4.1 VISUAL RESOURCES/AESTHETICS

This analysis is based on photo-simulations prepared for the project by John Kular Consulting, site reconnaissance, review of aerial photography and maps, and the Tajiguas Landfill Project Environmental Documents.

4.1.1 Setting

4.1.1.1 Applicable Standards

Santa Barbara County policies and guidelines that relate to visual resources are contained in the Land Use (adopted 1980, amended 2011), Open Space (adopted 1979, republished 2009) and Scenic Highway Elements (adopted 1975, republished 2009) of the County Comprehensive Plan; the Land Use Development Code (2011 with 2013 updates) covering the inland portions of the County, and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (2012). Policies and Guidelines that are applicable to the proposed project are described in Section 4.8.

Additionally, the draft Gaviota Coast Plan (Board of Supervisors Initiation Draft December 2013) also provides visual goals, policies, actions and development standards under consideration for adoption.

4.1.1.2 Existing Conditions

In general, the whole of Santa Barbara County is considered to be of high visual quality. As stated in the County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Management Element (ERME), “the County’s scenic beauty is one of the principal factors that has attracted its residents and visitors” (Santa Barbara County, adopted 1980, republished 2009).

The project site is in an area identified as having a high level of scenic value as shown on the Santa Barbara County Scenic Values Map of the Santa Barbara Comprehensive Plan Open Space Element.

Visual Characteristics

The scenic features of the project region include the Pacific Ocean, coastal plain, foothills and Santa Ynez Mountain range. Topography ranges from sea level at the Pacific Ocean to well over 2,000 feet within the coastal mountain range. Incised arroyos are a common feature of this coastal area. There are three industrial developments (PXP Point Arguello, Las Flores Canyon, and Tajiguas Landfill) on the coast with the most visible being the PXP Point Arguello site near the Gaviota Tunnel (County of Santa Barbara, December 2013). The Gaviota Coast is bisected by the transportation corridor of U.S. Highway 101 and the Union Pacific railroad. The immediate project vicinity is generally rural agricultural in character with scattered residences. The Arroyo Quemada community lies between U.S. Highway 101 and the coast in the project area. Cattle grazing is a common land use within the area.

The Los Padres National Forest is north of the Landfill property. Land east and south of the site is ranch/agriculturally zoned land with native plant restoration activities occurring on the County-owned Baron Ranch to the east. The Arroyo Hondo Preserve and Cañada de la Huerta (site of the former Shell Hercules oil processing facility undergoing remediation) are located west of the Tajiguas Landfill. U.S. Highway 101 and the Union Pacific Railroad extend generally parallel to the Pacific Ocean coast line south of the project site. Arroyo Hondo and Arroyo Quemado run north-south to the east and west of the Tajiguas Landfill respectively.

Currently, there is limited development in the project area. Scattered residences are located in the vicinity of the landfill (see Figure 4.7-1). Three are located north of U.S. Highway 101. One is located approximately 0.5 miles east of the landfill on the County-owned Baron Ranch. Another is located about 0.5 miles west of the landfill, and a third residence is located more than one mile west of the landfill. As mentioned above, the Arroyo Quemada community is located to the south of U.S. Highway 101 about 0.5 miles south of the landfill and includes fewer than 20 homes. Another home (Hart residence) is under construction about 400 feet south of the landfill boundary as discussed in Section 4.1.2.6, Cumulative Impacts of the Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project.

Existing and Future Visual Conditions at the Landfill

The Tajiguas Landfill has been used as a County MSW disposal facility since 1967. As an active landfill, the top deck and other active disposal areas have earthen surfaces that currently do not support vegetation. However, the side slopes of the landfill have been planted for erosion control and support grasses and shrubs. Areas of the site not disturbed by ongoing operations support primarily annual grassland and coastal scrub plant species.

The visual condition of the landfill is constantly changing as new waste cells are developed and then filled with MSW, borrow areas are excavated for daily cover, soil is removed and stockpiled for waste cell development activities, and on site roads and infrastructure are moved to adjust to the different waste disposal locations. In the prior environmental documents for the Tajiguas Landfill Project (listed in Section 1.4.2), the visual impact analysis and the identification of mitigation measures was based on the landfill visual condition at buildout. As noted below, from several view locations the impacts were identified as significant and unavoidable (Class I).

The Resource Recovery Project facilities would be built when the landfill is at an interim condition of development (see Figure 3-3). Some areas of the landfill site will have reached their buildout conditions (including final disturbance footprints and fill elevations), while development will be ongoing in other areas. The proposed MRF/AD Facility site would be located within the west central portion of the existing Tajiguas Landfill property in the area of the operations deck. In this area, the final waste fill elevations have been reached and existing conditions generally represent buildout/permitted conditions. Therefore, with respect to visual conditions for the MRF/AD Facility the baseline is the existing visual condition at the operations deck.

The landfill top deck, the proposed location of the composting area, will undergo substantial change between current conditions and when the composting area is constructed in approximately 2016. In this area, up to 80 feet of additional MSW will be placed, the top deck area and landfill front face will be closed and a final cover system will be installed prior to construction of the composting area. Therefore, the baseline for the assessing aesthetic/visual impacts for this element of the project is the condition expected to exist at the time of construction. This represents an interim condition of the landfill site development.

Since the precise interim landfill condition at the time the Resource Recovery Project would be constructed is not fully known, the following visual simulations depict the existing conditions, the landfill buildout conditions without the project and the landfill buildout conditions with the proposed project components. The impact discussions; however, include an analysis of the visual impacts at the interim condition and at buildout as appropriate.

Viewsheds

Sensitive viewsheds are identified as land uses with potential line-of-sight views to the landfill. Areas of potential sensitivity include the Arroyo Quemada community, U.S. Highway 101, offshore (such as may be seen by passing boats), and public trails including those in Arroyo Hondo and Baron Ranch described in further detail below.

To facilitate the assessment of aesthetic impacts on these sensitive viewsheds, eight views were selected as representative locations from which the proposed project facilities would have the most likelihood of being potentially visible. The selected views are identified as follows.

- View 1: private entrance to the Arroyo Quemada residential community, approximately 4,000 feet southeast of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;
- View 2: landfill access road entrance, approximately 3,000 feet south of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;

- View 3: U.S. Highway 101, approximately 2.4 miles west of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;
- View 4: U.S. Highway 101, approximately 1.4 miles southeast of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;
- View 5: offshore Pacific Ocean, approximately 0.9 miles south-southeast of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;
- View 6: U.S. Highway 101, south of the landfill, approximately 3,100 feet from the proposed MRF/AD Facility site;
- View 7: Baron Ranch Trail, approximately 1.3 miles north-northeast of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site; and
- View 8: Upper Outlaw Trail, approximately 0.6 miles to the north-northwest of the proposed MRF/AD Facility site.

The above view locations and their line of sight views toward the project site are shown in Figure 4.1-1.

Viewer Sensitivity

Viewer sensitivity has been categorized in two different ways for the purposes of this analysis: type of viewer and distance/duration. Three types of viewers are identified:

- Residential – people living in the vicinity;
- Recreational – transient viewers located at recreational areas (e.g. trails and ocean); and
- Mobile – people traveling along transportation corridors in the site vicinity (e.g., U.S. Highway 101 and the Union Pacific Railroad).

View 1 is representative of residential viewers. Views 1 through 4 and 6 are representative of mobile viewers. Views 5, 7 and 8 are representative of recreational viewers.

Distance from the site and duration of view also affect viewer sensitivity. Distance affects the apparent size of what is viewed; an increase in distance will result in an apparent reduction in size as perceived by the viewer. The greatest duration of views is associated with residential viewers. The duration of recreational views is ~~are~~ generally less than residential views; however, viewers may have a heightened sense of regard for aesthetics when engaged in specific recreational activities such as hiking, etc. Duration from mobile sources such as cars is the least. However, some travelers make repeated trips such as those persons who commute to work through the area on a daily basis, thus the frequency of the viewer's access to a particular viewpoint would be effectively increased.

Scenic Highways/Scenic Overlays

As defined in the Santa Barbara County Scenic Highways Element, "a rural scenic highway" is a route that traverses a defined visual corridor within which natural scenic resources and aesthetic value(s) are protected and enhanced." The Tajiguas Landfill is not located within a designated County or State scenic resources area, scenic corridor or on a designated scenic highway. However, U. S. Highway 101, which lies approximately 1,500 feet south of the permitted waste area of the landfill, is an eligible scenic highway throughout the County. For the purposes of this analysis, it has been assumed that at the appropriate time U.S. Highway 101 will be designated a Scenic Highway.

In addition, the scenic corridor Visual Overlay area specifically extends from Highway 101 to the ocean. Because the project site is located north of U.S. Highway 101, it is outside of the area governed by the scenic corridor Visual Overlay.

In the draft Gaviota Coast Plan, (Board of Supervisors Initiation Draft December 2013) a portion of the southern area of the Landfill property is within the proposed Critical Viewshed Corridor Overlay. Within the Critical Viewshed Corridor Overlay development would be required to be screened to the maximum extent feasible as seen from public viewing places.

Recreational Resources

The Baron Ranch Trail which opened in December 2010 is located within County-owned Baron Ranch east of the landfill. The trailhead is located off U.S. Highway 101 on Calle Real about 2 miles west of Refugio Beach. The trail leads inland through Arroyo Quemado and into the Santa Ynez Mountains and is a 6.6 mile loop trail. The Baron Ranch Trail is currently open for public use on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, from 8:00 a.m. until sunset and is restricted for use by only pedestrians/hikers.

A 2.5 mile extension (Baron Ranch Trail Connector) of the Baron Ranch Trail is planned to connect to West Camino Cielo, allowing eventual through access to the California State Parks Gaviota Peak trail system.

The 782-acre Arroyo Hondo Preserve (Preserve) is located north, west and adjacent to the Tajiguas Landfill. The Preserve property was purchased from the Hollister family in late 2001, and is now protected and managed by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara as a natural and historic preserve. The Preserve includes a number of hiking trails including the Upper Outlaw Trail which was selected as one of the modeled views for this aesthetic analysis. The Preserve is open to the public by reservation the first and third full weekends of each month, and every Monday and Wednesday for school and community groups.

As indicated above, the Pacific Ocean lies south of the Tajiguas Landfill. The ocean is used by people pursuing various recreational interests including boating, fishing, and surfing among others.

4.1.2 Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

4.1.2.1 Thresholds of Significance

State CEQA Guidelines

The State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Chapter 3, Appendix G) suggest that a project may have a significant impact with respect to aesthetics if it results in any of the following:

- 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 would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Santa Barbara County Thresholds

The Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (Guidelines Manual, updated 2015) provides guidance for the evaluation of aesthetic impacts, but does not provide formal significance thresholds. The guidance is based upon the State CEQA Guidelines and "directs the evaluator to the questions which predict the adversity of impacts to visual resources".

The Guidelines Manual states that the assessment of visual impacts of a project involve two major steps: 1) evaluating the visual resources of the project site; and 2) identifying the potential impact of the project on the visual resources located onsite and on views in the project vicinity which may be partially or fully obstructed. Significant visual resources which have aesthetic value are identified in the Comprehensive Plan Open Space Element and are referenced in the Guidelines Manual. They include:

- Scenic highway corridors;
- Parks and recreational areas;
- Views of coastal bluffs, streams, lakes, estuaries, rivers, watersheds, mountains, and cultural resources sites; and
- Scenic areas.

All views addressed in the Guidelines Manual are public views, not private views.

The Guidelines Manual indicates that affirmative answers to the following questions indicate potentially significant impacts to visual resources.

1a. Does the project site have significant visual resources by virtue of surface waters, vegetation, elevation, slope or other natural or man-made features which are publicly visible?

1b. If so, does the proposed project have the potential to degrade or significantly interfere with the public's enjoyment of the site's existing visual resources?

2a. Does the project have the potential to impact visual resources of the Coastal Zone or other visually important area (i.e., mountainous area, public park urban fringe, or scenic travel corridor)?

2b. If so, does the project have the potential to conflict with the policies set forth in the Coastal Land Use Plan, the Comprehensive Plan or any applicable community plan to protect the identified views?

3. Does the project have the potential to create a significantly adverse aesthetic impact through the obstruction of public views, incompatibility with surrounding uses, or intensity of development, removal of significant amounts of vegetation, loss of important open space, substantial alteration of natural character, lack of adequate landscaping, or extensive grading visible from public areas?

4.1.2.2 Approved Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project

01-EIR-05 prepared for the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project (see Section 3.8.3) identified the following visual resources/aesthetic impacts for the approved Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project:

1. The change in visual character of the landfill area associated with the Expansion Project was considered a significant and unavoidable visual impact (Class I). Measures VIS-1 and BIO-3 were adopted to reduce this impact but the residual impacts remain significant.

2. Increased visibility of landfill slopes from Viewpoints 4 (landfill access road) and 5 (Pacific Ocean, 1100 feet offshore) was considered a significant and unavoidable visual impact (Class I). Measures VIS-1 and BIO-3 were adopted to reduce this impact but the residual impacts remain significant.

3. Night lighting from the landfill scale house and the operations and maintenance facilities was considered a significant but mitigable visual impact (Class II). Mitigation measure BIO-9 was adopted to reduce the off-site visibility of night lighting.

4. At closure (maximum build-out) long-term changes in topography from Viewpoints 4 (landfill access road) and 5 (Pacific Ocean, 1100 feet offshore) were considered a significant and unavoidable visual impact (Class I). Measures VIS-1 and BIO-3 were adopted to reduce this impact but the residual impacts remain significant.

4.1.2.3 Approved Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project

The Subsequent EIR for the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project (see Section 4.8.2) noted that the landfill is visible from both the West Ridge Trail and Upper Outlaw trail within the Arroyo Hondo Preserve. The reduced elevation, reduced vegetation removal and reduced production of artificial slopes at the North Slope borrow/soil stockpile area associated with the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration was determined to reduce visual impacts and visibility of the landfill from the West Ridge Trail. It was determined that with the implementation of the landfill reconfiguration and Baron Ranch restoration, the existing landfill and approved expansion area would continue to be visible from the Upper Outlaw Trail and that post reconfiguration views would be similar to the approved expansion. It was further noted that at final closure as required by existing mitigation measure 01-EIR-05-VIS-1, the landfill will be recontoured and revegetated which will help to reduce but not eliminate the visual impact as seen from the trail.

The Subsequent EIR for the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project and 01-EIR-05 identified that portions of the existing landfill and approved expansion may be visible from selected locations along the upper-most alignment of the Baron Ranch Trail (proposed at the time of the Subsequent EIR preparation, but subsequently constructed and currently in use). The Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project was determined not to result in a substantial change in the overall landfill area and would have no effect on the visual character or quality of views from the trail.

The Subsequent EIR for the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project stated that the existing landfill, approved expansion and the proposed reconfiguration may be visible from sections of the West Camino Cielo Road. However, due to the distance between the road and the landfill (two miles at the closest point) and the fact that the approved expansion and proposed reconfiguration occur in the same general area and the footprint would remain the same there would not be a significant change in the visual appearance as compared to existing and approved conditions.

4.1.2.4 Proposed Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

Methodology and Assumptions

The analysis of visual impacts is focused on the viewsheds/views identified in Section 4.1.1.2. Five of the locations are the same or similar to those evaluated in the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion EIR (Views 1 – 5). Views 7 (Baron Ranch Trail) and 8 were evaluated in the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project Subsequent EIR. View 6 has been added as it provides a line of sight to the proposed MRF/AD Facility. Since the proposed project would be located entirely within the area of the landfill operations, it is reasonable to address these same viewpoints as supplemented by the additional View 6. John Kular Consulting prepared photos and photo-simulations depicting existing, permitted (maximum build-out conditions) and permitted plus project conditions which were used in the visual resource/aesthetics evaluation. The photo-simulations were created using geographically referenced computer assisted modeling. The photos and photo-simulations are provided as Figures 4.1-2 through 4.1-9 and are summarized as follows. Additional information derived from consideration of the photos, simulations and other factors including the number and types of potential viewers and viewer sensitivity is also provided.

Figure 4.1-2 shows that the line of sight from View 1 (Arroyo Quemada community entrance) toward the proposed MRF and AD Facility is blocked by intervening topography. Viewer sensitivity from this location is high, based on the potential duration of views and potential number of private viewers. The residences of the Arroyo Quemada community are situated along a coastal terrace, below the elevation of southbound U.S. Highway 101. Thus, the view from these residences is expected to be likewise blocked by topography.

Figure 4.1-3 shows that the existing view from View 2 (landfill access road) includes the southern-most waste fill slope. Under permitted conditions, the view would be similar to that under existing conditions with the exception that the visible portion of the waste fill slope would be larger. With the addition of the project, the proposed composting area would be slightly perceptible behind the waste fill slope, but would visually blend in with the color and texture of the fill slope.

Figure 4.1-4 illustrates that the line of sight from View 3 (U.S. Highway 101 west of the landfill access road) toward the existing operations deck. Note that all proposed Resource Recovery Project facilities would be entirely obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.

Figure 4.1-5 illustrates that the line of sight from View 4 (U.S. Highway 101 east of the landfill access road) toward the existing operations deck. Note that all proposed Resource Recovery Project facilities would be entirely obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.

Figure 4.1-6 illustrates that the line of sight from View 5 (offshore) toward the existing operations deck. Note that all proposed Resource Recovery Project facilities would be entirely obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.

Figure 4.1-7 shows the existing and permitted condition views from View 6 (U.S. Highway 101, just east of the landfill access road), which includes a distant view of existing operations trailers currently located at the proposed MRF/AD Facility site. It also shows that under post project-conditions the AD Facility building would be visible and would appear as a prominent feature of the view from U.S. Highway 101.

Figure 4.1-8 illustrates the line of site views from View 7 (Baron Ranch Trail) under existing, permitted and permitted plus project conditions. As can be seen from the photo-simulations and line of site profile, due to distance and intervening topography, proposed Resource Recovery Project facilities would not be visible.

Figure 4.1-9 illustrates the views from View 8 (Upper Outlaw Trail) under existing, permitted and permitted plus project conditions. Under permitted conditions, the top deck would be filled with MSW to elevation 620 ft (msl), and once final fill elevations are reached, the top deck would be closed and a final cover system installed. The composting area would be located on the top deck after the final cover system is installed.

Under permitted plus project conditions, the proposed composting area run-off collection tank (left edge of photo), maintenance building (left center of photo) and composting area would be visible from the trail. However, the composting area would be in the background, with the northern portion of the waste disposal area in the foreground (facing southeast, see Figure 3-5). The composting area and related facilities would have a similar visual character and quality as the landfill in general, and would not substantially change the visual quality of the view, nor block background views of the ocean.

Impact TRRP VIS-1: Project implementation would not significantly alter the visual setting from public vantage points (View 2, View 7 and View 8) – Class III Impact.

As indicated above, the proposed project facilities would not be visible from most of the views evaluated. The view from the landfill access road (View 2) under existing conditions (see Figure 4.1-3), the front face of the landfill is visible in the central portion of the image as a round partially vegetated landform. In this image, the elevation of top portion of the landfill (top deck) is approximately elevation 540 feet (msl).

Between the existing conditions and the time construction of the composting area is proposed to take place, up to an additional 80 feet of waste fill would be placed (to reach a maximum elevation of 620 feet msl) and a final landfill cover system will be installed. This condition would essentially be the same as under buildout of the landfill (see Permitted Conditions in Figure 4.1-3) as viewed from this location. The change in the visual setting from existing to permitted conditions is a part of the overall significant and unavoidable (Class I) visual impact disclosed in the Tajiguas Landfill Project environmental documents as discussed in section 4.1.2.2. Figure 4.1-3 depicts the addition of the composting area to the permitted landfill condition (Permitted + Project Conditions). The proposed composting area (compost piles and litter fencing) would be slightly visible above the landscape, on the top deck in this view. The change in the visual condition would result from implementation of the project would be a small variation in the visual condition of the landfill as seen from this perspective and would not be considered a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista because the degree of change in the view would be slight. Therefore, the visual impact would be adverse but less than significant.

Implementation of the project would result in an almost unperceivable change in the view from the Baron Ranch Trail as shown on Figure 4.1-8. With project development, the 325,000 gallon composting area collection tank would barely be seen on the plateau within the mid-ground view from this location, but would likely be discernable as a tank. However, distant views of tanks are not completely incongruous with the visual setting of the general area as such tanks are not unusual within areas used for agricultural purposes such as grazing. This project element would not block views of the ocean.

The view from the Upper Outlaw Trail toward the Pacific Ocean (View 8) presently includes the disturbed landfill area including the back canyon (Phase 3) disposal area in the foreground and the top deck area in the background (see Figure 4.1-9, Existing Conditions). The operations deck area is not visible from this view. As discussed, prior to construction of the composting area the top deck will receive up to 80 feet of additional fill to reach the maximum permitted elevation of 620 feet and the final cover will be installed. The back canyon area is also currently being modified (800,000 cubic yards of grading and installation of 6 acres of landfill liner) as a part of the Phase 3B liner installation project. This area will look significantly different by the time the composting area is constructed, but not all areas visible in the image will have reached buildout conditions.

Figure 4.1-9 presents both the condition of the landfill at buildout as viewed from the Upper Outlaw Trail (Permitted Conditions) and buildout conditions with the composting area (Permitted + Project Conditions). At the time of the construction of the composting area, the landfill will be in an interim condition of development different than depicted in Figure 4.1-9. The back canyon waste fill area landform in the foreground of the picture (which is depicted at its maximum elevation of 580 feet) will just be in the beginning phase of being filled with waste at the time the composting area is installed. Therefore, there will be a more direct view of the top deck and composting area in the background. However, the maximum elevation of the top deck will be above the maximum elevation of the Phase 3 waste fill area so even under full buildout conditions the top deck and composting area would remain visible in the background from the Upper Outlaw Trail. The change in the visual setting from existing to permitted conditions is a part of the overall significant and unavoidable (Class I) visual impact associated with the Tajiguas Landfill Project.

The development of the proposed composting area would alter the view from the interim condition and permitted conditions by introducing an additional element of man-modified landscape. However, the composting windrows and stockpiles that would be created, the runoff storage tank, and the relocated landfill maintenance facility would not block views of the ocean as they would be just below the elevation of the topographic features to the south. Additionally, project-related view modifications would be an insubstantial element of the view relative to the landscape which has already been and will continue to be substantially modified by landfill operations and will continue to appear as a man-altered landscape during operation and after closure. Visual impacts of the landfill development would remain significant and unavoidable (Class I) but impacts resulting from the addition of the Resource Recovery Project composting area and associated facilities to the view from the Upper Outlaw Trail in the interim landfill development condition and at landfill buildout are considered to be adverse, but less than significant.

Impact TRRP VIS-2: Project implementation would significantly alter the visual setting as seen from U.S. Highway 101, (View 6), an eligible scenic highway – Class II Impact.

View 6 (Figure 4.1-7) is from U. S. Highway 101 south of the landfill. The existing operations deck and landfill operations trailers are slightly visible from this view; the landfill top deck (proposed location of the composting area) is not visible). This area has reached its final permitted elevation and the existing condition is generally reflective of the permitted condition.

The proposed MRF and AD Facility would involve additional cut and placement of fill (to create a level building pad and to provide a setback from the waste footprint) and the facilities would be visible between two hills as an incongruous element of the background view. As compared to the existing landfill operations trailers, the proposed MRF and AD Facility would be a substantively larger and a more prominent feature of the view as shown in the photo simulation presented on Figure 4.1-7. In particular, the light color of the proposed structures, as simulated, makes them stand out visually relative to the surrounding landscape.

Viewers from this perspective are typically motorists on the heavily traveled highway and would typically be moving at a speed of about 65 miles per hour. Thus, the duration of the view (a few seconds) would be very brief as the topography of the surrounding hills would obscure the view from perspectives further north or south. However, the duration of the view may be considered to be additive for frequent travelers of this route. Although the view would brief and limited, without proper aesthetic treatment, the introduction of the MRF and AD Facility as shown in Figure 4.1-7 may be considered to have a significant visual impact to public viewers as U.S. Highway 101 is a well-traveled transportation corridor and an eligible scenic highway.

Mitigation Measures:

MM TRRP VIS-1a: Building Exterior Color. The exterior of the MRF, ~~and~~ AD Facility and other readily visible structures (such as retaining walls, containment walls and tanks) shall be an earth tone color selected to visually blend with the surrounding landscape.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The above measure shall be reflected in the project plans and contract specifications for the Resource Recovery Project and shall be implemented during construction.

Monitoring. RRWMD shall monitor for compliance.

MM TRRP VIS-1b: Landscape Screening. A landscape architect shall be retained to develop a landscape plan for the project that includes vegetative plantings that would break up the massing of the MRF, ~~and~~ AD Facility and other readily visible structures (such as retaining walls, containment walls and tanks) as viewed from the south. Native plants shall be used to the extent feasible to maximize visual compatibility with the surrounding vegetation communities, minimize irrigation requirements, minimize spread of invasive species, and augment nearby wildlife habitat. Landscape screening shall be maintained and replaced as needed over the life of the project.

Plan Requirements and Timing. The landscape plan shall be developed prior to project construction and implemented during construction and prior to operation of project facilities.

Monitoring. RRWMD shall monitor for compliance.

Residual Impacts. Implementation of the mitigation measures above would reduce the scenic vista impact from View 6 to a less than significant level.

Impact TRRP VIS-3: Project implementation would result in an adverse but less than significant change in the visual setting as seen from private views - Class III Impact.

The proposed project facilities would not be visible from View 1 (Arroyo Quemada community entrance); therefore, no change in the visual setting would occur as seen from this view point. The proposed project facilities would be visible from private property in the project area. The closest residence to the project site is presently under construction on APN 081-150-034 (Hart property) which borders the landfill property immediately to the south. The residence is located approximately 0.4 miles south of the proposed composting area and 2,500 feet southeast from the proposed location of the MRF and AD facilities. Portions of the landfill property, including fill slopes, operations trailers and the west borrow area cut slope are currently visible from the Hart property. As would be expected, views from the new residence (under construction) are primarily focused to the south towards the Pacific Ocean. However, based on site visits by RRWMD staff, the existing landfill operations trailers are visible from a small portion of the driveway to the Hart residence and would be visible from a small area of the building pad (pool and northwestern corner of the patio).

Therefore, with project implementation, the proposed MRF and AD Facility would also be visible from these locations. However, given that views from private residences would be limited, the views occur in areas substantially affected by existing landfill operations, construction of the facilities would not obstruct scenic vistas on or across the landfill property, and that Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and the County's Visual Aesthetic Impact Guidelines address public views, rather than private views, the visibility of the Resource Recovery Project facilities from private views is considered an adverse but less than significant impact. Additionally, the implementation of mitigation measures ***MM TRRP VIS-1a*** and ***1b*** would help to reduce the adverse visual impact from private property, as well as mitigate impacts from public viewpoints (U.S. Highway 101, View 6).

Impact TRRP VIS-4: Project-related construction activities would result in less than significant lighting and glare impacts - Class III Impact.

Construction work for the Resource Recovery Project would generally be conducted during daylight hours, in compliance with the County permitted landfill construction hours of 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday through Saturday, and 7:00 am to 6:00 pm on Sunday. However, non-daylight work hours on weekdays or daytime work on Saturdays and holidays may occur to minimize conflicts with ongoing landfill waste disposal operations, make up schedule deficiencies and/or to complete critical construction activities safely, such as MRF equipment installation and testing. In the event that nighttime work was required and it would occur outside, portable lighting may be necessary. However, because this occurrence is not anticipated to be a normal part of the construction process which itself would only be temporary, and due to the distance of the landfill from existing likely stargazing venues such as Refugio State Beach, construction-related nighttime lighting impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Impact TRRP VIS-5: Project operation could result in less than significant lighting and glare impacts - Class III Impact.

The MRF and AD Facility building roofs would include a series of translucent sky lights. The sky lights would include built-in blinds or external adjustable blinds to prevent light from escaping from the building at night. Assuming that the blinds are closed, interior lighting would not affect nighttime views.

Exterior lighting would be provided on the Resource Recovery Project buildings and in the parking areas to allow continued operations after dark, accommodate safe traffic flow, and employee safety. No lighting is proposed along the site access roads, and unmanned facilities. The proposed lighting would consist of energy efficient, dark sky compliant, full cut-off lighting fixtures ~~lights~~ positioned to minimize off-site impacts by being directed inward and downward ~~with appropriate shielding~~ and away from U.S. Highway 101, Baron Ranch and ~~from~~ nearby habitat areas. Due to the measures incorporated into the project to reduce the potential for nighttime lighting to spill off the site or skyward, nighttime lighting introduced by the project is not expected to result in significant deterioration of nighttime views in the area.

The MRF and AD Facility would include south-facing rooftop solar panels. Currently available solar panels have anti-reflective coatings that have a reflectivity or albedo of 30 percent or less (dry sand has a reflectivity of 45 percent) resulting in glare that would be less than or equivalent to natural earth materials such as sand. Additionally, due to the angle of the panels relative to the orientation of U.S. Highway 101, solar panel reflectivity should not cause a significant glare impact on drivers.

Relocated Landfill Facilities

Operations facilities (primarily portable offices) may be temporarily relocated during the project construction period to an area north of the landfill top deck or to the southern portion of the landfill (see Figure 3-4). If located to the south, these facilities would be visible from the driveway to the Hart residence (under construction). As discussed under Impact TRRP VIS-3, views from this proposed residence are currently affected by ongoing landfill operations and these temporary facilities would not block views or adversely affect scenic vistas. If relocated to the north, operations facilities may be visible from the Upper Outlaw Trail as a minor additional element to the man-modified landscape and would not result in any additional aesthetics impacts.

Landfill equipment maintenance facilities would be relocated to the area north of the landfill top deck (see Figure 3-4). As discussed under Impact TRRP VIS-1, the addition of project components (including relocated maintenance facilities) would result in an adverse but less than significant impact to views from the Upper Outlaw Trail.

4.1.2.5 Proposed Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project with Optional Commingled Source Separated Recyclables (CSSR) Component

As discussed above, there are limited public views of the MRF and AD Facility. Inclusion of the CSSR component would increase the MRF building area by 10,000 sf. The visual modeling included the additional building area; therefore, visual resources impacts identified in Section 4.1.2.4 include the optional CSSR component.

4.1.2.6 Extension of Landfill Life Impacts

Impact TRRP VIS-6: Project-related extension of life of the Tajiguas Landfill would delay final closure of the back canyon area of the landfill site and result in an adverse but less than significant extension of the landfill aesthetic impacts further in time – Class III Impact.

As discussed in Section 3.4, project-related diversion of recyclable material and organic waste is anticipated to extend the life of the Tajiguas Landfill by about 10 years. Aesthetics impacts associated with the approved and ongoing landfill project are considered significant and unavoidable (see Section 4.1.2.2) primarily as seen from U.S. Highway 101. The proposed project would delay landfill closure, including final contouring and revegetation. However, landfilling will primarily be focused in the back canyon area of the landfill, which is not visible from U.S. Highway 101 and phased closure (including final contouring and placement of final cover systems) is proposed to begin in the front canyon portion of the landfill, where final fill elevations have been reached.

The affected population is very limited as the landfill is visible for only a few seconds to motorists on U.S. Highway 101, an eligible scenic highway or by limited recreational users of Upper Outlaw Trail on the Arroyo Hondo property. In addition, the landfill has been in operation since 1967 and the public has become accustomed to the current visual condition. Overall, the aesthetic impacts of the landfill development remain significant but the extension of the landfill's aesthetic impacts by delaying landfill closure is considered less than significant.

4.1.2.7 Decommissioning Impacts

In general, the removal of major project facilities (MRF building, AD Facility building, percolate tanks, bio-filters, etc.) would reduce the visual impacts of the proposed project since these structures are the main project components that are visible from public and private viewing locations. Where appropriate, vegetation screening associated with the project would be retained to provide screening of any remaining facilities and to break up the massing of any remaining retaining walls that would not be removed as a part of decommissioning. In addition, additional vegetation would be established as a part of the approved Landfill closure. However, the removal of the buildings may render the manufactured slope and retaining walls more visible, as these features would be generally blocked from view by the buildings. Following decommissioning, the following changes in the modelled views is anticipated:

- View 2 (Figure 4.1-3) would be virtually the same as Permitted Conditions because compost piles barely visible under Permitted + Project Conditions would be removed, and the MRF/AD Facility site (with manufactured slope and retaining walls) is not visible from this view.
- View 6 (Figure 4.1-7) would be very similar to Permitted Conditions because the AD Facility building visible under Permitted + Project Conditions would be removed, and the project-related manufactured slope and retaining walls would be much less visible than the AD Facility building shown in this view.
- View 7 (Figure 4.1-8) would be the same as Permitted Conditions because compost piles present but not visible under Permitted + Project Conditions would be removed. Other project components that would remain are not visible in this view.
- View 8 (Figure 4.1-9) would be the virtually same as Permitted Conditions because compost piles barely visible under Permitted + Project Conditions would be removed, while the maintenance building would likely remain. Other project components that would remain are not visible in this view.

Overall, decommissioning would not result in any new impacts and would serve to reduce project-related aesthetics impacts.

4.1.2.8 Cumulative Impacts of the Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

Impact TRRP VIS-CUM-1: Project implementation, combined with other related cumulative projects, could degrade the visual character/quality of scenic vistas from U.S. Highway 101 along the Gaviota Coast – Class I Cumulative Impact; Project Contribution – Not Considerable with Mitigation (Class II).

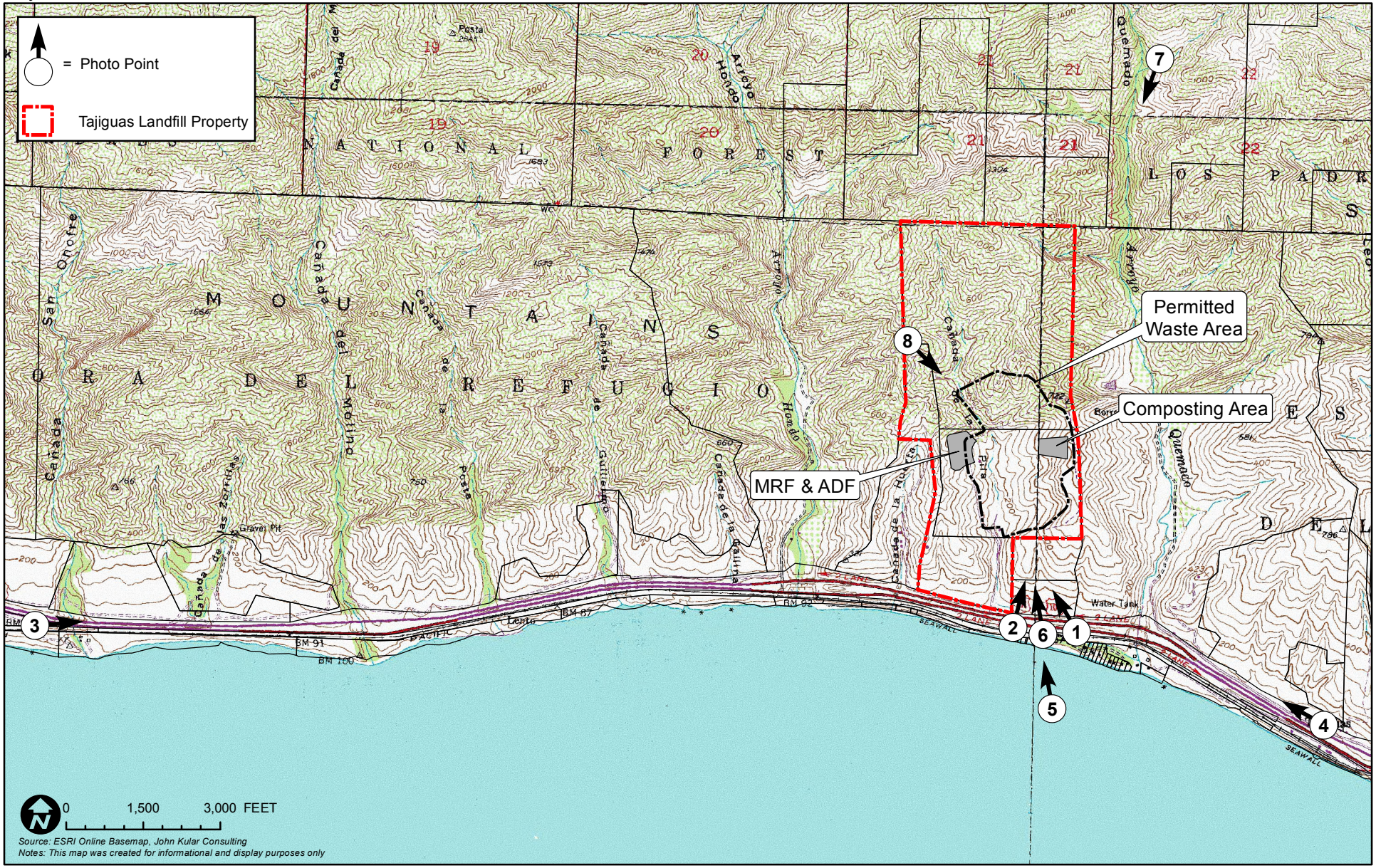
The County of Santa Barbara considers the coastal view corridor along U.S. Highway 101 and the railroad tracks from Goleta to the Gaviota Tunnel as providing ocean and inland public views of the highest quality in the region. Further, stretches of this view corridor are considered to be highly susceptible to visual degradation from future development due to broad near-field views largely devoid of major stands of trees or intervening topographical breaks. Factors including appropriate site selection, architecture, grading and landscaping are integral elements to be considered in minimizing visual impacts of future development and protecting the visual resources of the corridor.

The cumulative project list includes a number of residential subdivisions located along the Gaviota Coast. The following discussion is specific to the assessment of the Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project together with known cumulative projects in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project. The Shell Hercules Remediation and Slope Stabilization Project is located 0.2 miles west of the Tajiguas Landfill. Continuation of site remediation at this State Superfund site for poly-cyclic biphenyls, mercury and hydrocarbons is proposed. Modification of landforms associated with this project may be visible from U.S. Highway 101 within Canada de la Huerta where the site is located. Northbound motorists would pass this site within about 20 seconds after passing View 6 wherein they would have views of the proposed MRF and AD Facility.

The proposed Hart residence is located 400 feet south of the Tajiguas Landfill property boundary and is currently under construction. The residence would be visible following construction as a noticeable feature of the mid-ground view for persons traveling on U.S. Highway 101. Northbound motorists would view the residence a few seconds before passing View 6.

The combined effect of the potential view modification from these two projects and the approved landfill, in addition to the proposed project may be considered cumulatively significant due to their proximity. However, with implementation of project-specific mitigation proposed for the project (***MM TRRP VIS-1a, VIS-1b***), the project's contribution to this scenic vista impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

July 2014
Project No. 1202-0792



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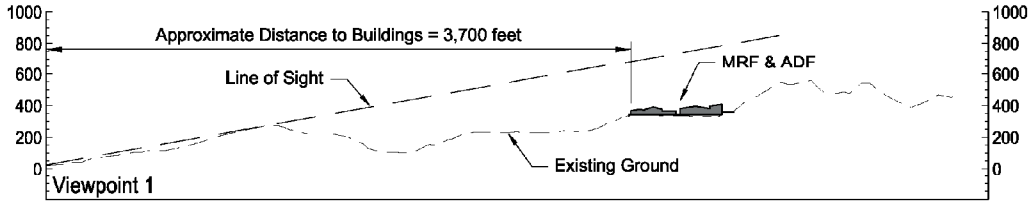
Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

PHOTO-SIMULATION LOCATION MAP
FIGURE 4.1-1

1 Back of color figure

Note 1 - Line of sight to existing operations deck and proposed TRRP buildings obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.



Line of Sight Profile

Horizontal and Vertical Scale

0' 1000' 2000'

Source: John Kular Consulting
Notes: This map was created for informational and display purposes only

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Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

PHOTO-SIMULATION VIEW 1
FIGURE 4.1-2

Back of color figure

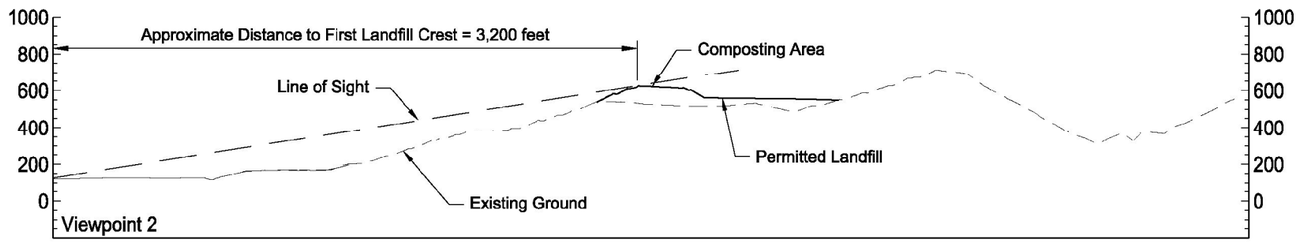
October 2013
Project No. 1202-0792

Date of photo: 12/17/2012

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PERMITTED CONDITIONS

PERMITTED + PROJECT CONDITIONS



Line of Sight Profile

Horizontal and Vertical Scale

0' 800' 1600'

Source: John Kular Consulting
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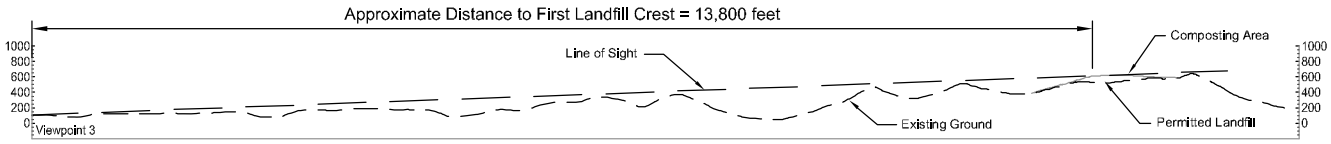
Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

PHOTO-SIMULATION VIEW 2
FIGURE 4.1-3

Back of color figure

EXISTING, PERMITTED AND PROJECT CONDITIONS

Note 1 - Line of sight to existing operations deck and proposed TRRP buildings obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.



Line of Sight Profile

Horizontal and Vertical Scale

0' 2000' 4000'

Source: John Kular Consulting

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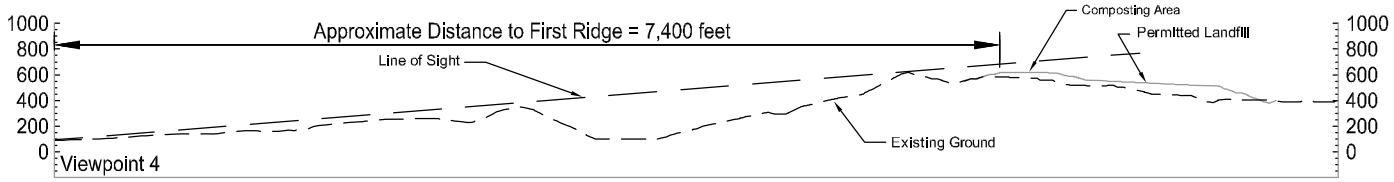
PHOTO SIMULATION VIEW 3
FIGURE 4.1-4

Back of color figure

EXISTING, PERMITTED AND PROJECT CONDITIONS

Note 1 - Line of sight to existing operations deck and proposed TRRP buildings obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.



Line of Sight Profile

Horizontal and Vertical Scale

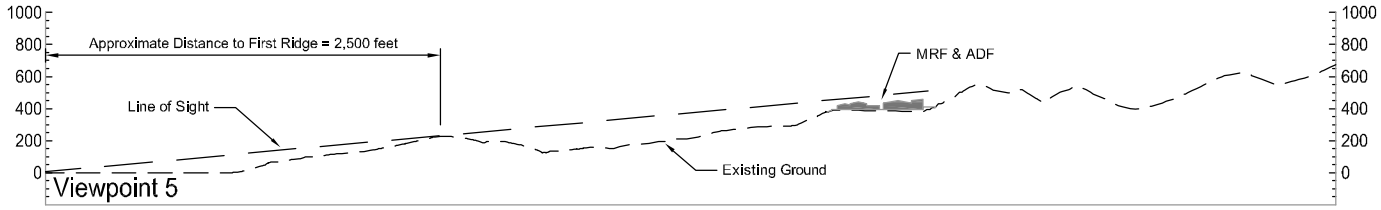
0' 1500' 3000'

Source: John Kular Consulting

Back of color figure

EXISTING, PERMITTED AND PROJECT CONDITIONS

Note 1 - Line of sight to existing operations deck and proposed TRRP buildings obscured by intervening topography and vegetation.



Line of Sight Profile

HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL SCALE

0' 1200' 2400'

Source: John Kular Consulting

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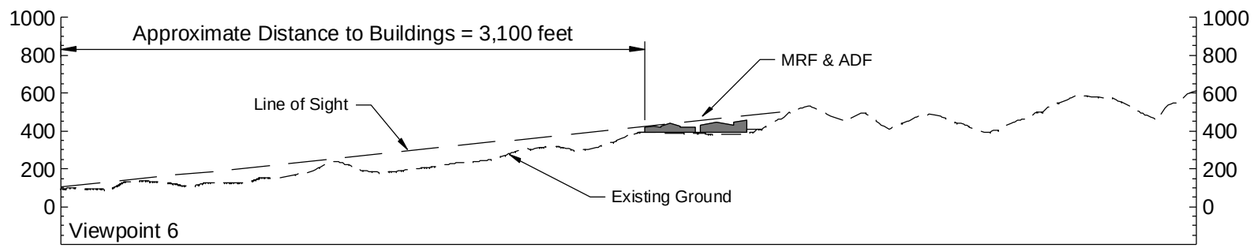
PHOTO SIMULATION VIEW 5
FIGURE 4.1-6

Back of color figure

Date of photo: 12/17/2012

EXISTING & PERMITTED CONDITIONS

PERMITTED + PROJECT CONDITIONS



Line of Sight Profile

HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL SCALE

0' 800' 1600'

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PHOTO-SIMULATION VIEW 6
UPDATED FIGURE 4.1-7

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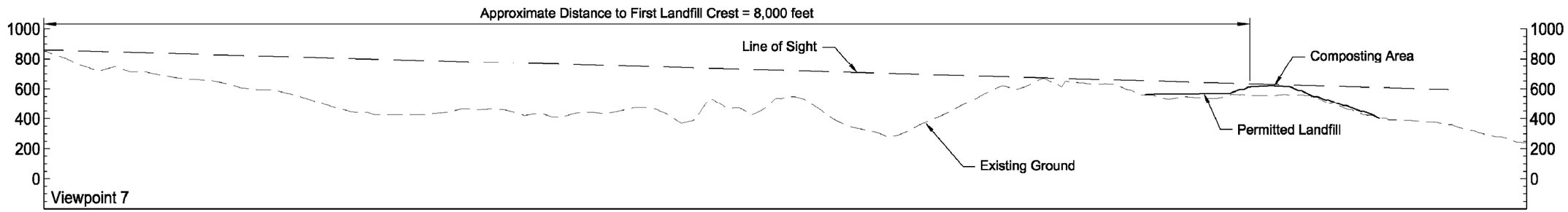
July 2014
Project No. 1202-0792

Date of photo: 1/16/2013

EXISTING & PERMITTED CONDITIONS

PERMITTED + PROJECT CONDITIONS



Line of Sight Profile

HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL SCALE

0' 800' 1600'

Source: John Kular Consulting
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Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

PHOTO-SIMULATION VIEW 7
FIGURE 4.1-8

Back of color figure

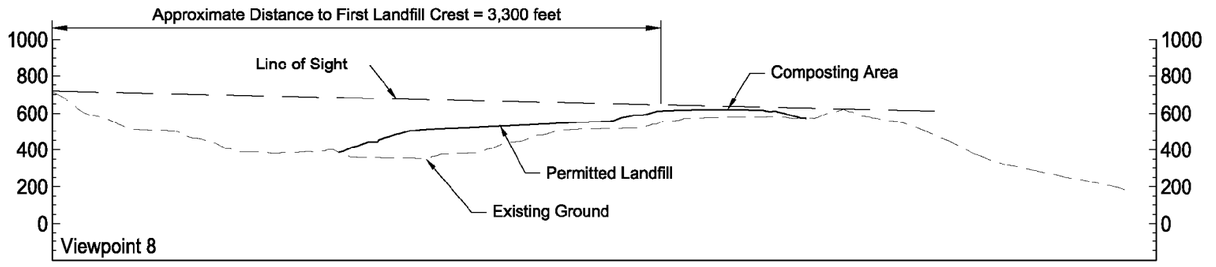
October 2013
Project No. 1202-0792

Date of photo: 1/16/2013

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PERMITTED CONDITIONS

PERMITTED + PROJECT CONDITIONS



Line of Sight Profile

HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL SCALE

0' 800' 1600'

Source: John Kular Consulting
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PHOTO-SIMULATION VIEW 8
FIGURE 4.1-9

Back of color figure