4.1 AESTHETICS

This section describes existing aesthetic and visual resources of the project site. In particular, descriptions of existing visual characteristics, both on and in the vicinity of the project site, are presented, and potential project-related impacts to aesthetic and visual resources, such as increased light and glare or impacts to any scenic views, are evaluated based on analyses of photographs, site reconnaissance, and project data.

Data used for this section were obtained from various sources, including site photographs taken by PBS&J staff, the City of San Bernardino General Plan (SBGP) (City of San Bernardino 2005, November), previous environmental studies prepared for the project site, and other data sources. Full bibliographic entries for all referenced materials and communication are provided in Section 4.1.5 (References).

No comment letters related to aesthetics were received in response to the notice of preparation (NOP) circulated on August 3, 2007, for the proposed project.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

City of San Bernardino

The City of San Bernardino is located in the southwestern portion of San Bernardino County, which is surrounded by Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, Kern County, and Inyo County. The City lies at the southern base of the San Bernardino Mountains in the upper Santa Ana River Valley, more specifically, the Santa Ana River Basin. The valley is surrounded by the San Bernardino Mountains to the northeast and east, Blue Mountain and Box Springs Mountain to the south and the San Gabriel Mountains and the Jurupa Hills to the northwest and southwest, respectively. Major freeways traversing the City include SR-259, I-210, SR-330, SR-18, I-215, and I-10 Freeways. The City of San Bernardino encompasses an area that stretches from the 10 Freeway on the south to the Cajon Creek Wash and the San Bernardino Mountains on the north.

The topography of the City varies from hills and canyons to the north to flat areas towards the southwest. Significant natural features that define the City of San Bernardino include the steep mountains, deep canyons, wide alluvial plains, a flat valley floor, the Santa Ana River, Lytle Creek, and other streams and rivers. The City's General Plan Conservation Element identifies the following areas, as areas that could benefit from sensitive treatment of the land; Kendall Hills, San Bernardino Mountain, the hillsides adjacent to Arrowhead Springs, Lytle Creek Wash, East Twin Creeks Wash, the Santa Ana River, Badger Canyon, Bailey Canyon, and Waterman Canyon. The proposed project site is not located within any of the areas identified.

Visitors typically view the City from major freeways and along arterials. Two roadways within the City have been nominated for official Scenic Highway status. The portions of State Route 30 south of the 330

and State Route 330 that pass through the City are designated as Eligible Scenic Highways. Historic US Route 66 parallels the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks west of the project site.

Project Site

The project site consists of a large, vacant lot in an area of northern San Bernardino. The project site is not located within a designated viewshed, nor is it located near an eligible or designated State Scenic Highway. The project site is bounded to the northeast by Interstate 215 (I-215), to the northwest by Palm Avenue, and to the south by Industrial Parkway. Figure 4.1-1 (Aerial View of the Project Site and Surroundings) is an aerial view of the project site and area.

The proposed project site is on the north side of Industrial Parkway, just east of the intersection of Palm Avenue. Development along Industrial Parkway consists primarily of newer industrial uses, set back from the roadway by sidewalks, landscaping, parking lots and other forms of screening. This development is located to the south and east of the project site. Several flat, undeveloped parcels are located to the southwest and west of the project site. The terrain of this area is mostly flat, with slight slopes. Natural features within this area are limited to the two hills located on the project site.

There are two hills on the property, the larger at the southern end of the site. The project site is approximately 1,500 feet above mean sea level. The San Bernardino Mountains can be seen from the property looking north and east. The property does not block views of the mountains from residents or motorists on I-215, as these locations are to the north and east of the property. The only views of the mountains that could be disrupted by the proposed project are those from the uses located on the opposite side of Industrial Parkway, southwest of the site; however, the presence of the two on-site hills and the I-215 located on an elevated berm currently limits background views of the surrounding mountains from the south.

Adjacent Land Uses

The project site is presently surrounded by a variety of uses:

- **North:** I-215 is northeast of the project site. Beyond I-215 uses include various commercial businesses and a large residential community. The on-ramp to the southbound I-215 runs directly north of the project site. A Denny's Restaurant and gas station are northwest of the project site, on Palm Avenue. The land north of Palm Avenue is vacant. The lot at the southeast corner of Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway (northwest of the project site) is vacant and currently for sale.
- **East:** I-215 runs along the northeast boundary of the project site. Directly east of I-215, approximately 500 feet from the project site, is the residential community of Verdemont. The hills that currently occupy the project site are visible from the residential community.
- **South:** Directly south of Industrial Parkway is both vacant property and newer industrial development. Historic Route 66 and railroad tracks lie beyond this development.
- **West:** Directly west of the project site, across Industrial Parkway, is an industrial development.

Source: Google Eart Pro, basemap, 2011; Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-1

Aerial View of Project Site and Surrounding Area

ATKINS

Ambient nighttime lighting in the project area includes street lighting along Industrial Parkway and Palm Avenue, vehicular traffic along project area roadways and I-215, and the residential areas north and east of the project site. Other light sources include the Denny's Restaurant and gas station to the north, and exterior security lighting associated with the businesses to the west and south of the project site.

Existing Views

The following figures and descriptions offer views of and from the project site. The photos were taken on October 1, 2010. Figure 4.1-2 (Photograph Key Map) provides a key to the locations from which the photographs were taken as well as their direction.

Views from the Northwest, Looking East and Southeast (Photos 1 and 2)

Photographs 1 and 2 illustrate views of the project site from the corner of Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway and from slightly south of the intersection. The existing Denny's restaurant, to the north of the project site, is on the other side of trees at the left of Photo 1, with the vacant lot for sale in the foreground. Photo 2 gives a view of the larger hill on the southern portion of the project site from Industrial Parkway, which runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the project site. Both photos show the limited vegetation and lack of development on site.

View from the Northwest, Looking South (Photo 3)

Photo 3 illustrates the view down Industrial Parkway from the intersection of Palm Avenue and industrial Parkway. The project site is on the left. The view shows the small amount of vegetation currently on the site, as well as the large hills that can be found on site.

View from Southbound I-215, Looking South (Photo 4)

Photo 4 shows a view from the southbound I-215 of the area south of the project site. The southern hill on the project site is visible in the right side of the photo. Development is shown on Industrial Parkway.

Views from the West, Looking East (Photo 5 and 6)

Photographs 5 and 6 were taken facing the site from Industrial Parkway. In Photo 5, the smaller of the two hills is shown on the left, with the beginning of the larger hill in the middle and right side of the photo. I-215 is visible beyond the site in the low points between the hills.

View from the West, Looking East (Photo 7)

Photo 7 is taken from Industrial Parkway east toward the site. I-215 is visible between the hills.

View from the South, Looking North (Photo 8)

This photo was taken on Industrial Parkway looking north at the project site. The Denny's sign (on Palm Avenue) is visible in the background beyond the site boundaries.

Source: Google Earth Pro, basemap, 2011; Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-2
Photograph Legend

ATKINS

Views from the South, Looking North (Photos 9 and 10)

Photo 9 shows the larger hill at the southern end of the project site and is taken from Industrial Parkway, south of the project site. New industrial development is visible in the left side of the photograph. Photo 10 is a similar view from farther south and also illustrates the flat vacant land to the south of the project site. The large hill is prominent in the middle of the photograph in this view.

Views from the North, Looking South (Photos 11 and 12)

Photo 11 depicts industrial development to the south of the project site on Industrial Parkway. Photo 11 shows similar industrial development on the west side of Industrial Parkway, with the southern portion of the project site visible in the left side of the photograph and the San Bernardino Mountains beyond.

Views from the Project Site looking West (Photos 13 and 14)

These photographs are taken from the project site at the corner of Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway, and show the Southern Pacific railroad in the middle ground. The current at-grade rail crossing is shown in the left portion of Photo 13.

Views from Kendall Drive Looking East and Southeast (Photos 15, 16 and 17)

These two photographs depict the residential and neighborhood commercial development on Kendall Drive on the east side of I-215 just south of Palm Avenue.

View from Kendall Drive Looking West across I-215 (Photo 18)

This photograph is taken from Kendall Drive on the east side of I-215. The elevated freeway is seen in the middle ground, as well as the signage for the businesses on Palm Avenue on the west side of the freeway. The project site is to the left, not visible in this photograph.

View from Project Site Looking Southeast to I-215 (Photo 19)This photograph was taken from the northern portion of the project site looking southeast toward the onramp to northbound I-215.

View Looking Northeast from Industrial Parkway (Photo 20)

This photograph from the west side of Industrial Parkway looks across the vacant land adjacent to the north boundary of the project site (the smaller of the two hills on the site appears in the right side of the photograph).

View Looking North from Project Site (Photos 21 and 22)

These views are from the southern portion of the project site northward. Cars traveling on I-215 to the east of the project site are visible in the middle ground.

***Source*:** Atkins, 2011.

Figure 4.1-3
Views 1 and 2

ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

Figure 4.1-4
Views 3 and 4

ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-5
Views 5 and 6

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-6
Views 7 and 8

ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-7
Views 9 and 10

ATKINS

View 11

View 12

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-8
Views 11 and 12

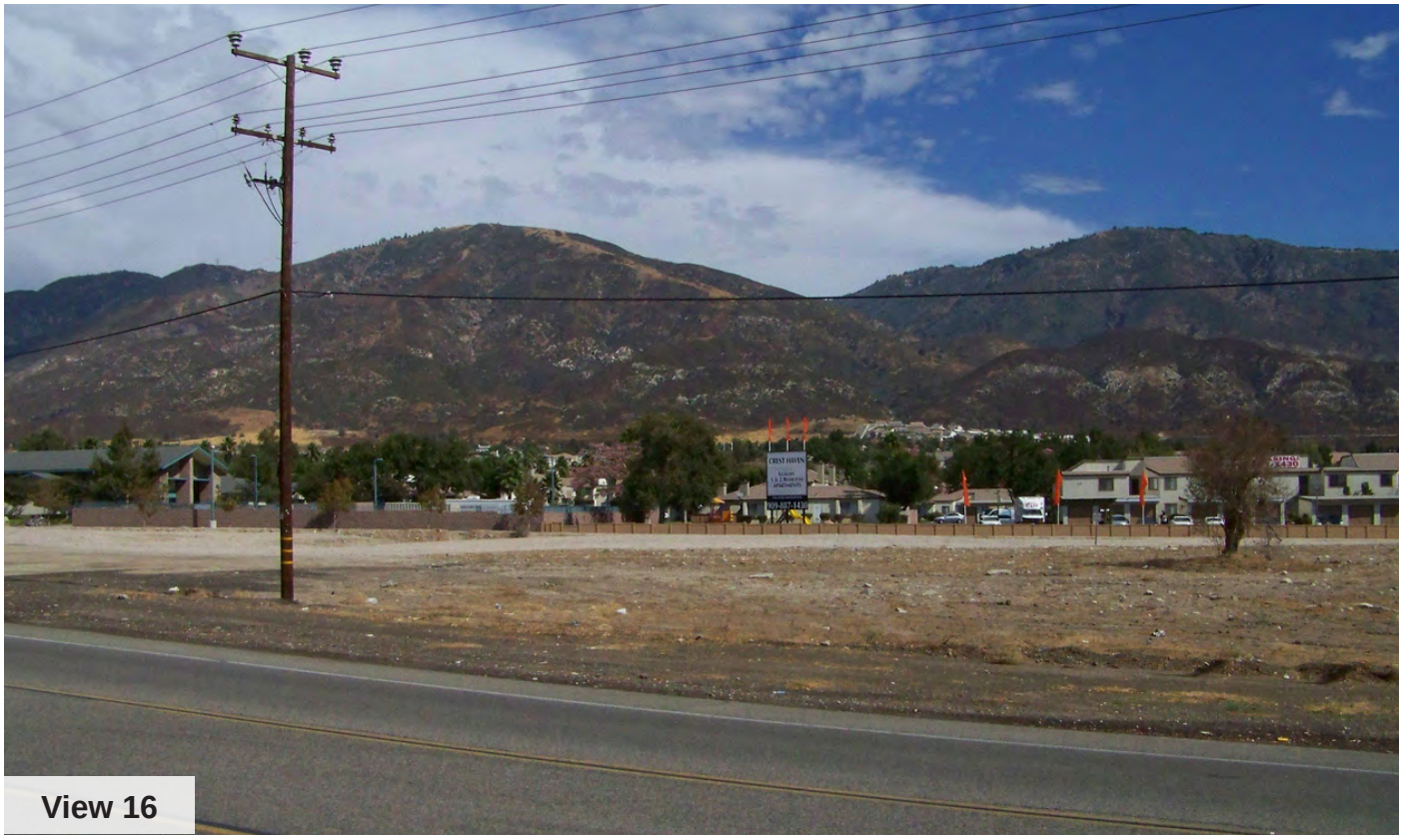
ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-9
Views 13 and 14

ATKINS



Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-10
Views 15 and 16

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-11
Views 17 and 18

ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-12
Views 19 and 20

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-13
Views 21 and 22

View Looking Southwest and West from west side of Kendall Drive (Photos 23 and 24)

These photographs were taken from the east side of Kendall Drive looking toward the project site across I-215.

View Looking Southeast across Kendall Drive (Photo 25)

This photograph was taken from Pine Avenue looking east toward the housing tract on the east side of Kendall just north of Pine Avenue.

View Looking West across Kendall Drive (Photos 26 and 27)

These photographs show the view from Kendall Drive and Pine Avenue looking across I-215 to the west. The larger of the two hills on the project site is visible in these photographs.

4.1.2 Regulatory Framework

Federal

There are no federal policies that would apply to aesthetics or visual resources for the proposed project.

State

There are no state policies that would apply to aesthetics or visual resources for the proposed project.

Regional

There are no regional policies that would apply to aesthetics or visual resources for the proposed project.

Local

City of San Bernardino General Plan

The City of San Bernardino General Plan is the guiding policy document for the planning area. The following goals, policies, or objectives pertaining to visual resources and aesthetics are identified in the San Bernardino General Plan:

Goal 2.2 Promote development that integrates with and minimizes impacts on surrounding land uses.

Policy 2.2.1 Ensure compatibility between land uses and quality design through adherence to the standards and regulations in the Development Code and policies and guidelines in the Community Design Element.

Policy 2.2.2 Require new uses to provide mitigation or buffers between existing uses where potential adverse impacts could occur, including as appropriate, decorative walls, landscape setbacks, restricted vehicular access, enclosure of parking structures to prevent sounds transmission, and control of lighting and ambient illumination.

Policy 2.2.4 Hillside development and development adjacent to natural areas shall be designed and landscaped to preserve natural features and habitat and protect structures from the threats from natural disasters, such as wildfires and floods.

Goal 2.5 Enhance the aesthetic quality of land uses and structures in San Bernardino.

Policy 2.5.4 Require that all new structures achieve a high level of architectural design and provide a careful attention to detail.

Policy 2.5.6 Require that new developments be designed to complement and not devalue the physical characteristics of the surrounding environment including consideration of:

a. The site's natural topography and vegetation;

b. Surrounding exemplary architectural design styles;

c. Linkages to pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian paths;

d. The use of consistent fencing and signage;

e. The provision of interconnecting greenbelts and community amenities, such as clubhouses, health clubs, tennis courts, and swimming pools;

f. The use of building materials, colors, and forms that contribute to a "neighborhood" character;

g. The use of extensive site landscaping;

h. The use of consistent and well designed street signage, building signage, and entry monumentation;

i. A variation in the setbacks of structures;

j. The inclusion of extensive landscape throughout the site and along street frontages;

k. The articulation of building facades to provide interest and variation by the use of offset planes and cubic volumes, building details, balconies, arcades, or recessed or projecting windows, and other techniques which avoid "box"-like structures;

l. The integration of exterior stairways into the architectural design;

m. The screening of rooftop mechanical equipment;

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-14
Views 23 and 24

View 25

View 26

Source: Atkins, 2011.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-15
Views 25 and 26

ATKINS

Source: Atkins, 2011.

Figure 4.1-16
View 27

ATKINS

n. The use of a consistent design through the use of unifying architectural design elements, signage, lighting, and pedestrian areas;

o. The provision of art and other visual amenities;

p. The inclusion of awnings, overhangs, arcades, and other architectural elements to provide protection from sun, rain, and wind; and

q. The location of parking at the rear, above, or below the ground floor of non-residential buildings to enhance pedestrian connectivity.

Goal 2.6 Control development and the use of land to minimize adverse impacts on significant natural, historic, cultural, habitat, and hillside resources.

Policy 2.6.1 Hillside development and development adjacent to natural areas shall be designed and sited to maintain the character of the City's significant open spaces and historic and cultural landmarks.

Goal 5.4 Ensure individual projects are well designed and maintained.

Policy 5.4.1 Aggressively apply and enforce citywide landscape and development standards in new and revitalized development throughout the City.

Goal 5.7 Develop attractive and safe commercial, office, and industrial projects that are creatively designed and intelligently sited.

Policy 5.7.3 Maintain architectural interest and variety through varied rooflines, building setbacks, and detailed façade treatments and maintain a strong sense of project identity through similarities in façade organization, signage, landscaping, material use, colors, and roof shapes.

Policy 5.7.4 The size, colors, type, materials, and design of signs shall be related to the scale of the building or development and its relation to the street.

Policy 5.7.6 Encourage architectural detailing, which includes richly articulated surfaces and varied facade treatment, rather than plain or blank walls.

Policy 5.7.7 Minimize the visual impact of surface parking lots by locating them behind buildings, away from the street or through perimeter and interior landscaping, berming, and small-scale fencing.

Policy 5.7.9 Ensure that the scale and massing of office, commercial, and industrial uses are sensitive to the context of surrounding residential development.

Policy 5.7.10 Lighting should provide for safety and to highlight features of the center but not shine directly onto neighboring properties or into the eyes of motorists.

Policy 5.7.11 Loading bays should be screened by walls and landscaping and oriented away from major streets and entries.

Goal 12.8 Preserve natural features that are characteristic of San Bernardino's Image

Policy 12.8.1 Carefully review new projects on properties that:

a. Contain sloping topography,

b. Provide limited abilities to provide infrastructure to new development based upon severely sloping terrain;

c. Provide natural vistas and views enjoyed by the community; or

d. Serve as landmark features within the City.

Policy 12.8.2 Condition and modify plans to preserve the City's natural features to the greatest extent possible.

Policy 12.8.3 Review grading, access, and site plans for new projects to ensure that they are sensitively designed to minimize impacts to the City's natural features.

City of San Bernardino Development Code

The City of San Bernardino Development Code specifies methods for implementing the goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan and addresses areas of regulation more typically contained in separate zoning and subdivision ordinances and in sections of the Municipal Code. The Development Code (Chapter 19.20) contains the specific standards to ensure that development will produce an urban environment of desirable character which is harmonious with the existing and future development, consistent with the General Plan. Specific provisions related to Design Considerations (Section 19.020.030.4), Glare (Section 19.02.020.11) and Lighting (Section 19.02.030.14) are included in this Section.

Section 19.20.030.4—Design Considerations

A. The proposed development shall be of a quality and character which is consistent with the community design goals and policies including but not limited to scale, height, bulk, materials, cohesiveness, colors, roof pitch, roof eaves and the preservation of privacy.

B. The design shall improve community appearance by avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition.

C. Proposed signage and landscaping shall be an integral architectural feature which does not overwhelm or dominate the structure or property.

D. Lighting shall be stationary and deflected away from all adjacent properties.

E. Mechanical equipment, storage, trash areas, and utilities shall be architecturally screened from public view.

F. With the intent of protecting sensitive land uses, the proposed design shall promote a harmonious and compatible transition in terms of scale and character between areas of different land uses.

Section 19.20.030.11—Glare

No glare incidental to any use shall be visible beyond any boundary line of the parcel.

Section 19.20.030.14—Lighting

Exterior lighting shall be energy efficient and shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are contained within the boundaries of the parcel, and shall be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way. No lighting shall blink, flash, or be unusually high in intensity or brightness. All lighting fixtures shall be appropriate in scale, intensity, and height to the use it is serving. Security lighting shall be provided at all entrances/exits.

Consistency Analysis

The proposed project is intended to create a well-designed, high-quality distribution center in an industrial area of northern San Bernardino. As shown above, the General Plan and Development Code provide a number of policies aiming to improve the overall visual quality of city developments as well as seamless integration with surrounding developments. The proposed project is designed to be consistent with policies contained in the General Plan, including those related to visual resources. The proposed project calls for the development of the currently vacant 38.4-acre site on the corner of Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway. Some of the land surrounding the proposed site is vacant and undeveloped, and several parcels across Industrial Parkway are developed with newer industrial facilities. The proposed project is designed to be compatible with adjacent uses, and would provide screening walls, building articulation, landscaping, and fencing as appropriate and required by local design guidelines and regulations to soften the appearance of the structure as well as to screen any undesirable views. All design standards for the project would comply with City requirements for setbacks, height limitations, density, landscaping, open space, lighting, and architectural features to ensure a pleasing appearance. Therefore, the proposed development would not conflict with the policies set forth by the City of San Bernardino.

4.1.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Analytic Method

The analysis of visual impacts focuses on the nature and magnitude of changes to the visual character of the project site as a result of the proposed project, including the visual compatibility of the proposed development with existing adjacent uses, and vantage points where visual changes would be evident.

The analysis of aesthetics and visual quality in this EIR focuses primarily on the proposed structural development and plan layout. Vantage points and associated view points were chosen for analysis based on locations of existing vantage points that would be affected by the proposed development. Visual change that is compatible with existing patterns of development with respect to height, massing, setbacks, and architecture or form would not be considered a significant impact on the environment; a

significant impact would occur where the proposed project would introduce structures or elements that are out of scale or context to the existing development, or where scenic resources would be damaged or destroyed. In addition, impacts as a result of the introduction of new sources of light and glare are analyzed.

Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the 2011 CEQA Guidelines and City-specific thresholds, where applicable. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on aesthetic and visual resources if it would:

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

Effects related to the following thresholds were found to have "no impact," and are discussed in Section 4.14 (Effects Not Found to Be Significant):

- 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

Less-Than-Significant Impacts

Threshold	Would implementation of the proposed project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Impact 4.1-1 **Construction activities under the proposed project could degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. This is a potentially significant impact. Implementation of mitigation measures MM4.1-1 and MM4.1-2 would reduce this impact to *less than significant*.**

The project site would be prepared, excavated, and graded to accommodate the new building foundation. During grading for development, views of disturbed soils, stockpiles, construction materials and equipment would be visible from I-215 as well as the neighboring businesses to the northwest and the nearby industrial businesses to the south and east. Over-excavation and recompaction of near-surface soils underlying the project site could occur during grading to provide appropriate soil characteristics for support of the structure. Grading would be substantial, as large hills are presently located on site and would require removal and export of 200,000 cubic yards of soil. The remainder of excavated soil would be balanced on site. Construction workers and equipment would be parked and staged within the project site on vacant areas or on the future building pad and parking areas.

Construction activities associated with infrastructure improvements would also occur on the project site and in areas adjacent to the project site. Specific activities would generally include demolition (scraping and/or cutting) of existing asphalt and concrete, actual construction of the infrastructure improvements,

including re-paving roadways and re-pouring concrete median and sidewalk elements, and potential addition or replacement of signals and other infrastructure. In the case of water line and sewer connections, trenching would also be necessary to access the existing lines to which the project infrastructure would connect.

Visual impacts associated with construction activities would include exposed pads and staging areas for grading, excavation, and construction equipment. In addition, temporary structures could be located on the project site during various stages of demolition or construction, within materials storage areas, or associated with construction debris piles on site. Exposed trenches, roadway bedding (soil and gravel), spoils/debris piles, and possibly steel plates would be visible for the proposed utilities infrastructure improvements. However, the surrounding area is in various stages of development, with construction activities ongoing in the project site's general vicinity, and construction activities are short term. Therefore, construction activities associated with the proposed project would not represent a degradation of the visual character of the area.

Although these activities would take place primarily on and immediately adjacent to the project site, these visual impacts could affect surrounding land uses. As noted in Chapter 3 (Project Description), as a result of the San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG) grade separation project on Palm Avenue just west of the project site, the grade of the intersection of Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway will be raised 9 feet compared to its current elevation. The building pad for the proposed project would occupy a level plane from that elevation point southward. Therefore, the finished grade for the building would be lower compared to Industrial Parkway at its northern end than at its southern end, as the grade from the intersection slopes 53 feet downward to the S-curve at the southern boundary of the project site. The finished grade for the building would be approximately 53 feet above Industrial Parkway and approximately level with the grade of I-215 at its southern end, with the grade differential diminishing for Industrial Parkway diminishing to near 0 as one travels north on that street, and increasing on I-215 to 25 feet as one travels north on I-215. The proposed project would include an office area, with a cross-dock loading configuration. In addition, the proposed project would include an 8-foot wrought-iron fence around the perimeter, a guard shack at the entry on Industrial Parkway. Two 8-foot screenwalls would be constructed on the west side of the truck yard on both sides of the building. Approximately 12 percent of the project site would be landscaped. Automobiles traveling along I-215 and along Palm Avenue and Industrial Parkway would have short-term views of the project site and adjacent street areas during construction activities. Mitigation measures MM4.2-1 and MM4.2-2 would reduce visual impacts from construction by requiring the contractor to provide for appropriate staging of construction equipment, maintain the cleanliness of such equipment, and provide temporary visual screening as appropriate.

MM4.1-1 *Construction contractors shall strictly control the staging of construction equipment and the cleanliness of construction equipment stored or driven beyond the limits of the construction work area as a means of minimizing temporary degradation of the visual character of surrounding areas and the associated impact to aesthetics. Construction workers and equipment shall be parked and staged within the project site on vacant areas. Prior to completion of final plans and specifications, the City of San Bernardino shall review the plans and specifications to ensure that all construction vehicles and equipment shall be parked in designated staging areas when not in use. Vehicles shall be kept clean and free of mud and dust before leaving the project site.*

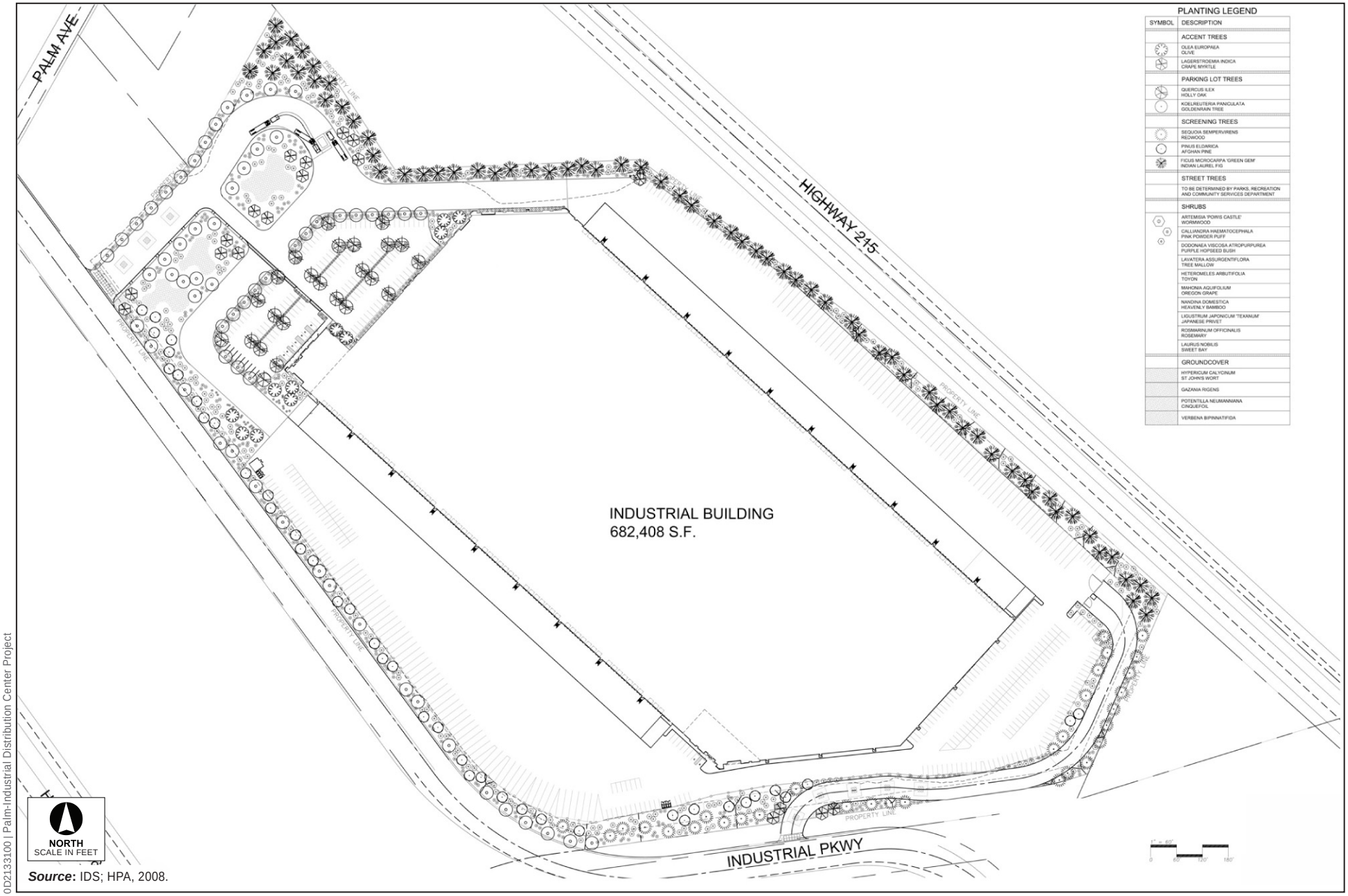
MM4.1-2 *Construction contractors shall provide temporary screening from public view of the site, around construction work areas, for all improvements that require grading during construction and enhancement, as a means of minimizing the temporal effects to the visual character of the surrounding area and the associated impacts to aesthetics.*

Implementation of these mitigation measures would require screening of construction work areas, appropriate staging of construction equipment away from public view, and routine cleaning of construction equipment so mud and dirt are not spread onto adjacent streets when equipment exits the project site. These measures would ensure that adverse visual impacts from construction activities would be minimized. Any adverse visual conditions from construction would be temporary visual distractions typically associated with construction activities and commonly encountered in developed areas, and would, therefore, be considered ***less than significant***.

Impact 4.1-2 **Operation of the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing visual character and/or quality of the site and its surroundings. This is considered a *less-than-significant* impact.**

Development of the proposed project would convert 38.4 acres of vacant land to an industrial use. The proposed development would remove the existing on-site features, mainly two large hills, to develop a 678,275 sf distribution center. The proposed distribution center would be consistent with the community design goals (Design Considerations, City of San Bernardino Development Code) and would be compatible with existing industrial development around the project site. As can be seen in Figure 4.1-1 through Figure 4.1-16, surrounding land uses are predominantly industrial, with two commercial developments northwest of the proposed project. All residential areas are separated from the proposed project by I-215. Visual quality impacts between the proposed development and existing adjacent land uses are not anticipated to occur. The visual quality of the project site would resemble the surrounding development (e.g., similar building massing and land uses), and would include a landscaped buffer and screen walls which would serve as a visual barrier between the structure, adjacent development and roadways as displayed in Figure 4.1-17 (Conceptual Landscaping Plan).

The 678,275 sf facility would be 40 feet tall from base to the top of parapet along the west and east elevations. As noted, above, the finished grade for the building would be lower compared to Industrial Parkway at its northern end than at its southern end, as the grade from the intersection slopes 53 feet downward to the S-curve at the southern boundary of the project site. The finished grade for the building would be approximately 53 feet above Industrial Parkway and approximately level with the grade of I-215 at its southern end, with the grade differential diminishing for Industrial Parkway diminishing to near 0 as one travels north on that street, and increasing on I-215 to 25 feet as one travels north on I-215. The parapet would screen all rooftop equipment. Because of the slope of Industrial Parkway and the proposed grading plan, the warehouse facility would be at a higher elevation than adjacent development. However, as the surrounding developments are predominantly industrial and would not be considered sensitive receptors, the height and massing of the proposed project structure would be considered compatible and harmonious with the scale and character of the project area and industrial uses in the vicinity. Also, landscaping is proposed on 12 percent of the project site to soften and buffer views of the proposed development. Spatial buffering would be provided for the adjacent commercial businesses to the northwest and I-215 pursuant to all City of San Bernardino codes and



Source: IDS; HPA, 2008.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-17

Conceptual Landscaping Plan

ATKINS

regulations, and the incorporation of landscaping along the perimeter and within the project site would provide an additional visual enhancement to the site. The project would include an 8-foot wrought iron fence around the perimeter, with wrought iron swing gates at the project site entrances. Six-foot high concrete trash enclosures would be supplied to screen all outdoor trash receptacles. Along the north side of the property, adjacent to I-215, a screenwall would be provided 8 feet in height to screen views of tractor-trailers utilizing the property. This screenwall would be articulated and textured per City regulations, and a landscaped buffer would be provided on the exterior to further soften the wall's appearance from I-215 and residential uses beyond to the north. Eight-foot screenwalls would also be provided at the western ends of the truck yards on both sides of the structure to provide a visual barrier to loading/unloading activities.

Even though the proposed project would represent a new and more intensive use of the site, operational activities would be shielded from view. Rooftop equipment would be screened by a parapet surrounding the perimeter of the roof, and screenwalls would be utilized to provide a visual barrier to outdoor operation activities. Although the visual quality of project site would be visually compatible with surrounding uses, development on the project site would require the removal of on-site hills and the construction of a distribution center on a plot of land previously undeveloped. Any development on the site would result in a significant change to the visual character of the project site; from an undeveloped lot with its natural topography intact, to a developed site with none of its distinct landforms remaining.

However, as the project site is designated as industrial by the San Bernardino General Plan, the proposed project would be consistent with this designation, and changes in the visual character and quality of the site are considered compatible with surrounding uses and the intended uses on the project site.

With regard to change in landform and the associated visual impact, the project would result in a significant change from the existing topography of the site to a leveled condition. Visual simulations have been prepared (see Figure 4.1-18 [View from the I-215 Traveling Westbound], Figure 4.1-19 [View along Industrial Parkway Traveling North], and Figure 4.1-20 [View from the Eastbound I-215]) that depict simulated views of the site with the project from I-215 and Industrial Parkway, respectively. Figure 4.1-21 (Cross-Section Views) depicts cross-section views across I-215 from the east and across Industrial Parkway from the west. The views of the project site from I-215 and the residential uses beyond could be considered sensitive views (views from Industrial Parkway, which is central to existing industrial development, would not be considered sensitive).

View A (Figure 4.1-18) offers a simulated view of the project from I-215 traveling westbound, because of the elevation of the freeway, the proposed structure would not sit at freeway grade; rather, the building pad would be below freeway grade, with the result that only a portion of the warehouse would be readily visible from I-215, as depicted in Figure 4.1-18. Instead of views of hills and scrub vegetation on site that currently exist from I-215, at least part of the warehouse structure would be visible, which could be considered a change in the visual character of the site. However, the existing on-site hills only represent a small component of the view available from I-215. The proposed warehouse structure would be visually consistent with the existing industrial development visible along the south side of I-215 through this segment of highway. Furthermore, views of the distant San Bernardino Mountains would continue to be

Source: IDS; HPA, 2008.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-18

View from the I-215 Traveling Westbound

ATKINS

Source: IDS; HPA, March 2008.

0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-19

View along Industrial Parkway Traveling North

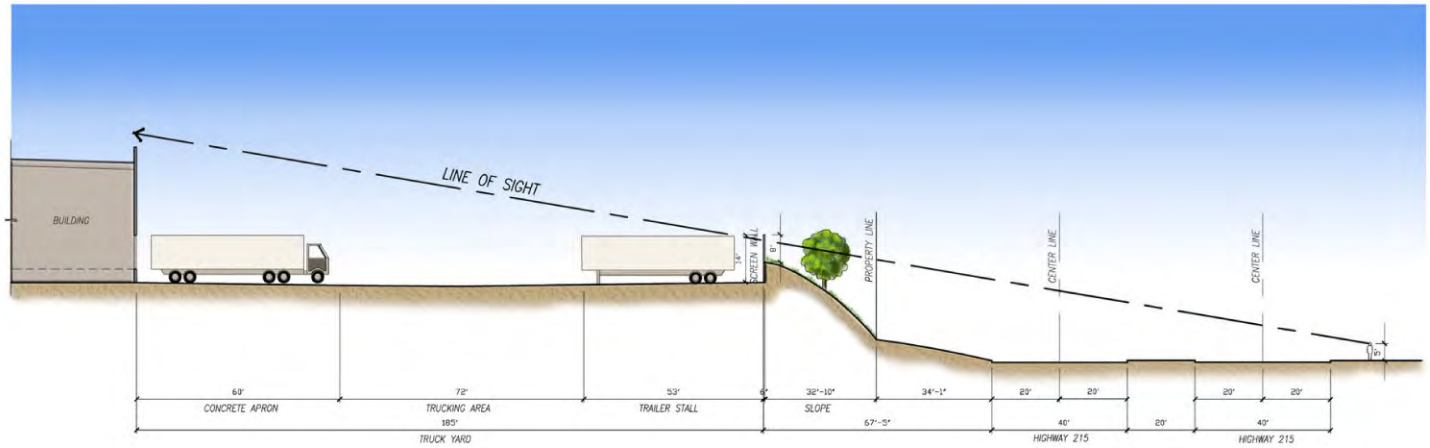
ATKINS

Source: IDS; HPA, 2008.

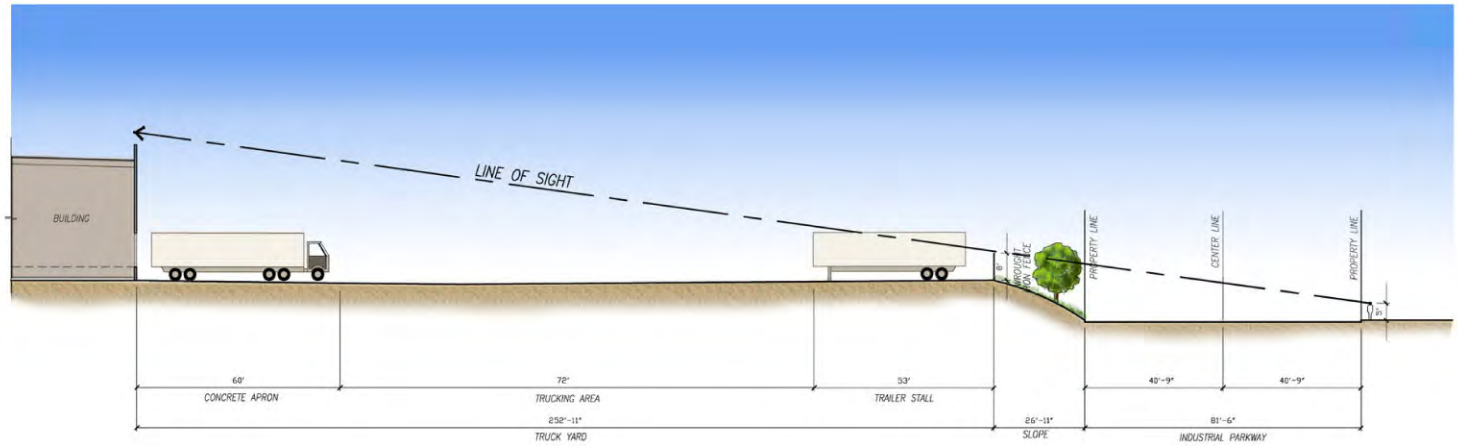
0D2133100 | Palm-Industrial Distribution Center Project

Figure 4.1-20
View from the Eastbound I-215

ATKINS



Section Thru Truckyard and Highway 215 @ East Side (A)
scale: 1" = 20'-0"



Section Thru Truckyard and Industrial Parkway @ West Side (B)
scale: 1" = 20'-0"

Source: IDS; HPA, March 2008.

Figure 4.1-21
Cross Section Views

ATKINS

the dominant visual feature as seen from the I-215. Background views of the valley would continue to be partially obstructed from uses northeast of I-215.

The structure's pad would be elevated 53 feet above the Industrial Parkway grade at the southern boundary of the site. Along Industrial Parkway traveling north (View B, Figure 4.1-19), the structure would be partially shielded by an 8-foot wrought-iron fence and a vegetative buffer. The vegetative buffer surrounding the warehouse would be similar to the Parkway's existing landscaping and would allow for an easy transition from undeveloped land to the new distribution center. As seen in View B, views of the mountains in the horizon would remain available. The structure would not significantly disrupt the overall visual quality of the surroundings and would be compatible with adjacent development, which consists of similar uses.

View C (Figure 4.1-20) simulates the view of the distribution center from the eastbound I-215, existing commercial uses, specifically the Denny's Restaurant and the Gas Station on Palm Avenue. Beyond these commercial lots, further east, the warehouse would be situated on a higher elevation than other development on Industrial Parkway. Although the structure would be taller than the identified land uses, it would be consistent with the general character of this segment of highway. No existing views from I-215 from this vantage point would be disrupted.

Whether the removal of hills and the new development represent a substantial adverse change is subjective and varies by viewer. General Plan policies promote development that integrates with and minimizes impacts on surrounding land uses and enhances the aesthetic quality of land uses and structures in San Bernardino. General Plan policies further encourage development of attractive and safe commercial, office, and industrial projects that are creatively designed and intelligently sited, as noted, above. Other goals and policies in the General Plan encourage preservation of significant topographical features.

While the proposed project would result in substantial changes to the existing landforms on the site, altering the visual character of the project site, these hills would not be considered a natural feature that contributes to San Bernardino's image. The San Bernardino Mountains, as the dominant topographical feature in the area, would remain visible to the east from a wide range of viewpoints. As described in the General Plan, hillsides and other visual resources that provide natural vistas and views enjoyed by the community should be preserved. However, because the natural terrain of the area surrounding the project site has been altered and replaced with urban development, replacement of the on-site hills with industrial development would not substantially change the character of the project area, and would not substantially degrade the quality of a natural vista or view. Project landscaping and thoughtful site design, as well as the differences in elevation, would soften structures and provide visual interest. The impact on the visual quality and character of the project site would, therefore, be ***less than significant***.

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

Impact 4.1-3 **Implementation of the proposed project would create a new source of substantial light or glare that could adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This is a potentially significant impact. Project requirements PR4.1A, PR4.1B, and PR4.1C would reduce this impact to a *less-than-significant* level.**

Glare from headlights and spill light from lighting fixtures are the two major causes of ambient light pollution that could generate potential adverse impacts. Glare occurs when our eyes see a bright object against a dark background (such as when we experience oncoming headlights while driving) and spill light is caused by misdirected light. These new sources of glare could affect daytime views from adjacent land uses.

This analysis assesses spill light and obtrusive light and glare that might be associated with the proposed project's security, parking, and interior lighting.

The following terms are used in this discussion:

- *Spill light*—The light emitted from an installation that falls outside the boundaries of the property on which the lighting system is installed
- *Obtrusive light*—Spill light that causes annoyance, discomfort, distraction, or a reduction in the ability to see essential information such as traffic signals
- *Glare*—The discomfort or impairment of vision experienced when the image is excessively bright in relation to the general surroundings
- *Foot-candle*—The recognized international unit for the measure of light (luminance) falling onto a surface

Spill light can be accurately calculated and the effects of spill light can be measured for general understanding and comparison. The effects of obtrusive light are, however, the subject of debate and technical discussion throughout the lighting community. Attempts have been made to quantify obtrusive light, but this has proven to be difficult, as individuals have a range of reactions to the perceived effects of lighting on the environment. Typical nighttime street lighting requirements are 1 to 3 foot-candles, which is considered to be unobtrusive.

A typical example of glare effects is the car headlight. When viewed directly in front of a vehicle with the headlights on full beam, vision is impaired, resulting in disabling glare. However, when viewed from the side, the same headlights would not impair vision.

The following are examples of light levels, expressed in foot-candles:

- Bright and sunny day: 3,000 foot-candles
- Professional baseball-field lighting: 300 foot-candles
- Office: 50 to 75 foot-candles

- Residential lighting at night: 7 to 10 foot-candles
- Main road junction street lighting: 2.5 to 3.0 foot-candles
- Bright moonlight: 0.1 foot-candle

Night illumination of outdoor areas can affect people in several ways. For example, where intense lighting is viewed against a dark background, the contrast attracts the attention of the viewer and could be considered annoying. Under low-light conditions, the human eye adjusts to the brightest light within the field of view. If the range of light intensity to which the eye is exposed is large, the eye will be relatively insensitive to the more dimly lighted areas within the field of view. In addition, increased illumination can affect the suitability of sleeping areas, use of outdoor areas at natural light levels, and privacy. The degree of impacts may be related to the degree of change from the illumination levels to which people have become accustomed.

Implementation of the proposed project would include a distribution center that would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The project site is located next to a Denny's Restaurant and gas station. The Denny's Restaurant, which is open 24 hours a day, has the potential for all-night customers. Therefore, existing lighting to the northwest of the project site exists 24 hours a day, similar to what would occur from the proposed project's interior illumination. The proposed project would be visible to patrons through the windows of Denny's Restaurant.

Security lighting around the building, driveways, guard shacks, and parking area would be visible from various points of view in the surrounding areas 24 hours a day. Because the project site is not currently lit, this lighting would increase the nighttime ambient light in the project area. The previously mentioned Denny's Restaurant and gas station to the northwest, along with existing industrial development located across Industrial Parkway and I-215, would not be considered sensitive receptors, as they create their own nighttime illumination with security and interior lighting. In addition, vehicle headlights from motorists on I-215 provide ambient illumination.

Vehicles exiting the site during nighttime hours could cast light towards adjacent uses. The proposed project would provide vehicular access on Industrial Parkway. The access driveway is situated at the northern end of the proposed development and trucks entering or exiting would not reflect headlights on any existing uses other than industrial centers. Due to distance and intervening vegetation and topography, truck headlights would not be visible to the residents across I-215 and Kendall Drive.

Security lighting on the building would utilize low-glare shielded fixtures and would be oriented so as to direct light away from I-215 and surrounding uses wherever feasible. Background lighting from nearby buildings and uses would serve to reduce the contrast between the parking area lighting and nighttime darkness. Interior illumination and security lighting for the proposed project would comply with City of San Bernardino standards and design guidelines. Compliance with city guidelines would ensure that no negative impacts to I-215 drivers would occur.

In addition, to further reduce light impacts from the proposed project, the following project requirements shall be implemented, as required by Section 19.20.030.14 of San Bernardino's Development Code:

PR4.1A *All parking lot and other security lighting shall be directed away from surrounding land uses and towards the specific location intended for illumination. State-of-the-art fixtures shall be used, and all lighting shall be shielded to minimize the production of glare and light spill onto surrounding uses. A lighting design plan shall be submitted to the City for approval at plan check.*

PR4.1B *Landscape illumination and exterior sign lighting shall follow the City's Municipal Code and Development Code guidelines and be accomplished with low-level unobtrusive fixtures.*

Exterior building surfaces and windows can be a source of glare, particularly if highly reflective surfaces are utilized. The proposed project would utilize finish materials consistent with the requirements of the Municipal Code and the design standards in the SBGP. Glass surfaces would not exceed the allowable square footage under the Municipal Code. Use of non-reflective textured surfaces on building exteriors, as well as avoidance of the use of reflective glass, would reduce impacts related to daytime glare to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of project requirement PR4.1C (pursuant to the Municipal Code requirement) would minimize the glare impact from building surfaces and ensure that it remains less than significant.

The following project requirement shall be implemented, as required by federal, state, or local statute or code:

PR4.1C *Design of the proposed structure shall include the use of textured or other non-reflective exterior surfaces and non-reflective glass.*

These project requirements would reduce lighting and nighttime glare impacts to surrounding uses. Lighting for the proposed project would be designed in such a way as to limit spillover onto adjacent commercial and industrial uses by focusing additional light only on the area to be illuminated, and would reduce increased ambient nighttime light levels to a less-than-significant level. Consequently, the increase in nighttime lighting levels on the project site would be ***less than significant***.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative impact analysis is only provided for those thresholds that result in a less-than-significant or significant and unavoidable impact. A cumulative impact analysis is not provided for Effects Found Not to Be Significant, which result in no project-related impacts.

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetic impacts varies by threshold. Thus, the geographic context scenarios are presented individually for the various potential cumulative impacts identified below. The analysis accounts for all anticipated cumulative development within these geographic areas, as represented by full implementation of the *San Bernardino General Plan* and those development projects within these geographic areas listed in Table 3-2 (List of Related Development Projects) of Chapter 3 (Project Description).

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

The geographic context for this impact includes the immediate area surrounding the project site. Development of the proposed project would not conflict with the San Bernardino Municipal Code and SBGP for height, setbacks, and area requirements, and the general appearance and massing of the project would be visually compatible with surrounding development in the area. Therefore, the proposed project, in combination with the related projects in Table 3-2 would not result in a cumulatively significant impact to visual character or quality. The proposed modification of the visual characteristics of a vacant area that is in close proximity to a more densely developed area represents a logical, compact, and orderly outward extension of the urban area, and therefore would generate only a minimal incremental environmental impact. Implementation of the proposed project would result in a beneficial impact to the surrounding area by removing a vacant site and replacing it with a development compatible with surrounding uses, including new landscaped areas. Moreover, the proposed project is compatible in scale, size, mass, height, and density of development with the surrounding developments within the industrial zoned area. The implementation of design features contained in the SBGP, combined with local design review procedures, would ensure that any new development would not degrade the visual character or quality of the surrounding environment and the cumulative impact as well as the project's contribution to this impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

Existing industrial, commercial, and residential uses have resulted in a cumulative increase in nighttime lighting within San Bernardino and surrounding cities. The cumulative effect of these past developments have resulted in a cumulative loss of available nighttime views, as nighttime lighting hinders one's ability to view the sky and other distant natural features that are not artificially lighted. The City will continue to enforce a variety of measures designed to minimize impacts resulting from a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. All new development would be required to comply with the provisions of the San Bernardino Municipal Code. The project area is rapidly developing according to the General Plan and is adjacent to a major travel corridor, and the cumulative effect of development in the area with regard to light and glare is not considered to be significant. Therefore, the cumulative impact of the proposed project on light and glare would be ***less than significant***.

4.1.5 References

PBS&J. 2010. Site visit and photos, October.

San Bernardino, City of. 2005. *City of San Bernardino General Plan*, November.