

## 4.1 Aesthetics

This section addresses the aesthetic and visual quality impacts associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project, Weed Segment and alternatives. It includes a description of existing visual conditions and an evaluation of potential effects on visual resources and public view corridors. Presumed views from private viewpoints are also discussed. A set of 28 photographs document existing visual conditions in the study area.

For purposes of this analysis, visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as the natural and built landscape features that can be seen. The overall visual character of a given area results from the unique combination of natural landscape features including landform, water, and vegetation patterns as well as built features such as buildings, roads and other structures.

The EIR visual impact analysis considers view obstruction, negative aesthetic effects, conflict with adopted environmental plans or goals, and light and glare effects. As part of the analysis a set of computer-generated visual simulations have been produced to illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions as seen from representative locations. The visual simulations provide a clear depiction of the location, scale, and general appearance of proposed project facilities. Digitized photographs and computer modeling and rendering techniques were utilized to prepare the simulation images. The simulations are based on project drawings and technical data provided by PacifiCorp and independently assessed by the EIR team.

The visual assessment is based field observations of the study area and surroundings in addition to review of topographic maps, aerial and ground-level photographs of the study area, computer-generated visual simulations from representative public viewing locations, and public planning documents.

### 4.1.1 Setting

The Proposed Project, Weed Segment and alternatives lie in northern California, about 40 miles south of the Oregon border. Figure 4.1-1 shows the study area’s regional landscape setting.

#### Regional and Local Setting

The Proposed Project, Weed Segment and alternatives are located within Siskiyou County, near the southern end of the Cascade Range. Known for its volcanic landforms, this mountain range rises to elevations of 5,000 to 10,000 feet and extends from northern California through Oregon and Washington to southern British Columbia. The study area lies in Shasta Valley, a region characterized by rolling hills with vast expanses of ranches, agricultural fields, and open space filled with meadows, streams, wetlands, and lakes. The Valley is surrounded by the abrupt, hilly, and mountainous topography of the Cascade Mountains.

To the southeast, Mt. Shasta is a dramatic landform rapidly rising to 10,000 feet above the valley floor to an elevation of more than 14,000 feet above sea level. Mount Shasta, a dormant volcano, is the fifth highest peak in California and the second highest in the Cascade Range. At its base,

the mountain is 17 miles in diameter, and its snow-capped peak is visible from distances over a hundred miles away. Black Butte, another dormant volcano named because of its dark silhouette, is a prominent landform which reaches over 6000 feet in elevation to the south of the study area.

The Shasta River, a tributary of the Klamath River, winds northward through the Shasta Valley. In addition to numerous smaller streams, the valley is interspersed with a variety of unconnected depressions that form seasonal lakes and wetlands.

Vegetation in the study area includes open grassland, coniferous forest, and scrubland. Annual grassland dominates most of the study area. Mixed, open, juniper-dominated forests with sagebrush understory often are limited to the steeper hillside slopes and the southern end of the study area. Uncultivated hillsides typically are covered with various sized volcanic rocks and small boulders. Within this landscape setting, the surrounding mountains provide a visual backdrop.

The area is typically rural in character, with open pastures and scattered ranches and residences. The area is a popular tourist destination, with opportunities for wilderness related recreation including fishing, camping, hiking, and hunting. However, as described below, the vicinity also has several more developed areas, including the town of Weed to the south of the study area.

Two major roadways, Interstate 5 (I-5) and Highway 97, connect the study area to points within and beyond the region. Interstate 5 is the primary vehicular route between northern California and Oregon. Highway 97 connects the area with the Klamath National Forest to the northeast and points beyond in central and eastern Oregon. Additionally a system of local, rural roadways traverses the study area.

Located on Interstate 5 at the southern foot of Mount Shasta, the City of Weed is approximately midway between Portland, Oregon and San Francisco. Weed lies 49 miles south of the Oregon border at an elevation of 3,500 feet. The town was founded in the beginning of the 1900's as a lumber town centered along Boles Creek, a tributary of the Shasta River. The downtown core includes a number of historical structures from the early twentieth century. Later residential subdivisions date predominately from the 1950s and 1960s.

With a current population of approximately 3,000 Weed's economy is still focused on timber, although ranches and seasonal grazing lands are also found within the sphere of influence (US Census Bureau, 2000 and City of Weed General Plan, Land Use Element, p. 2). Recreation and tourism also provide an important source of economic activity with visitors traveling to the Shasta Valley area to enjoy wilderness sports with the scenic backdrop of Mount Shasta and the surrounding Cascade Mountains.

A majority of the Weed Segment is located within the City of Weed; however, as noted above, a majority of the line traverses Ponderosa Pine habitat with the exception of the Lincoln Heights neighborhood and the Weed Substation area. About 50 single-family residences, several churches, a barbeque stand, and a cemetery comprise the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. The Weed Substation area includes commercial and light industry such as a recycling facility and a paper mill, which is located across the street from the Weed Substation.

## Local Visual Character

The visual character found in the study area encompasses a variety of natural and built features typically found in a rural landscape setting. The regional and local roadways described below comprise the primary corridors from which the Proposed Project, Weed Segment and alternatives would be visible to the public.

The following discussion provides a general description of the existing landscape setting and visual character of the study area. Presented on Figure 4.1-2a through Figure 4.1-2g, a set of photographs taken from representative public vantage points document these existing visual conditions. As explained below, several views taken from private property are also included in the visual setting photographs. Reference to existing conditions photographs used for visual simulation purposes also is provided.

With the exception of a 1.2 mile segment of the Proposed Project, existing transmission line facilities occupy the entire route of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. As described below, existing transmission lines, as well as other existing utility structures, are established features within the area's landscape setting.

### **Highway 97**

Highway 97 is an important regional travel corridor within the study area. The portion of Highway 97 from the Oregon border south to the intersection of I-5, on the south end of the City of Weed is designated as part of the Volcanic Legacy National Scenic Byway All-American Road, nationally recognized under the U.S. Department of Transportation National Scenic Byways Program. Highway 97 is also a state-eligible Scenic Highway and a County-designated Scenic Highway. In the study area, Highway 97 carries an average of roughly 3,100 to 7,000 vehicles daily (Caltrans, 2007).

Views from Highway 97 encompass a variety of landscape features ranging from grassland and open and wooded hillsides with ridgelines and mountains in the backdrop to light industrial uses seen near the Weed Substation. Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g present photos taken from various places along Highway 97 in the study area.

As shown in these photographs, where not obstructed by roadside vegetation and landforms, distant mountain views are available along portions of the north and southbound Highway 97 corridor. Views of the Proposed Project route from Highway 97 are somewhat limited, but include a small portion of the Proposed Project at the Weed Junction Substation, approximately 300 feet from the highway. In addition, part of the Weed Segment, including the Weed Substation, is situated along the Highway 97 corridor. Photos 17 and 18, taken respectively from south and northbound Highway 97, show views looking toward the Weed Substation at the southern end of the route. Photos 20 and 22 through 24 portray representative views of the alternative route corridor as seen from north and southbound Highway 97. Figure 4.1-2g present four views taken from Highway 97 near the Weed Junction Substation at the eastern end of the project. Photos 25 and 27 show views taken near the residential area at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue on the north edge of Weed. Mature vegetation screens views from many places in this area. As demonstrated

by the photos, existing transmission structures are visible to varying degrees from some places along the highway corridor.

### ***Hoy Road***

Hoy Road is a winding, rural two-lane roadway. Figure 4.1-2a and Figures 4.1-2c present photographs taken from a variety of Hoy Road locations in the project vicinity. As indicated by these photos, in this general area views from Hoy Road encompass rural landscape features such as open grassland, fences and mature trees in the foreground. Several rural residences and farm structures are situated along this roadway. As shown in Photos 1 through 4, views of the mountains and ridgelines appear in the backdrops from some points along Hoy Road. At other locations dense vegetation encloses views from the road (refer to Photos 9 through 12). Photos 1, 10, 11, and 12 demonstrate the presence of existing power poles and overhead lines in foreground views from some portions of the Hoy Road corridor. With respect to the relative number of potentially affected viewers along Hoy Road, it can reasonably be assumed that this local roadway carries a small fraction of the daily traffic that traverses Highway 97 in the study area.

The Proposed Project crosses Hoy Road in an area bordered by dense woodland on the east side of the road and an open meadow on the west. It crosses the meadow and turns north at existing Pole 8/45. Figure 4.1-2a and Figure 4.1-2b include views from Hoy Road looking toward the Proposed Project near the area where its route crosses the road. Photo 2, a public view looking southeast from Hoy Road, shows the open meadow in the foreground with forest and Mt. Shasta in the backdrop. Photo 3 is a view looking south toward the roadway crossing showing open grassland against a backdrop of forested hillsides. Figure 4.1-2b includes photos taken from nearby private property looking toward the Proposed Project. Photo 7, taken from an access road on private property, is a view looking east across the meadow toward Hoy Road with existing Pole 8/45 in the center foreground.

Hoy Road is not a state or locally designated scenic route; however, it is included on a “self guided driving tour” map of Siskiyou County Highways and Byways published in the mid 1980s (Kim Solga Artworks, ca. 1985). Sponsored by the Mount Shasta Visitors Bureau, this map identifies scenic landscape features, driving routes and local businesses in the area. Recent inquiries at the Mount Shasta Visitors Bureau and the Weed Chamber of Commerce and Visitors’ Center indicate that the map may no longer be available for purchase (Anderson, 2007; Mehman, 2007).

### ***Kennedy Road and the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood***

Beginning at Pole 8/45, the existing 69 kV transmission line which would be upgraded as part of the Weed Segment proceeds south toward Highway 97 and the Weed Substation. It traverses Lincoln Heights, a residential community of about 50 single family homes. Figure 4.1-2d presents photos taken from the Lincoln Heights residential area. Photo 14, taken from Kennedy Road, shows a close range view of the existing 69 kV transmission line and existing residential development with Mt. Shasta in the backdrop. Photo 15 is another view taken from Kennedy Road looking south toward the Weed Segment route from the Lincoln Heights neighborhood.

Photo 16, taken from a nearby cemetery, is a view looking toward the Lincoln Heights neighborhood and part of the Weed Segment route, with Mt. Shasta in the backdrop.

### **California Street**

South of Highway 97, Hoy Road becomes California Street and is bordered by undeveloped land on the north and residences on its south side. From portions of this street, views toward Highway 97 and part of the alternative route alignments are available (Figure 4.1-2f, Photo 25).

## **Regulatory Context**

### **Federal Highway Administration**

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided funding for almost 1,500 state and nationally designated byway projects in 48 states. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities.

The Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway includes the California Volcanic Legacy corridor, which is an extension of the Oregon Volcanic Legacy All-American Road, which reaches the Oregon/California border via Highway 97. From this point, one can choose to go east toward the Modoc section of the byway, or south on the Shasta section, continuing to the Lassen section. A portion of the Proposed Project, near the Weed Junction Substation, as well as portions of the Weed Segment, including the Weed Substation, are visible from Highway 97, part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway. In addition almost half of the PacifiCorp Option 4, Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative routes lie in proximity to and would be visible from Highway 97.

### **California Department of Transportation**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has a State Scenic Highways program to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways (Section 260 *et seq.* of the California Streets and Highways Code). The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that either are eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. These highways are identified in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. The program entails the regulation of land use and density of development, attention to the design of sites and structures, attention to and control of signage, landscaping, and grading, and the undergrounding of utility lines within the view corridor of designated scenic roadways. The local jurisdiction is responsible for adopting and implementing such regulation. In the study area, Highway 97 has been listed by Caltrans as eligible for designation as a State Scenic Highway.

No portion of the Proposed Project, Weed Segment or alternatives would be visible from a designated State Scenic Highway. However, portions of the Proposed Project, near the Weed Junction Substation, and portions of the Weed Segment, including the Weed Substation, would be visible from Highway 97, which is listed by Caltrans as an Eligible State Scenic Highway. In addition, almost half of the PacifiCorp Option 4 and Mackintosh/ALJ Variations A and B alternative routes lie in proximity to and would be visible from Highway 97.

### **California Public Utilities Commission**

California Public Utilities Code Section 320 requires that all new or relocated electric and communication distribution facilities within 1,000 feet of an officially-designated scenic highway and visible from that highway be buried underground where feasible and not inconsistent with sound environmental planning. GO 131-D defines distribution as "...a line designed to operate under 50kV".<sup>1</sup>

### **Siskiyou County General Plan**

#### **Scenic Highway Element**

The Siskiyou County General Plan's Scenic Highways Element (1974) provides the following policies that would be applicable to the Proposed Project and a portion of the Weed Segment that lies within the County's jurisdiction.

*Objective 2:* To conserve, enhance, and protect scenic views observable from scenic routes to all major recreational areas throughout the county.

*Objective 4:* To preserve for all travelers the outstanding characteristics of Siskiyou County, primarily clean air and magnificent scenery, so that it may so remain, providing incentives for tourism, and to stabilize and increase property values and the economy of Siskiyou County.

#### Scenic Freeways

Interstate 5 from the Oregon line to its intersection with State Route 3 in Yreka, and from its confluence with Highway 97 in Weed to its confluence with Highway 89 south of Mt. Shasta.

#### Scenic Highways: Highway 97 from the Oregon border south to I-5 in Weed

*Optional implementation measure: Location of Overhead Utilities:* Through coordination and cooperation with utilities companies an equitable, and adoptable, policy can frequently be derived that will deal with the elimination of existing objectionable overhead utilities within the corridor. For P.U.C. regulated utility companies, undergrounding may frequently be accomplished under existing conversion tariffs of the respective utility companies. Underground utilities should be required wherever possible in all new development.

(Siskiyou County, 1974).

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<sup>1</sup> The CPUC has implemented PU Code §320 via Tariff Rule 20. While Tariff Rule 20 does not disallow the funding of undergrounding transmission lines, the specific mandate of PU Code §320 is limited to distribution lines. (CPUC, D.85497.)

### **Conservation Element**

The Siskiyou County General Plan's Conservation Element (1973) provides the following objective that would be applicable to the Proposed Project and the portion of the Weed Segment that lies within the County's jurisdiction.

*Objective:* To conserve, preserve and maintain the scenic lands of Siskiyou County.

(Siskiyou County, 1973).

### **City of Weed General Plan**

The City of Weed General Plan does not contain any aesthetics goals, objectives or policies that would be applicable to the Proposed Project or Weed Segment.

## **4.1.2 Significance Criteria**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, significant aesthetic effects on the environment include substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effects, conflicts with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community, substantial degradation of scenic vistas or highways, and/or the creation of light or glare.

Using the criteria above, this analysis evaluates the impact of implementation of the Proposed Project and Weed Segments and alternatives on the visual character of the study area. The evaluation of potential impacts is based on the potential to change the visual character of the area if implementation of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor;
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

## **4.1.3 Aesthetics Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

### **Visual Simulations**

Visual simulations, presented as part of this aesthetic analysis, illustrate representative "before" and "after" visual conditions along the Proposed Project and Weed Segment route. In the text below, the evaluation of potential visual impacts associated with the Proposed Project and the Weed Segment are based, in part, on comparing the "before" and "after" visual conditions as portrayed in the set of simulations and assessing the degree of visual change that the project would bring about. The significance determination is based on several evaluation criteria

including the extent of project visibility from sensitive viewing areas such as designated scenic routes or residential areas; the degree to which new project elements would contrast with or be integrated into the existing landscape; the extent of change in the landscape's composition and character; and the number and sensitivity of viewers. Project conformance with public policies regarding visual quality was also taken into account.

Figure 4.1-3 depicts the simulation photo viewpoint locations for the existing views and computer-generated visual simulations presented in Figures 4.1-4a through 4.1-14b. The set of images shows views of the Proposed Project (Figures 4.1-4 through 4.1-12), as well as two views of the Weed Segment (Figures 4.2-13 and 4.1-14). These simulations illustrate the location, scale and conceptual appearance of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment as seen from key viewing locations.

The visual simulations are presented in color, one image per page with the existing visual condition photo on a page opposite from a visual simulation depicting the proposed project. All but two of the images use a 50mm lens which represents a horizontal view angle of 40 degrees. These images should be viewed at a distance of approximately 13 inches in order to gain an optimal impression of the project's scale in relationship to the surrounding landscape. The Figure 4.1-10 and 4.1-12 simulation photos (taken from private residential property) were photographed with a 28mm lens which represents a horizontal view angle of 65 degrees. The Figure 4.1-10 and 4.1-12 images should be viewed at a distance of about 7.5 inches. Except where noted below, the simulations portray public views. The simulation vantage points are as follows:

*Visual Simulations of the Proposed Project*

1. View from Hoy Road Looking Southeast (Figures 4.1-4a and b)
2. View from Hoy Road Looking South (Figures 4.1-5a and b)
3. View from Hoy Road Looking West (Figures 4.1-6a and b)
4. View from Hoy Road Looking Northwest (Figures 4.1-7a and b)
5. View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (Figures 4.1-8a and b)
6. View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (Figures 4.1-9a and b)
7. View from Private Residence on Hoy Road (Figures 4.1-10a and b)
8. View from Private Access Road (Figures 4.1-11a and b)
9. View from Private Residence on Hoy Road (Figures 4.1-12a and b)

*Visual Simulations of Weed Segment*

10. View from Kennedy Road (Figures 4.1-13a and b)
11. View from Highway 97 near Weed Substation (Figures 4.1-14a and b)

## **Discussion**

The Proposed Project would involve the upgrade of an existing 69 kV transmission line with a new 115 kV transmission line within an existing right-of-way except for approximately 1.2 miles of new line (approximately 15 poles) that would be constructed where none currently exists. The Weed Segment would include upgrading approximately 1.5 miles of single-circuit 69 kV

transmission line to a double-circuit 115 kV transmission line within existing right-of-way. In general, existing wood poles and overhead conductor would be replaced with new taller wood poles and heavier conductor. Self-supporting steel poles would be installed at the following locations: Pole 8/45, Pole 1, Pole 15/48, Pole 1/49, Pole 19/45, Pole 13/46 and Pole 13x1/46, Pole 14x2/46. In general, the replacement poles would be approximately 14 to 36 feet taller than the existing poles. To varying degrees, these changes would be visible to the public.

a) **Substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

A scenic vista is considered an open and expansive public view encompassing valued landscape features including ridgelines and mountains. Portions of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment route would be within the broad definition of scenic vista.

***Proposed Project***

The introduction of approximately 1.2 miles of new transmission line would noticeably affect views from a limited portion of Hoy Road. This portion of the Proposed Project would also affect views from a private residential property located within 1,000 feet of the new line.

Figure 4.1-6a and 4.1-6b present an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from Hoy Road looking southeast. The Proposed Project can be seen along the base of the hillside near the middle ground of the view (see also Figure 4.1-2a, Photo 4.). The upgraded portion of the Proposed Project as seen from Hoy Road looking northwest can also be seen, though barely discernable in the background of the visual simulation and existing view presented on Figures 4.1-7a and 4.1-7b (see also Figure 4.1-2c, Photo 9).

**Impact AES-PPWS-1: The Proposed Project (Poles 11 and 12) could affect scenic views from a limited portion of Hoy Road. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

Figure 4.1-4a and Figure 4.1-4b and Figure 4.1-5a and Figure 4.1-5b show an existing and a simulated view of the Proposed Project from Hoy Road looking southeast and looking south respectively. From this vantage point, the Proposed Project would appear against a landscape backdrop at a distance of about one half mile. The simulation indicates that the new poles and overhead conductors would not be particularly noticeable and therefore would not substantially alter scenic views from Hoy Road (see also Figure 4.1-2a, Photos 2 and 3.). However, when seen without a landscape backdrop at a closer distance of about 500 feet, the Proposed Project would be more noticeable from Hoy Road. Figure 4.1-7a and Figure 4.1-7b depicts “before” and “after” views of the Proposed Project as seen from Hoy Road looking northwest (see also Figure 4.1-2c, Photo 9). This visual simulation portrays a close range view of the Proposed Project as it crosses this public roadway. This view shows the new overhead line where it would

appear most visible to the public because the simulation portrays an unobstructed close range view of new Poles 11 and 12. The new poles would be clearly noticeable from this vantage point. Although the Proposed Project would not obstruct views of the landscape backdrop, it would contrast with the form of natural landscape features. The visual effect would be seen from a limited segment along Hoy Road.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-1a:** During final design, Poles 11 and 12 shall be sited to minimize potential effects on views from Hoy Road. Siting criteria shall include the following: 1) where feasible, set back poles from the edge of the roadway so as to reduce their visibility; 2) locate poles to take advantage of available opportunities for screening provided by existing vegetation; and 3) locate poles to minimize the degree of skylining. Final design/placement of Poles 11 and 12 shall be submitted, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commence of construction.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-1b:** After Poles 11 and 12 are in place, the CPUC mitigation monitor shall review the effectiveness of Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-1a to determine whether Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-1b is needed. If Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-1b is needed, then PacifiCorp shall develop a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist. The plan shall include planting of trees and/or shrubs either individually or in informal groupings to partially screen close range unobstructed views of the new poles as seen from Hoy Road. Planting shall be designed to substantially preserve views of the landscape features seen in the backdrop. Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. The landscape plan shall show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the poles. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**Impact AES-PPWS-2: The Proposed Project (Poles 13 and 14) could affect scenic views from nearby private residential property. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Figure 4.1-11a and Figure 4.1-11b show “before” and “after” views from a vantage point located along a private access road that connects to Hoy Road (shown as viewpoint 7 on Figure 4.1-3). The view looks east across the meadow with a portion of Pole 8/45 and several trees seen in the immediate foreground and wooded hillsides and distant mountains in the backdrop. Although not a representative or typical public or private view, Figure 4.1-11 conveys a sense of the Proposed Project as it traverses the meadow and heads east across Hoy Road. As shown in the simulation, new Poles 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 would be visible; however, when seen from this vantage point, Pole 15 would be

seen in the foreground against a partial landscape backdrop. An existing house (5322 Hoy Road) and an adjacent, recently built, hillside home (the Mackintosh residence) are located along this winding, wooded, private drive. Intervening vegetation would generally screen views of the new line, including Pole 15, from the hillside residence.

Figure 4.1-12a and Figure 4.1-12b are “before” and “after” views of the Proposed Project as seen from a private residential property (the Pappas residence) located at 5026 Hoy Road (see also Figure 4.1-2b, Photo 8). The visual simulation portrays a relatively unobstructed view of the Proposed Project. As seen from this rear yard vantage point, new wood poles (Pole 13 and Pole 14) and overhead conductor would be visible in the foreground. Pole 14, seen on the left side of the view, would appear against a landscape backdrop. However, Pole 13 would be seen against the sky. As a result, this pole would appear more prominent in relation to the setting. Although the Proposed Project would not obstruct views of the landscape backdrop, it would contrast with the form of natural landscape features. This visual effect is potentially significant.

Figure 4.1-10a and Figure 4.1-10b present a view of the Proposed Project as seen from the rear deck of a private residence (the Luiz residence) located at 4309 Hoy Road. A close comparison of the two images indicates that Poles 9 through Pole 13 of the Proposed Project would be visible, although barely discernable. From this vantage point, the Proposed Project would appear across the center of the view, against a landscape backdrop. The simulation indicates that due to the backdrop and viewing distance, the new poles and overhead conductors would not be particularly noticeable from this location and would therefore not substantially affect the existing view.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-2a:** During final design, Poles 12 through 14 shall be sited to minimize potential effects on views from the 5026 Hoy Road residential property. Siting criteria shall include the following: 1) where feasible, locate poles to take advantage of available opportunities for screening provided by nearby, foreground existing vegetation and 2) locate poles to minimize the degree of skylining. Final design/placement of Poles 12 through 14 shall be submitted, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commence of construction.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-2b:** In consultation with the 5026 Hoy Road property owner, and a certified arborist or landscape architect, PacifiCorp shall plant trees/shrubs either individually or in informal groupings to partially screen unobstructed views of the new poles. Planting shall be designed to substantially preserve views of the landscape features seen in the backdrop. Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

### **Weed Segment**

The upgraded transmission line of the Weed Segment would be visible from limited portions of Highway 97, which affords motorists with scenic vistas toward the mountains. With respect to views from Highway 97, the Weed Segment generally involves replacing a set of existing wood poles and overhead conductors with new, taller wood poles and overhead conductors. Figure 4.1-14a and Figure 4.1-14b present an existing view and visual simulation of the Weed Segment as seen from northbound Highway 97 near Alamo Avenue. A comparison of the existing view and the visual simulation image indicates that the placement of the new poles would be the same or similar to existing pole locations. The replacement poles would extend just slightly further into the sky than the existing poles. In these respects, the Weed Segment would represent an incremental change which would not substantially obstruct or affect scenic vistas toward the mountains that currently are available from Highway 97 in this area (see also, Figure 4.1-2e, Photo 18). This impact is less than significant (Class III).

- b) **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).**

Portions of the Proposed Project and the Weed Segment would be seen from a limited segment of Highway 97, which is designated as a National Scenic Byway and County Scenic Highway; as well as an Eligible State Scenic Highway.

**Impact AES-PPWS-3: New poles at the Weed Junction Substation and rebuild of the Weed Substation would affect views from a limited portion of Highway 97, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).**

The Proposed Project would include the addition of 4 new poles (2/49x through 5/49x) along the west and north sides of the Weed Junction Substation. In addition an existing wood pole, Pole 1/49, would be replaced in a location closer to Highway 97 with a larger, taller steel pole. Figure 4.1-8 and Figure 4.1-9 present close range “before” and “after” views of the Proposed Project as seen from locations along Highway 97 looking north and south, respectively, toward the replacement poles in the vicinity of and at the Weed Junction Substation. As shown in the visual simulations, the removal of mature trees and the introduction of larger poles would represent noticeable changes as seen from these Highway 97 viewing locations. The replacement structures would generally be more prominent in the foreground when seen from the highway corridor.

Figure 4.1-8a and Figure 4.1-8b portray an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from northbound Highway 97 at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, near Weed Junction Substation. Highway 97 motorists’ views of the substation area are quite brief in duration. Near the substation, the Proposed Project would require the addition of 4 new wood poles which would be between 70 and 79 feet tall on the north and west sides of the

substation, outside of the fence line (i.e., Pole 2/49x through 5/49x). Installation of these new poles could require the removal of approximately 3 to 5 mature trees. As seen within the context of the existing substation the new poles would represent an incremental change that would increase the visual prominence of transmission facilities. In addition, the removal of the vegetation would affect views from Highway 97 at this location.

Figure 4.1-9a and Figure 4.1-9b portray an existing view and visual simulation of the Proposed Project as seen from southbound Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation. As shown in the visual simulation new poles (Pole 16/48 to Pole 19/48) would appear slightly taller than the existing wood poles. The poles appear in a gap in the surrounding trees that would be slightly enlarged to accommodate the placement of the new poles, which would be situated 15 feet south of the existing transmission line.

A comparison of both existing views and visual simulations indicates that the replacement of existing wood Pole 1/49 in a location approximately 25 feet closer to the highway with a larger, taller rust-colored steel pole, would result in this pole appearing taller, bulkier and more visually prominent in the foreground when seen from Highway 97. Given their proximity to the existing substation, the replacement poles would appear as an incremental change when seen from the highway. The overall effect would make the transmission facilities at the substation area appear more prominent.

Figure 4.1-14a and Figure 4.1-14b portrays an existing view and visual simulation of the Weed Segment as seen from northbound Highway 97 near Alamo Avenue. As shown in the visual simulation, the placement of the new poles would be similar and would follow the centerline of the existing transmission line. In these respects, the Weed Segment would represent an incremental change which would not substantially affect roadway views. The new Weed Substation facilities would be comparable to the existing substation currently located at the site in terms of their scale and general appearance. In addition, the Weed Segment proposes replacing an existing chain link fence at the Weed Substation with a new perimeter fence that would be closer to Highway 97. As seen from the highway, the replacement fence could appear more noticeable. These changes would affect views from a limited segment of both northbound and southbound Highway 97 (see also Figure 4.1-2e, Photo 18). In consideration of the roadway's status as a designated National Scenic Byway, a designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway, these effects are considered significant.

Therefore, because of the Weed Junction and Weed Substations' increased visibility from Highway 97, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-3a:** Landscaping shall be installed outside the perimeter fence at the Weed Junction Substation to partially screen views from Highway 97 and to integrate the Weed Junction Substation's appearance with the surrounding landscape. Additional landscaping shall also be installed along the roadside, south of the substation, to partially enclose roadway views and to partially screen views toward the transmission poles seen in the foreground.

Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. A landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist shall be submitted to the CPUC. The landscape plan will show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the route alignment replacement poles, and substation perimeter fence. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-3b:** Perimeter fencing at the Weed Junction Substation shall incorporate aesthetic treatment through use of appropriate, non-reflective materials, such as chain link fence with light brown vinyl slats.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-3c:** Landscaping shall be installed outside the perimeter fence at the Weed Substation to partially screen views from Highway 97 and to integrate the Weed Substation's appearance with the surrounding landscape. Additional landscaping shall also be installed along the roadside, south and east of the substation, to partially enclose roadway views and to partially screen views toward the transmission poles seen along the skyline.

Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. A landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist shall be submitted to the CPUC. The landscape plan will show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the route alignment replacement poles, and substation perimeter fence. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-3d:** Where visible from Highway 97, perimeter fencing at the Weed Substation shall incorporate aesthetic treatment through use of attractive, non-reflective materials, such as chain link fence with light brown vinyl slats; in order enhance its aesthetic appearance.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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c) **Substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings: *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Impacts to scenic views are addressed under paragraph a) and impacts related to changes in visual character and scenic quality are addressed under paragraph b), above. Distinct from scenic vistas, the proposed upgrade along the majority of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would generally represent an incremental change to the visual character or quality of views currently experienced by the public along the proposed route.

**Impact AES-PPWS-4: The Weed Segment would affect views from a limited portion of the Lincoln Heights residential area. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

Figure 4.1-13a and Figure 4.1-13b show an existing view and visual simulation portraying the effects of the upgraded Weed Segment transmission line on views from the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, looking south from Kennedy Road (see also Figure 4.1-2d, Photo 15). A comparison of the existing view and the visual simulation image demonstrates that the placement of new Poles 4/46 through 7/46 would be the same or similar to existing pole locations and would represent an incremental visual change. However, replacement Pole 3/46 would appear more visually prominent and intrusive due to its increased height (18 feet taller than the existing pole) and diameter, combined with the dissimilarity of its appearance compared with numerous existing wood utility poles and other vertical elements. The bulkiness and asymmetrical configuration of the insulators contribute to this effect. Because close range unobstructed views of replacement Pole 3/46 would be available from nearby residences, these effects are considered significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-4a:** During final design, Pole 3/46 shall be sited to minimize potential effects on close range unobstructed residential views in the Lincoln Heights area. To the extent feasible the replacement pole shall be located to take advantage of available opportunities for screening provided by existing vegetation.

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-4b:** Pole 3/46 shall be redesigned to utilize a self-supporting steel TF285 structure which has a horizontal rather than vertical arm configuration and is lower in height compared to the proposed pole at that location. Final design and siting of Pole 3/46 shall be submitted, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**d) Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

The Proposed Project and Weed Segment do not propose new lighting along the transmission line corridor. Therefore, no new sources of light would occur. However, the introduction of new overhead conductor along the new 1.6-mile segment where none currently exists could be a noticeable visual change as seen from some viewing locations during the daytime. The new conductor is a potentially reflective surface which could cause glare. This effect could result in the new conductor appearing visible or prominent. This would be a potentially significant visual impact.

**Impact AES-PPWS-5: The Proposed Project and Weed Segment transmission lines could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-5:** Non-specular conductors shall be installed to reduce the potential glare effects and the level of visual contrast between the transmission line and its landscape setting.

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The Weed Segment would not add new lighting at the Weed Substation; therefore, no new sources of light would be introduced. However, the new substation structure could introduce potentially reflective, metal surfaces that could create glare effects. This effect could result in the substation structure appearing more visible or prominent. This visual impact would be potentially significant.

**Impact AES-PPWS-6: The Weed Segment substation upgrades could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-6:** A non-reflective or weathered finish shall be applied to all new structures and equipment installed at the Weed Substation to reduce potential glare effects.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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### 4.1.3 Cumulative Impacts

As discussed above, Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 5, and 6 would ensure that the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not result in significant individual effects on visual resources. The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects described in Chapter 3, *Alternatives and Cumulative Projects*, include various renovations/improvements to local roadways in the vicinity, as well as the introduction of a biomass-fueled 15 MW cogeneration plant to be built at an existing industrial facility located near the intersection of Alamo Avenue and Highway 89, about a half mile south of the Weed Substation. In addition, a limited amount of new development including a church to be located near the Weed Junction Substation and a four-parcel residential subdivision near the Weed Segment are anticipated. Of these projects, only the cogeneration plant would have the potential to create any new visual impacts that would be industrial in nature. However, the cogeneration plant would be located within an existing industrial site and so would not be likely to affect the area's visual character.

However, the Proposed Project would add approximately 1.2 miles of new ROW within which approximately 15 new wood poles and 3 conductors would be installed where none currently exists. This new ROW would be constructed within approximately one-half mile of an existing transmission line ROW along Highway 97, and both would be visible to residents and visitors in the area. The existing transmission line is a past and/or present project that must be considered

together with the Proposed Project and probable future projects to determine whether there exists a combined cumulative impact. The combined visual effect of establishing a new 1.2 mile ROW containing transmission facilities while retaining the nearby existing ROW that also contains transmission facilities is significant since the overall visual character of the area would be adversely affected by such combined facilities and would be degraded from its present condition. The Proposed Project's incremental contribution to the cumulative adverse visual impact is cumulatively considerable and thus significant (Class I).

The Weed Segment would be constructed within an existing ROW, and so would not substantially alter the existing visual conditions and aesthetic character that is currently found in the study area, and Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-3c, 3d, 4a, and 4b would reduce the Weed Segment's contribution to the cumulative impact. Therefore, the effects of the Weed Segment on visual resources, in combination with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects, would not be cumulatively considerable (Class II).

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#### 4.1.4 Alternatives

As discussed above, visual simulations, presented as part of this aesthetic analysis, illustrate representative “before” and “after” visual conditions along the PacifiCorp Option 4, Macintosh/ALJ Variation A and Macintosh/ALJ Variation B route. In the text below, the evaluation of potential visual impacts associated with the alternatives is based, in part, on comparing the “before” and “after” visual conditions as portrayed in the set of simulations and assessing the degree of visual change that the alternative project would bring about. The significance determination is based on several evaluation criteria including the extent of project visibility from sensitive viewing areas such as designated scenic routes or residential areas; the degree to which new project elements would contrast with or be integrated into the existing landscape; the extent of change in the landscape's composition and character; and the number and sensitivity of viewers. Project conformance with public policies regarding visual quality was also taken into account.

The simulations of the alternatives illustrate the location, scale and conceptual appearance of the alternatives as seen from key viewing locations. Existing views and computer-generated visual simulations of the alternatives are presented as Figures 4.1-15 through 4.1-26.

Visual simulations are presented in color, one image per page with the existing visual condition photo on a page opposite from a visual simulation depicting the proposed project. All the images use a 50mm lens which represents a horizontal view angle of 40 degrees. These images should be viewed at a distance of approximately 13 inches in order to gain an optimal impression of the alternative project's scale in relationship to the surrounding landscape. All simulations portray public views from the following vantage points (Figure 4.1-3):

##### Visual Simulations of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative

1. View from Highway 97 near California Street (Figures 4.1-15a and b)

2. View from California Street at Center Street (Figures 4.1-16a and b)
3. View from Highway 97 Southbound (Figures 4.1-17a and b)
4. View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (Figures 4.1-18a and b)
5. View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (Figures 4.1-19a and b)
6. View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (Figures 4.1-20a and b)

*Visual Simulations of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B Alternatives*

7. View from Highway 97 near California Street (Figures 4.1-21a and b)
8. View from California Street at Center Street (Figures 4.1-22a and b)
9. View from Highway 97 Southbound (Figures 4.1-23a and b)
10. View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (Figures 4.1-24a and b)
11. View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (Figures 4.1-25a and b)
12. View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (Figures 4.1-26a and b)

## **PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative**

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative involves upgrading the existing line from Pole 15/44 south to Pole 8/45 as described under the Proposed Project. At Pole 8/45, the line would continue south with pole-for-pole replacement to Pole 19/45, where the alignment would veer east parallel to, but 15 feet north of, an existing line generally along Highway 97 for about 1.7 miles to the Weed Junction Substation.

In general, this alternative proposes replacing existing single circuit wood poles with taller double circuit wood poles between Poles 19/45 and the Weed Junction Substation. Pole 19/45 and Pole 1/49 would be replaced with self-supporting steel poles. The new poles would be about 10 to 30 feet taller than the existing poles, with the exception of Pole 17/47 which would be approximately 40 feet taller. Under this alternative the replacement poles would be situated 15 feet north of each existing pole, and so would be 15 feet further away from Highway 97. Once the new double circuit poles are installed, the existing single circuit poles would be removed. When complete, the new double circuit poles would carry 6 conductors compared to 3 conductors on the existing poles.

Construction of this alternative would require removal of some existing vegetation along a 1.4-mile portion of the ROW which passes through mature stands of conifers and other types of vegetation (Pole 19/45 to Pole 14/48). Shifting the ROW 15 feet to the north in this area would require trimming and removal of trees and lower vegetation for line clearance and fire safety purposes. The exact number and location of trees that would have to be removed by shifting the ROW 15 feet to the north would be determined during final surveying and engineering design, but would likely include between 20 to 50 trees larger than 10 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) with some in excess of 30 inches dbh (based on field observations noted by ESA biologists for the Constraints Analysis conducted for the Mitigated Negative Declaration (Appendix A in CPUC, 2006)).

Figures 4.1-15a through 4.1-20b illustrate “before and “after” views of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative.

a) **Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

A scenic vista is considered an open and expansive public view encompassing valued landscape features including ridgelines and mountains. Portions of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative route would be within the broad definition of scenic vista.

**Impact AES-OPT4-1: The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would affect scenic views from an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would be visible from portions of Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 28).

To varying degrees, the changes associated with installing new, taller replacement wood poles and overhead conductors associated with this alternative would be apparent from places along Highway 97. Figure 4.1-15, Figure 4.1-17, and Figure 4.1-18 present “before” and “after” views of PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ scenic mountain vistas along Highway 97. These three sets of figures illustrate the visual change associated with installing the taller replacement poles approximately 15 feet to the north of the existing alignment. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-15b, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole.

With respect to effects on the general scenic vista, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length).

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-1:** In consultation with the Siskiyou County Public Works Department, Caltrans, and the Volcanic Legacy Community

Partnership, PacifiCorp shall have a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist. This plan shall including the planting of trees and/or shrubs individually or in informal groupings to partially screen close range unobstructed views of Pole 15/47, Pole 18/47, Pole 19/47, Pole 20/47, Pole 3/48, Pole 4/48 and Pole 5/48; as well as long range unobstructed views of Pole 16/47, Poles 17/47 and Poles 2/48 from Highway 97.

Planting shall be designed to substantially preserve scenic mountain vistas seen in the backdrop. While it is not expected that new trees and/or shrubs will fully screen views of the replacement transmission structures, this mitigation will introduce additional landscape elements in the foreground that provide partial screening and effectively reduce this alternative's overall visibility.

Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. The landscape plan will show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the route alignment and replacement poles. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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- b) **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Portions of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would be seen from limited segments of Highway 97, which is a designated as a National Scenic Byway and County Scenic Highway; as well as an Eligible State Scenic Highway.

**Impact AES-OPT4-2: New poles at the Weed Junction Substation and rebuild of the Weed Substation would affect views from a limited portion of Highway 97, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

The rebuild of the Weed Substation and new pole installation at the Weed Junction Substation would be generally the same under this alternative as described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Therefore, because of the Weed Junction and Weed Substations' increased visibility from Highway 97, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented.

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-2:** Implement Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-3a, AES-PPWS-3b, AES-PPWS-3c, and AES-PPWS-3d.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**Impact AES-OPT4-3: The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would adversely affect the visual character within an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97 corridor, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. *Significant (Class I)*.**

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative generally involves replacing existing wood poles and overhead conductor with new conductor and wood poles that would be approximately 10 to 30 feet taller than existing poles. The replacement poles would be situated 15 feet further from (north of) Highway 97 than the existing poles. In two instances the replacement structures would be rust-colored steel rather than wood. In addition, this alternative would require the removal of some existing vegetation including mature trees.

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would be visible from Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 28).

Figure 4.1-15, Figure 4.1-17, and Figure 4.1-18 present “before” and “after” views of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ views of the scenic corridor along Highway 97. These three sets of figures illustrate the visual change associated with installing the taller replacement poles approximately 15 feet to the north of the existing alignment. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway. The largest number of affected viewers would be motorists traveling along Highway 97, a heavily-traveled roadway. This increased visual prominence would represent a noticeable intrusion with respect to motorists’ views of the scenic corridor.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-15b, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole. Figure 4.1-18b shows that Pole 5/48 would appear prominently in the foreground.

Collectively, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length). Although implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-1 would reduce this impact, in consideration of the roadway's status as a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway, these impacts would remain significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-3:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-1.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Significant.

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- c) **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Impacts to scenic views are addressed under paragraph a) and impacts related to changes in visual character and scenic quality are addressed under paragraph b), above. Distinct from scenic vistas, the proposed upgrade along the majority of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would generally represent an incremental change to the visual character or quality of views currently experienced by the public along the proposed route.

**Impact AES-OPT4-4: The Weed Segment would affect views from a limited portion of the Lincoln Heights residential area. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Under the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative, the portion of the Weed Segment through the Lincoln Heights neighborhood would appear as depicted Figure 4.1-13a and Figure 4.1-13b. This visual impact would be the same under this alternative as was described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. New Poles 4/46 through 7/46 would be the same or similar to existing pole locations and would represent an incremental visual change. However, replacement Pole 3/46 would appear more visually prominent and intrusive due to its increased height (18 feet taller than the existing pole) and diameter, combined with the dissimilarity of its appearance compared with numerous existing wood utility poles and other vertical elements. The bulkiness and asymmetrical configuration of the insulators contribute to this effect. Because close range unobstructed views of replacement Pole 3/46 would be available from nearby residences, these effects are considered significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-4:** Implement Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-4a and AES-PPWS-4b.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would also affect views from a limited rural residential area which is situated in proximity to Highway 97. Figure 4.1-16a and Figure 4.16-b illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions as seen from a vantage point on California Street at Center Street. This location represents a public roadway view in a residential area where relatively open, unobstructed views toward Highway 97 and the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative alignment. A comparison of the existing view and visual simulation indicates that several of the replacement poles would be slightly more visually prominent against the skyline (Pole 18/47 toward the left side of the view, Pole 19/47 near the center, and Pole 20/47 toward the right side of the image). Given the presence of existing transmission line structures in the foreground, this effect associated with the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would represent an incremental change that would not substantially alter the existing visual character seen from the area near California Street at Center Street (Class III).

- d) **Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Impact AES-OPT4-5: The transmission lines under the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative does not propose new lighting along the transmission line corridor. Therefore, no new sources of light would occur. However, the introduction of replacement overhead conductor in proximity to an approximately 1.4 mile segment of the Highway 97 scenic roadway corridor could be a noticeable visual change as seen from some highway viewing locations. The conductor is a potentially reflective surface which could cause glare with respect to views from the highway. This effect could result in the new conductor appearing noticeable and visually intrusive. This is a potentially significant visual impact.

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-5:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-5.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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Under this alternative, the Weed Segment would not add new lighting at the Weed Substation; therefore, no new sources of light would be introduced. However, the new substation structure could introduce potentially reflective, metal surfaces that could create glare effects. This effect could result in the substation structure appearing more visible or prominent. This visual impact would be potentially significant.

**Impact AES-OPT4-6: The Weed Segment substation upgrades could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Mitigation Measure AES-OPT4-6: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-6.**

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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## **Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A Alternative**

The Macintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative (Figure 3-4) would be located entirely within the existing ROW for the 1.7 miles between Pole 19/45 and the Weed Junction Substation. The final result of this alternative would be a double circuit pole line in the center of the existing ROW with 115 kV, 69 kV, and distribution underbuild. In general, this alternative proposes replacing existing wood poles with taller wood poles using the same spacing as the existing pole alignment. Pole 19/45 and Pole 1/49 would be replaced with self-supporting steel poles. The new poles would be approximately 10 to 30 feet taller than the existing poles, with the exception of Pole 17/47 which would be approximately 40 feet taller. The new double circuit poles would carry 6 conductors compared to 3 conductors on the existing poles. Tree trimming and brush clearing would be limited to the existing ROW under this alternative.

Additionally, under this alternative a temporary 115/69 kV transformer would be required at the Weed Substation to serve existing load. Once the temporary transformer is installed and operational, the 69 kV line between the Weed and Weed Junction Substations could be de-energized, thus allowing construction of the new double circuit line in the centerline of the existing ROW.

Figures 4.1-21a through 4.1-26b illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions associated with Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A. Because the final physical configuration of both the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and the Macintosh/ALJ Variation B are the same, this set of Figures provides a reasonable representation of the both alternatives. Therefore, reference to this set of figures in discussion of the potential visual impacts associated with both alternatives is appropriate.

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

A scenic vista is considered an open and expansive public view encompassing valued landscape features including ridgelines and mountains. Portions of Macintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative route would be within the broad definition of scenic vista.

**Impact AES-VAR/A-1: The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would affect scenic views from an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would be visible from portions of Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22-24 and 28).

To varying degrees, the changes associated with installing new, taller replacement wood poles and overhead conductors associated with this alternative would be apparent from places along Highway 97. Figure 4.1-21, Figure 4.1-23, and Figure 4.1-24 present “before” and “after” views of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ scenic mountain vistas along Highway 97. These three sets of figures illustrate the visual change associated with the pole for pole replacement of the existing poles with taller replacement poles. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-21b, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole.

With respect to effects on the general scenic vista, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length).

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-1:** In consultation with the Siskiyou County Public Works Department, Caltrans, and the Volcanic Legacy Community Partnership, PacifiCorp shall have a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist. This plan shall include the planting of trees and/or shrubs individually or in informal groupings to partially screen close range unobstructed views of Pole 15/47, Pole 18/47, Pole 19/47, Pole 20/47, Pole 3/48, Pole 4/48 and Pole 5/48; as well as long range unobstructed views of Pole 16/47, Poles 17/47 and Poles 2/48 from Highway 97.

Planting shall be designed to substantially preserve scenic mountain vistas seen in the backdrop. While it is not expected that new trees and/or shrubs will fully screen views of the replacement transmission structures, this mitigation will introduce additional landscape elements in the foreground that provide partial screening and effectively reduce this alternative’s overall visibility.

Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. The landscape plan will show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the route alignment and replacement poles. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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- b) **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor. Significant (Class I).**

Portions of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would be seen from limited segments of Highway 97, which is a designated as a National Scenic Byway and County Scenic Highway; as well as an Eligible State Scenic Highway.

**Impact AES-VAR/A-2: Rebuild of the Weed Substation and new poles at the Weed Junction Substation would affect views from a limited portion of Highway 97, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).**

The rebuild of the Weed Substation and new pole installation at the Weed Junction Substation would be generally the same under this alternative as described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Therefore, because of the Weed Junction and Weed Substations' increased visibility from Highway 97, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-2:** Implement Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-3a, AES-PPWS-3b, AES-PPWS-3c, and AES-PPWS-3d.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**Impact AES-VAR/A-3: The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would adversely affect the visual character within an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97 corridor, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. Significant (Class I).**

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative generally involves replacing existing wood poles and overhead conductor with new conductor and wood poles that would be approximately 10 to 30 feet taller than existing poles. The replacement poles would be situated in essentially the same location as the existing poles. In two instances the

replacement structures would be rust-colored steel rather than wood. In addition, this alternative would require the removal of some existing vegetation.

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would be visible from Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 28).

Figures 4.1-21, 4.1-23 and 4.1-24 present “before” and “after” views of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ views of the scenic corridor along Highway 97. These three sets of figures illustrate the visual change associated with installing the taller replacement poles within the existing ROW. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway. The largest number of affected viewers would be motorists traveling along Highway 97, a heavily-traveled roadway. This increased visual prominence would represent a noticeable intrusion with respect to motorists’ views of the scenic corridor.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-21, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole. Figure 4.1-24b shows that Pole 5/48 would appear prominently in the foreground.

Collectively, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length). Although implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-1 would reduce this impact, in consideration of the roadway’s status as a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway, these impacts would remain significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-3: Implement Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-1**

**Significance after Mitigation:** Significant.

c) **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Impacts to scenic views are addressed under paragraph a) and impacts related to changes in visual character and scenic quality are addressed under paragraph b), above. Distinct from scenic vistas, the proposed upgrade along the majority of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would generally represent an incremental change to the visual character or quality of views currently experienced by the public along the proposed route.

**Impact AES-VAR/A-4: The Weed Segment would affect views from a limited portion of the Lincoln Heights residential area. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative, the portion of the Weed Segment through the Lincoln Heights neighborhood would appear as depicted Figure 4.1-13a and Figure 4.1-13b. This visual impact would be the same under this alternative as was described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. New Poles 4/46 through 7/46 would be the same or similar to existing pole locations and would represent an incremental visual change. However, replacement Pole 3/46 would appear more visually prominent and intrusive due to its increased height (18 feet taller than the existing pole) and diameter, combined with the dissimilarity of its appearance compared with numerous existing wood utility poles and other vertical elements. The bulkiness and asymmetrical configuration of the insulators contribute to this effect. Because close range unobstructed views of replacement Pole 3/46 would be available from nearby residences, these effects are considered significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-4:** Implement Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-4a and AES-PPWS-4b.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would also affect views from a limited rural residential area which is situated in proximity to Highway 97. Figure 4.1-22a and Figure b illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions as seen from a vantage point on California Street at Center Street. This location represents a public roadway view in a residential area where relatively open, unobstructed views toward Highway 97 and the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative alignment. A comparison of the existing view and visual simulation indicates that several of the replacement poles would be slightly more visually prominent against the skyline (Pole 18/47 toward the left side of the view, Pole 19/47 near the center, and Pole 20/47 toward the right side of the image). Given the presence of existing transmission line structures in the foreground, this effect associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would represent an incremental change

that would not substantially alter the existing visual character seen from the area near California Street at Center Street (Class III).

- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative does not propose new lighting along the transmission line corridor. Therefore, no new sources of light would occur. However, the introduction of replacement overhead conductor in proximity to an approximately 1.4-mile segment of the Highway 97 scenic roadway corridor could be a noticeable visual change as seen from some highway viewing locations. The conductor could be a potentially reflective surface which could cause glare with respect to views from the highway. This effect could result in the new conductor appearing noticeable and visually intrusive. This could be a potentially significant visual impact.

**Impact AES-VAR/A-5: The transmission lines under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-5:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-5.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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Under this alternative, the Weed Segment would not add new lighting at the Weed Substation; therefore, no new sources of light would be introduced. However, the new substation structure could introduce potentially reflective, metal surfaces that could create glare effects. This effect could result in the substation structure appearing more visible or prominent. This visual impact would be potentially significant.

**Impact AES-VAR/A-6: The Weed Segment substation upgrades could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/A-6:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-6.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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## **Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B Alternative**

The Macintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative, Figure 3-4, would be located entirely within an existing ROW for the 1.7 miles between Pole 19/45 and the Weed Junction Substation. This

alternative would require installation of a temporary pole line within the existing ROW approximately 15 feet south of the existing poles. The temporary pole line would be removed once construction of the new line is complete. The final result of this alternative would be a double circuit pole line in the center of the existing ROW with 115 kV, 69 kV, and distribution underbuild. In general, this alternative proposes replacing existing wood poles with taller wood poles using the same spacing as the existing pole alignment. Pole 19/45 and Pole 1/49 would be replaced with self-supporting steel poles. The new poles would be about 10 to 30 feet taller than the existing poles, with the exception of Pole 17/47 which would be approximately 40 feet taller. The new double circuit poles would carry 6 conductors compared to 3 conductors on the existing poles.

Installation of the temporary pole line would require trimming and removal of trees for line clearance requirements, and trimming or clearing of lower vegetation for fire safety requirements. Some of this tree trimming/removal and vegetation clearance may need to occur just outside the south edge of the ROW to ensure that windy conditions would not compromise system reliability while the temporary line is in place. The exact number and location of trees that would have to be substantially trimmed or removed outside the ROW would be determined during final surveying and engineering design, but may include some trees larger than 10 inches diameter at breast height (dbh).

Figure 4.1-21a through Figure 4.1-26b illustrate “before and “after” views of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative.

**a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

A scenic vista is considered an open and expansive public view encompassing valued landscape features including ridgelines and mountains. Portions of Macintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative route would be within the broad definition of scenic vista.

**Impact AES-VAR/B-1: The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would affect scenic views from an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would be visible from portions of Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22-24 and 28).

To varying degrees, the changes associated with installing new, taller replacement wood poles and overhead conductors associated with this alternative would be apparent from places along Highway 97. Figure 4.1-21, Figure 4.1-23, and Figure 4.1-24 present “before” and “after” views of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ scenic mountain vistas along Highway 97. These three sets of figures

illustrate the visual change associated with the pole for pole replacement of the existing poles with taller replacement poles. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-21b, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole.

With respect to effects on the general scenic vista, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length).

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-1:** In consultation with the Siskiyou County Public Works Department, Caltrans, and the Volcanic Legacy Community Partnership, PacifiCorp shall have a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist. This plan shall including the planting of trees and/or shrubs individually or in informal groupings to partially screen close range unobstructed views of Pole 15/47, Pole 18/47, Pole 19/47, Pole 20/47, Pole 3/48, Pole 4/48 and Pole 5/48; as well as long range unobstructed views of Pole 16/47, Poles 17/47 and Poles 2/48 from Highway 97.

Planting shall be designed to substantially preserve scenic mountain vistas seen in the backdrop. While it is not expected that new trees and/or shrubs will fully screen views of the replacement transmission structures, this mitigation will introduce additional landscape elements in the foreground that provide partial screening and effectively reduce this alternative's overall visibility.

Plant material shall be appropriate to the local/natural landscape setting and shall be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4292 for vegetation located in proximity to transmission facilities. The landscape plan will show the location, suggested species and size at planting for all proposed plant material. The plan shall show proposed landscaping in relation to the final placement of the route alignment and replacement poles. The plan shall be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the CPUC prior to commencement of construction.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

- b) **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor. *Significant* (Class I).**

Portions of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would be seen from limited segments of Highway 97, which is designated as a National Scenic Byway and County Scenic Highway; as well as an Eligible State Scenic Highway.

**Impact AES-VAR/B-2: Rebuild of the Weed Substation and new poles at the Weed Junction Substation would affect views from a limited portion of Highway 97, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).**

The rebuild of the Weed Substation and new pole installation at the Weed Junction Substation would be generally the same under this alternative as described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Therefore, because of the Weed Junction and Weed Substations' increased visibility from Highway 97, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-2:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-3a, AES-PPWS-3b, AES-PPWS-3c, and AES-PPWS-3d.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**Impact AES-VAR/B-3: The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would adversely affect the visual character within an approximately 1/2-mile portion of Highway 97 corridor, a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway. *Significant* (Class I).**

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative generally involves replacing existing wood poles and overhead conductor with new conductor and wood poles that would be approximately 10 to 30 feet taller than existing poles. The replacement poles would be situated in essentially the same location as the existing poles. In two instances the replacement structures would be rust-colored steel rather than wood. In addition, this alternative would require the removal of some existing vegetation.

Just over a half mile of the upgraded transmission line associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would be visible from Highway 97. Public views from this portion of the highway encompass a variety of landscape features including open and wooded hillsides, ridgelines and more distant mountains including Mt. Shasta (refer to the Visual Setting Section 4.1.1 and Figure 4.1-2e through Figure 4.1-2g, Photos 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 28).

Figures 4.1-21, 4.1-23 and 4.1-24 present “before” and “after” views of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative, which show its effect on motorists’ views of the scenic corridor along Highway 97. These three sets of figures illustrate the visual change associated with installing the taller replacement poles within the existing ROW. The simulations demonstrate that the replacement poles would extend further into the skyline and would include twice as many transmission line conductors, causing them to appear more visually prominent than the existing poles which are currently seen from the highway. The largest number of affected viewers would be motorists traveling along Highway 97, a heavily-traveled roadway. This increased visual prominence would represent a noticeable intrusion with respect to motorists’ views of the scenic corridor.

In addition, as shown in Figure 4.1-21, new poles 16/47 and 17/47 which have a higher base elevation than that of the roadway, would be particularly noticeable against the skyline. Pole 17/47 would also appear visually prominent in the foreground because its height would be more than 40 feet taller than the existing pole it would replace and because its design would be dissimilar to the other adjacent poles that would be visible along the route. Near Angel Valley Road the transmission line would pass within 60 feet of the roadway. Situated near this location, Pole 5/48 would be over 20 feet taller with almost twice as many guy wires (7 proposed versus 4 existing) crossing the road as the existing pole. Figure 4.1-24b shows that Pole 5/48 would appear prominently in the foreground.

Collectively, these changes would be noticeable intermittently for approximately a minute or less as Highway 97 motorists traverse the affected highway segment (just over half a mile in length). Although implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-1 would reduce this impact, in consideration of the roadway’s status as a designated National Scenic Byway, designated County Scenic Highway, and an Eligible State Scenic Highway, these impacts would remain significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-3:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-1.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Significant.

- 
- c) **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Impacts to scenic views are addressed under paragraph a) and impacts related to changes in visual character and scenic quality are addressed under paragraph b), above. Distinct from scenic vistas, the proposed upgrade along the majority of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would generally represent an incremental change to the visual character or quality of views currently experienced by the public along the proposed route.

**Impact AES-VAR/B-4: The Weed Segment would affect views from a limited portion of the Lincoln Heights residential area. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

Under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative, the portion of the Weed Segment through the Lincoln Heights neighborhood would appear as depicted Figure 4.1-13a and Figure 4.1-13b. This visual impact would be the same under this alternative as was described above for the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. New Poles 4/46 through 7/46 would be the same or similar to existing pole locations and would represent an incremental visual change. However, replacement Pole 3/46 would appear more visually prominent and intrusive due to its increased height (18 feet taller than the existing pole) and diameter, combined with the dissimilarity of its appearance compared with numerous existing wood utility poles and other vertical elements. The bulkiness and asymmetrical configuration of the insulators contribute to this effect. Because close range unobstructed views of replacement Pole 3/46 would be available from nearby residences, these effects are considered significant.

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-4: Implement Mitigation Measures AES-PPWS-4a and AES-PPWS-4b.**

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would also affect views from a limited rural residential area which is situated in proximity to Highway 97. Figure 4.1-22a and Figure b illustrate “before” and “after” visual conditions as seen from a vantage point on California Street at Center Street. This location represents a public roadway view in a residential area where relatively open, unobstructed views toward Highway 97 and the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative alignment. A comparison of the existing view and visual simulation indicates that several of the replacement poles would be slightly more visually prominent against the skyline Pole (18/47 toward the left side of the view, Pole 19/47 near the center, and Pole 20/47 toward the right side of the image). Given the presence of existing transmission line structures in the foreground, this effect associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would represent an incremental change that would not substantially alter the existing visual character seen from the area near California Street at Center Street (Class III).

- 
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative does not propose new lighting along the transmission line corridor. Therefore, no new sources of light would occur. However, the

introduction of replacement overhead conductor in proximity to an approximately 1.4 mile segment of the Highway 97 scenic roadway corridor could be a noticeable visual change as seen from some highway viewing locations. The conductor could be a potentially reflective surface which could cause glare with respect to views from the highway. This effect could result in the new conductor appearing noticeable and visually intrusive. This could be a potentially significant visual impact.

**Impact AES-VAR/B-5: The transmission lines under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-5:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-5.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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Under this alternative, the Weed Segment would not add new lighting at the Weed Substation; therefore, no new sources of light would be introduced. However, the new substation structure could introduce potentially reflective, metal surfaces that could create glare effects. This effect could result in the substation structure appearing more visible or prominent. This visual impact would be potentially significant.

**Impact AES-VAR/B-6: The Weed Segment substation upgrades could create new sources of glare. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II).***

**Mitigation Measure AES-VAR/B-6:** Implement Mitigation Measure AES-PPWS-6.

**Significance after Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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## No Project

a) **Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

A new, presumably longer, transmission line would likely result in greater impacts than would occur under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment due to the linear nature of the facility and the expansive views of Mount Shasta from many areas. Effects on a scenic vista from a new power plant would be dependent on the location; however, it is likely that it would have a much greater impact due to the physical size of such structures and the presence of exhaust stacks and cooling towers.

**b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor.**

If sited in proximity to a state scenic highway corridor, a new transmission line or power plant would likely result in impacts greater than those that would occur under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. However, if not in proximity to a state scenic highway corridor, the No Project alternative would likely be of a similar significance as compared to the Proposed Project and Weed Segment.

**c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;**

A new, presumably longer, transmission line would likely result in potential impacts that would be of greater significance when compared to the Proposed Project and Weed Segment as a new ROW would likely be required which could entail substantial amounts of vegetation removal dependent on location. Effects on existing visual character or quality from a power plant would be dependent on the location; however, it is likely that it would have a much greater impact due to the physical size of such structures and the presence of exhaust stacks and cooling towers.

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**d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.**

Operation of a new transmission line associated with the No Project alternative would likely result in impacts similar to those that would occur under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Operations and maintenance of a new power plant would likely require lighting at the facility as well as around the perimeter for security purposes. This would likely introduce new sources of light.

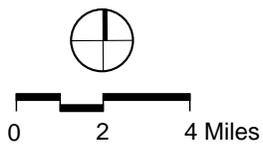
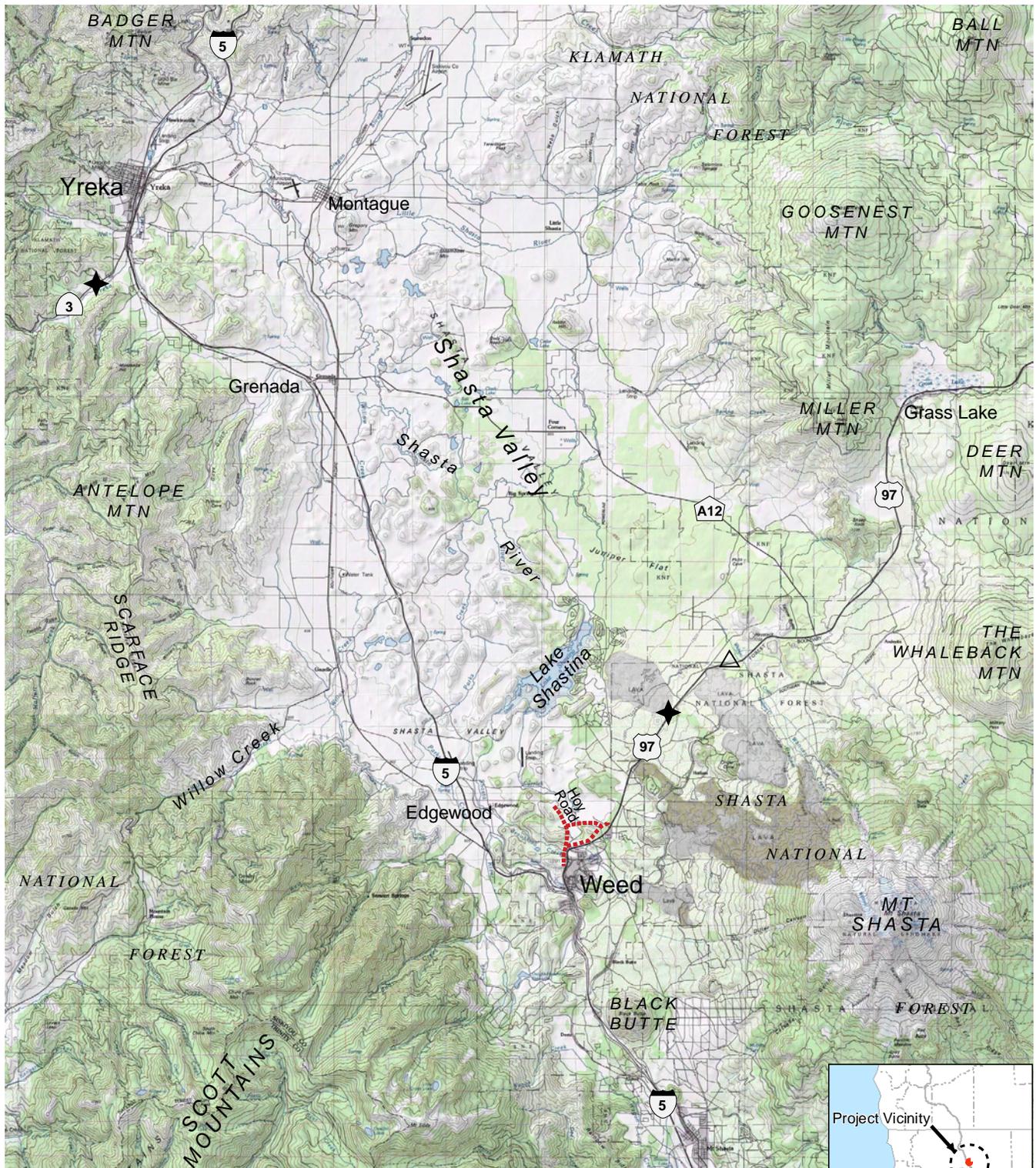
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- Legend**
- ..... Project Route
  - ★ Eligible State Scenic Highway
  - △ Scenic Byway



SOURCES: USGS, Environmental Vision (2007) — PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-1**  
Regional Landscape Context



1. Hoy Road looking southeast



2. Hoy Road looking southeast\*



3. Hoy Road looking south\*

\*Simulation Viewpoint

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007)



4. Hoy Road looking west\*

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2a**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



5. Private residence on Hoy Road looking southeast\*\*



6. Hoy Road looking south



7. Private access road at pole 8/45 looking east\*\*

\*\*Simulation Viewpoint - not a public view

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007, June 2006)



8. Private residence on Hoy Road looking north\*\*

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2b**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



9. Hoy Road looking northwest\*



10. Hoy Road looking northeast



11. Hoy Road looking north



12. Hoy Road near Highway 97 looking south

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007)

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2c**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



13. Alameda Avenue, Lincoln Heights residential area, looking north



14. Kennedy Road, Lincoln Heights residential area, looking east



15. Kennedy Road, Lincoln Heights residential area, looking south\*

\*Simulation Viewpoint

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007)



16. Cemetery in Lincoln Heights, looking east

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2d**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



17. Highway 97 looking south toward Weed Substation



18. Highway 97 near Weed Substation\*



19. Highway 97 near California Street looking east

\*Simulation Viewpoint

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007, June 2006)



20. Highway 97 near California Street looking northeast\*

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2e**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



21. California Street at Center Street looking north\*



22. Highway 97 southbound looking west\*



23. Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road looking northeast

\*Simulation Viewpoint

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007)



24. Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road looking southwest\*

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2f**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



25. Highway 97 at 1st. Avenue looking north at Weed Junction Substation\*



26. Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation looking southwest\*



27. Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation looking south

\*Simulation Viewpoint

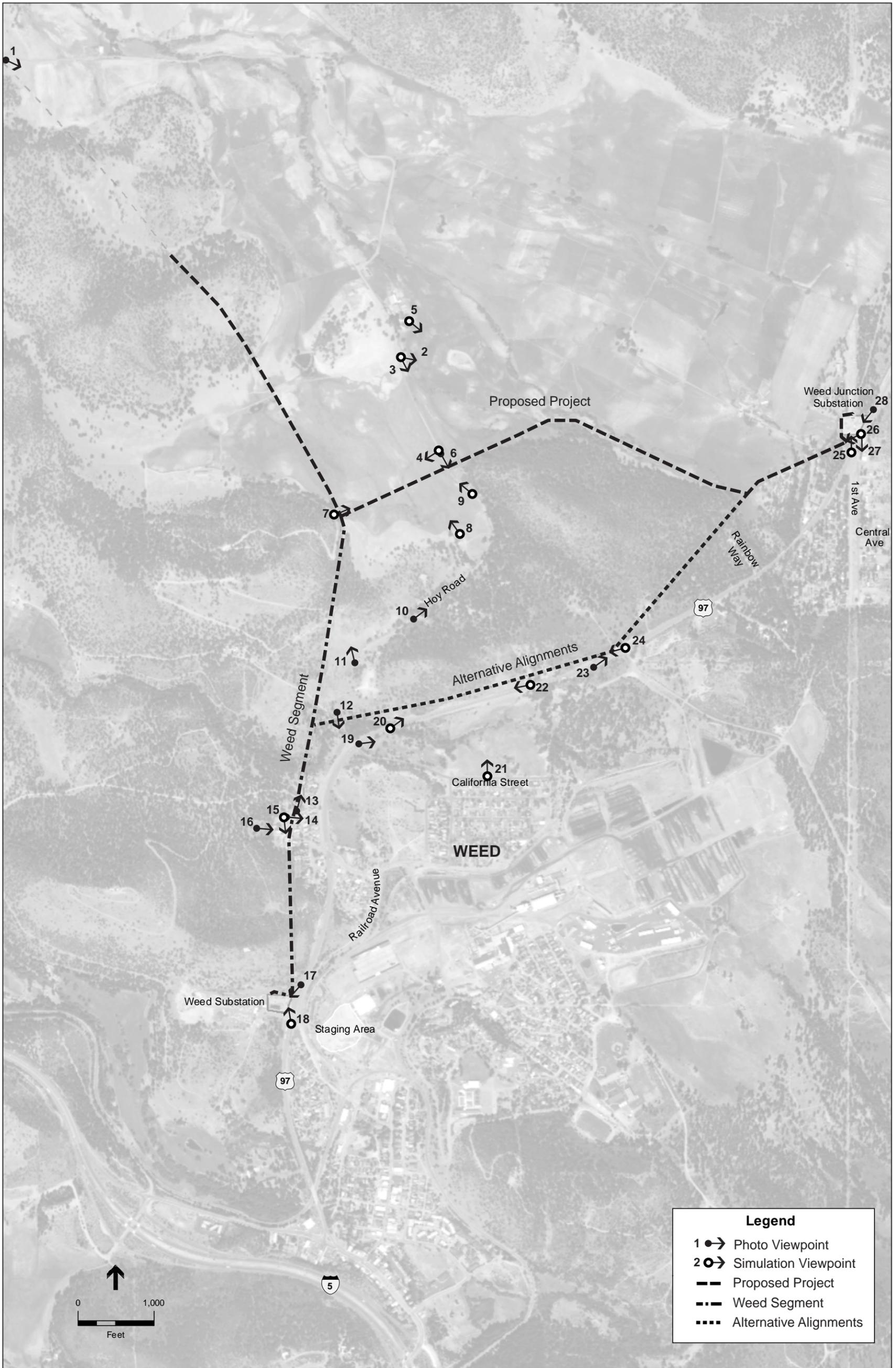
SOURCE: Environmental Vision (May 2007)



28. Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation looking southwest

PacifiCorp's Weed-Yreka Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-2g**  
Photographs of the Visual Setting



SOURCES: ESA (2007), PacifiCorp (2007), Environmental Vision (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-3**  
Photo Viewpoint Locations



Existing View from Hoy Road Looking Southeast (VP 2)

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project- Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-4a**

Existing View from Hoy Road (VP 2)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road Looking Southeast (VP 2)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project- Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-4b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road (VP 2)



**Existing View from Hoy Road Looking South (VP 3)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project- Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-5a**

Existing View from Hoy Road (VP 3)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road Looking South (VP 3)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project- Southern Portion. 205439

**Figure 4.1-5b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road (VP 3)



Existing View from Hoy Road Looking West (VP 4)

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road Looking West (VP 4)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-6b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road (VP 4)



**Existing View from Hoy Road Looking Northwest (VP 9)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-7a**

Existing View from Hoy Road (VP 9)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road Looking Northwest (VP 9)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-7b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Hoy Road (VP 9)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-8a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-8b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-9a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-9b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)



Existing View from Private Residence on Hoy Road (VP 5)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Private Residence on Hoy Road (VP 5)



**Existing View from Private Access Road (VP 7)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-11a**

Existing View from Private Access Road (VP 7)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Private Access Road (VP 7)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-11b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Private Access Road (VP 7)



**Existing View from Private Residence on Hoy Road (VP 8)**



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Private Residence on Hoy Road (VP 8)**



**Existing View from Kennedy Road (VP 15)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-13a**

Existing View from Kennedy Road (VP 15)



**Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Kennedy Road (VP 15)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-13b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Kennedy Road (VP 15)



Existing View from Highway 97 near Weed Substation (VP 18)

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-14a**

Existing View from Highway 97 near Weed Substation (VP 18)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 near Weed Substation (VP 18)

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-14b**

Visual Simulation of Proposed Project from Highway 97 near Weed Substation (VP 18)



**Existing View from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-15b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)



**Existing View from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-16a**

Existing View from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-16b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)



**Existing View from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-17a**

Existing View from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-17b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)



**Existing View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-18a**

Existing View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-18b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-19a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-19b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-20a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)



**Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-20b**

Visual Simulation of PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)



**Existing View from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-21a**

Existing View from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-21b**

Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 near California Street (VP 20)



**Existing view from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-22a**

Existing View from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-22b**

Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from California Street at Center Street (VP 21)



**Existing View from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-23a**

Existing View from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-23b**

Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 Southbound (VP 22)



**Existing View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-24a**

Existing View from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-24b**

Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 near Angel Valley Road (VP 24)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-25a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-25b**

Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 at 1st Avenue (VP 25)



**Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-26a**

Existing View from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)



**Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)**

SOURCE: Environmental Vision (2007)

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**Figure 4.1-26b**

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Visual Simulation of Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A and B Alternatives from Highway 97 at Weed Junction Substation (VP 26)