	Project Consistency
	between the Baker Street ROW improvements and the Habitat Restoration Area. The Construction Buffer is included as part of the Project to ensure that any disturbance adjacent to the ROW improvements would not encroach onto the Habitat Restoration Area. This Construction Buffer would be separate parcel from the Habitat Restoration Area. Therefore, the Project would be consistent.
Policy 3.3: Development on steep slopes in public or private property shall require contour grading.	**Consistent.** The Project would be located within a mostly flat grassy undeveloped area adjacent to surrounding steep slopes. The Project would be designed to accommodate the existing topography of the Project site and adjacent area. Building 2 would require the cut of an adjacent slope and construction of a retaining wall that would be a maximum height of 46 feet along a portion of the southwest side of the building. Contour grading would be provided from the grading wall to the property line at a maximum slope of 2:1.
Policy 11.1: For new developments and redevelopment, encourage the maintenance and incorporation of existing mature trees and other substantial vegetation on the site, whether naturally-occurring or planted, into the landscape design.	**Consistent.** As shown in Figure 9, *Landscape Plan – Buildings 1 and 2,* and 10, *Landscape Plan – Building 2 Cont.*, would include planting of a variety of trees, shrubs, and succulents, that would compliment the surrounding natural landscaping. Trees would be planted in optimal locations to screen the Project from offsite locations. The Project would not require the removal of any existing trees on the Project site. Additionally, the Project includes restoration of a conservation area adjacent to the Project site, which would restore and enhance vegetation to natural vegetative conditions.
Policy 12.1: Encourage development designs and concepts that provide public views of Lake Elsinore and local ridgelines through proper siting, building design, and landscape design.	**Consistent.** As discussed above, proposed buildings would include appropriate setbacks, height, and siting so as not to intrude upon views of surrounding mountain ridgelines from public vantage points. The Project site is not located within the viewshed to or from Lake Elsinore due to the natural topography and distance from the lake.
Policy 13.3: Require grading plans for any hillside development to include specifications for revegetation and new planting to minimize hillside scarring.	**Consistent.** As shown in Figure 9, *Landscape Plan – Buildings 1 and 2,* and 10, *Landscape Plan – Building 2 Cont.*, would include planting of a variety of trees, shrubs, and succulents, that would compliment the surrounding natural landscaping. Trees would be planted to screen the Project from offsite locations. Additionally, the Project would not require the removal of any existing trees on the Project site. Further, the Project would include restoration of a conservation area adjacent to the Project site, which would restore and enhance vegetation to predeveloped natural vegetative conditions. Building 2 would require the cut of an adjacent slope and construction of a retaining wall with a maximum height of 46 feet along a portion of the southwest side of the building. Contour grading would be provided from the grading wall to the property line at a maximum slope of 2:1. The slopes would be landscaped with trees to

General Plan Community Form Element	Project Consistency
	stabilize the slope and reduce hillside scarring, while also minimizing potential fueling in the event of wildfire.

Additionally, Section 17.112.040, *Lighting*, and Section 17.148.110, *Lighting (Parking Requirements)*, of the City's Municipal Code would be applicable to the Project as well. Section 17.112.040 requires that "outdoor lighting fixtures in excess of 60 watts shall be oriented and shielded to prevent direct illumination above the horizontal plane passing through the luminaire and prevent any glare or direct illumination on adjacent properties or streets." Site lighting would be directed downward and shielded so as to avoid unnecessary illumination of the night sky and minimize potential for significant light trespass onto adjacent property. The use of shields on exterior lighting fixtures would also minimize potential to adjacent properties to receive or experience nuisance glare from site lighting sources.

Section 17.148.110 requires that "Adequate parking lot lighting for security purposes shall be required and maintained to effectively illuminate the parking area of all developments, except for single-family and duplex dwellings. Lighting shall be located and designed so as to preclude the direct glare of light shining onto adjacent property, streets, or into the sky above a horizontal plane passing through the luminaire." Parking lot lighting across the site would be selected and designed to preclude the direct glare of light shining onto adjacent property, streets, or into the sky above a horizontal plane passing through the luminaire.

As discussed above and specified in Tables 4, 5, and 9, the proposed Project would be consistent with the City's General Plan, zoning, and municipal code regulations regarding aesthetics and scenic quality, which would be verified by the City during the development permitting process. Therefore, while the proposed Project would change the visual character of the site, it would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

7.4 Light and Glare

The Project site is undeveloped and does not include any sources of nighttime lighting. However, the Project site is surrounded by sources of nighttime lighting that includes illumination from vehicle headlights, streetlights offsite exterior industrial/commercial lighting, and interior illumination passing through windows. Sensitive receptors relative to lighting and glare include motorists and passing by the Project site and adjacent residents.

Development of the Project would introduce new sources of light and glare into the area from street lighting, parking lot lighting, and outdoor and indoor building lighting. The proposed Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped and is adjacent to other nonresidential developments along the I-15 freeway corridor. The spill of light from the proposed Project onto surrounding properties and "night glow" would be reduced by using hoods and other design features on the light fixtures used within the proposed Project. Implementation of the existing regulatory requirements per Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Section 17.112.040, *Lighting*, and Section 17.148.110, *Lighting (Parking Requirements)*, would be verified during the City's permitting process and would ensure that potential operational impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

As shown on Figure 11, *Building Elevations*, in Section 2, *Project Description*, the building exterior predominately would consist of painted concrete in shades of cream and grey, aluminum canopies, and stone formliner accents. The building exterior would contain green reflective-glazed windows dispersed along the building facade within cutouts of the concrete exterior, but would not include large areas of reflective surfaces. Views of the proposed building would be most notable from I-15 and Nichols Road. The proposed building would be setback at a minimum of approximately 2,050 feet from the nearest point on I-15 and 350 feet from the nearest point on Nichols Road. Additionally, the Project would contain landscaping surrounding the Project site that would support in screening glare from adjacent roadways during peak sunlight hours. The Project would not be visible from SR-74 and predominately the top of the proposed building, which does not contain reflective glass, would be visible from Ingall Circle.

The proposed building materials do not consist of highly reflective materials; lights would be shielded consistent with Section 17.112.040, *Lighting*, and Section 17.148.110, *Lighting (Parking Requirements)*, requirements; and the proposed landscaping along the Project boundaries would screen some sources of light and reduce the potential for glare. The proposed Project would create limited new sources of light or glare from security and site lighting but would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area given the similarity of the existing lighting in the surrounding urbanizing environment. Thus, operation of the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and impacts would be less than significant.

During Project construction, nighttime lighting may be used within the construction staging areas to provide security for construction equipment. Due to the distance between the construction area and the adjacent residences and motorists on adjacent roadways, such security lights may result in glare to residents and motorists. However, this potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 which would require the temporary lighting to be downward facing and hooded. In addition, the City's standard construction permitting process and compliance with existing municipal code regulations would ensure that impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

AES-1: Prior to issuance of grading permits, the Project developer shall provide evidence to the City that any temporary nighttime lighting installed for security purposes shall be downward facing and hooded or shielded to prevent security light spillage by one foot candle to surrounding properties outside of the staging area or direct broadcast of security light into the sky.

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