

**OTAY HILLS CONSTRUCTION AGGREGATE AND INERT  
DEBRIS ENGINEERED FILL OPERATION PROJECT**

**APPENDIX L**

**VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

*for the*

**PUBLIC REVIEW  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

PDS2004-3300-04-004 (MUP);  
PDS2004-3310-04-001 (RP);  
PDS2010-3813-10-002 (SPA);  
Log No. 04-190-04

JUNE 2020

*Prepared for:*

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
5510 OVERLAND AVENUE, SUITE 310  
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# **Visual/Community Character Analysis**

## **Otay Hills Construction Aggregate and Inert Debris Engineered Fill Operation Project**

**PDS2004-3300-04-004 (MUP); PDS2004-3310-04-001 (RP);  
PDS2010-3813-10-002 (SPA); Log No. 04-190-04**

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**July 2019**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Otay Hills Construction Aggregate and Inert Debris Engineered Fill Operation (IDEFO) Project (Proposed Project) site is located in the unincorporated community of East Otay Mesa in south San Diego County, approximately 0.5 mile north of the U.S.-Mexico international border. The Proposed Project is an application for a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA), a Major Use Permit (MUP), and Reclamation Plan for the extraction and processing of construction aggregate and inert debris landfill on a 438-acre site. The MUP project area consists of 110 acres upon which the mining of construction aggregates, materials processing, and inert debris landfill operations would occur. The balance of the 438-acre Project area would be placed in biological preserve prior to aggregate recovery operations. The Project site is located 8.5 miles east of the Interstate 805 (I-805)/State Route 905 (SR 905) interchange, approximately 2 miles east of the State Route 125 (SR 125)/SR 905 interchange, and approximately 0.5 mile east of the intersection of Old Otay Mesa Road and Alta Road. Existing on-site features include several peaks and canyons, including one large canyon, and native vegetation. A 120-foot San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) power line easement transects the western parcels of the Project site. Several large power line towers and some smaller power poles are located within this easement.

The Proposed Project would include the extraction of aggregate materials (i.e., quarried rock) from the Project site and the processing of those materials for use in construction projects throughout San Diego County. The extraction operations would take place over four phases; depending on the rate of production, the Proposed Project would have a lifespan of approximately 120 years. Project operations would require a variety of equipment ranging in size from trucks to large silos. Mineral resource recovery operations would be conducted through the use of drilling and blasting to fracture rocks. The materials would be extracted from the Project site hills and canyons and would be transported to the six proposed on-site processing plants via trucks or conveyor belts. The processing plants would be metal, geometric structures (rectangular or cylindrical) supported by networks of metal scaffolding and, while generally up to 35 or 45 feet, the asphalt and concrete plants could reach 75 feet in height. Conveyor belts feeding into and out of the plants would be long, spider-like structures with arm-like features extending between the various elements of the operational equipment. The various plant structures mainly would be white, light gray or tan. Once processed, the material would be stored in geometrically conical stockpiles up to 35 feet in height. The exposed soil and material stockpiles also would vary in color from the vegetated and weathered surface soil.

As part of the reclamation process, the site would be utilized as an IDEFO during Phases 3 and 4 of the Project. Inert debris would include excavated soil material from development projects, clean demolition materials, and possibly concrete, asphalt and rock.

Following completion of aggregate extraction operations, the Project site would be reclaimed to a land use consistent with the underlying land use regulations. Reclamation, which includes final grading, application of topsoil, revegetation and broken rock staining as necessary, would commence upon completion of each phase of the Project. The ultimate topography of the site after reclamation would include a nearly level pad approximately 85 acres in size, and approximately 16 acres of slopes up to approximately 190 feet high, with a 1:1 steepness ratio (i.e., 1 foot vertical rise to 1 foot horizontal run).

A concrete and asphalt recycling plant also would be included as part of the Proposed Project. This process involves the import of used concrete and asphalt materials, crushing, and then exporting the material for use as road base or foundation material. These materials also may be blended with rock originating from the site to improve performance characteristics. Incoming and outgoing materials would be stored in stockpiles. This plant, located in the southwest corner of the northern 16-acre parcel, could move around within that parcel as needed.

County-approved visual analysts and a licensed landscape architect evaluated potential modifications to the existing conditions as a result of Project implementation. Project analysis is based on the following elements:

- A map of the viewshed and a discussion of areas from which the site may be viewed as a prominent feature.
- Key Views, a photosimulation, and a discussion of potential changes to key viewpoints.
- A discussion of the visibility of the Project from nearby public and private viewpoints.
- A discussion of the Proposed Project's compatibility with County policies, zoning, and local design guidelines.

The Project site encompasses undeveloped land within the western foothills of the San Ysidro Mountains. The Project site includes slopes and supports disturbed and undisturbed native vegetation, including Diegan coastal sage scrub, cismontane alkali marsh, chaparral scrub, chamise chaparral, southern mixed chaparral, and grasslands. Undeveloped, graded or vacant land immediately surrounds the Proposed Project to the north, east, and south. The closest existing development to the Project site consists of a power plant (Calpine) and Vulcan Materials plant located immediately west of the impact footprint. A prison is in proximity to the Project to the northwest, and a new peaker power plant (Pio Pico) was built in Fall 2016, located immediately west of the existing power plant.

The eastern edges of the developed areas of Otay Mesa comprise the existing visual environment within approximately two miles west of the Project site. Existing development within these adjacent areas includes industrial buildings, two prison facilities, four residences, an auto auction yard, and a commercial establishment. The San Ysidro Mountains are located immediately east of the Project site; and Otay Mountain is located approximately 3.5 miles from the site. This mountain range would not be impacted by the Proposed Project and would continue to provide a backdrop to views toward the east from the surrounding area.

No officially designated State scenic highways or County priority scenic routes are located within the Otay Mesa area. The Proposed Project, therefore, would not impact any current scenic routes.

During operation of the Proposed Project, earthmoving and aggregate processing equipment and the soil and rock exposed on the slopes and pads of the impact footprint would change the patterns of the visual environment on and near the Project site and would contrast with the existing visual environment, currently comprised of undulating hills and native vegetation that provide a visual transition between the mesa and the mountains. During operation, the contrast created by the

Proposed Project would be noticeable but not visually dominant, would not be larger in scale than the surrounding elements, would introduce new diversity, and would moderately interrupt the continuity of overall views. The steeper, rockier slopes created by the Project would support less dense vegetation than the hills surrounding the Project site; final slopes would be steeper (up to 1:1) than the existing hills on and near the Project site and would have horizontal benches spaced evenly across them. The native plants proposed by the Reclamation Plan (EnviroMINE 2014), however, would provide visual continuity between the Project site post-reclamation and the surrounding area, softening the strong contrast and ensuring that the diversity created by the Project would not be incompatible with the existing visual environment. Additionally, the Project would be compatible with the current undeveloped/industrial character of the area, and reclamation of the site would allow future development that would be compatible with future surrounding development according to the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan (EOMSP). The Project, therefore, would not cause a significant impact to the existing visual environment (Guideline 1).

The Proposed Project elements would not interrupt views of the largest, silhouetted mountains; the San Ysidro Mountains would continue to provide the dominant background in eastward views of the area. Post-reclamation, the Project site would be characterized by manufactured slopes that would be taller, steeper, and more uniform and geometric than the existing hillsides, with evenly spaced benches extending horizontally across the length of the new slopes. This configuration would affect continuity of the area's visual environment. Undisturbed native vegetation existing on the Project site would be impacted, although not all of the vegetation would be disturbed at the same time, and the strongest contrast between the exposed soil and the surrounding undisturbed vegetation would be temporary. The proposed Reclamation Plan includes a Revegetation Plan with similar species. The site reclamation would soften the contrast created by the exposed soil and would ensure that the Proposed Project slopes would be more compatible with the existing vegetation on the hillsides and pads abutting the Project site. The approximately 329 acres of open space preserved as part of the Project east of the mining footprint would ensure that visible native habitat is retained *in perpetuity*. Proposed project impacts to valued visual elements would be less than significant (Guideline 2).

The Proposed Project would not degrade the quality of views from public trails such as Otay Mountain Truck Trail and the trail leading north from Calzada de la Fuente; visible elements of the Project would be below visible slope lines when viewed from the west, and below the viewer when viewed from the east. No other public parks or recreation areas, surface waters or major drainages, ridgelines, or other sensitive public viewpoints are located within the Project site or close enough to the Project site to provide sensitive viewpoints. The Project, therefore, was found to have no significant adverse visual impacts due to degradation of these resources (Guideline 3).

The San Ysidro Mountain foothills and canyons, identified in the EOMSP as areas of special scenic beauty, would either not be impacted (Johnson and O'Neal Canyons) or not substantially impacted (foothills) by the Proposed Project. Additionally, although potential scenic highways exist in the area, none are currently designated; therefore, the Project would not impact scenic highways. The lighting proposed for the Project would meet the objectives of the County Dark Sky Ordinance/Light Pollution Code (LPC) and would be visually similar to lighting at the closest developed facilities, including the power plant and the prisons. Lights would be shielded and focused as necessary so that light spill onto adjacent properties would not occur. The Project, therefore, would meet the applicable policies and planning guidelines for the area (Guideline 4).

While the Proposed Project in combination with the anticipated development of nearby industrial and roadway projects in the area would create a substantial change to the visual environment of East Otay Mesa, the cumulative level of visual change is consistent with County plans and would not significantly impact scenic resources. The project's contribution to this less than significant change would be less than considerable.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Study Purpose

The following Visual Impact Analysis was prepared for the Otay Hills Construction Aggregate and Inert Debris Engineered Fill Operation (IDEFO) Project (hereinafter referred to as “Proposed Project” or “Project”). The purpose of this study is to assess the visual impacts of the Proposed Project, determine the significance of the impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and propose measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse visual impacts associated with Proposed Project construction on the surrounding visual environment.

This analysis has been prepared per the County of San Diego (County) Visual Analysis guidelines using the CEQA Guidelines of Significance and is based on the Project Description found in Chapter 2.0 of the Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR).

### 1.2 Key Issues

This report evaluates potential impacts to the visual character and quality of the Project site and surrounding area as viewed from points within the Project viewshed, as well as consistency with applicable ordinances and design guidelines.

### 1.3 Principal Viewpoints to be Covered

This report evaluates principal views of the Proposed Project from public roads, trails, potential scenic highways (or designated priority scenic roadways), and recreation areas. In particular, this report discusses potential impacts to views from nearby roadways such as Otay Mesa Road, Alta Road, and Paseo de la Fuente, and recreational trails such as the Otay Mountain Truck Trail.

### 1.4 Project Location

The Project site is located in the unincorporated community of East Otay Mesa in south San Diego County, approximately 0.5 mile north of the U.S.-Mexico international border, 8.5 miles east of the Interstate 805 (I-805)/State Route 905 (SR 905) interchange, 2 miles east of the SR 125/SR 905 interchange, and 0.5 mile east of the intersection of Old Otay Mesa Road and Alta Road (Figure 1, *Regional Location*). The Project site is located in Township 18 South, Range 1 East, Sections 28, 29, 30 and 32 on the San Bernardino Meridian U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Otay Mesa quadrangle (Figure 2, *Project Location – USGS Quadrangle Map*). The Project impact footprint is located at the eastern extension of Otay Mesa on the southwestern flank of the San Ysidro Mountains. The Project is within the South County segment of the County of San Diego Subarea Plan for the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) and is divided among four County MSCP Subarea Plan designations: Major Amendment Area, Minor Amendment Area, Minor Amendment Area Subject to Special Consideration, and Proposed Hardline Preserve. Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph and Topographic Elevations in the Project Vicinity*, is an aerial photograph of the Project site and surrounding vicinity.

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Project Components

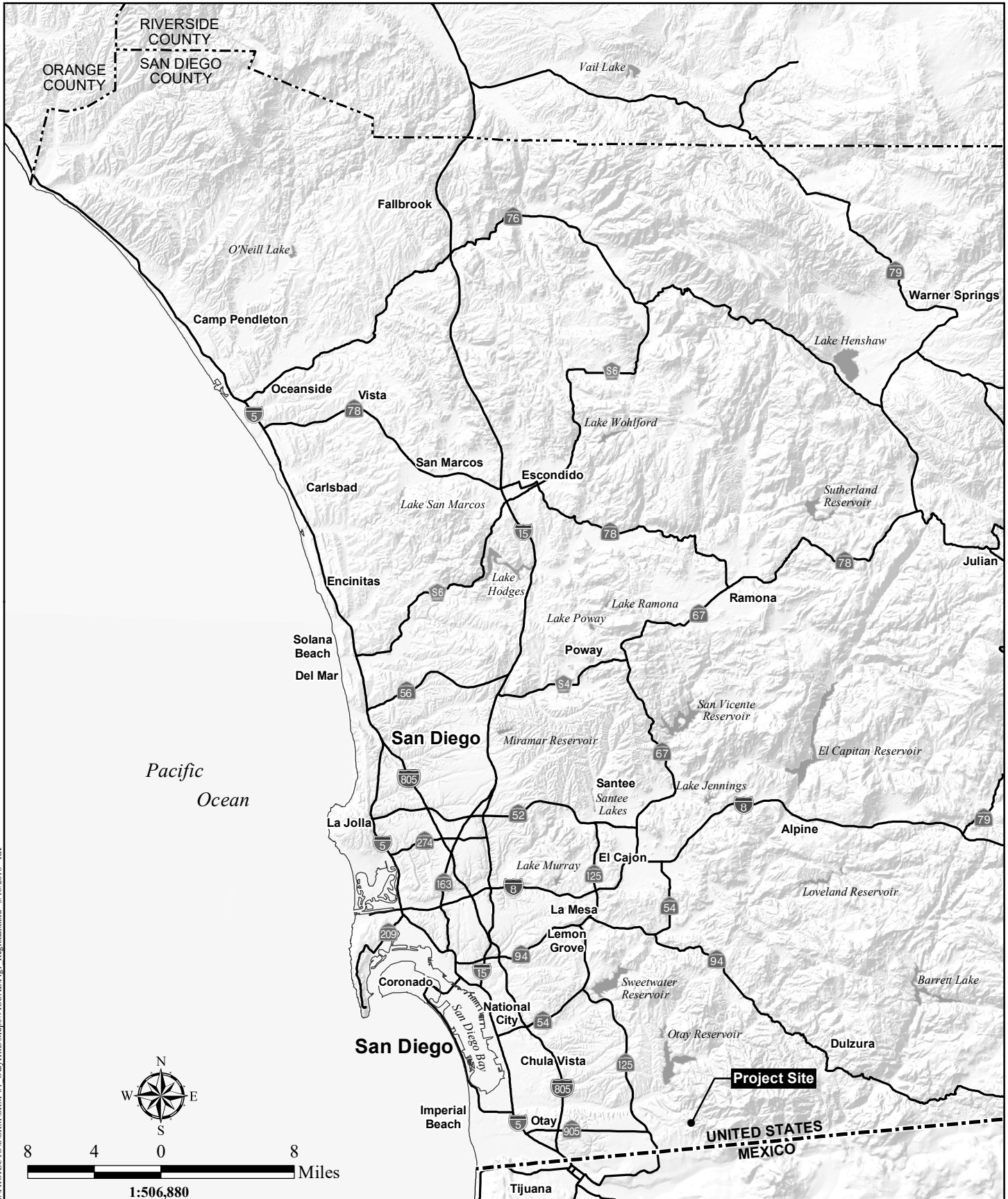
The Proposed Project is an application for a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA), a Major Use Permit (MUP), and Reclamation Plan for the extraction and processing of construction aggregate and inert debris landfill on a 438-acre site. The MUP project area consists of 110 acres upon which the mining of construction aggregates, materials processing, and inert debris landfill operations would occur. The balance of the 438-acre Project area would be placed in biological preserve (Multiple Species Conservation Program Hardline Preserve) prior to aggregate recovery operations. Additional biological preserve areas would be created on a portion of the mined and reclaimed resource recovery areas. Depending on the rate of production, the Proposed Project would have a lifespan of approximately 120 years. Figure 4, *Extraction Impact Footprint*, illustrates the above-grade grading and ultimate pit depth for the Proposed Project.

Approximately 89.2 million tons of mineral resources would be extracted from the Project footprint area and over 32 million cubic yards of inert debris would be received. Initial vegetation clearing is expected to occur over the entire development footprint within the first 16 years. Anticipated operations at the site would include the following:

- Phased recovery of rock resources
- Materials processing (primary and secondary plants)
- Concrete ready-mix (batch) production
- Cement-treated base (CTB) production
- Asphalt batch production
- Recycling of asphalt and concrete products
- IDEFO

The aggregate extraction operation would occur on an approximately 110-acre area of the impact footprint, while processing activities would take place on an approximately 16.1 acre pad located at the northern portion of the impact footprint (Figure 5, *Proposed Facilities Layout*). Some crushing and screening may occur in the extraction area. Hours of operation for processing activities primarily would be from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM, with mining operations outside these hours only as needed for public health, safety and welfare concerns (e.g., requested by a public/state agency). Maintenance of equipment and export of material would occur 24 hours per day. Anticipated levels of mineral production are between 0.6 and 1.6 million tons per year.

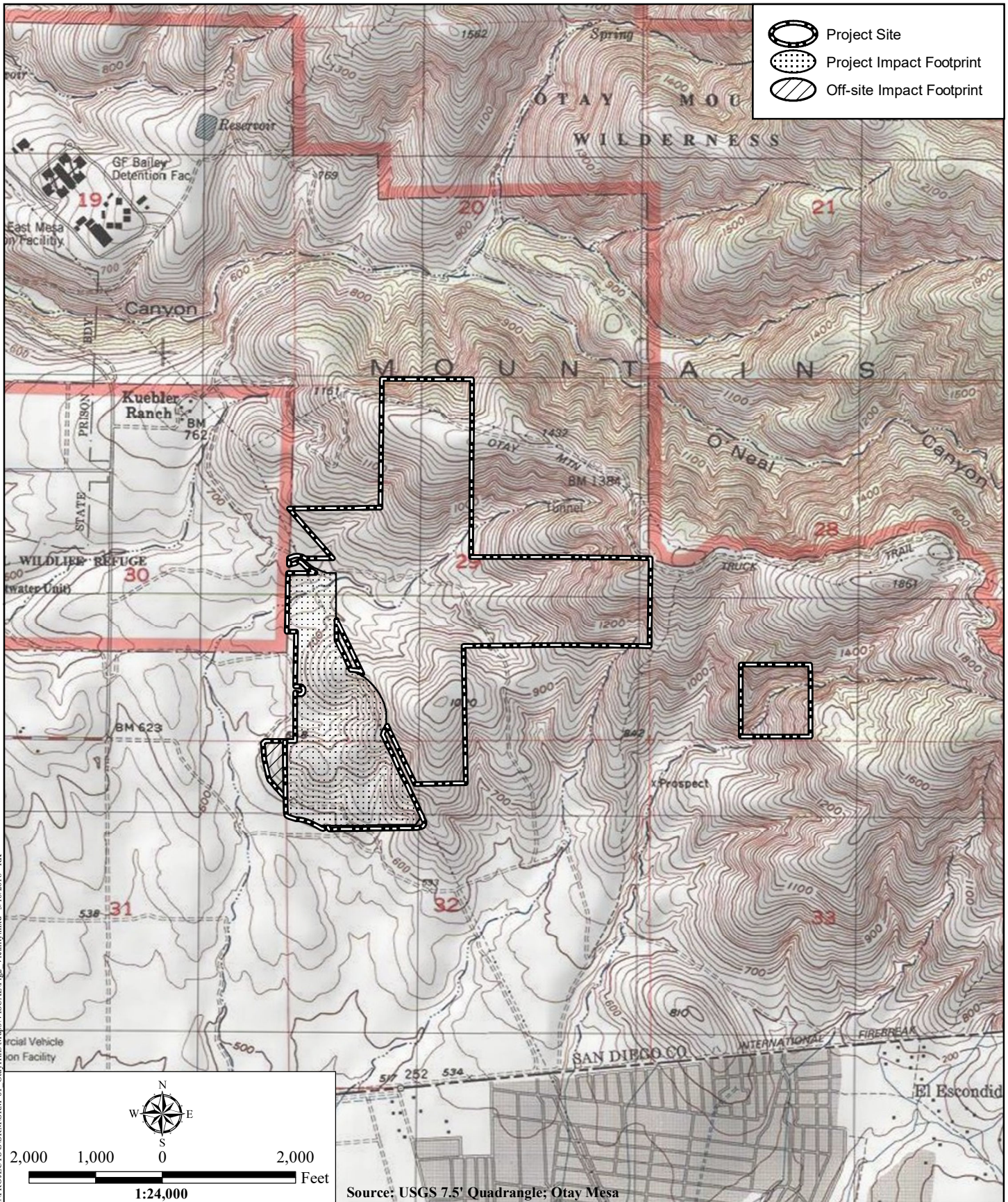
Mineral resource recovery operations would be conducted through the use of drilling and blasting to fracture rocks. Blasting would occur approximately once per week following drilling of bore holes 3 to 6 inches in diameter and 45 feet deep, in a 10- by 12-foot grid. Some dust would be created by the blast and would dissipate within 30 to 60 seconds. Following blasting, the rock resource would be fractured and moved with conventional earthmoving equipment. The extracted material would be transported within the site to the on-site processing plants via trucks or conveyor belts. Six processing plants are proposed within the Project impact footprint: two materials processing plants (primary and secondary), a concrete ready-mix plant, a CTB plant, a recycling plant, and an asphalt plant (Figure 5). The processing plants would be metal, geometric structures (rectangular or cylindrical) supported by networks of metal scaffolding, and while generally up to



## Regional Location

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

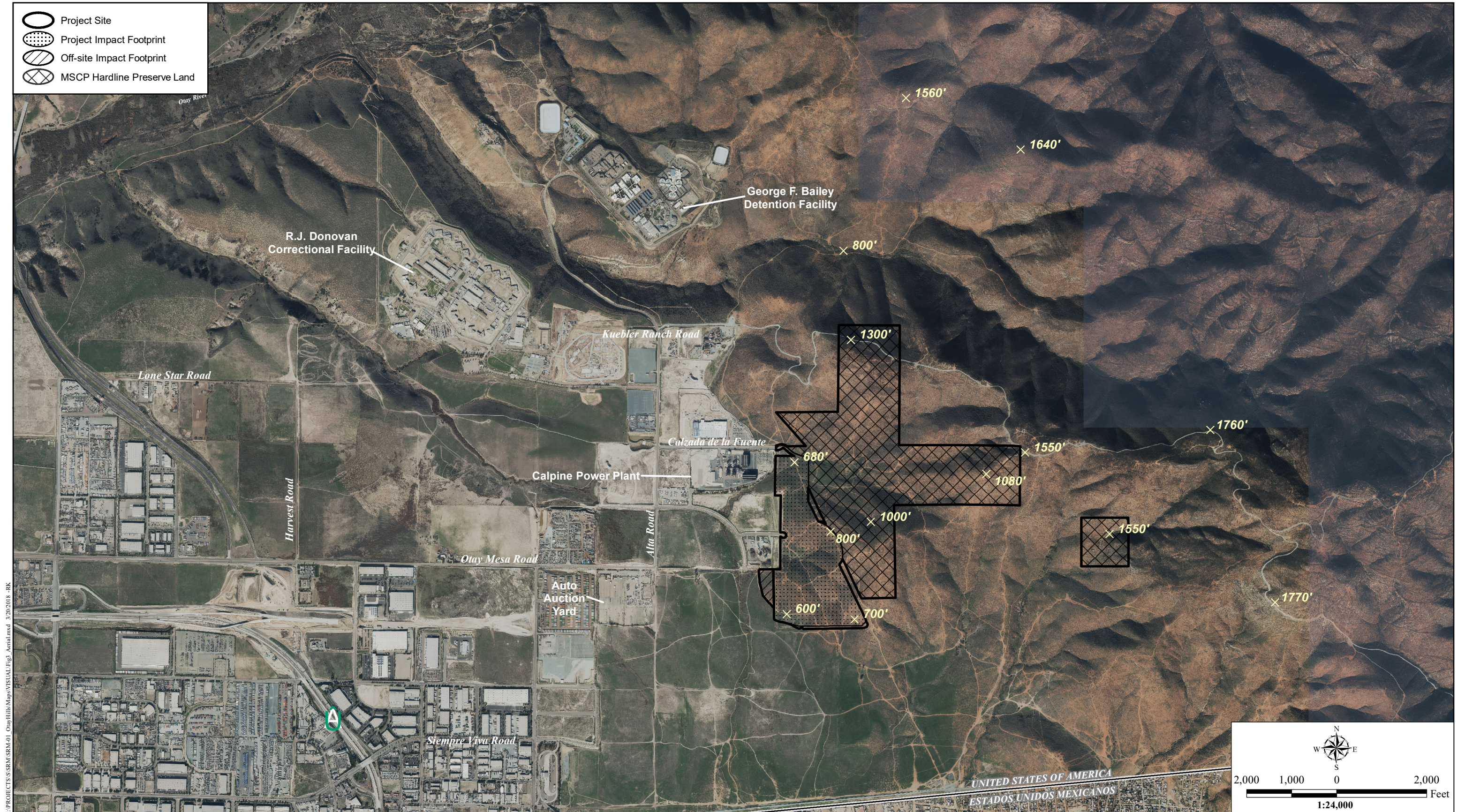
Figure 1



## Project Location - USGS Quadrangle Map

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS





**Aerial Photograph and Topographic Elevations in the Project Vicinity**

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

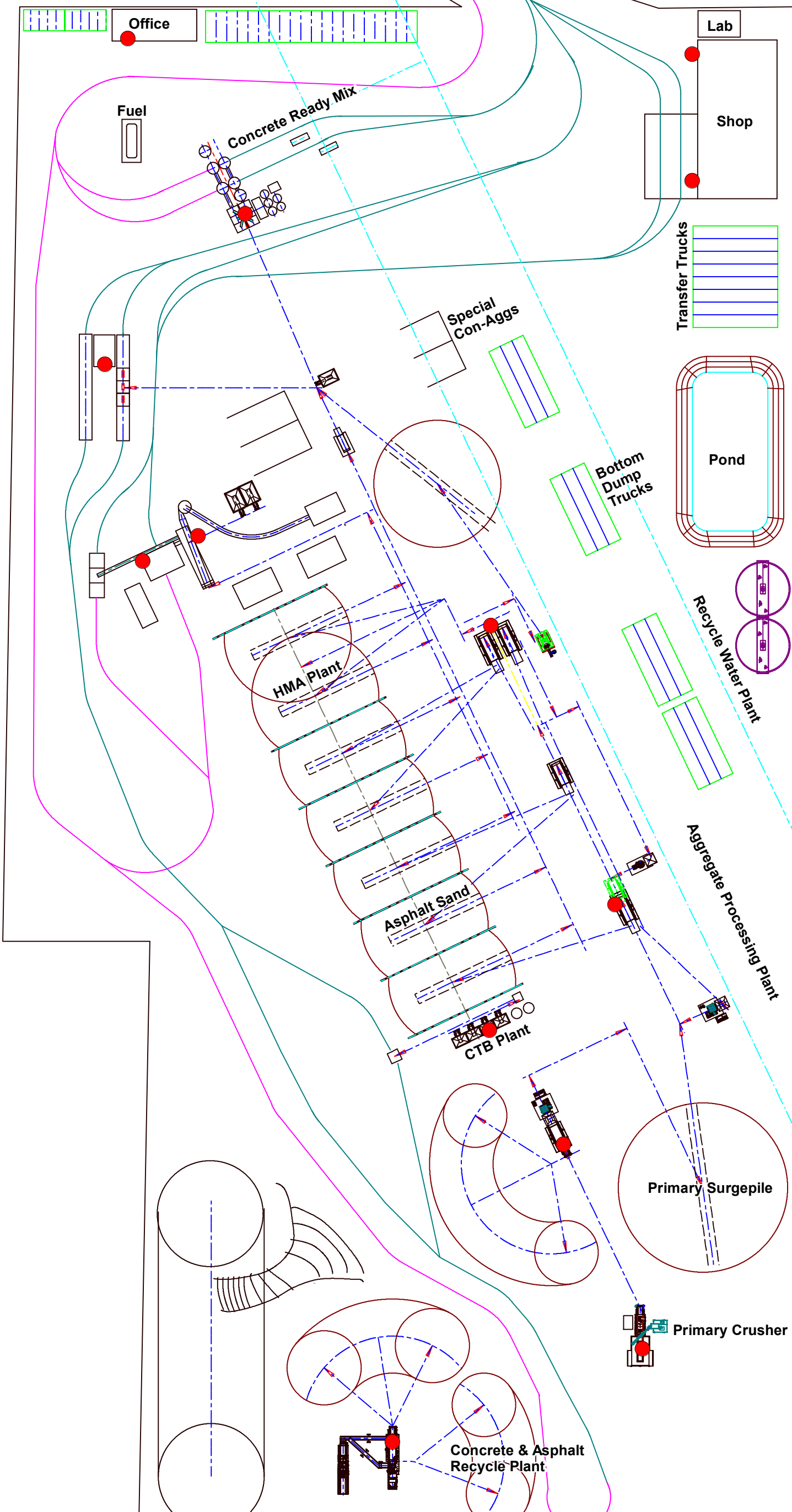


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### Extraction Impact Footprint

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

● Proposed 250W or Higher Light Fixture



### Proposed Facilities Layout

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

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35 or 45 feet high, the asphalt and concrete plants could reach 75 feet in height. Conveyor belts feeding into and out of the plants would be long, spider-like structures with arm-like features extending between the various elements of the operational equipment. Once processed, the material would be conveyed, again by trucks or conveyor belts, to stockpiles or bins. The stockpiles would be geometrically conical piles of materials up to 35 feet in height. The conveyor belts would connect the lower portions of the processing plants to the top of the stockpiles or storage bins. The various plant structures mainly would be white, light gray or tan.

Also shown on Figure 5 are primary lighting elements associated with the facility. Away from the pads, a single perimeter light at the end of Calzada de la Fuente and adjacent to the Calpine power plant would be located at the facility entrance, focused on the entry and away from the street. On-site night-lighting associated with mining/processing would include approximately 18 fixtures, with a variety of wattage. All fixtures exceeding 250 Watts (locations shown on Figure 5) would be oriented so as to provide light within site boundaries. Fixtures near to Project boundaries with potential to light off-site properties would be focused and shielded toward the site to ensure compliance with the County Light Pollution Code (LPC).

The stored materials would be used to create concrete, asphalt, or similar materials for use in the construction of roads and buildings. These aggregate materials would be mixed on site and fed into trucks to be taken where needed. The plants that mix the aggregate materials would be similar in size and appearance to the processing plants, rectangular or cylindrical metal structures supported with metal scaffolding. Conveyor belts would be used to move the stored gravel, sand, and rock to the appropriate portion of each of these plants. The material then would be distributed in measured quantities into trucks or mixing areas. Buildings associated with the aggregate plant would likely include an office building, a small scale office, and small maintenance shop.

The concrete ready-mix plant would consist of a feed hopper, feed conveyor, batching plant, cement storage silos, and an operations building. A conveyor would feed the required aggregate into the aggregate storage bins. The highest point for this plant would be 75 feet at the top of the concrete ready mix plant.

The hot mix asphalt (HMA) plant would be sited such that materials could be conveyed from the aggregate stockpiles for direct loading of the asphalt plant by conveyor. The height of the HMA plant would be approximately 75 feet. Three silos, which look like grain silos on a farm, would be the tallest structures at the facility. The tall elevation is needed to allow for a surge of material to be stored and for gravity to discharge it to the trucks. The next highest structure would be the baghouse and its ducting, which typically stands 45 feet high.

A CTB plant would be located at the site. CTB is a rock/sand mixture that has been mixed with cement powder to provide improved strength and stability for highway and foundation projects.

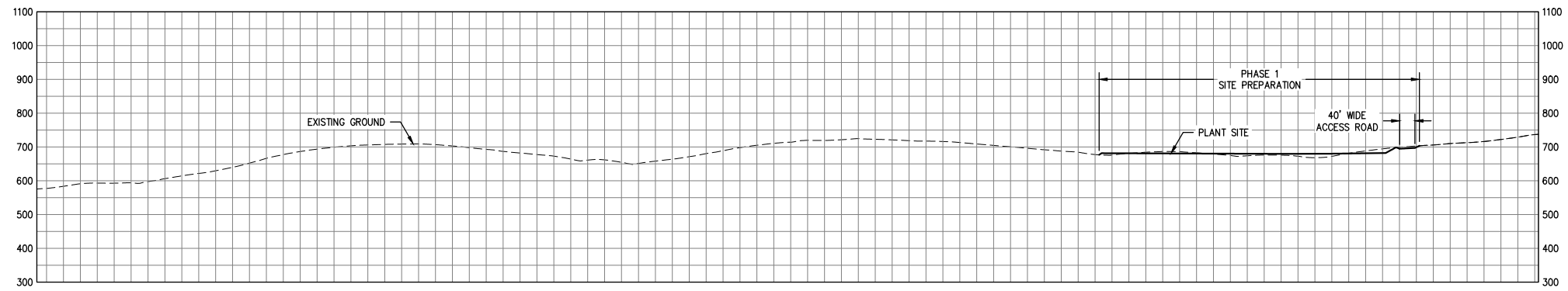
A concrete and asphalt recycling plant also would be included as part of the Proposed Project. This process involves the import of used concrete and asphalt materials, crushing, and then exporting the material for use as road base or foundation material. These materials also may be blended with rock originating from the site to improve performance characteristics. Incoming and outgoing materials would be stored in stockpiles.

The primary processing (which includes the use of a jaw crusher) may be extended to the extraction areas using conveyor belts. Some crushing and screening would eventually occur below grade, within the pit area. The HMA plant, aggregate processing plant, and concrete ready mix plant would be stationary and therefore, would not be relocated. Equipment shown on the southern end of the 16.1-acre pad (Figure 5), including the recycling plant and primary crusher, is portable and eventually would be relocated to the quarry floor as excavation progresses below grade.

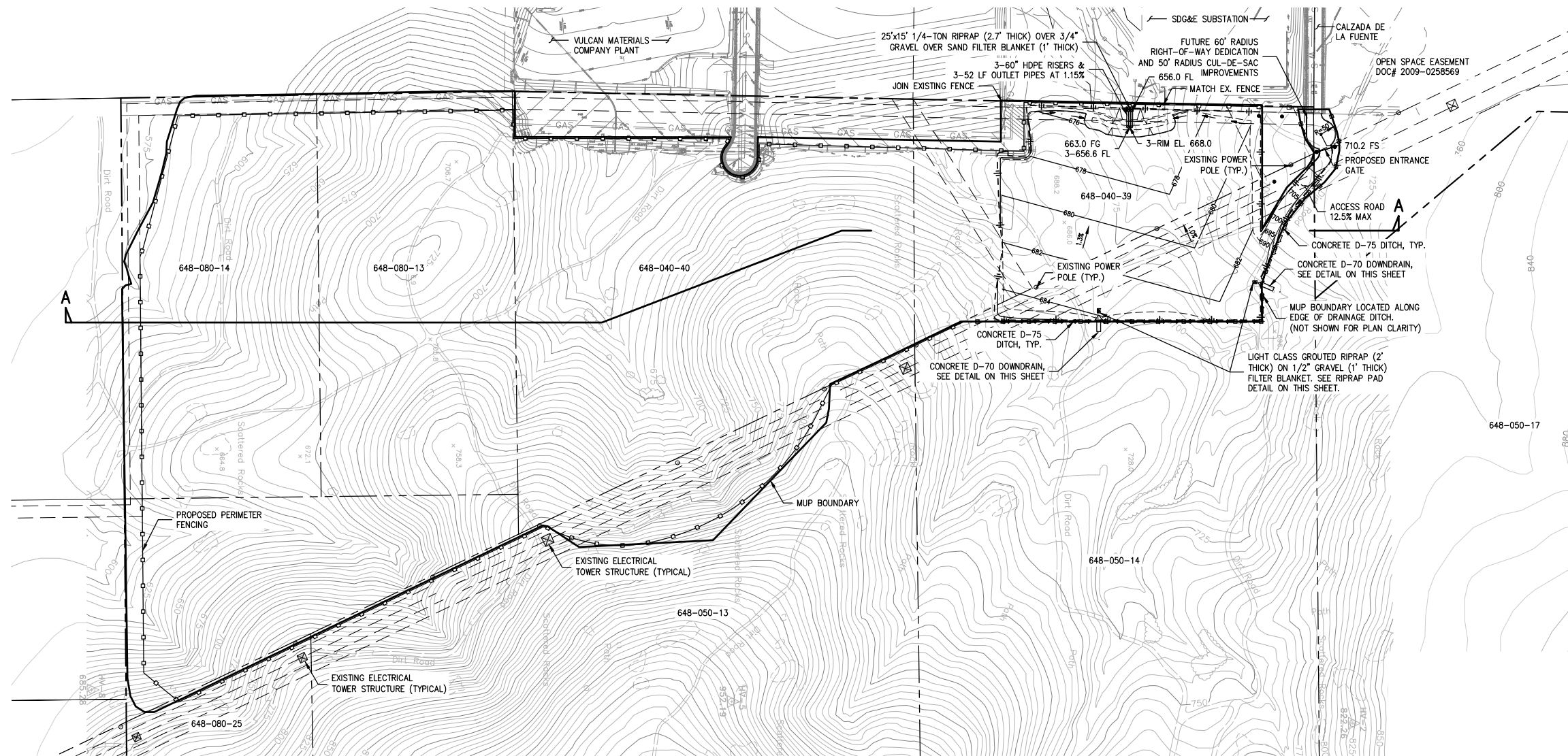
Pursuant to the requirements contained in the Conceptual Fire Protection Plan (EnviroMINE 2014c; EIR Appendix K), a buffer, or vegetation management zone, of at least 100 feet wide would surround all inhabited structures over 250 square feet in size (Figure 5). The vegetation management zone would begin at the structures or processing equipment and extend out on all sides to the unmodified vegetation. In addition, a vegetation management zone would be located around all retention basins, water district and power line rights-of-way, and roads within the Project's impact footprint. This zone would be located entirely within the impact footprint and west of the SDG&E transmission line right-of-way.

The Proposed Project would consist of site preparation for the processing plant equipment and a phased extraction and backfilling operation. Ongoing backfilling of the site during the open pit extraction phase of the Project would allow reclamation to progress concurrently with the extraction operation. Site operations are proposed to occur in four phases:

- Phase 1 would include site preparation activities prior to mining, including initial grading to establish access routes, extending water and power service to the site, and grading pad areas for the processing plant location on 16.1 acres. Construction of the processing plant, concrete batch plant, asphalt plant, CTB plant, and site office would also be commenced. This phase would last approximately one year and would be located as shown on Figure 6, *Cross-section, Phase 1*.
- Phase 2 would involve commencement of extractive operations within the extraction footprint. This phase is divided into three sub phases, with Phase 2a occurring in the north and ending with Phase 2c in the south. Rock extraction would occur to the natural grade elevation of land that exists along the western perimeter of the site (ranging between 580 and 650 feet above mean sea level [amsl]). During Phase 2a, aggregate resource would be recovered immediately adjacent to the Phase 1 area and over an approximately 19.2-acre area of the site. Extractive operations in Phase 2a are expected to remove 4,8 million tons and would continue for approximately five years. As aggregate resources are depleted from Phase 2a, extraction operation would transition into Phase 2b. Phase 2b operations would include extraction of approximately 5.4 million tons of material from a 27.7-acre area and is expected to continue for approximately six years. Phase 2c would consist of extracting approximately 10.9 million tons of material from the remainder of the extraction footprint (45.8 acres) and is expected to continue for approximately 11 years. The length of each sub phase would be dependent upon the demand for aggregate resources but is currently anticipated to extend approximately 22 years overall. Physical locations of the phasing are shown on Figure 7, *Cross Section, Phase 2 (2a, 2b & 2c) Extraction*.
- Phase 3 would include open pit extraction of mineral resources within the Phase 2 footprint to a maximum depth of 525 feet from the existing grade in four overlapping phases, and



SECTION: A-A

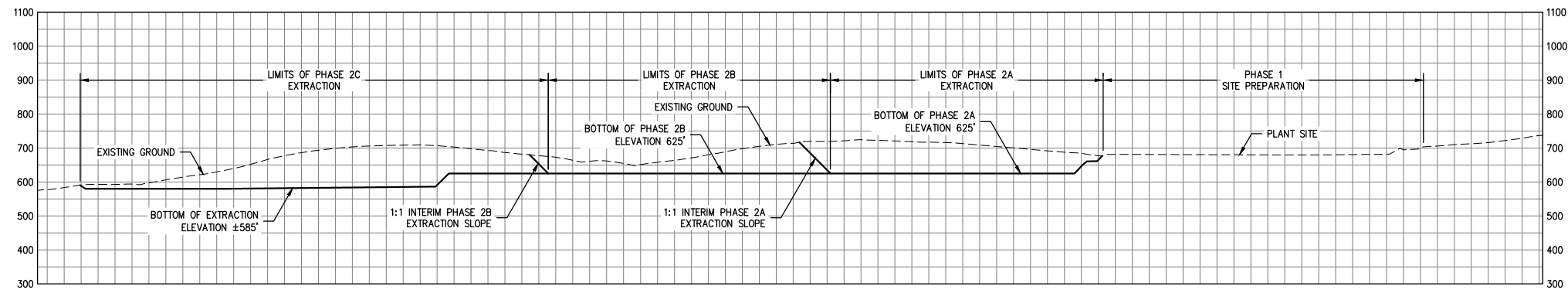


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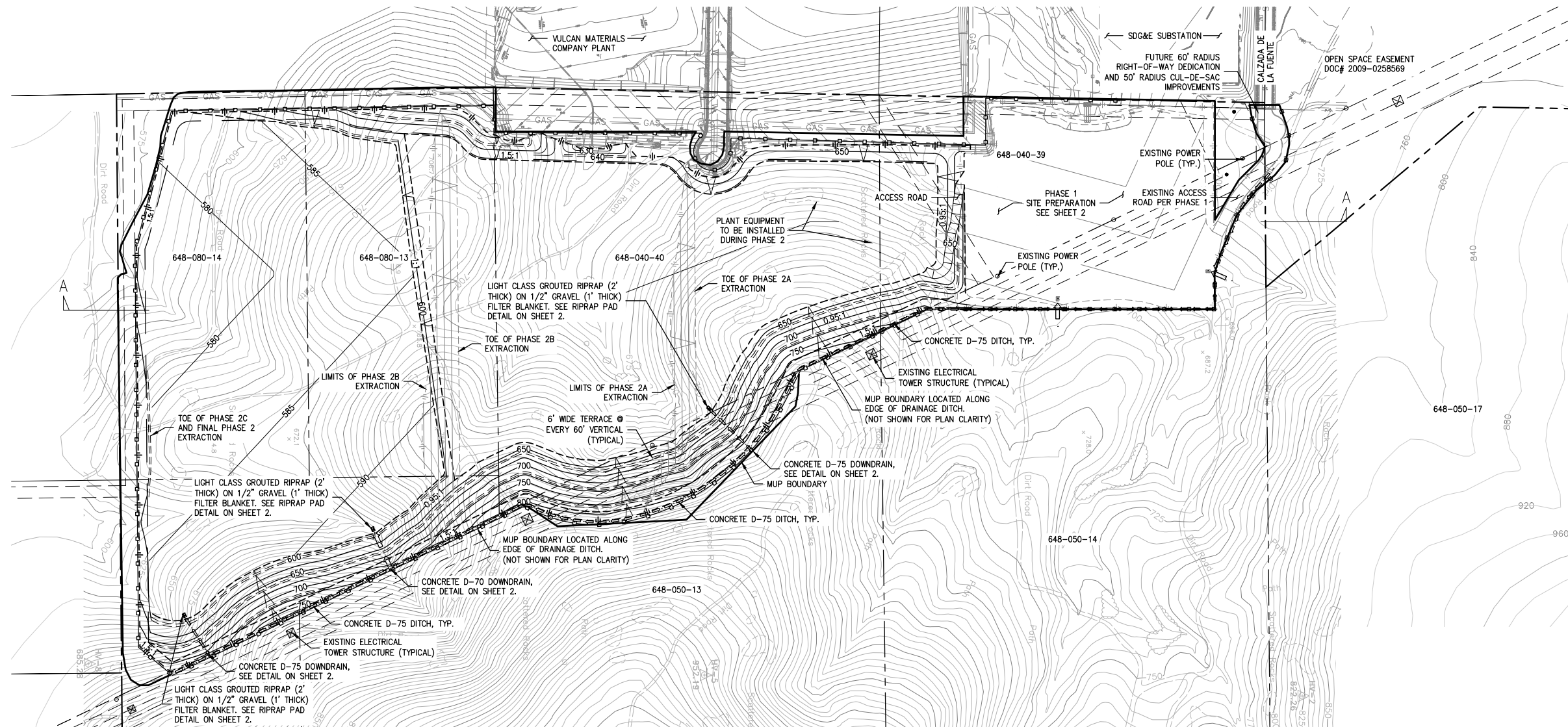
Source: Chang Consultants 2015

## Cross-section, Phase 1

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS



SECTION: A-A



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Source: Chang Consultants 2015

### Cross-section, Phase 2 (2a, 2b & 2c) Extraction

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

backfilling beginning as excavation is complete within each area. Like Phase 2, Phase 3 is divided into sub phases, and Phases 3a through 3d also would progress in a north to south direction. The Phase 3a operations would involve additional extraction of material from an 8.5-acre area that would extend a maximum depth approximately 285 feet from the existing grade. This phase is expected to remove 3.3 million tons and would continue for approximately three years. Phase 3b operations would consist of extracting 16.1 million tons of material from a 22.1-acre area, over approximately 16 years. Phase 3c would extract 17.9 million tons of material from a 22.1-acre area, over approximately 18 years. Phase 3d operations are expected to extract 30.7 million tons from a 33.7-acre area, over approximately 31± years. As with Phase 2, the length of each sub phase would be dependent upon the demand for aggregate resources. Physical locations of the phasing are shown on Figure 8, *Cross Section, Phase 3 (3a, 3b, 3 & 3d) Extraction*.

- Phase 4, the IDEFO phase, would begin as extraction operations advance in Phase 3. Phase 4, also divided into sub phases to correspond with the sub phases of Phase 3, would consist of backfilling the Phase 3 pit areas with inert fill material (fill dirt). Inert debris would include excavated soil material from development projects, clean demolition materials, and possibly concrete, asphalt, and rock. Phase 4 activities would continue for approximately 67 years throughout the extraction operation and are expected to last approximately 16 years beyond the extraction operation (Phase 3) for final revegetation and monitoring.. Physical locations of the phasing are shown on Figures 9a through 9c, *Cross-section, Phase 4 (4a through 9e) Reclamation*, and Figure 9d, *Proposed Post-reclamation Plan*.

The Project impact footprint would be reclaimed to be consistent with the underlying land use regulations. Reclamation, which includes final grading, application of topsoil, staining of above-ground cut rock as appropriate and revegetation, would commence upon completion of each phase. Although reclamation would occur in each phase as recovery operations are concluded, these activities would be similar on all areas of the site. Final reclamation would occur when all recovery operations have been completed. These activities would include final grading to establish the final land form, removal of plant equipment, application of topsoil resources on the pad, and revegetation. The ultimate topography of the site after reclamation would include a nearly level pad up to 85 acres in size, and approximately 16 acres of slopes up to approximately 190 feet high, with a 1:1 steepness ratio (i.e., 1 foot vertical rise to 1 foot horizontal run).

As indicated above, where soil conditions allow, slopes would be seeded with native and locally appropriate species to include “areas of brush cover with intervening areas of rock outcroppings,” according to the Proposed Project Reclamation Plan (EnviroMINE 2014). The proposed palette contains mainly low-growing shrubs, annual flowers and grass-like plants, including: buckwheat, monkey flower, redberry, sage, California poppy, and lupine. Additional larger shrubs such as toyon and laurel sumac are also included, but in lesser quantities that reflect the sparser distribution of such shrubs in the surrounding hills. Pad areas would be seeded with a similar mixture of mostly low-growing shrubs and annuals to stabilize the site against accelerated erosion and sedimentation. Portions of the slopes would be prepared for seeding as a biological buffer adjacent to sensitive biological habitats proposed to be set aside by the project to the east of the proposed extractive operations. Exposed rock outcroppings would be stained to lessen the visual dominance of the modified slopes.



Drought-tolerant trees and shrubs would continue streetscape planting at the northwest corner of the property along from the Project property line fronting Calzada de la Fuente for approximately 425 linear feet. The proposed planting area would be approximately 9,705 square feet. Screening canopy trees may include species such as Brisbane box (*Lophostemon confertus*), Australian willow (*Geijiera parvifolia*) and coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). Landscaping also would include evergreen scrubs such as lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and Yankee Point California lilac (*Ceanothus griseus horizontalis* 'Yankee Point'). The proposed landscaping would be watered using irrigation equipped with rain sensors to automatically shut off the system during periods of high rainfall.

It is assumed that the lots to the south of the power plant would be developed in the near future with heavy industrial uses (by others) that would screen quarry activities from views along Alta Road; therefore, no screening landscaping is proposed in this location.

The site would be managed in this manner until an appropriate land use is identified consistent with the underlying land use designation of Mixed Industrial, as implemented by the Project.

## **2.2 Land Use Designations and Zoning**

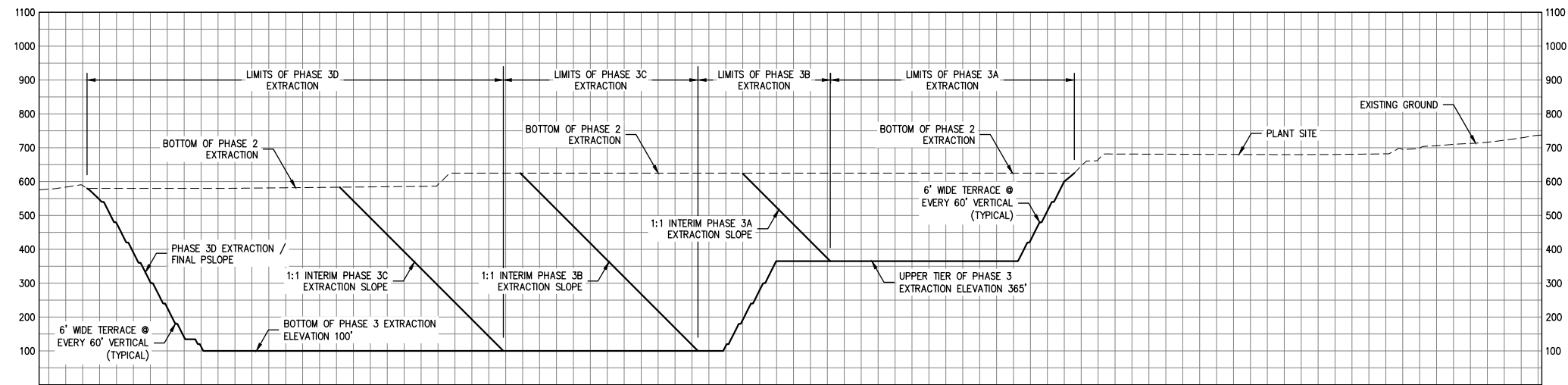
The Proposed Project area is subject to the County General Plan Land Use Designation (21) Specific Plan Area and the zoning is S88 (Specific Planning Area). The MUP site is within the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan (EOMSP) area, of the Otay Subregional Plan Area. Based on Section 3.1 of the EOMSP, the proposed aggregate mining and inert debris landfill activities require approval of a MUP and Reclamation Plan. The proposed site is located within two current land use designations (Mixed Industrial and Rural Residential) of the EOMSP. The EOMSP S88 zoning allows for a density of 0.05 (1 DU per 20 acres) in the Rural Residential area, and a lot size of 30,000 square feet in the Mixed Industrial portion of the Project site.

The SPA is proposed to establish a long-term land use policy for the area planned for extractive operations, IDEFO, and subsequent industrial use. The SPA would change the designation of approximately 36.3 acres of Mixed Industrial land to Rural Residential. These lands are found to the north and east of the Proposed Project site. In addition, approximately 85.7 acres of land currently designated Rural Residential would be designated as Mixed Industrial. All of the Rural Residential conversion to Mixed Industrial is located within the proposed quarry footprint. The SPA would therefore result in a net increase of 49.4 acres of industrial land. Following completion of all mining operations, the site would be backfilled and reclaimed to pad areas. It is assumed that post-mining land uses on these pads would be consistent with the underlying land use designation. The Reclamation Plan would therefore include all necessary steps to prepare the Project site for uses permitted by the Mixed Industrial land use designation.

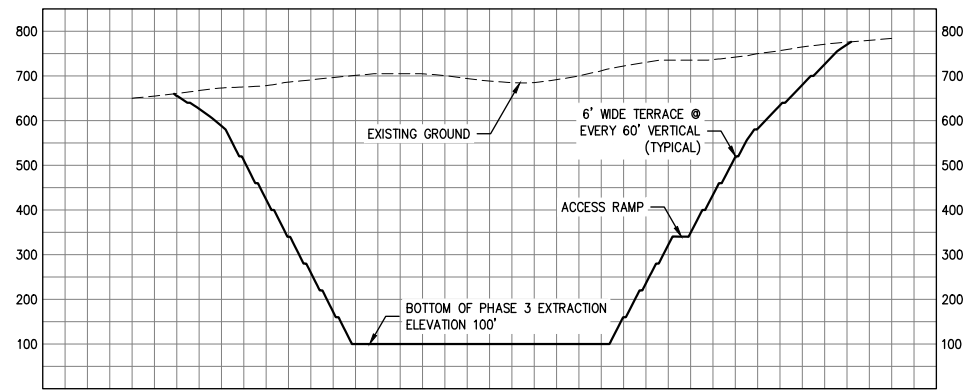
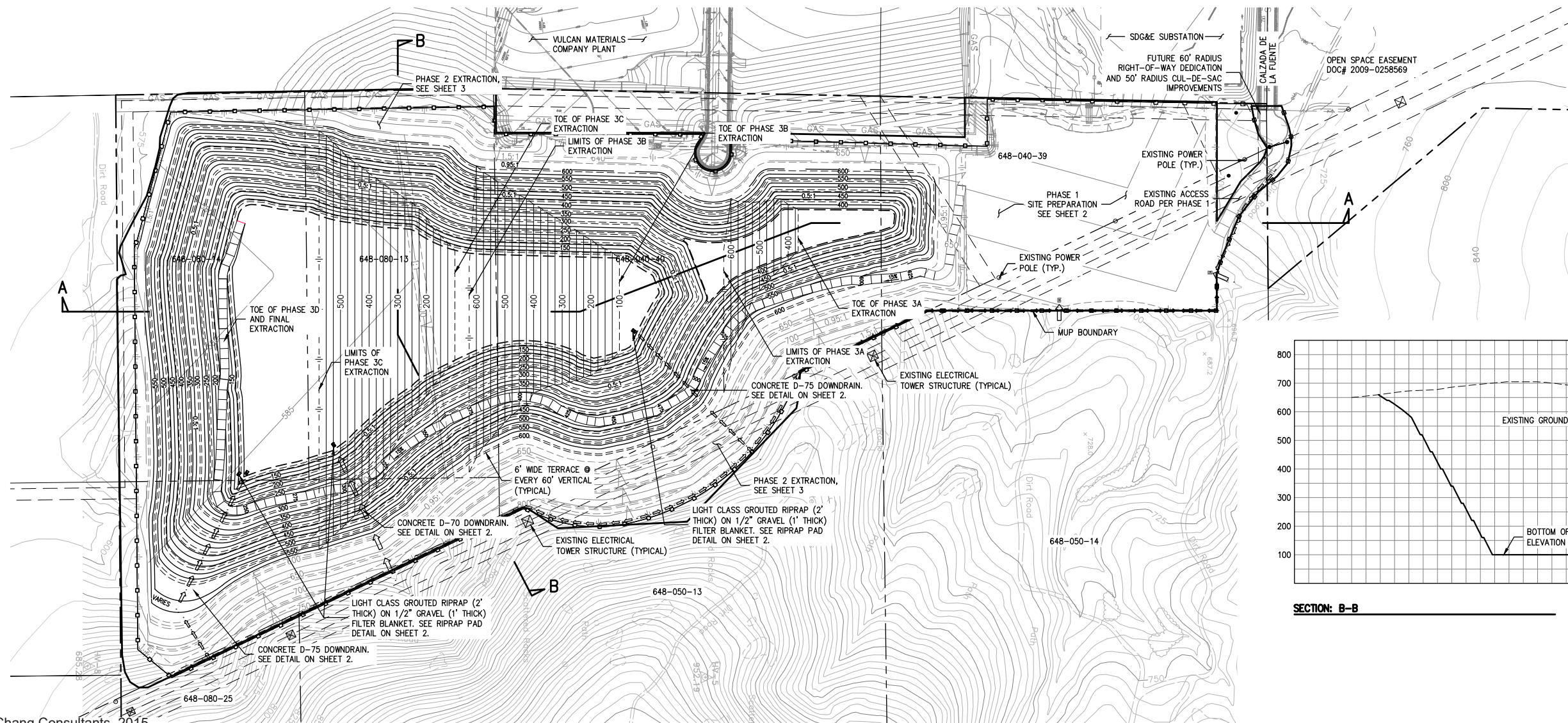
## **2.3 Regulatory Framework**

This discussion provides an overview of federal, state and local regulations and ordinances applicable to the Project.

No specific federal or state highways regulations pertain as the Project is not located along these features and would not place Project-related outdoor advertising along them. California's Scenic Highway Program is intended to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that



SECTION: A-A

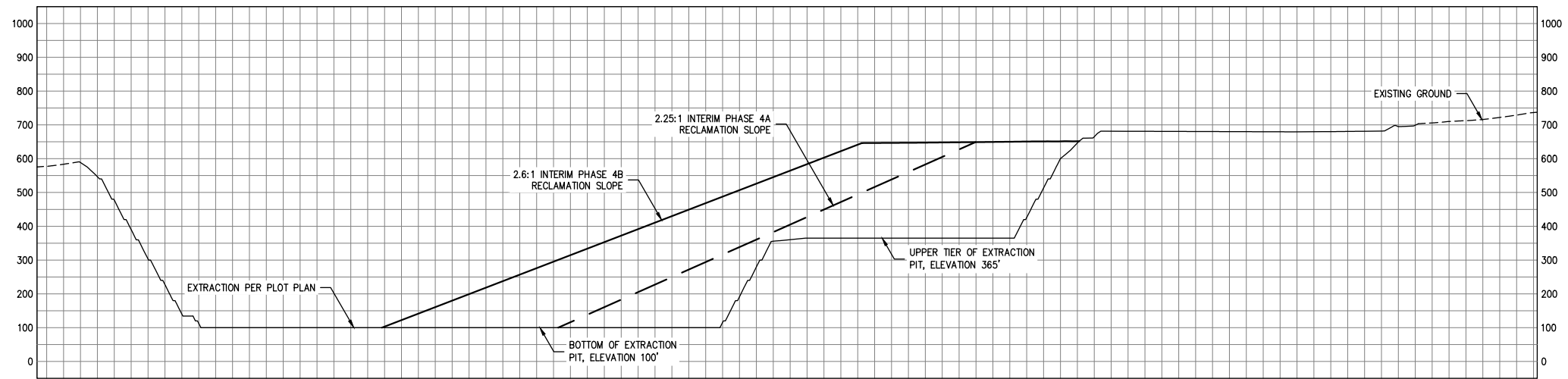


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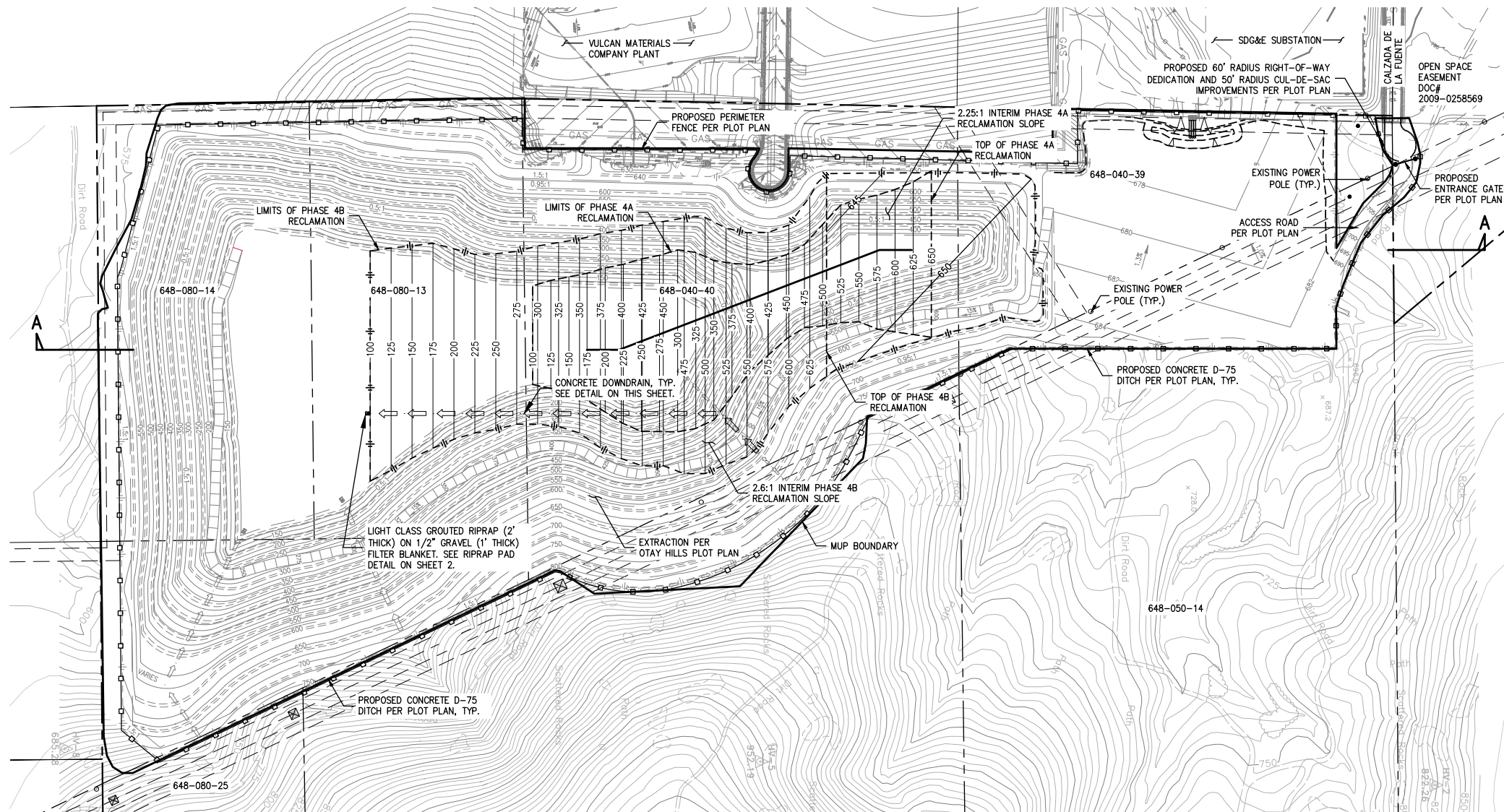
Source: Chang Consultants 2015

### Cross-section, Phase 3 (3a, 3b, 3c & 3d) Extraction

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS



SECTION: A-A

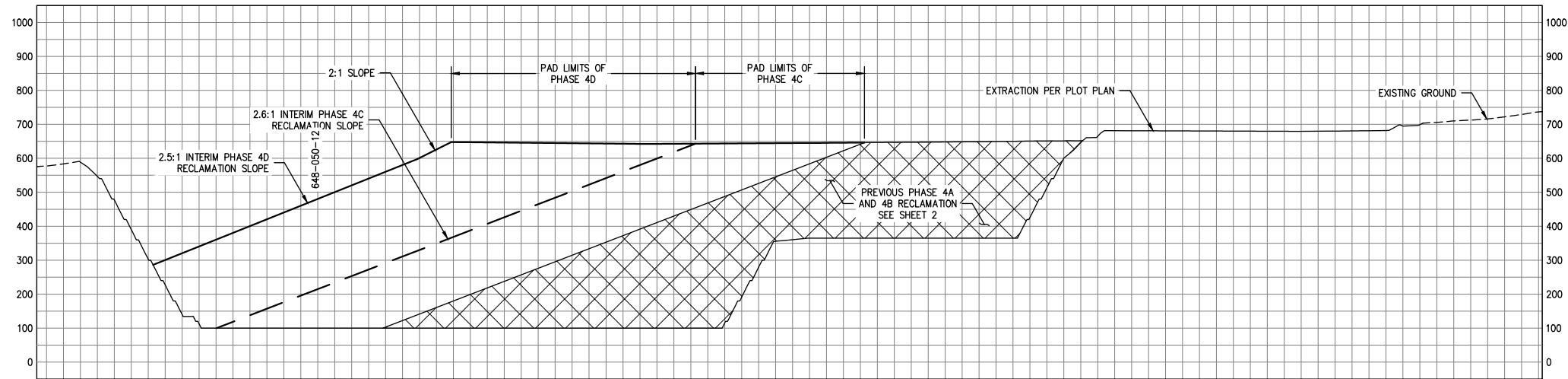


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Source: Chang Consultants 2015

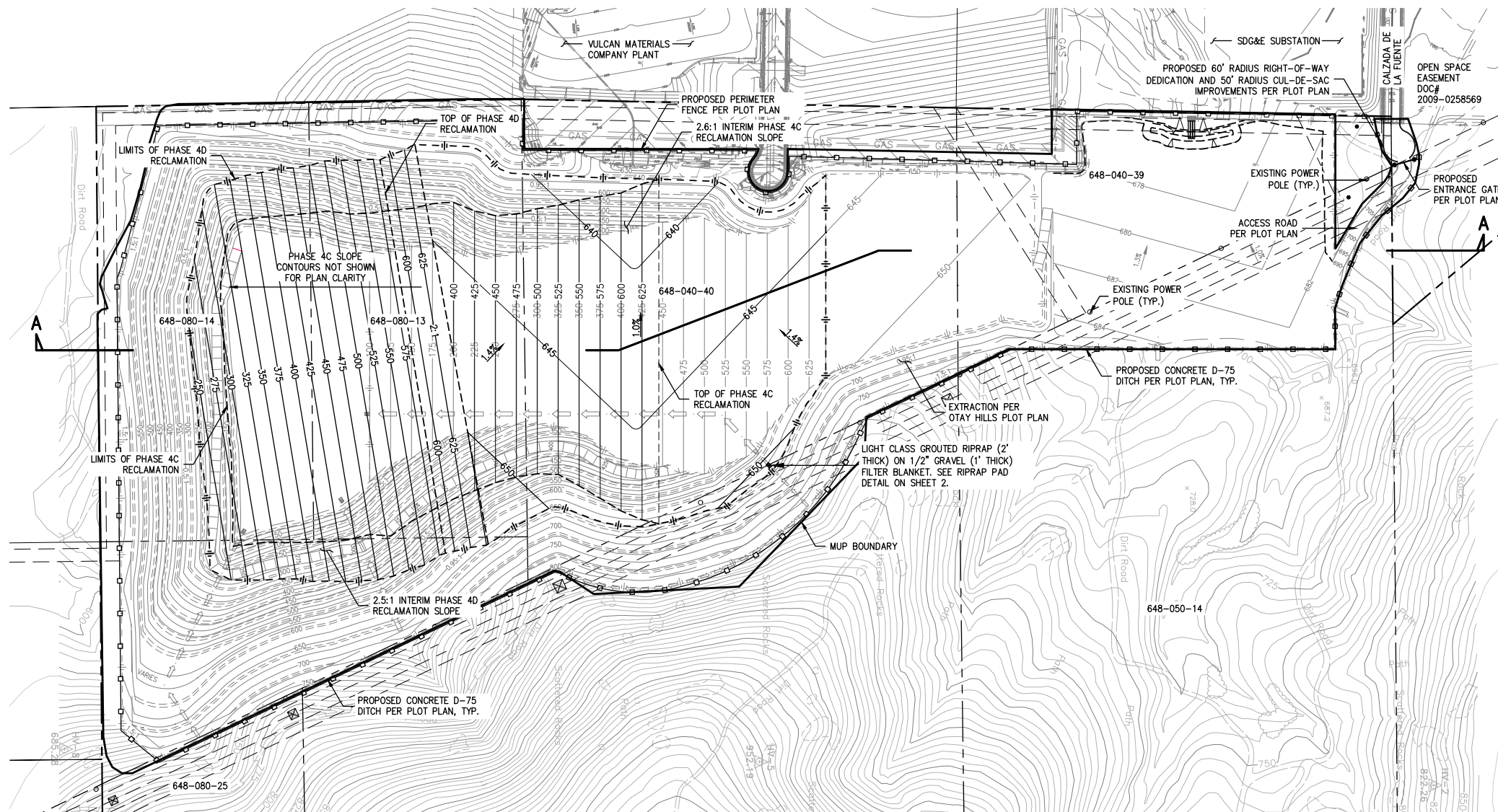
## Cross-section, Phase 4 (4a & 4b) Reclamation

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS



SECTION: A-A

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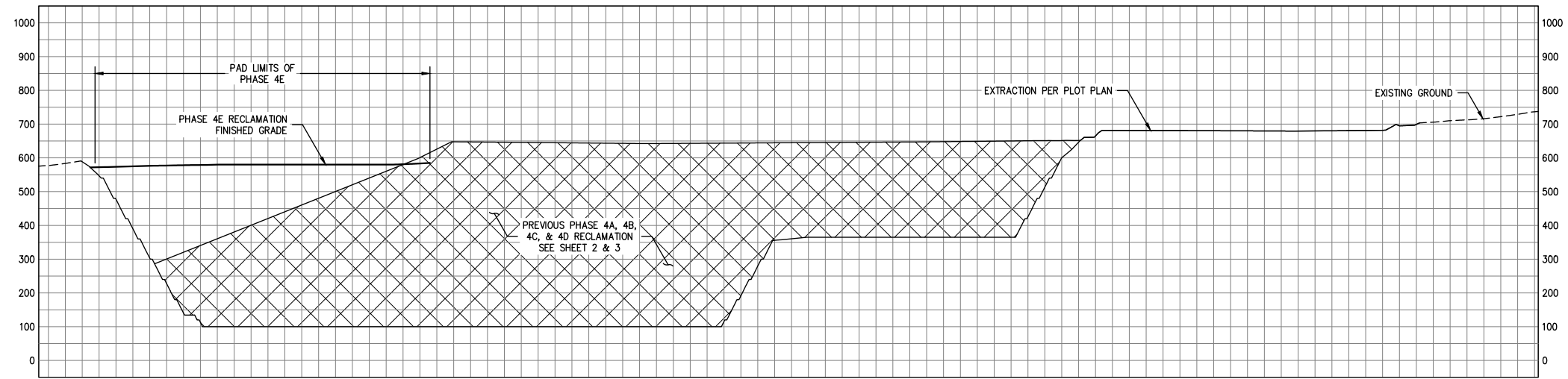


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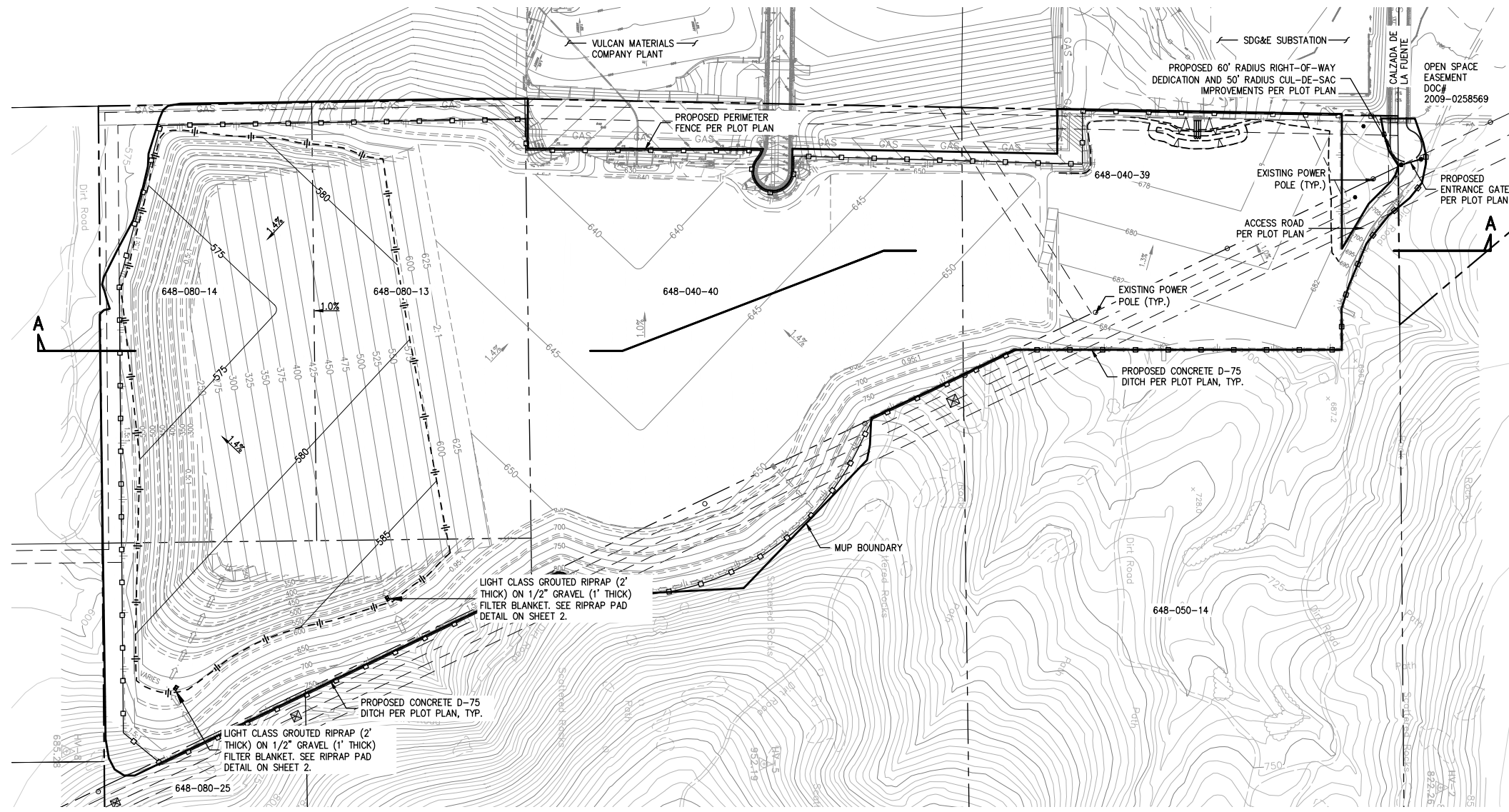
Source: Chang Consultants 2015

## Cross-section, Phase 4 (4c & 4d) Reclamation

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS



SECTION: A-A

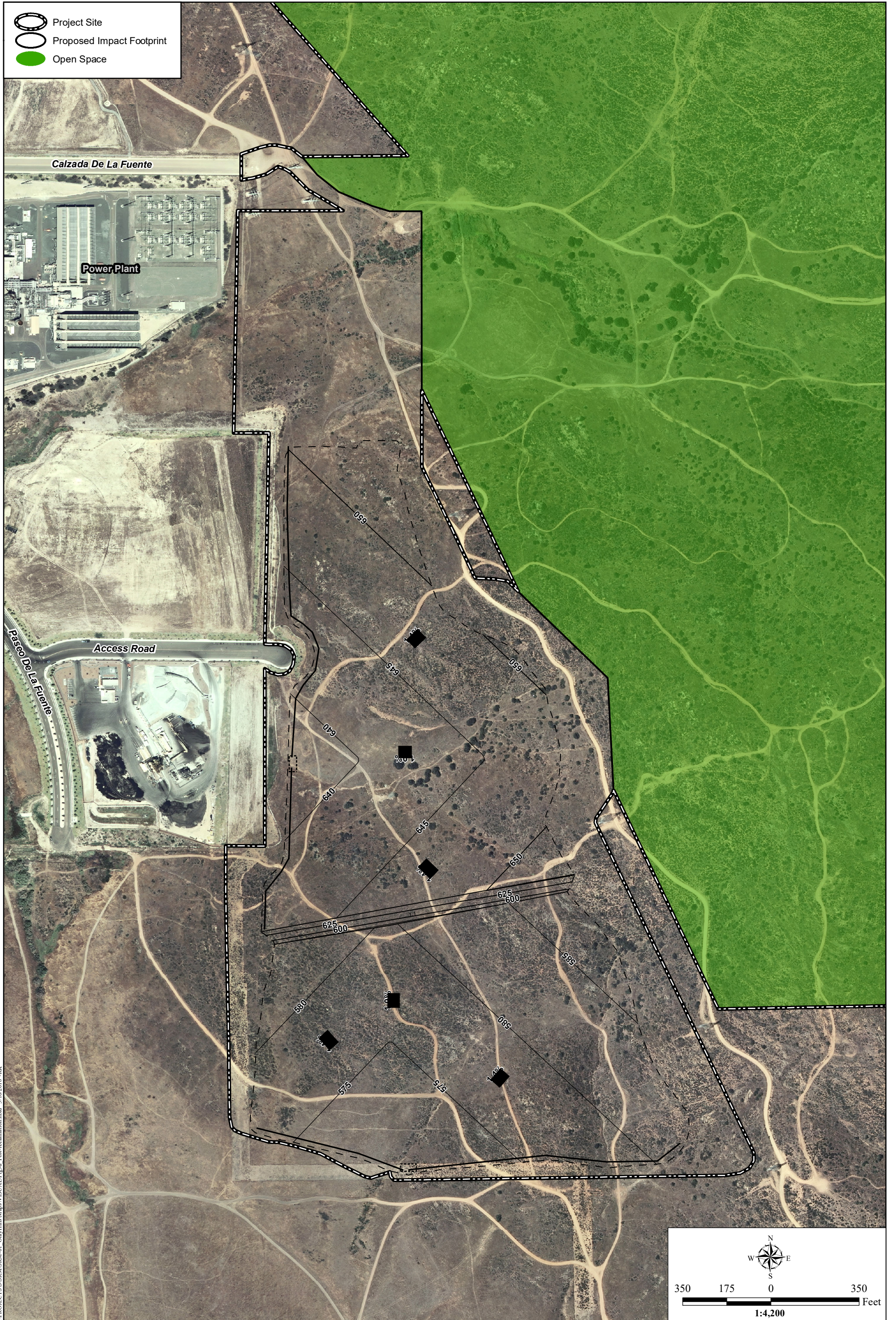


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Source: Chang Consultants 2015

### Cross-section, Phase 4 (4e) Reclamation

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### Proposed Post-reclamation Plan

OTAY HILLS VISUAL/COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The California Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. The only highways in the Project vicinity are I-905 and SR-125. Neither is designated as a scenic highway, nor have they been determined to be eligible for designation.

Visual resources also may be subject to plans and policies that ensure adequate consideration is given to preserving and/or enhancing the visual qualities of an area. These policies aid in evaluation of the planning agency/community perception of visual qualities within an area, as well as providing guidance as to whether Proposed Project modifications would be visually compatible with County and/or community goals.

The County's Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) provides development controls for unique resources within the County deemed to be fragile, irreplaceable and vital to the general welfare of the County's residents. An element of the ordinance focuses on the preservation and protection of the County's unique topography. The County has determined that the RPO does not apply to the Project and it is therefore not addressed in this section. Related discussion relative to steepness of topographic features, however, is provided under the heading "Steep Slopes" below.

The Proposed Project is subject to the following guidelines and policies.

### **2.3.1 County of San Diego General Plan – Conservation and Open Space Element**

The Conservation and Open Space (COS) Element of the County's General Plan provides direction for future growth and development in the County with respect to conservation, management, and utilization of natural resources; protection and preservation of open space; and the provision of park and recreational resources. It provides guidance with respect to the protection of visual resources, including scenic corridors, geographically extensive scenic viewsheds, and dark skies within the natural environment. Four COS Element Policies are applicable to the Proposed Project; addressing scenic resources, ridgelines/hillsides, dark skies, and scenic highways.

#### **2.3.1.1 Preservation of Scenic Resources**

*COS-11.1: Protection of Scenic Resources.* Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landmarks.

*COS-11.2: Scenic Resource Connections.* Promote the connection of regionally significant land features, designated historic landmarks, and points of regional historic, visual, and cultural interest via designated scenic corridors, such as scenic highways and regional trails.

*COS-11.3: Development Siting and Design.* Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:

- Creative site planning
- Integration of natural features into the project

- Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape
- Minimal disturbance to topography
- Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character
- Creation of contiguous open space networks

### **2.3.1.2 Preservation of Ridgelines and Hillsides**

**COS-12.1: Hillside and Ridgeline Development Density.** Protect undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designations on these areas.

**COS-12.2: Development Location on Ridges.** Require development to preserve the physical features by being located down and away from ridgelines so that structures are not silhouetted against the sky.

### **2.3.1.3 Dark Skies**

**COS-13.1: Restrict Light and Glare.** Restrict outdoor light and glare from development projects in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands and designated rural communities to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.

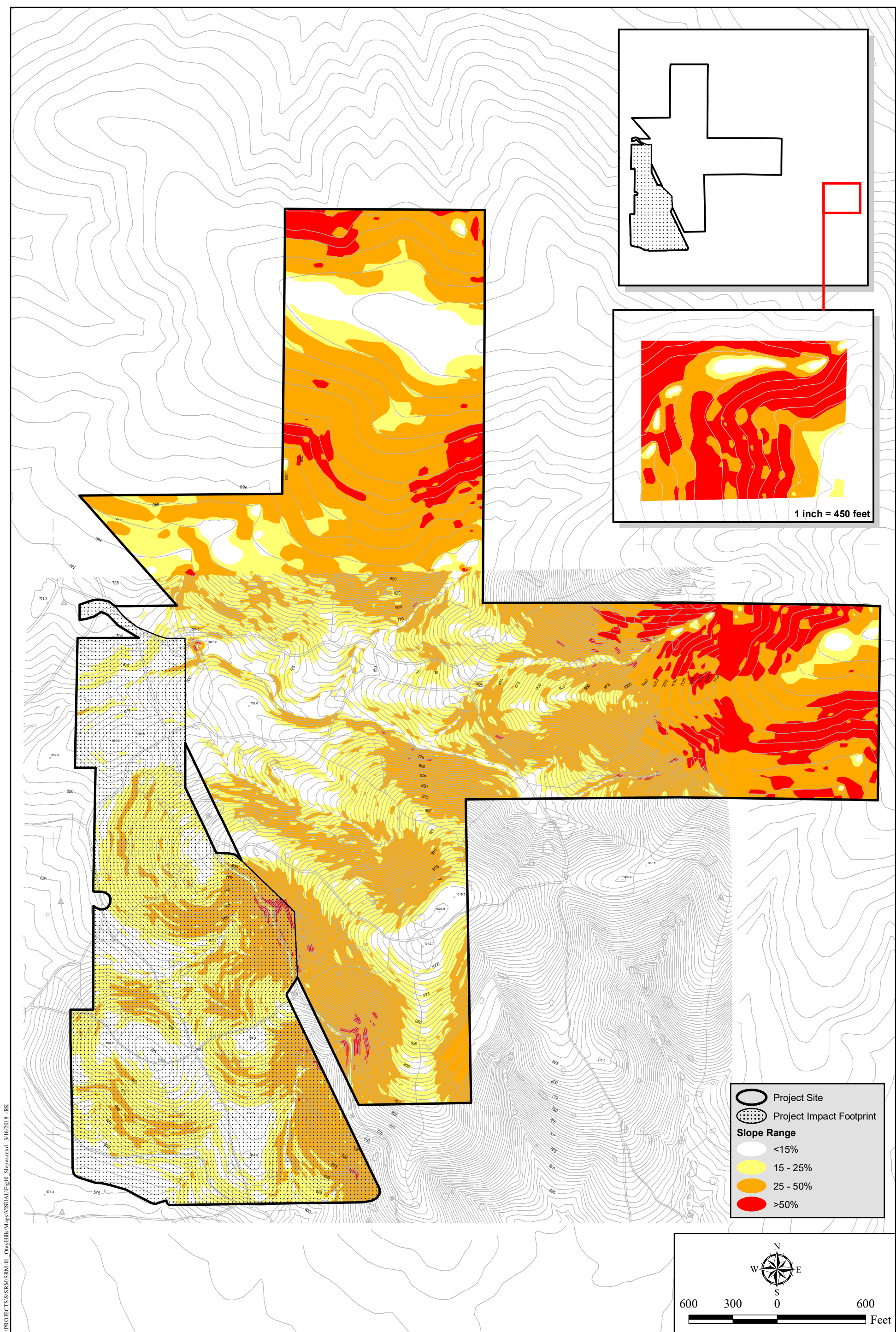
### **2.3.1.4 Scenic Highways**

Based on the County COS Element, the closest County designated scenic highway to the Project is Otay Lakes Road, located approximately 4.0 miles northwest of the Project site as the bird flies. In the 2007 County Scenic Highways List, one third priority scenic roadway is located approximately 2.0 miles west of the Proposed Project, Harvest Road and Otay Freeway (from the U.S.-Mexico international border to Proctor Valley Road). The southern portion of Harvest Road is aligned between industrial developments, while the northern portion is unpaved and parallels the eastern edge of an industrial development. The alignment north of Otay Mesa Road has been removed from the EOMSP Subarea 1 Circulation Element. Per the 2012 General Plan COS Element, at this time, Harvest Road is not designated as scenic.

### **2.3.1.5 Steep Slopes**

As noted above, the County generally protects natural slopes with a natural (i.e., not previously modified) gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 feet. The Project is exempt from the RPO, but information regarding on-site slopes meeting the specified standards of slope and rise is provided here for context as the steepest slopes contribute to viewshed elements. Relative to the slopes shown on Figure 10, *Site Topography/Slope Analysis*, most of these slopes are located within portions of the Project identified for preservation in open space; but some of these slopes are located in the southern portion of the Project that would be subject to mining. The steepest slopes within the Project impact footprint mostly are contiguous with the abutting foothills, and as such mostly are located near the Project boundaries in the eastern portions of the Project site. Approximately 22 acres, or 20 percent, of the Project mining area consists of slopes





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### Site Topography/Slope Analysis

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exceeding 25 percent slope and having a rise of 50 feet or greater. Less than an acre of these slopes is greater than 50 percent (1:2), and the acre is comprised of small and scattered areas among the slopes near the eastern Project impact footprint boundary. The topography of the site overall is gentle; there are no abrupt changes of grade (such as a cliff or incised creek). Therefore, the slope areas of greater than 25 percent (1:4) are not highly distinguishable, particularly from public viewpoints such as the points from which the photographs were taken west of the Project impact footprint. Refer to Figure 10, for a map of the slopes on site; areas shown in white or yellow are less than 25 percent gradient, while areas in orange or red are steeper than 25 percent gradient. Figure 3 provides additional context for elevations and heights of slopes visible in the vicinity of the Project.

### 2.3.2 East Otay Mesa Specific Plan

The EOMSP, which overlays the project site, includes site planning, landscaping and architectural standards, designed to create industrial and business parks with strong identities, distinction, and quality. The following EOMSP Urban Design Policies are applicable to the Proposed Project:

- Policy UD-1: Encourage the preservation and enhancement of visually prominent land forms and areas of special scenic beauty, particularly the San Ysidro Mountain foothills and the valley walls of Johnson and O’Neal Canyons (County 2015: 54).
- Policy UD-6: On-site landscaping along public streets should be compatible and complementary with the streetscape design of the public right-of-way (County 2015: 55).

### 2.3.3 Resource Conservation Area

The Otay Subregional Plan identifies Otay Mountain as a resource conservation area (RCA) that is significant for scenic landmark, and for biological habitat. Figure 11, *Photograph Locations/Viewshed Map*, shows the RCA boundary relative to the Project. As shown, the western extent of the RCA crosses area identified as Project Biological Open Space. The active mining area shown on the figure is a minimum of 850 feet away and down slope at the closest point (at the very northeast portion of the Project footprint). The designation in the Otay Subregional Plan states:

Otay Mountain–Lower Otay Lake: This area is of statewide significance. It includes Lower Otay Reservoir, rare and endangered plants on the lower mesa areas, and Otay Mountain. Otay Mountain contains the world’s largest population of the rare Tecate cypress (*Cupressus forbesii*) and numerous other rare and endangered plants, such as Gander’s pitcher sage [*Lepechinia gander*], Otay manzanita [*Arctostaphylos otayensis*], Orcutt’s brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*), Dunn’s mariposa lily (*Calochortus dunnii*), and dense reed grass (*Calamagrostis densa*). The Mexican fremontia (*Fremontodenron mexicanum*) may occur on the slopes of Otay Mountain in areas adjacent to the Otay Ranch/San Ysidro Planning Area #17 where the only known U.S. population of this species is located. Otay Mountain is predominantly under the Bureau of Land Management ownership. California Natural Area Coordinating Council lists it as a Significant Natural Area. Vernal pools and their attendant rare species occur on the mesas around the Lower Otay Reservoir. Otay Mountain is also a major scenic landmark for the region.