4.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

Project Site

The project site encompasses approximately 234 acres with the southern portion of the site located adjacent to SR 58 (also known as Calf Canyon Highway). The project site consists primarily of steep slopes (30 to 50 percent) covered in chaparral and scrub vegetation, with some oak trees. Views of these types of slopes, as well as oak and pine woodlands and several major creek crossings, are part of the scenic environment associated with SR 58 in the vicinity of the project site. There are several existing structures on-site that would be maintained with the proposed project including a barn, storage shed, shop/garage, a trailer and two residential structures. These structures are all located toward the southern boundary of the project site, off of SR 58. There are also existing ranching uses on the southern portion of the property.

The site is characterized by moderate to very steep terrain with one east-west trending drainage in the center, which is not visible from SR 58 or from nearby occupied properties. This central drainage is bounded by steep slopes and two ridgelines running generally east-west across the property. The southern portion of the site is relatively flat along SR 58. The project site is located in the La Panza Range, with the Salinas River and the Santa Lucia Range to the west. The valley bottom, at the southern end of the site, is formed from alluvium carried by Moreno Creek. This creek drains in a westerly direction to the southwest of the site towards the Salinas River.

Surrounding Land Uses

The land in and around the property consists of vacant steep hillsides (slopes typically over 50 percent) supporting natural vegetation, and flatter areas along drainages (slopes typically less than 10 percent) containing rural residences with grazing and similar ranch uses. Some adjacent properties to the south and southeast of the project site are designated Residential Rural. This designation is placed on subdivided land southeast of SR 58 at the western edge of the Las Pilitas planning area, and on subdivided lands along Parkhill Road. Within the first of these Rural Residential areas, there are about one dozen residences several of which are at locations with views into the proposed quarry site. There are several dozen residences in the second Rural Residential area along Parkhill Road to the southeast, but all of these are separated from the proposed quarry site by intervening ridges and greater distances. In addition, the Santa Margarita Quarry of Hanson Aggregates (Heidelberg Cement Co.) is located to the west and northwest of the property.

Figure 4.1-1 shows the Quarry Viewshed Analysis. This analysis is based solely on topography, and does not account for the effect of vegetation in obscuring views from some

locations. The figure illustrates the fact that travelers along SR 58 viewing in the eastbound direction will have a view into the proposed quarry along a segment of the highway approximately 4,100 to 2,200 feet southwest of its proposed location. As eastbound drivers approach closer to the project site, the elevation of SR 58 descends as the roadway approaches the Salinas River, and intervening topography blocks portions of the quarry site, particularly Phases 2A and 2B. As described in the preceding paragraph, there are also several homes in this area east of SR 58 from which the quarry would be partially visible. Figure 4.1-1 also shows the locations of the two key viewpoints that are discussed further in Sections 4.1.4 (Assessment Methodology) and 4.1.5 (Impacts and Mitigation), below.

Scenic Highways and Corridors

There are no officially designated State Scenic Highways within close proximity to the project site. State Route 58, also called Calf Canyon Road in the project vicinity, connects US Highway 101 on the west through Bakersfield in the southern San Joaquin Valley to Barstow in the Mojave Desert on the east. No part of SR 58 is listed as an official Scenic Highway by Caltrans (2011), although a segment between Mojave and Barstow is considered "eligible" for such designation.

The County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) identifies SR 58 as a "Suggested Scenic Corridor" (San Luis Obispo County 2010: Table VR-2). The County has not prepared a corridor study or designated any land along SR 58 as a scenic resource area, as of the time the application for the project was submitted (April 2010). Nevertheless, the County has identified SR 58 as a potential scenic corridor; Policy VR 4.3 in the COSE states: "The County should develop policies and standards for each designated scenic corridor that will guide all County and State road and highway development projects. An example of such policies and standards is included in Appendix 9."

In general, the Assessment Methodology specified in Section 4.1.3 of this EIR and the Significance Criteria specified in Section 4.1.5 correspond to the policies and standards presented in Appendix 9.

The COSE (in Appendix 9), identifies "spectacular" visual resources as vistas of steep mountain ranges, the Pacific Ocean shoreline, and landmark volcanic peaks. The COSE also identifies more common features like rolling hills, open meadows, riparian corridors, and wetland areas, as scenic resources. The COSE describes scenic corridors as view areas or viewsheds from popular public roads and highways that have unique or outstanding scenic qualities. While the determination of "unique or outstanding scenic qualities" may be subjective, the steep hills covered with chaparral vegetation on the project site are a scenic resource even if they are not "spectacular." The project site is also located in a geographic transition zone between the flatter rolling topography in the Santa Margarita area and the steeper areas to the east. The Salinas River supports a major riparian zone that adds scenic

variety to the immediate vicinity of the proposed quarry site. SR 58 is also a route commonly travelled by people visiting the Carrizo Plain or other recreational destinations to the east, and these users of the highway may be more sensitive to changes in the visual resources along this corridor. These features help to describe the value of scenic resources along SR 58 and support the identification of the lands adjacent to SR 58 as a suggested scenic corridor by the COSE.

During review of the Notice of Preparation for this EIR, comments were received questioning the consistency of the project with the County Highway Corridor Design Standards related to views from US Highway 101. As explained in Section 3.2 of this EIR, all of the areas covered by these design standards are located within the Salinas River Area Plan, and none extend into the Las Pilitas Area Plan or onto the project site (San Luis Obispo County Code, Section 22.104.020 H, and Map Area 8).

4.1.2 San Luis Obispo County Plans and Policies

Several policies related to planning for visual resources are contained in the COSE. These are identified and paraphrased below in Table 4.1-1. Most of these policies deal with actions to be implemented during the development of Area Plans, and do not apply directly to the evaluation of individual projects. For policies that appear to be applicable, the information in Table 4.1-1 presents a preliminary determination with respect to the conformance of the project with the policy. The final determination regarding consistency of the project with County policies, however, is to be made by the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors if the project were to be appealed.

4.1.3 Regulatory Setting

The property is within the County's Las Pilitas Planning Area and is designated as Rural Lands (San Luis Obispo County 2010). All of the area proposed to be mined, and much of the remaining property, is covered by the EX1 Extractive Resource Area Combining Designation (San Luis Obispo County 2009), which is placed over a large portion of the Las Pilitas Planning Area. This Combining Designation recognizes the California Department of Conservation classification of the area as MRZ-2, which means that the State Geologist has identified these areas as containing significant deposits of aggregate material (San Luis Obispo County 2003:page 6-1). The project design and reclamation plan is intended to comply with the statute and regulations of the California Surface Mine and Reclamation Act (SMARA, found at 2 PRC 2710, and 14 CCR 3500) and with the County requirements found in Chapter 22.36 of the County Code. These codes require the stockpiling and reuse of topsoil and vegetative matter, stabilizing final slopes with benching and contouring, and the phased reclamation and revegetation as final slopes are reached.

In 1998, the County Board of Supervisors adopted "San Luis Obispo County Design Guidelines" with the stated purpose: "The Design Guidelines are intended to serve as an

TABLE 4.1-1
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – VISUAL RESOURCES

Source	Policy Statement	Discussion	Preliminary Determination
Conservation and Open Space Element/Policy VR 1.1	Adopt Scenic Protection Standards	Includes a series of actions recommended for the County to identify and designate scenic areas; amend plans and ordinances to provide scenic protection.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 2.1	Develop in a manner compatible with Historical and Visual Resources	Encourage designs that are compatible with the natural landscape and with recognized historical character, and discourage designs that are clearly out of place within rural areas.	Potentially Consistent after the completion of reclamation and revegetation
COSE/Policy VR 2.2	Site Development and Landscaping Sensitively	Encourage designs that emphasize native vegetation and conform grading to existing natural forms.	Potentially Consistent after the completion of reclamation and revegetation
COSE/Policy VR 2.3	Revise Countywide Design Guidelines	New development should follow Countywide Design Guidelines to protect rural visual and historical character. This policy suggests that the County should revise the Countywide Design Guidelines.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 3.1	Identify and Protect Community Separators	Identify Community Separators and propose land use strategies and development standards to maintain separate, identifiable cities and communities with intervening rural land.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 3.2	Community Involvement	Encourage communities adjacent to Community Separators to maintain a sense of place and separation through education about the importance of separators.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 3.3	Conservation Tools	Propose voluntary scenic, agricultural, or conservation easements and/or greenbelt programs that support private landownership while retaining the visual resources within Community Separators.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 3.4	Community Edges	Maintain clear community edges for urban and village areas with appropriate plan designations when updating community and area plans.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 3.5	Annexation in Community Separators	Avoid annexation of Community Separators or their inclusion in spheres of influence for sewer and water service.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis

TABLE 4.1-1 (CONTINUED)
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – VISUAL RESOURCES

Source	Policy Statement	Discussion	Preliminary Determination
COSE/Policy VR 4.1	Designation of Scenic Corridors	Designate scenic corridors based on the recommendations for Scenic Corridor Studies, for the candidate roads and highways.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 4.2	Balanced Protection	Balance the protection of scenic resources with the protection of biological and agricultural resources that may coexist within the scenic corridor.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 4.3	Scenic Corridor Roadway Design	The County should develop policies and standards for each designated scenic corridor that will guide all County and State road and highway development projects.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 5.1	Retain Existing Scenic Access	Encourage Caltrans to maintain existing scenic vista points.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 5.2	Create New Scenic Access	Identify, construct, and maintain additional scenic overlooks, turnouts, or vista points along designated scenic corridors.	Not applicable to project-specific analysis
COSE/Policy VR 7.0	Nighttime Light Pollution	Exterior lighting, including streetlight projects, is designed to minimize nighttime light pollution.	Potentially Consistent
COSE Policy MN 3.3	Environmentally and Visually Sensitive Areas	Extraction operations may be established in designated environmentally or visually sensitive areas only when the Board of Supervisors determines that the need for a particular resource or facility outweighs the value of the sensitive land resource. Such sensitive resources may be subject to extraction operations only when no feasible alternative sites are available.	Potentially Consistent. Project vicinity is not designated an environmentally or visually sensitive area.

information resource for project designers and other interested people and is not intended to be a regulatory document. The guidelines encourage creativity and flexibility rather than a rigid "one-size-fits-all" approach." Part IV of these Guidelines – "Resource Conservation Guidelines" provides guidance "to preserve the natural appearance of ridgelines and other natural topographic features, and the ecological integrity of creeks, major vegetation features, and other habitats. Within Part IV, Resource Conservation Objective RC-7 states: "The impacts of grading should be minimized, both by limiting the amount of grading and by

properly contouring areas where grading occurs. *(This Objective does not apply to surface mining operations.)*" (emphasis added). For the purpose of this EIR, it is assumed that Objective RC-7 excluded guidance for surface mining, because adequate guidance for grading was already provided by Chapter 22.36 of the County Land Use Ordinance and Chapter 8, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (SMARA).

Exterior lighting in all areas of the County is subject to the requirements of Section 22.10.060 of the County Code, which requires that lighting be directed downward and be shielded to minimize glare, and that no portion of lighting be directly visible from any residence within 1,000 feet.

4.1.4 Assessment Methodology

Analyzing aesthetics impacts involves an objective description of the aesthetic resources and visual features of the landscape, and then determining their importance to, and the sensitivity of, receptors that view them. The procedures used for the analysis in this EIR generally include the following steps:

1. Identifying sensitive visual resources/features and determining the relative importance of these views
2. Identifying and qualitatively evaluating the project-related changes in the aesthetic character of the site and surrounding area, based on the modification of the physical conditions and the viewer sensitivity
3. Analyzing policies to determine the project's consistency with relevant local, state and/or federal land use policies
4. Determining light and glare impacts by comparing existing light sources with the proposed lighting, and designing the project to reduce the potential to generate spill light on adjacent sensitive receptors or to generate glare to receptors near the site

A review of relevant local land use planning documents was conducted to identify existing visual resources of community importance and to identify relevant land use regulations and policies related to these resources. Visual resources are scenic areas that are important aspects of the quality of life for residents and visitors. These resources include documented features of visual importance. For the purpose of this EIR analysis a scenic vista is an officially designated or recognized public view from a given location or corridor as identified in land use documents. The suggested scenic corridor of SR 58, as described in Section 4.1.1 above is one such visual resource.

The evaluation of project impacts was based on proposed project conditions in comparison to the existing conditions. Several visits were conducted to assess the existing visual character and quality of the project area and to take photographs. Based on site visits and considering

the extent of visibility from distant points, the analysis was oriented towards views in the relative vicinity of the project site—within a distance of about one mile. This is because at greater distances, the project site comprises such a small fraction of the overall view that any changes on it would not substantially alter the overall view.

For areas within one mile of the project site, photographs were taken from public viewpoints within the project vicinity. From these, two "key viewpoints" were selected for visual simulation based on the predominance of public view and proximity to the project site. Visual simulations are intended to help evaluate the project's potential visual impact within the context of the existing setting. Visual simulations provide a tool for identifying existing and proposed visual conditions. As part of the visual simulation process, a photograph is taken of the existing conditions at key viewpoints and then a visual representation of the proposed project is generated from the same vantage point. The visual simulations for the proposed project included Phase 1B excavation, completion of Phase 3B excavation and completion of reclamation and revegetation, after approximately 10 years of plant growth.

The primary visual resource considered in this analysis is the SR 58 corridor, and the associated views of steep hillsides covered with natural chaparral vegetation that contribute to the identification of this area as a suggested scenic corridor in the COSE.

Several residences are located in the project vicinity from which views into the property will be affected. The County does not have any specific policies to protect views from private lands, but alterations to any views would be of concern to residents. Residents are a viewer group highly sensitive to visual change. They have a greater awareness and more continuous exposure to the landscape in which they live, and typically expect that the existing visual character of their area will be maintained. Most residences with views into the quarry project site are located along SR 58 south and west of the project site. Several isolated residences in the higher elevations south of the site also have views into the proposed quarry. None of the residences along Parkhill Road or at lower elevations to the east of the property would be able to see the quarry. This is by design, since the mining plan would preserve two ridgelines on the east and west side of the quarry entrance, as well as oak trees and other vegetation near the entrance, specifically to help block views into the quarry from residences and from travelers along SR 58.

A second area or corridor from which views may be considered important is the Salinas River. The County Parks and Recreation Department long range plans include the development of a recreational trail generally along the Salinas River (San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan 2006:page 65 and Map H). Future recreational users of this trail would also be considered sensitive viewers.

Visual Simulations

A viewshed analysis identifying areas of visibility is provided as Figure 4.1-1, Quarry Viewshed Analysis. As noted in Section 4.1.1 above, this analysis is based solely on topography, and does not account for the effect of vegetation in obscuring views from some locations. In particular, the riparian corridor along the Salinas River provides a tall and dense vegetative wall that blocks views from the river and adjacent areas to the southwest. The viewshed analysis was limited to a radius of about one mile because field visits and preliminary simulations showed that at greater distances the project size was simply too small to have a major influence on the larger visual backdrop of the adjacent hillsides. In general, views of the quarry operations would be more dominant from viewpoints located in close proximity to the project site than for viewers located at further distance. Taking this into account, two "key viewpoints" were selected for visual simulation and analysis based on the dominance of public view and proximity to the project site.

The first of these was "View 1" (as identified in Figure 4.1.-1). This site was selected for visual simulation since both residents and travelers in this area would have views of the proposed quarry. This view represents the greatest effect of the proposed quarry on the greatest number of people. The picture was taken approximately 600 feet southwest of Digger Pine Road, looking northeast on SR 58. The proposed quarry site is at center on the skyline ridge. The view from this location is represented in a series of four photographs with visual simulations of the project:

- Figure 4.1-2A depicts the existing conditions looking north towards the project site from SR 58. Visible within View 1, are existing landscaping (trees to the left of SR 58), power lines, residential structures and the natural hillsides. The dominant visual feature is the hillside terrain.
- Figure 4.1-2B depicts the Completion of the Phase 1B excavation. The hillside is graded at lower elevations and is visible from the roadway. The graded portion of the hillside provides a sharp contrast in comparison to the undistributed area creating visual incompatibility.
- Figure 4.1-2C depicts completion of Phase 3B excavation without vegetation on the later slopes and with partial regrowth on the slopes vegetated in earlier phases of the reclamation. The westerly ridge of the quarry helps to shield views into the larger graded area from this vantage point, and the reclaimed slopes from earlier phases also help to reduce the contrast between freshly exposed rock surfaces and the natural vegetation. The cut and graded slopes, nevertheless, remain visually incongruent with the primarily naturally vegetated slopes along SR 58.
- Figure 4.1-2D depicts completion of reclamation and vegetation with a few years of plant growth. While disturbed areas are still visible, the restored project site is starting to blend into the naturally vegetated landscaped hillsides.

The second viewpoint selected for analysis was View 2, a location along SR 58 very near the project access point and the proposed quarry itself:

- Figure 4.1-3A depicts the existing conditions looking toward the project site from SR 58, just east of the Salinas River bridge. A pasture adjacent to SR 58 and rolling hills with vegetated terrain are the dominant visual features from this viewpoint. Other visual features include the wooden arch entryway to the property owner's residential compound, and a second residence on the property with its driveway near the left side of the photograph. In general, the site has a rural residential character.
- Figure 4.1-3B depicts the completion of the Phase 1B excavation. The new access road and a portion of the graded hillside are visible from the roadway from this vantage point, which represents views from eastbound SR 58. Oak trees in the mid-ground portion of the view and the preserved ridgelines partially block the views into the quarry, but the visible graded slope would stand in contrast to the adjacent brush covered hillside. Travelers going west on SR 58 would not have the same direct view, or would have to turn and look over their shoulders to see this view.
- Figure 4.1-3C depicts completion of Phase 3B excavation without vegetation. By this point, the quarry operation would remove a portion of the slope that was visible in the previous simulation, and a more distant fresh slope would be visible. More extensive grading associated with this phase is shielded from view by the westerly and easterly ridgelines preserved within the quarry (left and right side of the photograph). This vantage point is typical for viewers who would be eastbound on SR 58. While not as dominant as in other views, the graded portion of the hillside still breaks the visual continuity in the area and contrasts with the natural vegetation.
- Figure 4.1-3D depicts completion of reclamation and vegetation with approximately 10 years of plant growth. The restored project site blends into the rural setting with the naturally landscaped hillsides being the dominant view.

4.1.5 Significance Criteria

With appropriate consideration of the significance criteria presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of San Luis Obispo has developed and adopted the following significance criteria to determine project effects for Aesthetics and Visual resources within San Luis Obispo County. Accordingly, the Las Pilitas Quarry project will have a significant impact if it will:

a. Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view; and/or

b. Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view; and/or

c. Change the visual character of an area; and/or

d. Create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas; and/or

e. Impact unique geological or physical features.

4.1.6 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Effects on Scenic Vistas (SR 58)

As a fully functional quarry operation, this project will change the visual character of the surrounding area, due to ongoing grading for more than 25 years. Further, even upon cessation of the mining operations and phased implementation of the Reclamation Plan, the revegetated slopes will not appear "natural" when viewed by travelers and the public along Highway 58.

The project will affect general visual resources in the area and the scenic vista observed from SR 58. Minor improvements necessary to connect the existing well near the river to the pipes and tanks that will supply the project will occur within existing ranch roads on the property and will not substantially alter the visual conditions from their existing conditions. It is anticipated that proposed Tank "A", as shown on Figure 2-3, will be visible from Highway 58; proposed Tank "B" will not be visible.

Although this is not an officially designated scenic highway, Policy VR 4.1 of the COSE indicates that SR 58 will eventually become a scenic corridor. Based on the above descriptions the project is expected to have a significant impact on views from eastbound traffic along the SR 58 corridor, and similar effects on views from a few residents located south of the project site. The visual effects of the project can be reduced, but not avoided until after maturity of revegetation in the reclamation plan, which cannot occur for several decades. Given the large cut slopes associated with the mining activities and the sensitivity of views in the area, including the status of SR 58 as a "candidate" scenic highway corridor in the COSE, the visual effect of the project on the scenic vista is considered a significant impact that can be mitigated, but not to a level below significance.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
IMPACT AES-1: Scenic Vistas. The project will create graded slopes into natural hillsides, which will be visible to the public from portions of the SR 58 corridor, which is identified for study as a scenic corridor by the Conservation and Open Space Element. These slopes may adversely affect the aesthetic character of	MM AES-1a: Scenic Vistas/Reclamation and Revegetation. Revegetation of all final slopes and flat portions of the completed mine shall be accomplished in accordance with the approved Surface Mine Reclamation Plan. This includes phased reclamation in which exposed slopes in Phases 1B, 2A, 2B, and 3A are revegetated as early as practical, concurrent with the start of quarrying in the next subsequent phase. Upon completion of all quarry activities, all equipment and the access road are to be removed, and lower slopes within the quarry shall be filled to a slope of no more than 2:1 and revegetated consistent with the Final Site Configuration Plan shown in Appendix B and consistent with the performance standards for revegetation in the state surface mining regulations (14 CCR 3705). In accordance with Sections 22.01.050 (D) (4) and 22.01.070 of the County Land Use	Significant and not mitigated

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
the site and the surrounding area. The location of Tank "A" will be visible from public views and has the potential to silhouette against the skyline as viewed from SR 58.	Ordinance, all revegetated areas shall be permanently maintained in perpetuity. The applicant/quarry operator shall provide a financial guarantee to ensure completion of the reclamation plan, including monitoring and maintenance to demonstrate that vegetation has been self-sustaining without irrigation for a minimum of two years prior to release of the final assurance. MM AES-1b: Scenic Vistas/Off-site Landscaping Agreement. Prior to the issuance of any construction permit for project construction activities, the applicant/quarry operator shall obtain agreement from the off-site property owner (APN 070-154-018 / 6795 Calf Canyon Highway) for installation and maintenance for the life of the project, of additional landscaping as described below in mitigation measure AES-1c. The off-site landscaping shall be shown in a preliminary landscaping plan included within the grading plans for construction of the project access road and other initial improvements as described in MM AES-1c with the intent of screening views of the quarry from eastbound travelers on SR 58. MM AES-1c: Scenic Vistas/Off-site Landscaping. Prior to the start of excavations in Phase 1A, off-site landscaping shall be installed at a location approved by the Planning and Building Department (approximately 1,500 feet southwest of the project entrance and 100 feet southeast of the SR 58 roadway edge). The landscaping shall consist of 2 to 4 conifers or other tall growing trees consistent with the existing trees at this location, and shall be planted at a location that will help to block views into the quarry site from eastbound traffic on SR 58 and maintained for the life of the project. MM AES-1d: Scenic Vistas/Screening of Water Tank. Prior to the issuance of any construction permit for project construction activities, the applicant/quarry operator shall show landscape screening in a preliminary landscape plan. Landscaping shall be installed and maintained for the life of the project to visually screen Tank "A" from public views along SR 58. The applicant shall provide evidence that the proposed tank(s) are as low profile as is possible, given the site conditions and tank(s) shall be a neutral or dark, non-contrasting color.	

Effects on Scenic Vistas (Salinas River Trail)

Recreational users would also be sensitive to visual change. The Salinas River Trail and Natural Area proposed trail corridor crosses generally through the south-west corner of the project site based on the County Trails Map in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan (San Luis Obispo County 2006:Chapter 8, Table 5(b), page 65 and Map H). There is no trail plan, proposed alignment, right-of-way, or any location information beyond the broad corridor shown generally along the river itself. There is no existing trail or trail right-of-way on adjacent parcels upstream or downstream from the subject property. Assuming that any future trail is generally located along the river corridor itself, and not

along ridgelines in the general vicinity, the proposed quarry is not expected to have any significant visual effect on trail users. This is because the nearest point within the proposed quarry is over 1,000 feet from the Salinas River. The preserved western ridge in the quarry, along with the extensive riparian vegetation and oak trees along the river corridor, will block all views from the vicinity of the river into the proposed quarry. Minor improvements necessary to connect the existing well near the river to the pipes and tanks that will supply the project will occur within existing ranch roads on the property and will not substantially alter the visual conditions from their existing conditions. It is anticipated that proposed Tank "A", as shown on Figure 2-3, will be visible from Highway 58; proposed Tank "B" will not be visible. The effects of the project on views from the future Salinas River trail corridor will be less than significant.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
IMPACT AES-2: Scenic Vistas/Salinas River Trail. Although the project will create graded slopes into natural hillsides in the general vicinity of the proposed Salinas River trail corridor, those views will be blocked by existing vegetation and intervening topography.	MM AES-2: Scenic Vistas/Salinas River Trail. Since this effect is less than significant, no mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Effects on Nighttime Glare

The proposed project would create a new source of nighttime light in the vicinity, which may affect views in the area. Sources of light include the existing residential and ranch structures on-site that would be maintained with the proposed project. These include two residences, a barn, storage shed, shop/garage, and trailer. Lighting typically associated with these types of uses includes entryway light, interior building lighting, architectural and landscape lighting. These sources of light are part of the existing conditions, and are similar to those within the vicinity of the project site. The proposed quarry would not operate at night and new sources of light are anticipated to be limited to that which is needed for safety and security at the scale house and in the processing area where quarry vehicles and equipment would be stored. The nearest existing residences are both within the subject property, at distances of 380 and 800 feet from the scale house location. The nearest off-site residences are in excess of 1,200 feet south and southwest from the scale house location. Minor security lighting may also be provided at gates or other features on the access road for the project.

New light sources would be required to comply with the existing County standards for outdoor lighting (San Luis Obispo County Code, Section 22.10.060). In summary, these standards include:

- Outdoor lighting is to be used for illumination only.

- Light sources shall be designed and adjusted to direct light away from any road or street, and any dwelling outside the ownership of the applicant.
- No light or glare shall be transmitted or reflected in such concentration or intensity as to be detrimental or harmful to persons, or to interfere with the surrounding properties or streets.
- Light sources are to be shielded – with any light intended for ground illumination from a height greater than eight feet required to have shielding that extends below the lower edge of the light source to block the view of the light source from the view of any residential use within 1,000 feet of the light fixture.
- Freestanding outdoor light fixtures are not to exceed the height of the tallest building on the site.
- Street lighting shall be designed to minimize light pollution by preventing the light from going beyond the horizontal plane at which the fixture is directed.

Depending on the final location and design of lighting for the project, it may be visible from residences on and off of the subject property. Thus, nighttime lighting represents a potentially significant impact, which can be mitigated through design and compliance with applicable County standards.

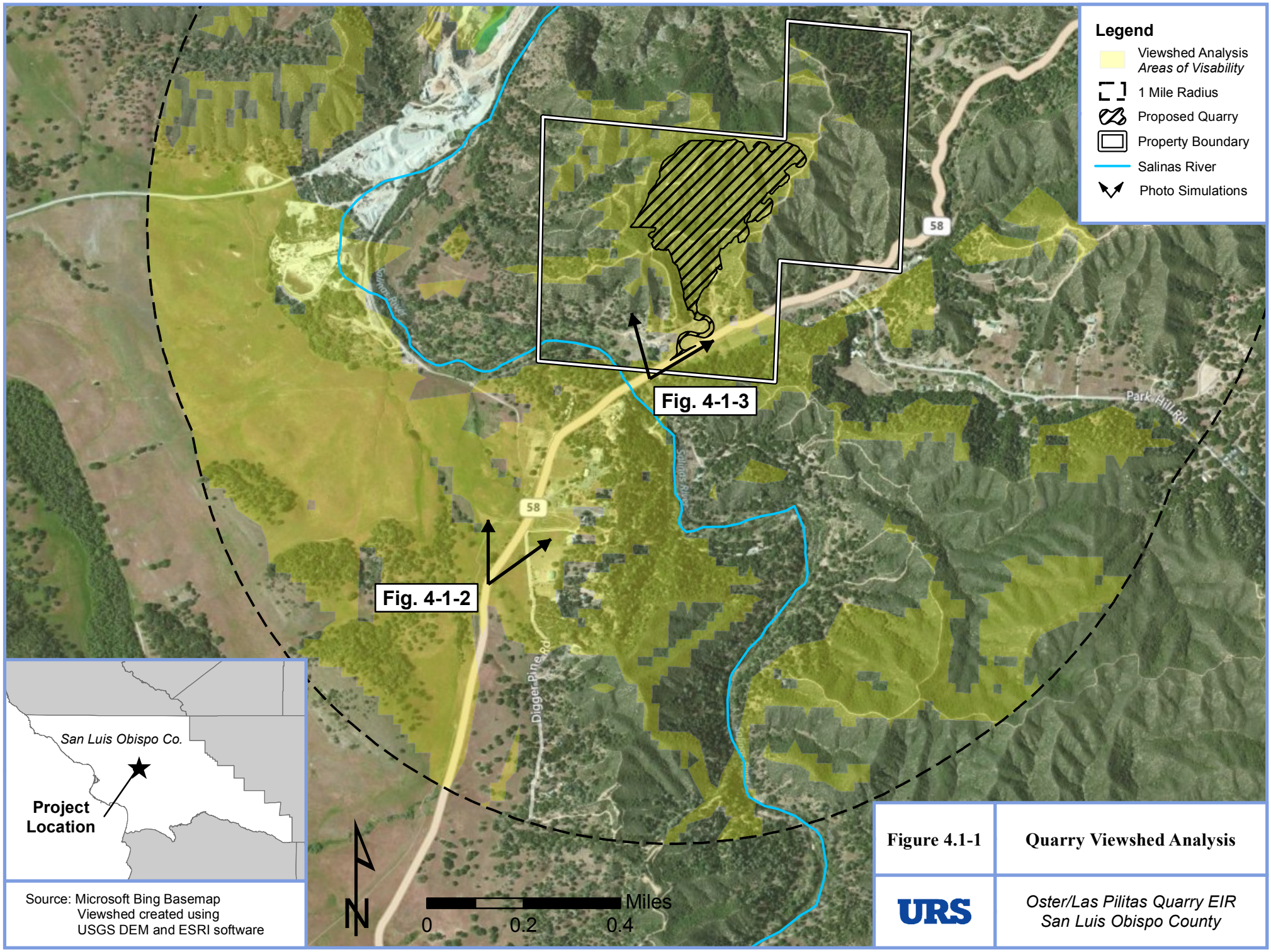
Description of Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
IMPACT AES-3: Nighttime Glare. The project will create a new source of nighttime lighting in the vicinity, which may generate glare visible to residences on properties to the south or southwest.	MM AES-3: Nighttime Glare/Lighting Plan. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project scale house, the applicant/quarry operator shall provide a plan or specifications for all lighting (including security lighting) that complies with the County Land Use Ordinance for approval by the County Planning and Building Department. All lighting fixtures shall be shielded so that neither the lamp nor the related reflector interior surface is visible from SR 58.	Less than significant

Cumulative Effects

The project is about one-half mile from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry. Both quarries are within the EX1 Extractive Resource Area Combining Designation, as shown on Figure 3-1. In this region, the EX1 Combining Designation is placed over the La Panza Granitics, a large area that is classified as MRZ-2 by the California State Geological Survey (1989:9). Since this Combining Designation is specifically intended to protect mineral resources, it is reasonable to expect that future quarries could be approved and constructed in this area, and that an unspecified number of them will have graded areas and ultimately revegetated slopes that will have visual impacts similar to this proposed project, particularly when viewed from Highway 58. Although the specific number, location, and actual

configuration of these future quarries is unknown at this time, cumulative effects relative to Aesthetics and Visual Resources are expected to be significant and not mitigable due to the nature of mining activities and the engineered appearance of mined slopes in quarry operations.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
IMPACT AES-4: Cumulative Effects on Aesthetics and Visual Resources. It is reasonable to expect that future quarries will be approved and constructed in the area surrounding the project. An unspecified number of these future quarries will have graded areas and ultimately revegetated slopes that will have adverse visual impacts similar to the proposed project, particularly when viewed from Highway 58. However, the specific number and actual configuration of these future quarries is unknown at this time.	MM AES-4: Cumulative Effects on Aesthetics and Visual Resources. Mitigation measures similar to AES-1a, AES-1b, AES-1c and AES-1d are likely to be applied to any future quarries. These measures may serve to minimize impacts on views from SR 58, but they are not likely to eliminate impacts entirely.	Significant and not mitigated



Source: Microsoft Bing Basemap
Viewshed created using
USGS DEM and ESRI software

Figure 4.1-1	**Quarry Viewshed Analysis**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

Figure 4.1-2a	**Existing Conditions**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-2b	**Proposed Phase 1B**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-2c	**Proposed Phase 3B**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-2d	**Proposed Phase 3B with Partial Revegetation**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-3a	**Existing Conditions**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-3b	**Proposed Phase 1B**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-3c	**Proposed Phase 3B**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR* *San Luis Obispo County*

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Figure 4.1-3d	**Proposed Phase 3B with Partial Revegetation**
URS	*Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry EIR San Luis Obispo County*

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