



Introduction

Visual resources are features that define the aesthetic character of an area. These resources are unique, often provide a sense of community for local residents, and may attract visitors to the area. This fact sheet summarizes the potential impacts the proposed project would have on visual resources.

What was studied?

The study examined how the construction and operations of the proposed project would affect the views and scenic quality of the surrounding landscape.

What was the study area?

- Proposed project site
- Proposed wetland mitigation site
- Rail corridor (Anacortes Subdivision)

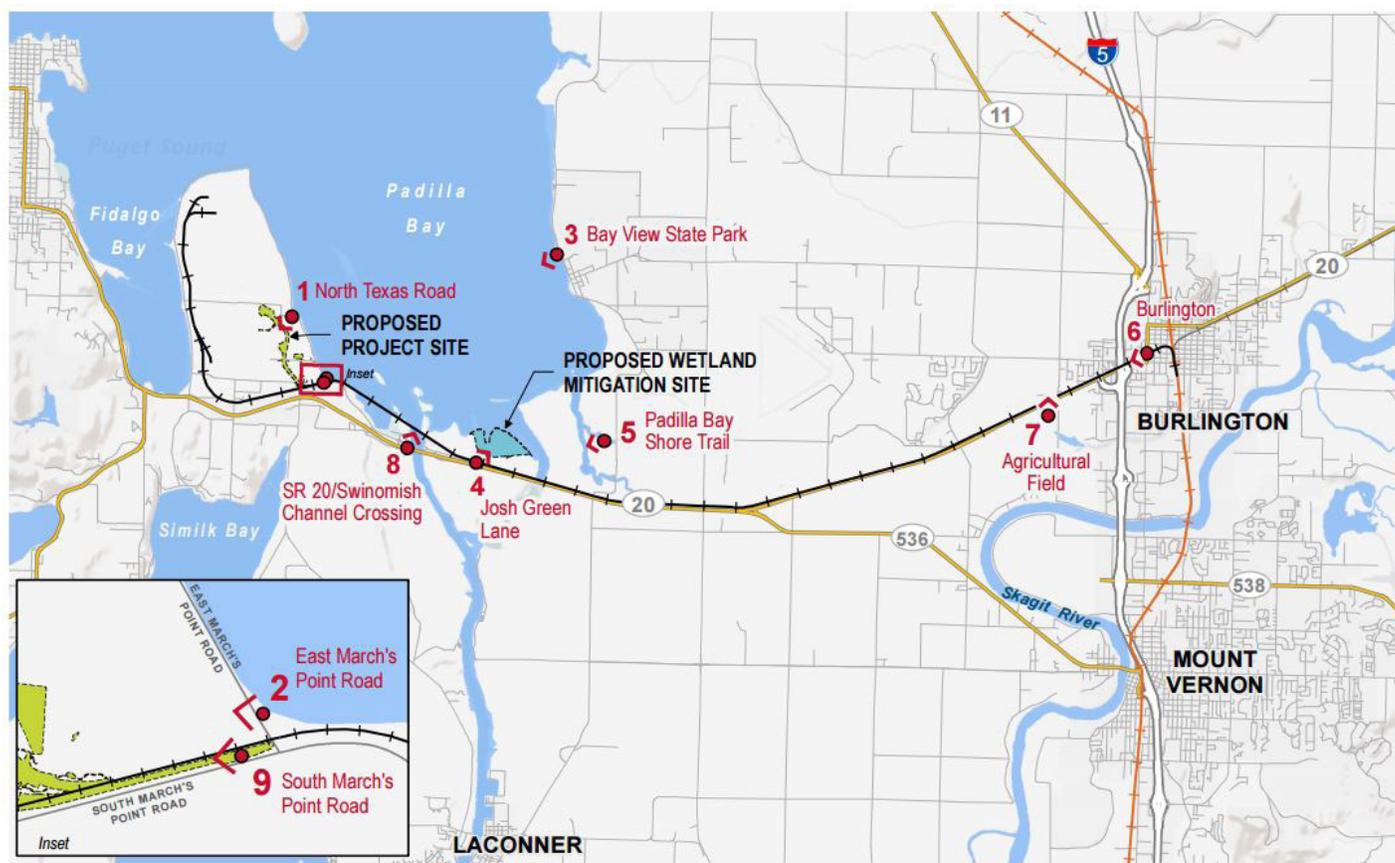
See the Proposed Project Fact Sheet for a map of the site.

How were impacts analyzed?

The analysis identified nine viewpoints, or Key Observation Points (KOPs), of the landscape in the study area (see Figure 3.13-1 of the draft EIS). The character and quality of each of these KOPs was assessed relative to the overall regional visual character to determine a scenic quality rating. Next, the analysis identified who most frequently views each area and their sensitivity to the view. Lastly, it assigned a level of impact to each KOP based on the degree of contrast between the proposed project elements and the surrounding landscape.

Scenic quality is a measure of the visual appeal of an area based on landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity, and cultural modifications.

Sensitivity levels are a measure of public concern for scenic quality and are assigned a value of low, medium, or high by evaluating the type of users, amount of use, public interest, adjacent land uses, and any land use designations that require protection of visual resources.



Key observation points and direction of view (see Figure 3.13-1 of draft EIS)

What are the potential impacts?

Construction and Operation Impacts

Construction and operation of the proposed project would take place in an area with existing industrial development and activities. Therefore, visual impacts from construction and operation would be minimal. Operation of the rail unloading facility would produce minor light and glare impacts. The construction of the wetland mitigation site would be largely shielded from the surrounding area by existing stands of trees; therefore, visual impacts during construction would be minimal. The wetland mitigation site would be similar in character to the surrounding area and would not attract the attention of viewers. After construction, viewers would not notice a change to the visual resources at the wetland mitigation site.

A retaining wall would be built along an approximately 1,000-foot-long stretch of the rail corridor (Anacortes Subdivision). Construction activities would result in minor visual impacts from the presence of construction equipment along the rail line. After construction, the retaining wall would be similar in height to the existing tracks, but close to South March's Point Road. This change in the visual environment would result in a moderate impact.

Additional trains traveling along the rail corridor (Anacortes Subdivision) would result in an increase in the frequency and the length of time that trains transporting crude oil were running and in view, but would not add a new type of visual impact to the existing rail corridor. Visual impacts from trains associated with the proposed project would therefore be minor.



Visual simulation of proposed retaining wall, KOP 9 (looking southwest along South March's Point Road)

Cumulative Impacts

Within the study area, there has been significant agricultural, industrial, commercial, and residential development. It is assumed that with this growth and new construction, visual resources have been affected. Construction and operation of the Tesoro Clean Products Upgrade Project has the potential to

impact these resources. Together, these projects would contribute to a cumulative impact on visual resources. However, given their proximity, the impacts would be localized to the Tesoro Anacortes Refinery site and the proposed project and wetland mitigation sites.

What mitigation measures are proposed?

Avoidance and Minimization

Impacts to visual resources would be minimized by the implementation of the best management practices required as part of the Shoreline Substantial Development Permit and in accordance with Skagit County Code, which states that:

- Building materials with high light-reflective qualities shall not be used in construction of buildings where sunlight would throw intense glare on an adjacent area
- Artificial lighting shall use full cut-off fixtures so that direct light from high-intensity lamps would not result in glare
- Lighting shall be directed away from adjoining properties so that not more than one foot-candle of light leaves the property boundaries

In addition, Shell would minimize the impacts of light on neighboring properties in accordance with recommendations from the International Dark Sky Association, which includes installing full cut-off light boxes, adjusting light direction, and providing additional screens with supplemental light shields.

Mitigation

No additional mitigation measures are proposed beyond the avoidance and minimization measures that would be developed and enforced as part of the permit conditions.

Are there unavoidable significant adverse impacts?

No unavoidable significant adverse impacts were identified

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOPIC?

Chapter 3.13 – Visual Resources of the draft EIS

The information in this fact sheet summarizes content from the draft Environmental Impact Statement; please review the full document for more detailed and complete information.

LEARN MORE shellraileis.com

To request ADA accommodation or materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at (360) 407-7668, Relay Service 711, or TTY (877) 833-6341. Si necesita información en español sobre el proyecto, por favor comuníquese con Gretchen Newman, (360) 407-6097, preguntas@ecy.wa.gov.

