

8.3 VISUAL RESOURCES

8.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Natural landscape features include landform, water, and vegetation patterns, whereas built features such as buildings, roads, and other structures are the visual resources component that reflects human or cultural modifications. Visual resource or aesthetic impacts are generally defined in terms of a project's physical characteristics and potential visibility and the extent to which its presence will alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment.

In accordance with the California Energy Commission (CEC) Guidelines for preparing Application for Certification (AFC) visual impact assessments, this section documents existing visual conditions in the project area and evaluates the potential of the proposed Kings River Conservation District Community Power Plant (KRCDD CPP) to cause significant adverse impacts with respect to existing visual or aesthetic resources. In addition, this section includes a discussion of the proposed KRCDD CPP in relation to federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, regulations and standards (LORS) pertaining to the protection of visual quality.

This analysis of the visual effects of changes that might occur with implementation of the proposed KRCDD CPP is based on review of the following information: local planning documents; project maps, drawings, and technical data; aerial and ground level photographs of the project area; and computer-generated visual simulations. In addition, site reconnaissance was conducted during October and November 2006 and February 2007 in order to observe the project site and surrounding area, to take representative photographs of existing visual conditions, and to identify key public views appropriate for simulation. Consultation with the CEC was conducted in the field during the course of this study regarding the selection of viewpoint locations for use in producing visual simulations of the proposed project (Edwards, 2006).

This section documents the visual conditions that currently exist in the project area and discusses the potential environmental consequences as they relate to visual resources, including construction, operational and cumulative impacts as well as mitigation measures proposed to reduce project impacts on visual resources. Applicable permits required, agencies involved and contact information and citations of the references used to prepare this section are also included.



8.3.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

8.3.2.1 Regional Context and Landscape Setting

The KRCDD CPP regional location is shown on Figure 8.3-1. The San Joaquin Valley, situated in central California, is enclosed by the Sierra Mountains on the east and the Coast Range foothills on the west. With a floor comprised of alluvial terraces and flood plains the San Joaquin Valley is actually the southern portion of the Great Central Valley which extends approximately 450 miles in length. Its landscape character is defined by a combination of natural and built features including vast areas of agricultural land devoted to orchards, vineyards and field crops as well as a network of roadways, canals, railroad corridors and electric transmission structures which traverse the landscape. Highway 99 and Interstate 5 provide major north-south transportation links between the valley's cities and smaller communities including the cities of Fresno, Visalia, and Selma. East-west roadways include smaller highways and rural roads.

The approximately 32-acre project site lies approximately 15 miles southeast of the City of Fresno in an unincorporated portion of Fresno County between the cities of Selma to the west and Parlier to the north and east. Land uses in the project vicinity are dominated by vineyards with some field crops and orchards, and the area is considered one of the most productive agricultural regions of the country (City of Selma General Plan, Land Use Element, 1997). This landscape generally reflects a high level of human modification associated with agricultural activities. A network of roads which are oriented primarily north-south and east-west provides a framework for the area's overall development pattern. Canals and irrigation ditches crisscross the landscape draining north towards the Kings River. The Centerville and Kingsburg Canal lies approximately three-quarters of a mile to the west of the project site, and the Kingsburg Branch Canal lies approximately one-half mile to the east. Topography in the area is generally flat with open vistas available from many points along roadway corridors. On very clear days, the Sierra foothills, with peaks rising to over 3000 feet, are visible 15 miles away to the east. To the west, approximately 50 miles away, are the Coast Ranges which are not visible from the KRCDD CPP project area.

The City of Parlier has approximately 12,000 residents and the city limits include the City of Parlier Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP), which is located on the parcel adjacent to the project site on the north. The city center is located approximately one mile to the northeast of the site. The project site is located within the Parlier Rural Renewal Community an area sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and targeted for economic revitalization.

The City of Parlier is in the process of revising their 1998 General Plan and is working with Fresno County on redefining their sphere of influence (SOI). The driver behind the General Plan



revision and updating of the SOI is two residential developments that have been proposed but are not currently entirely located with the City of Parlier or its current SOI. The first development has been proposed by Jonathon Homes and includes approximately 640 acres north and west of the project site at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Academy and Manning Avenues. The second development has been proposed by Wellington Homes and includes approximately 500 acres to the east of the project site between Mendocino and Zediker avenues. The residential development projects are approximately nine to twelve months away from having necessary permits and approvals for construction (O'Neill, 2007). Also, the Parlier Industrial Park is located south of Manning Avenue between Academy and Mendocino avenues. The total area is about 225 acres and the city has purchased 72 acres of land on the Mendocino Avenue side of the development. The city is installing infrastructure on the land it owns and has sold one parcel which is developed with a packing operation. All the of the city's land associated with this development has been committed/sold (O'Neil, 2007). The locations of the proposed development projects are shown on Figure 8.4-5, in Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture.

Located over one-mile to the west, the City of Selma is the fourth largest city in Fresno County with 22,000 residents. Selma was originally a railroad town oriented towards agricultural production; however according to the Selma General Plan, today many residents commute to Fresno (City of Selma General Plan, Land Use Element, 1997). There are multiple residential development projects both under construction and being considered within the City of Selma. These development projects include varying numbers of lots and vary in total size in acres. As of the date of this AFC, three residential developments are under construction, four residential developments have been approved, six residential development projects have submitted applications to the Selma Planning Department and another six residential development projects that are still in the conceptual phase (City of Selma, 2007). Additional information on the status and locations of these developments is located on the City of Selma's website at: <http://www.cityofselma.com/planning/index.htm>. Only one of the proposed developments will potentially be located within a one-mile radius of the KRCDD CPP project site (Hemby, 2007). This development is Amberwood, which is still in the conceptual phase with an anticipated 2570 lots on 686 acres. The locations of the proposed development projects are shown on Figure 8.4-5 in Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture.

8.3.2.2 Project Site and Construction Staging Area

The KRCDD CPP proposed project site is an approximately 32-acre site located on South Bethel Avenue between East Manning Avenue and East Dinuba Avenue. Approximately 15-acres of a 40-acre parcel to the immediate south of the project site will be used for temporary staging and parking during project construction. The western portion of the parcel to the south (i.e., the 15-acres of which will be used for the KRCDD CPP construction staging area) is currently used for

agricultural purposes (vineyards). The eastern portion of the parcel to the south (which will not be utilized during KRCDD CPP construction) includes vacant land in the northern portion and is occupied by several structures and rural dwellings in the southern portion. The KRCDD CPP project site, construction staging area and associated linear facilities as described in the following sections are shown on Figure 1-3 in Chapter 1, Executive Summary.

Figure 8.3-2, photos A through C presents several photos taken from the project site and surrounding area. As shown in photos B and C, the site occupies relatively level terrain primarily covered in vineyards. An abandoned one-story residential structure and outbuildings lie adjacent to South Bethel Avenue along with several mature trees (photo A). An irrigation canal also lies near the eastern property line. Figure 8.3-3a through 8.3-3f present photos of the project site and surrounding area. Photos D through G and key observation point (KOP) 2 on Figure 8.3-3a and 8.3-3b present views taken adjacent to the project site. Across South Bethel Avenue and nearby are several scattered, individual rural residences. To the south of the project site along East Dinuba Avenue are a cluster of residences. The City of Parlier WWTP lies directly to the north of the site. The entrance to this approximately 70-acre facility is on South Bethel and is enclosed by fencing and a steel rail gate (see photo E on Figure 8.3-3a). The facility is low-profile with most structures situated below-grade and to east, away from the roadway. To the east of the site is the County of Fresno Southeast Regional Disposal Site, a Class III landfill that was closed in 1998. The entrance is on East Dinuba Avenue near South Academy Avenue (Photo K on Figure 8.3-3c). The disposal site is approximately 130 acres and consists of large flat-topped earthen mounds.

8.3.2.3 Electric Transmission Line

A new 230-kV transmission line approximately five miles in length will connect the KRCDD CPP with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) McCall Substation to the west. The transmission line will proceed directly west from the project site across South Bethel Avenue for approximately one quarter mile, and then north approximately one mile across Manning Avenue. The line then proceeds directly west paralleling the south side of the existing PG&E McCall-Reedley 115-kV transmission line for approximately one mile. It then turns northwesterly for approximately one quarter mile, crossing over the McCall-Reedley line and under the existing PG&E Balch-McCall and Hass-McCall 230-kV lines. It then proceeds in a westerly direction for approximately two and one-half miles along Parlier Avenue to the McCall Substation located on Leonard Avenue. The proposed transmission line route is approximately five miles long.

For most of the route, the transmission line will traverse private agricultural land along a local rural roadway. The entire length of the proposed transmission line route is in the County of Fresno and the proposed route crosses both private property and public right of way.



Photographs showing representative public views of the transmission line route are presented on Figures 8.3-4a and 8.3-4b.

8.3.2.4 Natural Gas Pipeline

Fuel for the KRCDD CPP will be natural gas supplied from a new approximately 26-mile long 20-inch underground pipeline interconnection to the Southern California Gas Company (SCG) Line 7000 near the City of Visalia, California. The gas pipeline closely follows existing road right-of-way corridors and will primarily be located in the public right-of-way and in the counties of Fresno and Tulare. In order to facilitate construction of the natural gas pipeline, five temporary construction staging areas have also been identified along the pipeline route, each 200 foot by 200 foot in size. In order to comply with applicable natural gas pipeline design standards as described in Chapter 5, Natural Gas Supply, the proposed natural gas pipeline will include a minimum of three block valves. These valves will be manually controlled, lockable ball valves and will be located approximately two feet above the ground. These block valves will be located directly over the pipeline line and in the public right of way and do not present a significant feature visible to the public. The natural gas pipeline it is not addressed any further in this visual assessment.

8.3.2.5 Water Pipeline

The primary source of process makeup water for the KRCDD CPP will be reclaimed water delivered by new underground pipeline interconnections to the City of Parlier WWTP and the Sanger WWTP effluent percolation and evaporation ponds located on Lincoln Avenue (i.e., Lincoln Ponds). Up to four new wells recovering percolated effluent will provide a back-up cooling water supply. The Parlier WWTP is located adjacent to the north of the plant site, and the interconnection will be located at the northern plant site boundary. The proposed interconnection to the Sanger Lincoln ponds is approximately five miles north and will be located primarily in the public right of way. Currently two options are being considered for the water pipeline interconnection to Lincoln Ponds (i.e., Water Supply Pipeline Option 1 and Option 2). Up to four new shallow wells recovering percolated effluent will provide a back-up cooling supply. The construction of the water pipeline will not involve any above ground physical components and will not be visible to the public. The water pipeline is not addressed any further in this visual assessment.

8.3.2.6 Potable Water and Domestic Sewer

Potable water for domestic use will be supplied by a new groundwater well to be installed on the project site. There is no offsite linear associated with the potable water supply. Domestic wastewater will be discharged to the Parlier WWTP. The sewer interconnection is located at the northern boundary of the project site. There is no offsite linear associated with the domestic



sewer discharge. The potable water and sewer connections will not involve construction of any above ground physical components and will not be visible to the public. The potable water and sewer connections are not addressed any further in this visual assessment.

8.3.2.7 Project Site Visibility

The general area from which the KRCDD CPP is visible is also referred to as the project viewshed. The project viewshed includes close range and more distant viewing locations in the vicinity. The area portrayed on the regional landscape context map is generally flat (see Figure 8.3-1). Where existing vegetation and development do not intervene, expansive open landscape views are available from many locations in this vicinity. The project viewshed includes locations along public roadways as well as some places within residential areas and commercial sites. Figure 8.3-1 and Figure 1-3 in Chapter 1, Executive Summary delineate the generalized project viewshed. These maps were developed based on a review of topographic maps, aerial and ground level photographs, and field observations.

The project viewshed includes nearby scattered rural residences and portions of the East Manning, East Dinuba, South Bethel, South Del Rey, and the South Academy avenue roadway corridors. When traveling along these rural roads, motorists' views of the project site are relatively brief in duration. Distant views of the site are also available from residential and commercial areas on the outskirts of Selma and Parlier, approximately one-and-a-half miles and one mile away, respectively. The visual character of potentially affected view corridors and vantage points is described below. As indicated in the text and photos, to varying degrees existing vegetation and development screen views of the site from some locations in these areas.

A set of 35 photographs document the existing visual character found in the project area, as seen from close range and distances of up to two miles away. Figure 8.3-2 depicts on-site views; Figures 8.3-3a through 8.3-3f emphasize views towards the power plant site. Figures 8.3-4a and 8.3-4b focus on views of the transmission line route. The locations of photo viewpoints are delineated on Figure 8.3-5 for the project site and on Figure 8.3-6 for the transmission line route.

8.3.2.8 Sensitive Viewing Areas and Key Public Viewpoints

In order to establish a framework for evaluating the potential visual changes associated with the construction and operation of the proposed KRCDD CPP, sensitive viewing areas within the project viewshed have been identified in the vicinity. Based on accepted visual assessment methods including those employed by federal agencies such as the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as well as the guidance provide by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this visual resource analysis considers representative visual conditions as



seen from locations that are generally accessible to the public. For the purposes of this analysis the primary potentially affected sensitive viewing areas include public roadways and residential areas. Representative sensitive viewpoints were identified in consultation with CEC staff (Edwards, 2006).

As described below, four key public viewpoints or KOPs were selected from the set of 35 photographs for more detailed analysis including the preparation of visual simulations. Three KOPs were chosen to depict the visual effects associated with the proposed KRCDD CPP and one additional KOP was selected for the proposed transmission line. KOP-1 shows the relatively close-range, unobstructed view from the south the along South Bethel Avenue near the intersection of East Dinuba Avenue (see Figure 8.3-7). KOP-2 shows a view of the KRCDD CPP from South Bethel Avenue approximately one-third mile away to the north (see Figure 8.3-8). From this location, mature vegetation associated with a rural residence partially screens the site. KOP-3 is a view from heavily traveled East Manning Avenue at the Kingsburg Branch Canal. This view portrays the site from the northeast near several residences (see Figure 8.3-9). KOP-4 is a view of the transmission line route crossing at East Manning Avenue between South Indianola and South Bethel avenues (see Figure 8.3-10). Locations of the KOPs are shown on Figure 8.3-5 and Figure 8.3-6.

Close-Range Views from the South (KOP-1)

Photo G and KOP-1 on Figure 8.3-3b presents close views from the south of the project site from South Bethel Avenue. As shown in these photos, open views toward the site are available from the roadway across vineyards. Photo H on Figure 8.3-2b depicts a view from East Dinuba Avenue towards the site. Along East Dinuba Avenue to the south of the site between South Bethel and Academy avenues is a cluster of residences. Photo I depicts one of these residences as seen from East Dinuba Avenue. Photo J on Figure 8.3-3c shows a more distant view of these residences and the mature vegetation associated with them from the east on East Dinuba Avenue.

Close-Range Views from the North (KOP-2)

The project site is located on South Bethel Avenue between East Manning and East Dinuba avenues. Photos A through C on Figure 8.3-2 depict on-site views. The project site fronts South Bethel Avenue, a local rural road with an average of fewer than 80 cars passing per hour even during peak commute hours (see Section 8.6, Traffic and Transportation). Photos D through F and KOP-2 on Figure 8.3-3a depicts close views from Bethel Avenue north of the site. Several individual rural residences along South Bethel have close-range views of the site—the closest lies across the street approximately 100 feet west. As shown in photos D and KOP-2 (Figure 8.3-3a) mature vegetation partially screens views of the project site from nearby residences. However, many views across vineyards are open towards the site. As indicated in the photos,



wood utility poles and overhead conductors currently run along the east side of South Bethel Avenue. Adjacent to the project site on Bethel Avenue is the Parlier WWTP. As shown in photo E, the entrance includes fencing and a steel gate; however, structures on site are relatively low in profile and located away from the road.

Views from the East

Photos J through M on Figure 8.3-3c show views from the east of the site. Directly to the east of the site is the Fresno County Disposal Site with its entrance on South Academy Avenue. Photos J and K show rows of trees at the edge of this facility. Mature trees and berms along the facility's perimeter partially screen views of the site from this location. Berms of the disposal site can be seen in the distance in photo K. From other locations along South Academy Avenue views towards the site are generally open with some clusters of mature vegetation and structures in the distance. As seen in photo L, berms of the disposal site intervene in views toward the site. As noted previously in this section the Parlier Industrial Park, an industrial park with anticipated land uses to include light and heavy industry, is located to the south of East Manning from South Mendocino to a half-mile west of South Academy Avenue as Photo M shows a view from South Mendocino Avenue and the existing industrial character in the area.

Views from Northeast (KOP-3)

Residential and commercial areas on the southwestern outskirts of the City of Parlier lie within one-mile of the proposed KRCD CPP. Photos N through P and KOP-3 on Figure 8.3-3d depict views from southwestern Parlier. Photos N and O are views taken from South Academy Avenue at East Young Avenue and near East Manning Avenue. These photos convey the residential character at the western edge of the City of Parlier which includes primarily one-story homes. Mature street trees and existing buildings in these residential areas provide considerable screening with respect to views toward the project site. As shown in photo P, taken at the intersection of East Manning and South Academy avenues, clusters of commercial development can be found at major intersections. The visual character at these locations typically includes low-rise buildings with parking lots adjacent to the roadway. As shown in photo KOP-3 taken from further west on East Manning Avenue, vineyards dominate views from the road. The site is approximately three-quarters of a mile away from this vantage point. The vineyards are relatively low in height—approximately five feet tall—and in many locations lie at an elevation below that of the roadway.

East Manning Avenue is a heavily traveled regional roadway connecting Fresno County towns of the Sierra Foothills to the east with Highway 99. Between Parlier and Selma in the general project area, East Manning Avenue near the site has two travel lanes in each direction, a central gravel-covered median, plus protected turn lanes at major intersections. Traffic along this route



consists of local and regional travelers including trucks and commercial vehicles. During peak hours up to 1600 cars pass per hour (see Section 8.6, Traffic and Transportation). East Manning Avenue has posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour (mph). Because of the relatively open condition along the roadway edge, motorists' views of the project site from East Manning Avenue could be several minutes in duration.

Views from the West

Photos Q through T on Figure 8.3-3e depict views from the west of the project site. As seen from other locations in the vicinity, views from roadways and residences are generally open across vineyards. As shown in photo Q, mature trees situated near rural residences partially screen views from the nearby roadway and from the residences themselves. As shown in photo R, groupings of mature trees visible in the distance also provide partial screening for some views. Photo S taken from Ditch Road, a mile to the west, shows the Centerville and Kingsburg Canal. The left side of this view includes a residence surrounded by mature trees. Photo T is a view toward the site from Indianola Elementary School about one-half mile to the southwest of the project site and located on East Dinuba Avenue. Views toward the site from here are open with vineyards screening the lower portion of the site.

Distant Views from the West (Outskirts of Selma)

From areas to the west, distant views of the project site are available from residential and commercial areas on the eastern outskirts of the City of Selma located about one and a half miles away. In other locations at the edge of the City of Selma, views toward the project site are partially screened by mature trees and vineyards. Photos U through X on Figure 8.3-3f depict the character of this area.

As previously noted in this section, a residential subdivision is planned for this area (see Figure 8.4-5 in Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture for locations of proposed development projects). Some residential development has also recently been built or is currently under construction. Photo U, taken from East Dinuba Avenue near Dockery Avenue at the edge of a development under construction, includes a completed sidewalk and sound wall along East Dinuba Avenue. A recently completed residential neighborhood with distant views of the site is shown in Photo V, shot from Olive Street at Northview Street. As in the case of western Parlier, commercial development is clustered around major roadway intersections and primarily consists of low-rise structures with prominent signage and parking lots along the street frontage. Photo X shows typical low-rise commercial development at the intersection of South McCall and East Manning avenues. At this location, views of the project site are screened by existing buildings, signage, and mature trees. Photo W depicts view across a parking lot fronting a strip mall development at East Dinuba Avenue at McCall Avenue. This particular development includes a larger grocery



store, a chain restaurant, and other businesses. Other structures visible in the landscape include overhead distribution lines, lighting standards, and traffic signals.

Views of the Electric Transmission Line and Substation (KOP-4)

Photos T-A through T-G and KOP-4 on Figures 8.3-4a and 8.3-4b depict views from roadways and residences toward the proposed transmission line route. Figure 8.3-5 depicts locations of these photographs. The photos illustrate visual conditions where the transmission line route crosses public roadways as well as views towards the route and substation as it parallels those roadways.

Unobstructed, open views towards the transmission line route are available from locations along East Manning (Photo T-A). Open views are also available towards the location where the proposed transmission line crosses East Manning Avenue. In Photo KOP-4, the location of this crossing is approximately 1000 feet away from the viewpoint. Photos D and KOP-2 on Figure 8.3-3a show views from South Bethel Avenues toward locations where the route crosses South Bethel Avenue. Vineyards and fields along these roads will provide negligible roadside screening along the transmission route. However, in some locations, scattered mature vegetation generally associated with residences and businesses provides limited screening of the route from both the roadway and from the residences and business themselves. Photo T-A shows vegetation associated with a business on East Manning Avenue, and Photo T-B depicts vegetation associated with residences on South Indianola Avenue. Existing structures that are visible in the landscape include industrial buildings and numerous overhead distribution lines (Photos T-C through T-E).

From the point, the proposed transmission line turns northwesterly for approximately one quarter mile, crossing over the McCall-Reedley line and under the existing PG&E Balch-McCall and Hass-McCall 230-kV lines. It then proceeds in a westerly direction for approximately two and one-half miles along East Parlier Avenue to the McCall Substation located on Leonard Avenue. As shown on Photo T-D, the view east on East Parlier Avenue at South McCall Avenue, East Parlier Avenue is a local rural roadway without a painted centerline. Photos T-C and T-E show views toward the proposed route from McCall Avenue. This section of the proposed route is approximately one-quarter mile north of an existing PG&E right of way with 230-kV line with lattice towers (See Photo T-B). Photo T-F shows a close view of the existing McCall Substation from South Leonard Avenue, and Photo T-G depicts the view from East Manning Avenue northwards towards the substation.



8.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

8.3.3.1 Analysis Procedure and Visual Simulation Methods

This analysis of the visual effects associated with the changes that could occur from the proposed KRCD CPP is based on field observations of the project site and surrounding area conducted in October and November 2006 and February 2007. In addition, the analysis is based on review of the following material:

- Topographic maps;
- Aerial and ground-level photographs of the project area;
- Project drawings and technical data supplied by project engineers;
- Public planning documents; and
- Computer-generated visual simulations which portray the project’s appearance from four KOPs.

Visual Simulation Methods

Photographic images showing “before” and “after” conditions from the four KOPs are presented as Figures 8.3.7 through 8.3-10. Visual simulations illustrating the “after” visual conditions from each of the KOP locations provide a clear depiction of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the proposed project. The visual simulations show new buildings, equipment, and transmission line structures associated with the KRCD CPP. Table 8.3-1 summarizes the KOP viewpoint locations and their respective distance from the KRCD CPP project site.

Table 8.3-1 Visual Simulations KRCD CPP			
KOP	Approximate Distance from the KRCD CPP	Viewpoint Location (Figures 8.3-5 and 8.3-6)	Figure Number
1	1/4 mile	South Bethel Avenue near East Dinuba Avenue	8.3-7
2	1/3 mile	South Bethel Avenue, north of site	8.3-8
3	3 /4 mile	East Manning Avenue near Kingsburg Branch Canal	8.3-9
4	1/3 mile from transmission line	East Manning Avenue between South Indianola and South Bethel avenues - transmission line crossing	8.3-10

Computer modeling and rendering techniques were employed to produce the visual simulation images. The computer-generated visual simulations are the results of an objective analytical and computer modeling process described briefly below.

Site reconnaissance was conducted to view the site and surrounding area, to identify potential KOPs and to take representative photographs of existing conditions. A single lens reflex (SLR) digital camera was used to shoot site photographs from representative public viewpoints. Site

location data for each photograph was collected using global positioning system (GPS) equipment. Accurate digital location data was later incorporated into a three dimensional (3D) digital model. A “normal” 50 millimeter (mm) lens (horizontal 40-degree view angle) was used to shoot site photographs from three of the simulation vantage points, KOP-2 through KOP-4. KOP-1, the view from East Dinuba near South Bethel Avenues (Figure 8.3-7) was shot using a wide-angle 28mm lens (horizontal view angle of 64 degrees) in order to show the site in its landscape context.

Computer modeling and rendering techniques were then used to produce the simulation images. Existing topographic and site data provided the basis for developing an initial digital model. Project engineers provided site plans and digital data for the proposed KRCD CPP and existing structure removal. These were used to create 3D digital models of the proposed KRCD CPP. These models were combined with the digital site model to produce a complete computer model of the KRCD CPP and transmission line.

For each of the simulation viewpoints, viewer locations were digitized from topographic maps and scaled aerial photos, using five feet as the assumed eye level. Computer "wire frame" perspective plots were overlaid on photographs to verify scale and viewpoint location. Digital visual simulation images were then produced based on computer renderings of the 3D model combined with digital versions of the selected site photographs. The final "hardcopy" visual simulation images contained in this section were printed from the digital image files and are included as Figures 8.3-7 through 8.3-10.

With the exception of the view from East Dinuba Avenue near South Bethel Avenue (Figure 8.3-7), the simulation images presented in this section include 50 mm lens photos printed at a size which is approximately 9.25 inches in width. These images should be viewed at a distance of about 13 inches in order to gain an optimal impression of the project's scale in relationship to the surrounding landscape. The Figure 8.3-7 images include 28mm lens photos and should be viewed at a distance of approximately 7.25 inches.

Simulation of Proposed Landscaping

The Figure 8.3-7 through 8.3-10 visual simulation images show the new power plant with landscaping that is proposed as part of the project. The simulations portray proposed trees at approximately five years of growth. For KOP-1, project landscaping is also shown at 10 years of growth to demonstrate that more mature landscaping will provide additional visual screening. The visual simulations employ tree growth rate assumptions based on data from SelecTree (Reimer and Mark, 2007) and an assumed installed tree height of six feet for a 15 gallon



container size. Tree species and heights shown in the visual simulations are provided in Table 8.3-2.

Table 8.3-2 Assumptions Regarding Tree Height and Growth KRCD CPP				
Species (Scientific Name and Common Name)	Container Size and Planted Height	Growth Rate	Maximum Height and Maximum Canopy Width	Height Shown in Simulations at 5 years and 10 years
<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i> Red Iron Bark	15 gallons and 6 feet	3 feet per year	65 feet and 45 feet	21 feet and 36 feet
<i>Quercus suber</i> Cork Oak	15 gallons and 6 feet	2-3 feet per year	> 65 feet and > 65 feet	13.5 feet and 21 feet
<i>Cercis occidentales</i> Western Redbud	15 gallons and 6 feet	2-3 feet per year	25 feet and 25 feet	13.5 feet and 21 feet

Although the project area was photographed in autumn and winter, trees were simulated to show summer foliage in order to portray the most representative visual effect of the KRCD CPP throughout the seasons.

Analysis Procedure

The visual impact assessment is based on evaluation of the changes to existing visual resources that will result from construction and operation of the KRCD CPP. These changes were assessed, in part, by evaluating the computer-generated visual simulation images and comparing them to the existing visual conditions photos. In developing an assessment of the visual changes, consideration was given to several factors including:

- The specific changes in the affected visual environment’s composition and character;
- The extent to which the affected environment includes features that have been designated in plans and policies for protection/special consideration;
- The numbers and types of affected viewers; and
- The duration of the affected view.

With respect to determining the significance of the anticipated changes under CEQA, these changes were evaluated in terms of the criteria provided by the CEQA guidelines. Section 8.3.3.5 addresses the project’s visual effects in terms of the CEQA criteria. Appendixes G and I of the CEQA guidelines indicate that a project will have a significant effect on the environment if it will:

- Have a substantial, adverse effect on a scenic vista;

- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; and
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which will adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

8.3.3.2 Project Appearance

Project Site

The proposed KRCD CPP includes a variety of structures including a Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG), HRSG stacks, an eight-cell cooling tower, a warehouse, and an administration/control building. A complete description of the proposed KRCD CPP is included in Chapter 2, Project Description. Chapter 2 also includes site layout drawings. Table 8.3-3 provides a summary of the major proposed structures that are likely to affect visual resources. The table includes the approximate dimensions and heights of the project components. The plant structures will be set back from South Bethel Avenue approximately 70 feet from the roadway.

Table 8.3-3 Summary of Major Proposed Structures (Estimated Dimensions) KRCD CPP		
Project Component (Number)	Dimensions (length by width)	Height
HRSG Stacks (2)	18 feet diameter	150 feet
HRSGs	95 feet by 55 feet	111 feet
Cooling Tower	460 feet by 76 feet	80 feet
Administration Control Building	100 feet by 60 feet	24 feet
Warehouse Maintenance Building	100 feet by 80 feet	24 feet
Combustion Turbine Inlet	60 feet by 47 feet	60 feet
Switchyard	256 feet by 204 feet	Up to 68 feet
New Transmission Poles	3 feet 6 inches diameter at base	95 feet

KRCD CPP project structures will be light, neutral colors with non-reflective surfaces in order to minimize their contrast with the background sky. The proposed equipment and tanks will be metal, painted a non-reflective, light gray color, and buildings will be painted a non-reflective, tan color.



Lighting

KRCDD CPP operations will take place 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Lighting level will be as recommended in Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards. The lighting system will provide personnel with illumination for operation under normal conditions and for egress under emergency conditions, and will include emergency lighting to perform manual operations during an outage of the normal power source. The system will also provide 120 volt (V) convenience outlets for portable lamps and tools.

Outdoor lighting will be photocell controlled. Outdoor areas such as cooling tower deck, HRSG stack, etc. where only limited access is required, lighting will be switch controlled. Outdoor lighting fixtures will have shield or dome reflector as necessary to prevent light glare trespass. Explosion proof fixtures will be installed in hazardous classified locations. Vapor tight, enclosed and gasketed fixtures will be installed in locations where dirt, moisture, or corrosion problems exist. Emergency lights will be powered by integral battery packs, 125V direct current battery, 120V alternating current uninterruptible power supply, or by a 120V essential bus. Dedicated breakers and conduits will be used for emergency lighting circuits. All proposed lighting will utilize non-glare fixtures and will be directed on-site. A Lighting Mitigation Plan will be submitted to the CEC for review and approval as required.

Landscaping

New landscaping is proposed as part of the proposed KRCDD CPP. Figure 8.3-11 presents a preliminary conceptual landscape plan for the project site. The landscape plan includes installing a row of tall, fast-growing eucalyptus trees mixed with slower growing cork oaks along the project site's eastern, southern and northern boundaries. An eight to ten-foot high, 70-foot wide landscaped berm is proposed along the western edge of the project site fronting South Bethel Avenue. Tall, fast-growing eucalyptus trees are proposed on the east side of the berm toward the project structures. Lower, ornamental tree species will be installed on the berm along the street frontage. A variety of shrubs will also be planted below these trees to provide seasonal interest and additional screening at the ground level. A conceptual section of the landscaped berm is also presented on Figure 8.3-11.

The preliminary conceptual landscape plan calls for a mixture of trees including of fast-growing evergreen species to ensure rapid achievement of year-round visual screening and view enhancement. The very tall, fast-growing species are suggested for the site perimeter to maximize project screening from nearby roads and from more distant viewpoints. The project landscape plan includes species recommended by the Fresno County's Master Tree List. Figure 8.3-11 includes a table with suggested plant species and their respective sizes and growth rates.



Electric Transmission Line

A proposed 230-kV transmission line approximately five miles in length will connect the project site with the existing McCall Substation to the west. Poles are 95 foot-tall double circuit steel poles. The route traverses private agricultural land and a local rural roadway. In several places the route will cross larger public roadways. The project route is delineated on Figures 8.3-6.

Water Vapor Plumes

At times when temperatures are low and humidity is high, the KRCD CPP eight-cell cooling towers and HRSGs will create visible water vapor plumes. The analysis of water vapor plumes for the cooling towers is based on data prepared by Atmospheric Dynamics, Inc. (February 2007) using the Seasonal/Annual Cooling Tower Impact Program (SACTIP) developed by Argonne National Laboratory and five years of meteorological data for the area. The complete modeling analysis is included as Appendix 8.3-1. Appendix 8.3-1 includes cooling tower modeling input parameters as well as technical information relating to the HRSG stack. Results of the cooling tower plume analysis are described below.

Cooling Towers Plumes

As discussed further in Appendix 8.3-1, nighttime hours and hours of limited visibility due to weather conditions were removed from the SACTIP model. In total, these conditions accounted for 57 percent of all the hours (day, night, and obscuring weather) in the data set. Modeling results indicate that for 20 percent of the time during visible hours (an average of 756 hours per year) cooling tower plumes will not extend beyond the project site boundary. The probability of formation of long visible plumes during visible hours and in excess of 200 meters is less than 10 percent of the time during visible hours. The average height of the cooling tower plumes is predicted to be between 30 to 40 meters, the average plume length is predicted to be between 50 and 75 meters, and the average plume radius is predicted to be between 20 and 30 meters. The largest plumes are predicted to occur during cooler, winter months. Given wind patterns in the area, the plume dimensions will not be symmetrical, but will be distributed along a northwest to southeastern axis.

Heat Recovery Steam Generator Plumes

The formation of a visible plume from the HRSG stacks, i.e., water vapor in the HRSG exhaust condensing in the atmosphere after exiting the HRSG stacks, is also possible. Visible plume formation from the HRSG stacks is expected to occur less frequently than from the cooling tower because the temperature of the water vapor in the HRSG stacks is higher than the temperature of the water vapor in the cooling tower exhaust. Similarly, the size of any visible plume from the HRSG stacks will be smaller than a cooling tower plume because the amount of water in the HRSG exhaust is less than the amount of water in the cooling tower exhaust.



Ground Fog

The SACTIP analysis (Appendix 8.3-1) also concluded that there will be up to three hours of year of ground fogging within 500 meters of the facility created by the cooling towers.

8.3.3.3 Construction Impacts

An approximately 15-acre area to the south of the project site will be used as a laydown area. KRCD CPP construction activities will be visible from locations along public roadways including South Bethel, East Manning, and East Dinuba avenues. Because of the location of the laydown area, construction activities will likely be most visible when seen at close range from limited segments of South Bethel and East Dinuba avenues and be most noticeable to local residents. It is expected that these effects will be relatively short-term and temporary in nature and will not result in a significant visual impact.

8.3.3.4 Operational Impacts

A set of visual simulations portray the conceptual appearance of the KRCD CPP and associated transmission line as seen from the four identified KOPs. As indicated by the simulations and as described below, the KRCD CPP will introduce a new power generating facility into a largely flat agricultural landscape setting which is dominated by vineyards, and which also includes a WWTP, landfill facilities, and scattered rural residences.

On the north and the east respectively, the adjacent Parlier WWTP and the landfill facility sites will provide a visual buffer between the KRCD CPP and public viewing locations. In terms of its general aesthetic character, the KRCD CPP will appear compatible with the visual character of these existing infrastructure facilities. In addition, it is expected that with future planned development of the nearby Parlier Industrial Park which will include light and heavy industrial land uses. The KRCD CPP will be compatible with the area's overall visual character.

To varying degrees, the proposed KRCD CPP will be visible from scattered individual residences and points along local and regional public roads. In general, the project will not be particularly visible from more distant locations at the edge of the cities of Parlier and Selma due to intervening vegetation and development. The project includes a landscape plan presented in Figure 8.3-11, which is designed to reduce its visual impact and to enhance its aesthetic appearance, particularly along the site's roadway frontage. Initially the landscaping will provide a minimal level of screening; however, as the new landscaping matures it will more effectively screen views of the project and help integrate its aesthetic appearance with the surrounding landscape setting. Nonetheless, when seen from close range locations, the KRCD CPP could appear visually prominent in relationship to the scale of existing landscape features that are currently seen in the immediate visual setting. Visual mitigation measures outlined below in

Section 8.3.3.7 includes recommendations for tree planting at key off-site locations. This mitigation landscaping will provide more extensive visual screening which will minimize the project's overall visibility and visual impact.

Project Site

Figure 8.3-7 shows “before” and “after” images of the project from approximately one quarter mile from the project site at South Bethel Avenue near East Dinuba Avenue. Two simulations are presented for this vantage point. The first depicts the project with landscaping shown at five years maturity and maximum tree heights of 21 feet. As shown in this image, taller elements of the plant structures are visible above the vineyards. The second simulation portrays the project with landscaping at ten years of maturity with a maximum tree height of 36 feet. As shown in this image, more mature landscaping will provide greater visual screening. Over time it is expected project landscaping will screen all but the tops of cooling towers, HRSG stacks, and the tallest elements in the switchyard. As it matures, project landscaping will also integrate the project's appearance with the surrounding visual setting. In addition, Section 8.3.3.7 recommends the installation of mitigation tree plantings at the perimeter of the construction laydown area to achieve more extensive screening which will reduce the project's visibility as seen from this location.

Figure 8.3-8 shows a view of the project as seen from South Bethel Avenue approximately a third of a mile north of the project site. The simulation indicates that from this location, portions of the new switchyard will be visible along the east (left) side of South Bethel Avenue. Portions of the HRSGs, stacks, and other project elements are also visible from between the cypress trees to the right of the image. These tall, columnar trees and other foreground landscape features associated with residences will partially screen views of the project from this general area. As in the other view from South Bethel Avenue, proposed landscaping will partially screen lower portions of the project, and the project landscaping will provide a greater degree of visual screening as it matures.

Figure 8.3-9 shows “before” and “after” images of the project as seen from East Manning Avenue at the Kingsburg Branch Canal. This vantage point lies approximately three quarters of a mile away to the northeast. The simulation images indicate that the HRSGs, stacks, cooling towers and other taller elements of the plant will be visible above the vineyards. Vineyards, the area's primary intervening vegetation will only provide screening of the lower portions of the project. The simulation suggest that after five years, the project landscaping will not substantially screen views of the project from this location, however, it is anticipated that as landscaping matures it will provide a greater degree of screening. At full maturity, it is expected that trees will screen most of the project elements except for the tops of HRSGs, stacks, the taller switchyard



components, and portions of the cooling towers. As seen from many locations along East Manning Avenue in the immediate vicinity, it is anticipated that existing intervening vineyards, structures, and mature trees will partially screen views the project. Section 8.3.3.7 recommends the installation of mitigation tree planting along a portion of East Manning Avenue in order to further screen views of the project from this location.

Transmission Line

As previously noted, the proposed transmission line will route crosses both private land and public roadways. However, in several locations, the transmission line will cross a major public roadway. Figure 8.3-10 shows “before” and “after” views towards the east of the proposed transmission line crossing of East Manning Avenue between South Indianola and South Bethel Avenues. The transmission line is approximately 1000 feet away from this vantage point. Open views towards the route crossing are available, and existing vegetation or structures provide minimal screening. As shown in this image, an existing overhead distribution line runs parallel to East Manning Avenue. Existing transmission towers are also visible from points along this roadway. In this respect, the new transmission structures will represent a minor, incremental effect.

Lighting

The proposed KRCDD CPP will be operational 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and lighting will be installed as necessary to support plant operations. Project lighting will utilize fixtures of a non-glare type and exterior lights will be shielded with lighting directed onsite, therefore spill light or glare will not occur. Switched lighting circuits will be provided for areas where lighting is not required for normal operation, safety, or security, thus allowing these areas to remain unlit at most times. This will also minimize the amount of lighting potentially visible from offsite locations. With the incorporation of these measures, it is expected that project lighting will not result in a substantial visual effect.

Water Vapor Plumes

At times when temperatures are low and humidity is high, the KRCDD CPP eight-cell cooling tower and HRSGs will create visible water vapor plumes. Areas with higher ambient temperature and lower humidity (e.g., Fresno) provide fewer opportunities for visible plume formation than areas with cooler temperatures and higher humidity. In the project area, most of the plume formation will occur during nighttime hours when ambient temperatures are cooler.

Cooling Tower Plumes

The analysis of water vapor plumes for the cooling towers (Appendix 8.3-1), predicts that cooling tower plumes will be visible for a total of approximately 756 hours per year or less than

20 percent of daylight hours only within the boundary of the site and long visible plumes in excess of 250 meters will be visible during less than ten percent of daylight hours. Plumes will be visible only if there were sufficient natural or artificial light. Because of the measures that will be taken to reduce project lighting at the plant, any plumes that are present during nighttime hours will not be particularly noticeable. Therefore, cooling tower plumes present during nighttime hours will not be a major visual concern.

Because the conditions under which the water vapor plumes are likely to form—during the cooler winter months—are also conditions under which fog and rain are likely to be present, some of the time that plumes are present they will not be visible due to the presence of fog and rain. An additional variable that needs to be considered in evaluating the visual implications of the project’s water vapor plumes is that many of the daylight, non-fog, non-rain hours when plumes are present will occur during the winter when the sky is, at times, overcast. Under overcast conditions, the contrast of the plumes with the sky will be low, and therefore plumes will not be particularly noticeable. It is expected that during limited hours of visibility, the plume could be noticeable from nearby places along public roadways and scattered residential locations. However, the results of the SACTIP analysis indicate that the occasional cooling tower plumes will not substantially alter existing visual conditions.

Heat Recovery Steam Generator Stack Plumes

Visible plume formation from the HRSG stacks is expected to occur less frequently and in less intensity than from the cooling towers. Therefore, it is anticipated that visible plume formation from the HRSG stacks will not result in a significant visual impact.

Ground Fog

The SACTIP analysis (Appendix 8.3-1) also concluded that there will be up to three hours of year of ground fogging within 500 meters of the KRCD CPP created by the cooling towers. The nearest major roadway, East Manning Avenue, is a kilometer away, traffic on South Bethel is relatively light, and there are no schools within 500 meters of the project. “Tule fog” or radiation fog is common in the area during the winter months and may be present at the same time as ground fogging occurs. Therefore, this is not expected to be a significant impact.

8.3.3.5 Impact Significance

The following discussion addresses questions regarding whether KRCD CPP visual effects will be significant pursuant to CEQA criteria. The assessment of potential visual impacts is structured according to the criteria set forth in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The CEQA Guidelines define a “significant effect” on the environment to mean a “substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the



project, including objects of historic or aesthetic significance (14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 15382).” The four questions related to aesthetics that are posed for lead agencies and the answers to them follow.

1. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No. There are no scenic vistas within the project viewshed.

2. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No. As described in Section 8.3.4 (LORS), there are no state scenic highways or eligible scenic highways within the project viewshed. The project will be visible from locations along local roadways; however, the project will not affect views from a locally designated scenic route.

3. Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

No. Surrounding land uses consist of vineyards, scattered rural residences, a WWTP, and a landfill. This existing landscape is one which is heavily modified by human activity. The project will introduce new facilities that are substantially taller than existing nearby structures. On the north and the east, two existing adjacent large-scale infrastructure facilities will provide a visual buffer between the project and public view corridors.

The project includes new landscaping which will partially screen views of the proposed structures. Fast-growing, tall deciduous and evergreen trees will be planted along the entire perimeter of the plant site in order to provide a degree of visual screening. The project also includes a landscaping berm along the street frontage which will provide a measure of visual screening and aesthetic enhancement. As it matures, the landscaping will help integrate the project with its landscape setting. Mitigation measures outlined in Section 8.3.3.7 recommend the installation of additional new landscaping at several off-site locations. With project landscaping and additional landscape mitigation it is expected that the project’s visual effect will be less than significant.

The visual effect of the water vapor plumes from the cooling towers and HRSG stacks will be minor. For the most part, these plumes will be limited to locations on-site and will not substantially affect public views. Plumes are most likely to be visible during cooler, winter

months when the sky is frequently overcast and will provide a low-contrast background to plumes.

The existing landscape setting includes a variety of vertical structures such as distribution lines and transmission towers. In this respect, the new transmission structures will represent a minor, incremental effect. Therefore, the transmission line portion of the project is also considered compatible with the existing visual character of the surrounding landscape and will not result in a substantial effect on public views.

4. Would the project create a new source of substantial light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No. As described above, the KRCDD CPP will introduce a limited amount of new nighttime lighting at the site for safety and security purposes. Lighting will be directed onsite; it will be shielded from public view, and non-glare fixtures and use of switches, sensors, and timers to minimize the time that lights not needed for safety and security are on will be specified. These measures will substantially reduce the offsite visibility of project lighting. In addition, all new structures will be treated or painted with a non-reflective finish so as to reduce potential glare effects. Landscaping included as part of the project will also help visually screen views from nearby locations of on-site lighting. These changes will represent an incremental effect that will result in a substantial adverse impact on existing day or nighttime visual conditions.

8.3.3.6 Cumulative Impacts

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15355) define cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.”

The City of Parlier is currently planning an industrial park to the southeast of the project site. The area has been annexed by the city and a land use and road alignment plan has been completed. According to the City website, anticipated light and heavy industrial uses include with electronic assembly, food processing and warehouse distribution (Parlier, 2007). In terms of its scale and visual character of this development, the proposed project will be compatible with future industrial development that is planned in the area. The project also falls within the Parlier Rural Renewal Community area sponsored by HUD. This includes economic incentives for businesses to locate within the area. A number of housing developments are also under construction or in the planning or conceptual stages as described further in Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture. Therefore, an increase in non-agricultural land uses is expected.



Although most of the landscape already reflects a high level of human intervention, these modifications are primarily associated with agricultural activities. Overall, the various planned developments for the area including the proposed project will lead to a decrease in the area's agricultural character due to the expected increase in the suburban and industrial quality of the area.

8.3.3.7 Mitigation Measures

The following visual mitigation measures are recommended to reduce KRCDD CPP potential to appear visually prominent as well as to reduce its overall visibility.

- In consultation with Fresno County and the City of Parlier and the City of Selma Public Works Departments, consideration will be given to additional, off-site visual mitigation tree planting along the right-of-way of public roads to screen close and medium-range views of the project. In particular, plant material will be installed in the public right-of-way on the south side of East Manning Avenue between Selma and Parlier to screen views from this heavily traveled roadway and to aesthetically enhance the corridor.
- In consultation with affected nearby residential property owners with close range, unobstructed views of the project from within 1000 feet, consideration will be given to installing trees and shrubs individually or in informal groupings on private residential property to partially screen views of the project structures.
- After construction is complete mitigation tree plantings and other landscape features will be installed on the project site in accordance with an approved landscape plan to further screen views from South Bethel and East Dinuba avenues. A conceptual landscape plan is included as Figure 8.3-11. Plant material will be appropriate to the local setting, and local requirements including the Fresno County Master Tree List. Landscaping will also be consistent with technical requirements for project operation and maintenance.

8.3.4 LAWS, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

Various plans, laws and ordinances were reviewed to determine their salience in evaluating the visual effect of the project. The discussion below identifies plans and policies relevant to visual quality that are potentially applicable to the project by plan, and identifies any potential conflicts with these policies. There are no federal visual resource LORS that apply to the project, although two federal programs that apply to nearby areas are listed.

Table 8.3-4 lists the federal and state plans and ordinances that are pertinent to the project. Local LORS are described below. The specific provisions of each plan or ordinance that have potential relevance to the project are also described below.

Table 8.3-4 Visual Resources LORS KRCD CPP		
Regulation/Program	Description and Jurisdiction	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
Federal		
None		
State		
State Scenic Highways, 1963 - Streets and Highways code.	Implemented by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the program was established to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California by including highways that are listed either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such to adopt a scenic corridor protection program.	No eligible or designated state scenic highways are located within the project viewshed. See Section 8.3.4.2

8.3.4.1 Federal

There have been no federal LORs or visual policies identified as applicable to the proposed KRCD CPP. However, the site is located within the Parlier Renewal Community as funded by HUD and is within one mile of Manning Avenue which is the focus of an improvement initiative by the United States Department of Transportation.

Department of Housing and Urban Development - 2001 Rural Renewal Community

In 2001, the City of Parlier applied for and received a Rural Renewal Community grant from HUD. This program is designed to provide economic incentives for businesses to develop within an area. The project is within this Renewal Community area. No specific provisions are given for scenic resources or visual quality in this program.

Manning Avenue (Fresno County) Corridor Initiative 2003

The site is approximately three quarters of a mile from Manning Avenue which is the focus of the 2003 Manning Avenue (Fresno County) Corridor Initiative by the United States Department of Transportation. Manning Avenue runs east-west across the valley floor and is considered an important vehicular route. This initiative focuses on Manning Avenue from Highway 99 east to the Sierra Foothills and includes the communities of Orange Cove, Reedley, Parlier, Selma, and Fowler. This initiative focuses on economic development and roadway improvement related to increasing traffic capacity and efficiency. No visual/aesthetic guidelines are included in this initiative.



8.3.4.2 State

California Department of Transportation - State Scenic Highway Program

The State Scenic Highways program, a provision of the Streets and Highways code, was established by the Legislature in 1963 to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California (Caltrans, 1996). The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are listed either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. The status of a state scenic highway changes from “eligible” to “officially designated” when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives from Caltrans the designation. A city or county may propose adding routes with outstanding scenic elements to the list of eligible highway. Further action on the part of the local municipalities is required officially designate this highway.

No eligible or designated state scenic highways are located within the project viewshed.

8.3.4.3 Local

Local planning policies and documents that could be applicable to visual quality are discussed below and are summarized in Tables 8.3-5 through 8.3-9.

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan’s Open Space and Conservation Element, adopted in October 2000, addresses visual quality in terms of scenic resources and roadways. As background, the General Plan recognizes the county’s diverse landscape scenery which ranges from valley grassland to high mountains in terms of both its value both to the general quality of life in the county and the region’s economic vitality including an expanding tourism industry. A network of Designated Scenic Roadways, identified in the Open Space and Conservation Element, has been established as part of a program to manage the county’s scenic resources. A portion of East Manning Avenue east of South Frankwood Avenue in Reedley is considered a scenic drive, however, this is approximately seven miles away from the project site and not within its viewshed.

Section K and L of the General Plan’s Open Space and Conservation Element contain policies designed to protect the scenic resources of the county, including resources seen from roadways, and to ensure that new development enhances these resources.



Table 8.3-5 Applicable County General Plan Policies Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Fresno County General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element	Project Applicability/AFC Section Reference
Goal OS-K To conserve, protect and maintain the scenic quality of Fresno County and discourage development that degrades areas of scenic quality.	The KRCD CPP includes landscaping along the site perimeter and street frontage. It is consistent and compatible with the existing visual character found in the vicinity and will not degrade visual quality. See Section 8.3.3
Policy OS-K.1 The County shall encourage the preservation of outstanding scenic views, panoramas and vistas wherever possible.	The KRCD CPP conforms because it does not affect any outstanding scenic views. See Section 8.3.3
Goal OS-L.1 To conserve, protect and maintain the scenic quality of land and landscape adjacent to scenic roads in Fresno County.	The KRCD CPP conforms because it does not affect views from a county scenic roadway. See Section 8.3.4
Policy OS-1.1 The County designates a system of scenic roadways that includes landscaped drives, scenic drives and scenic highways.	The KRCD CPP conforms because it does not affect views from any county scenic roadways. See Section 8.3.4

Fresno County Zoning Ordinance (July 5, 1994)

The Fresno County Zoning Ordinance provided several provisions that are applicable to the KRCD CPP as follows:

- Section 845.5 Property Development Standards (M-3);
- Section 843.5 Property Development Standards (M-1); and
- Section 875 Electric Utilities And Services.

Of those, the code sections listed in Table 8.3-6 have been determined to be applicable to the visual resources analysis of the project.

Table 8.3-6 Applicable Fresno County Zoning Provisions Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
<p>Section 845.5 Property Development Standards (M-3).</p> <p>The following property development standards and those in Section 855 shall apply to all land and structures in the "M-3" District.</p> <p>The property development standards of the "M-1" District, Section 843.5, shall apply with the following exception: Building Height, None, except for advertising structures as provided in Section 843.5-D.</p> <p>Section 843.5 (H) Property Development Standards: Fences, Hedges And Walls.</p> <p>This section is intended to provide for the regulation of the height and location of fences, hedges and walls for the purpose of providing for light, air and privacy, and safeguarding the public welfare by preventing visual obstructions at street and highway intersections.</p> <p>1. Required Fences and Walls</p> <p>A six (6) foot high solid masonry wall shall be erected along the property line of an M-1 lot which is a district boundary between the M-1 District and any residential district.</p> <p>a. Where the district boundary is an interior side lot line, the required wall shall be reduced in height to three (3) feet within the front yard setback area.</p> <p>2. Permitted Fences, Hedges and Walls</p> <p>No requirements except:</p> <p>a. Fences, hedges and walls shall not exceed six (6) feet in height in any required interior side or rear yard.</p> <p>b. Fences, hedges and walls shall not exceed three (3) feet in height in any required street front, side or rear yard.</p> <p>3. Corner Cutoff Areas</p> <p>The following regulations shall apply to all intersections of streets, alleys, or private driveways in order to provide adequate visibility for vehicular traffic. There shall no visual obstruction within the cut-off areas established herein.</p> <p>a. There shall be a corner cut-off area at all intersecting streets or highways. The cut-off line shall be in a horizontal plane, making an angle of forty-five (45) degrees, with the side, front, or rear property line, as the case may be. It shall pass through the points located on both the side and front (or rear) property lines at a distance of thirty (30) feet from the intersection of such lines at the corner of a street or highway.</p> <p>b. There shall be a corner cut-off area on each side of any private driveway intersecting a street or alley. The cut-off line shall be in a horizontal plane, making an angle of forty-five (45) degrees with the side, front, or rear property line, as the case may be. They shall pass through a point not less than ten (10) feet from the edges of the driveway where it</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP conforms because it there are no building height restrictions.</p> <p>The KRCD CPP conforms because it is not adjacent to a residential district.</p> <p>The proposed KRCD CPP security fence conforms to the 6-foot-height limit.</p> <p>Driveway cutoffs meet requirements for providing visibility.</p>



Table 8.3-6 Applicable Fresno County Zoning Provisions Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
<p>intersects the street or alley right-of-way.</p> <p>d. Where due to an irregular lot shape, a line at a forty-five (45) degree angle does not provide for intersection visibility, said corner cut-off shall be defined by a line drawn from a point on the front (or rear) property line that is not less than thirty (30) feet from the intersection of the side and front (or rear) property lines.</p>	<p>See Chapter 2, Project Description</p>
<p>Section 875 Electric Utilities And Services Section 875 – Electric Utilities and Services. Outlines a formal means by which the county shall review and comment on electric transmission facilities and electric utility facilities which are subject to approval by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) or the CEC.</p>	<p>KRCD, as a local agency, is not required to comply with city or county building or zoning ordinances.</p> <p>See Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture</p>
<p>Section 875(E) Electric Utilities And Services: Action By The Director</p> <p>1. The Director shall review the proposed electric transmission facility or electric utility facility for compatibility with all adopted plans, existing zoning and land use. The Director may, when in the public interest, recommend such modifications as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare.</p> <p>2. The Director shall prepare a report of all findings, including support for recommended modifications. Support for recommended modifications, based upon the premise that the location should provide the greatest public good and least private injury, shall give consideration to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community values. b. Recreational and park areas. c. Historical and aesthetic values. d. Influence on environment 	<p>The project proposes the installation of landscaping including deciduous and evergreen trees at the project site. The landscape plan incorporates material from the Fresno County Master Tree List. As part of the site landscape concept, trees will be installed along portions of the northern, eastern, southern and western site perimeter. The site design also includes a landscaped berm along the project street frontage. The proposed landscaping and site design responds appropriately to aesthetic factors and values.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.3</p>

City of Parlier General Plan, 1998

The City of Parlier General Plan elements updated in 1998 were reviewed for their pertinence to the KRCD CPP. These elements include Economic Development, Land Use, Circulation, and Housing. The General Plan is not comprehensively updated. The City of Parlier General Plan has several policies within its Land Use Element that are applicable to the project. Of those, the

code sections listed in Table 8.3-7 have been determined to be applicable to the visual resources analysis of the project. The KRCD CPP project site is located in Fresno County and outside the boundaries of the City of Parlier; however for informational purposes, applicable general plan requirements are listed.

Table 8.3-7 Applicable Parlier General Plan Provisions Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
<p>Land Use Element <u>4.5 Industrial Land Use</u> <u>Objective</u> A. Promote industrial sites which are functional have adequate public services and have access to major streets and railroads. <u>Policies, Standards</u> 4. Ensure that industrial development creates no significant off-site impacts concerning access and circulation, noise dust, odors, visual features, and hazardous materials that cannot be adequately mitigated.</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP will not cause significant off-site impacts including noise, dust, odors, or visual features.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.3, Section 8.1, Air Quality, and Section 8.2, Noise</p>
<p>5. Major streets which pass through industrial areas and serve as entrances to the City shall receive special design treatment to reduce aesthetic impacts and traffic concerns. Measures for industrially zoned parcels shall be as follows: (a) The minimum building setback from the right-of-way line shall be 40 feet.</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP has a 70-foot setback from the roadway.</p> <p>See Chapter 2, Project Description and Figure 8.3-11</p>
<p>(b) There shall be a minimum 10-foot landscaped area adjacent to the right-of-way.</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP includes a 70-foot landscaped buffer along the right-of-way.</p> <p>See Figure 8.3-11 and Section 8.3.3</p>
<p>(c) The number of driveway approaches shall not be greater than two for individual parcels; efforts should be made to consolidate driveways along the common property boundaries, where possible</p>	<p>There is one main driveway to be used to enter the project site.</p> <p>See Chapter 2, Project Description and Figure 2-1</p>
<p>(d) Signs shall be low profile and non-rotating.</p>	<p>The project includes a low-profile, monument style sign at the entry drive.</p> <p>See Chapter 2, Project Description</p>
<p><u>Objective</u> Protect residential areas from intrusion by industrial uses. <u>Policies, Standards</u> 1. Industrial land in close proximity to residential areas shall be planned for light industry.</p>	<p>While a rural residence is across the street from the project, the area is primarily a vineyard. No planned residential areas are located in close proximity to the project.</p> <p>See Section 8.4, Land Use and Agriculture</p>

Table 8.3-7 Applicable Parlier General Plan Provisions Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
<p>2. Development standards between industrial properties and residential uses shall be as follows:</p> <p>a) Where properties planned for industry abut properties planned for residential uses, the minimum set back for any new industrial building shall be 75 feet.</p> <p>b) On properties planned for industry, a landscaped setback 20 feet wide containing deciduous and evergreen trees shall be planted and maintained along the property line abutting property planned for residential uses and along abutting local streets.</p> <p>c) A masonry wall a minimum of six feet in height shall be erected along the property line between properties planned for industry and properties planned for residential uses.</p> <p>d) A masonry wall three and on-half feet in height, an earth berm three and one-half feet in height, or any combination of wall and berm shall be erected along the setback line 20 feet from and parallel with local streets abutting residential uses.</p> <p>f) Exterior area lighting for industrial buildings, parking areas, garages, access drives, and loading areas, shall be low profile, hooded, and directed away from abutting property planned for residential use.</p>	<p>The plant structures will be set back from South Bethel Avenue approximately 70 feet from the roadway. An 8 to 10 foot tall approximately 70 feet wide earthen berm along the South Bethel Avenue frontage will include a variety of trees and shrubs is proposed as a landscape buffer. There are no planned residential uses along the property lines.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.3</p>

City of Selma General Plan 1997

Although the KRCD CPP is located approximately one mile from the City of Selma, some elements of the General Plan include the area up to the intersection of South Bethel and East Manning avenues, therefore a discussion of applicable portions of the Selma General Plan is included. Applicable general plan provisions are provided in Table 8.3-8.

Table 8.3-8 Applicable Selma General Plan Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Applicability/ AFC Section Reference
<p>Circulation Element Gateways and Scenic Corridors. This includes East Manning Avenue which “may also serve as a gateway through the community as development progresses in this direction” (p. 10).</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP will not substantially alter views from Manning Avenue.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.4</p>

City of Selma City Code 2006,

As previously noted, the KRCD CPP project site is located in Fresno County and outside the boundaries of the City of Selma; however, for informational purposes, applicable industrial zoning requirements are listed. Applicable code provisions are provided in Table 8.3-9.

Table 8.3-9 Applicable Selma City Code Pertinent to Visual Quality KRCD CPP	
Provision	Project Conformance
<p>Title IX: Public Ways and Property 9-4-2: PERMISSION TO PLANT TREES: No trees or shrubs shall hereafter be planted in or removed from any public parking strip or other public place in the city without the permission from the director of public works. (Ord. 472, 11-1-1954; amd. Ord. 852, 2-22-1983)</p>	<p>No trees will be removed from the parking strip.</p> <p>See Chapter 2, Project Description</p>
<p>9-4-3: STREET TREE PLAN: All trees and shrubs hereafter planted in any public parking strip or other public place in the city shall conform as to species and location with the recommendation of the Saratoga horticultural foundation or to the street tree plan of the city which are hereby made a part of this chapter. (Ord. 472, 11-1-1954)</p>	<p>As the KRCD CPP is within an unincorporated part of Fresno County, all trees selected for the planting plan conform to the Fresno County Master Tree List. Shrubs are drought tolerant species appropriate to the local setting.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.3</p>
<p>9-4-4: PROHIBITED TREES: It shall be unlawful to plant in any public parking strip the following trees: Acacia, Elm, Tree of Heaven, Black Walnut, Palm, Conifers, Eucalyptus, Poplar, Sycamore.</p> <p>It shall be unlawful to plant willow, cottonwood or poplar trees anywhere in the City unless the Director of Public Works approves the site as one where the tree roots will not interfere with a public sewer. (Ord. 472, 11-1-54; amd. Ord. 852, 2-22-83)</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP does not propose planting any of the prohibited trees in the parking strip. Willow, cottonwood, or poplar trees are not proposed for project landscaping.</p> <p>See Section 8.3.3</p>
<p>TITLE XI: ZONING CHAPTER 28: SIGN REGULATIONS 11-28-6-3: INDUSTRIAL SIGNS: (A) Freestanding Signs: Each industrial complex shall be permitted one freestanding sign per two hundred fifty feet (250') of street frontage or fraction thereof. The sign face area shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet and the overall sign height shall not exceed twenty feet (20'). Sign area shall not be exchanged between signs. (B) Wall Signs: Each freestanding industrial building shall be permitted one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage adjacent to a public street, parking area or access drive. Sign area may not be exchanged between walls. (Ord. 95-9, 8-7-95)</p>	<p>The KRCD CPP proposes two signs for over 500 feet of street frontage. These signs do not exceed size or height requirements. The KRCD CPP does not include wall signs.</p> <p>See Chapter 2, Project Description</p>

8.3.5 INVOLVED AGENCIES AND CONTACTS

Table 8.3-10 identifies agency contacts for the KRCD CPP.

Table 8.3-10 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts KRCD CPP		
Agency	Contact, Title and Email	Telephone
County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning	William M. Kettler Principal Staff Analyst wkettler@co.fresno.ca.us	(559) 262-4242



Table 8.3-10 Involved Agencies and Agency Contacts KRCDD CPP		
Agency	Contact, Title and Email	Telephone
Development Services Division 2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor Fresno, CA 93721		
Parlier Planning Department 1100 East Parlier Avenue Parlier, CA 93648	Bruce O'Neill City Planner b.oneal@comcast.net	(559) 646-3545
Selma Community Development Department City Hall Annex 1710 Tucker Street Selma, CA 93662	Bryant Hemby City Planner bryanth@cityofselma.com	(559) 891-2209

8.3.6 REQUIRED PERMITS AND SCHEDULES

No specific visual resources permits are required, therefore no permit schedule is provided.

8.3.7 REFERENCES

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