

1 **3.1 AESTHETICS**

<b>AESTHETICS – Would the Project:</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 **3.1.1 Environmental Setting**

3 The Project area is located 2 miles east-northeast of Niland, Imperial County, in the  
 4 central basin of the Colorado Desert. Niland is a small community on the southeast side  
 5 of the Salton Sea, approximately 80 miles southeast of Palm Springs and 19 miles north  
 6 of Brawley. The 640-acre School Lands parcel containing the two smaller Project  
 7 parcels is accessed via Beal Road, a paved road that heads east from Niland's Main  
 8 Street and traverses the property in a southwest-northeast direction. The Project area  
 9 includes Salvation Mountain and the East Jesus property with its art installations (Figure  
 10 2-3). Activities at these sites are not expected to change as a result of the Project and  
 11 are part of the baseline conditions. The proposed purchasers of the School Lands  
 12 parcels plan to continue the existing uses (current baseline conditions) associated with  
 13 the respective parcels. Any other uses and potential impacts are too speculative for  
 14 evaluation.

15 **3.1.2 Regulatory Setting**

16 Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to this issue area and relevant to the  
 17 Project are identified in Table 3.1-1.

18 **Table 3.1-1. Laws, Regulations, and Policies (Aesthetics)**

<b>CA</b>	California Scenic Highway Program	The California Scenic Highway Program, managed by the California Department of Transportation, was created to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. State highways identified as scenic, or eligible for designation, are listed in California Streets and Highways Code section 260 et seq.
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1 At the local level, goals, policies, and/or regulations applicable to aesthetics are found in  
2 the Circulation and Scenic Highways Element of the Imperial County General Plan  
3 (Imperial County 1993), which identifies the location and extent of transportation routes  
4 and facilities. This Element, which is a mandatory component of the General Plan  
5 (pursuant to Gov. Code, § 65302, subd. (b)), is intended to meet the transportation  
6 needs of local residents and businesses and as a source for regional coordination. The  
7 Circulation and Scenic Highways Element, which identifies scenic highways in the  
8 County, also provides a means of protecting and enhancing scenic resources within  
9 both rural and urban scenic highway corridors in Imperial County.

### 10 **3.1.3 Impact Analysis**

#### 11 ***a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?***

12 **No Impact.** The proposed sale of School Lands will not have an adverse effect on a  
13 scenic vista.

#### 14 ***b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, 15 rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

#### 16 ***c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its 17 surroundings?***

#### 18 ***d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect 19 day or nighttime views in the area?***

20 **No Impact.** The proposed sale of School Lands will not substantially damage scenic  
21 resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings  
22 within a state scenic highway; will not substantially degrade the existing visual character  
23 or quality of the site and its surroundings; and will not create a new source of substantial  
24 light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Neither  
25 the nearest major road, Imperial County Road 111 (located approximately 3.5 miles  
26 from the Project area) nor Beal Road, which provides access to the parcels, are state  
27 scenic highways.

### 28 **3.1.4 Summary**

29 Based upon the above considerations, no impacts to aesthetics are expected to occur  
30 as a result of the proposed sale of School Lands.