

4.5 AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

This section addresses the potential for the project to affect visual resources and view corridors during construction (short term), during revegetation establishment (intermediate term), and operation (long term).

4.5.1 Regulatory Setting

Evaluation of the effect the proposed project may have on the aesthetics or visual resources of the existing environment is provided in the CEQ Regulations sections as stated below:

40 CFR 1502.16 Environmental Consequences

This section shall include discussions of: (c) possible conflicts between the proposed action and the objectives of federal, regional, state, and local land use plans, policies, and controls for the area concerned; (g) urban quality, . . . and the design of the built environment.

40 CFR 1508.8 Effects

Effects and impacts . . . include . . . aesthetic, cultural, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative.

4.5.2 Existing Conditions

Regional Setting

The following discussion of existing aesthetic and recreation resources within the project area is based on the visual analysis prepared by Jones & Stokes for the *EIR/EIS for the Guadalupe River Flood Control Project* (Parsons Engineering-Science 1997) and an inventory, forecast, and analysis of aesthetic and recreation resources in the *Upper Guadalupe River Reconnaissance Report* (COE 1989) and the *Upper Guadalupe River Interim Feasibility Report, Environmental Working Paper* (BioSystems Analysis 1995). Field visits for the analysis in the EIR/EIS were conducted during summer 1989, summer and fall 1990, fall 1992, spring 1993, and summer 1996.

The Guadalupe River riparian corridor provides visual relief from surrounding urban development. One of few rivers in the urban area of Santa Clara Valley that has not been constricted to a narrow band by the use of levees, the upper reaches of the Guadalupe River are predominantly lined with extensive vegetation that is considered an important visual resource.

Although scenic due to its natural character, the public recreation use of the corridor is limited. Portions of the river along residential areas are used informally, as evidenced by existing paths along the banks. Most of the riverbank, however, is posted with "No Trespassing" signs, and developed trails or other recreational facilities along the river banks do not exist. The river, however, is navigable by small watercraft such as canoes and kayaks at moderate to high flows throughout the feasibility study area (Lawrence Johmann, Western Waters Canoe Club 1997; Appendix M, Letter J).

The City of San Jose is interested in developing recreational opportunities and is coordinating their efforts with the SCVWD's flood control planning process. The city's interim report for the south corridor includes conceptual plans for trails and park development that give consideration to the flood-control alternatives already being developed for the feasibility study area.

The visual and recreational use setting is provided by reach below.

Reach 7. The riparian forest along Reach 7 is dense for most of its length, with only few visible areas of barren earth bank or riprap-covered surfaces (see Figure 4.5-1). The east bank is visible from Lelong Avenue, SR 87 and the LRT West Alma Avenue Station. It backs up against the Elks Lodge parking lot. The western bank is visible from backyards of residential development. Travelers on the Willow Street Bridge experience expansive, although fleeting, views.

Aesthetics

Public access to the river is limited in Reach 7, though a narrow trail runs along the top of the east bank inside the Elks Lodge parking lot fence. The trail is used by pedestrians to reach West Alma Avenue.

Reach 8. Reach 8 includes dense, mature riparian tree canopy as well (see Figure 4.5-2). Residents living on Mackey Avenue can view vegetation on the east bank, while the west bank growth is visible to Creek Drive residents. Public views of both banks are experienced from the Willow Glen Way Bridge, and background views are experienced by travellers on SR 87 and the LRT. The Willow Glen Way Bridge has a rustic or historical quality that contributes to the neighborhood character.

Residents on Creek Drive can easily access the river and have in some cases constructed decks and treehouses near the edge of the riparian forrest corridor.

Reach 9. The narrow river corridor in Reach 9 includes tall riparian forest (see Figure 4.5-3). Homes back up to the river and residents enjoy open space views from their backyards. Public views of the river are also experienced from Almaden Road downstream of Curtner Avenue. Other public views are from the Willow Glen Way Bridge, a parallel, adjacent pedestrian suspension bridge, the Malone Road Bridge, and the Curtner Avenue Bridge.

Access to the river is limited along the reach, although residents, particularly on the west bank, have extended their backyard fences to incorporate river corridor areas.

Reach 10A. The visual character of the relatively short Reach 10A is similar to Reach 9, with fairly dense riparian forest along both banks (see Figure 4.5-4). Limited views of the west bank are experienced by residents, while the eastern bank is seen by travellers along Almaden Road and shoppers at the Almaden Shopping Center. Other public views are experienced from the pedestrian crossing on the Almaden Expressway Bridge.

Public use of the eastern river bank is limited due to the narrow Almaden Road shoulder. Both banks are steep, discouraging access.

Reach 10B. Unlike other areas on the river downstream, Reach 10B lacks riparian forest canopy. The banks have been modified by flood control improvements including widening and benching, stepped gabions, and riprap (see Figure 4.5-5). The downstream portion of the reach has minimal vegetation cover and is visible to travellers on SR 87. Although the view of the river contrasts with the adjacent urban landscape, the lack of riparian vegetation at this point makes the area less visually appealing. In the upstream portion of the reach, the eastern bank is visible from residences on Skylark Drive. Portions

Figure 4.5-1 Reach 7 Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-2 Reach 8 Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-3 Reach 9 Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-4 Reach 10A Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-5 Reach 10B Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

of the Valley View Packing Plant orchard are on the eastern bank upstream. Although the river is not densely vegetated, it is visible from adjacent public view corridors as open space.

Recreational opportunities include a small public area adjacent to Wren Drive overlooking the river, and a narrow path following the east bench in the southern portion of the reach.

Reach 10C. North of Foxworthy Avenue, the river channel is narrow and vegetation is dense; south of Foxworthy Avenue, the channel widens and vegetation is sparser (see Figure 4.5-6). Clusters of mature riparian vegetation exist along the river corridor. The Valley View Packing Plant borders the east bank and extends to Hillsdale Avenue; commercial development exists adjacent and upstream of the plant. Travellers on Old Almaden Road experience views of the west bank. Other public views are from the Hillsdale Avenue Bridge and the Capitol Expressway Bridge.

A pathway along the west bank adjacent to Old Almaden Road is used by cyclists, walkers, and joggers, although its narrowness and location next to the busy road minimize recreational opportunities.

Reach 11A. The reach is wide and contains a dense, continuous riparian canopy (see Figure 4.5-7). The west bank of the river is seen by travellers on Chard Drive and the Almaden Expressway, while the eastern bank is visible from the residential backyard on Wellington Square. Riparian growth screens views of Almaden Expressway traffic from these residential views.

Walkers and cyclists use the bicycle path along the north shoulder of the Almaden Expressway, enjoying views of the river's west bank. A wide bench on the top of the east bank between the Wellington Square residential area and the river is informally used by joggers, hikers, walkers, and cyclists.

Reach 11B. This reach is covered with mature riparian forest on steep slopes, with a wide bench along both banks (see Figure 4.5-8). Residential backyards abut the eastern river banks, while public views of the west bank are enjoyed by travellers along the Almaden Expressway. A bicycle lane on the expressway also provides views.

Access to the river is extensive, with the bench along the east bank used by neighborhood residents. The SJWCo property on the east bank upstream portion of the reach is fenced off, but unauthorized recreational use of the area occurs.

Reach 11C. The reach includes riparian forest and stands of eucalyptus trees along steep banks (see Figure 4.5-8). Views of the east and west banks are similar to Reach 11B. Additionally, public views are experienced from the Branham Lane Bridge.

Reach 12. Bank vegetation includes scattered mature riparian, orchard, and eucalyptus trees, with sparse non-native ground cover along the channel bottom (see Figure 4.5-9). Residential development along Tonino Road fronts the eastern bank in the upstream portion of the river. Agricultural activity borders the west bank in this portion. The downstream areas of the river are flanked by percolation ponds, and have only sparse bank vegetation. Public views of the river are experienced from the Almaden Expressway and bicycle lanes (although distant), the SR 85 overpass, Chynoweth Avenue, Blossom River Drive, Blossom Hill Road, Branham Lane, and the Oakridge LRT station. Water reflections on the river and pond and a general open space character provide an important visual quality.

The percolation ponds are informally used for fishing and swimming.

Ross and Canoas Creeks: The creek stretches within the feasibility study area are flood control channels with trapezoidal banks, forming narrow, straight channels with no riparian forest. They are bordered by residential development, but appear as drainage ditches. These sections of the creeks have overall a very low aesthetic value. Public access to the channels is prohibited by locked chain-link gates.

4.5.3 Environmental Effects

Aesthetics

Impact Significance Criteria

The project would cause an adverse, significant aesthetic impact if it would result in either of the following:

- Substantially degrade the quality of an identified visual resource, including but not limited to unique topographic features, undisturbed native vegetation, surface waters and major drainages, and parks or recreational areas; or
- Substantially obstruct any scenic vista or view visible to the public.

Beneficial impacts would result if project components would improve the visual quality of views from residences or publicly accessible vantage points (e.g., roads, trails, etc.).

The project would cause an adverse, significant impact on recreational opportunities if it would impede or conflict with established recreational uses. (This definition incorporates criteria listed in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G [w]).

Channel Widening Plan

General Characteristics

Construction activities, constructed project elements, and operation/maintenance activities following project construction would result in impacts on visual resources. Construction activities resulting in short-term visual impacts include vegetation removal, earthwork activities, removal of infrastructure and structures, and activity at heavy equipment and material staging and storage areas. Constructed project elements including river channel modifications, access ramps, maintenance roads, and other associated facilities could cause long-term visual impacts. Operation and maintenance activities (in addition to current management practices) have not been finalized by the Corps, so the SCVWD upper Guadalupe River Flood Control Project maintenance plan (see section 6.1.8) is used to reasonably project impacts. They may, however, include vegetation control and maintenance, removal of sediments, debris, and obstructions from channels and adjacent areas, and repair, cleaning, and replacement of facilities and structures that could result in long-term visual impacts.

Construction-Related Activities

Construction-related activities in visually sensitive reaches of the stream corridor would reduce the visual quality of these areas. Activities that reduce visual quality include the following: earthwork activities

Figure 4.5-6 Reach 10C Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-7 Reach 11A Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-8 Reach 11B and 11C Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

Figure 4.5-9 Reach 12 Existing Visual Setting

Aesthetics

foldout

(e.g., clearing, grading, and excavating); building flood control features; siting temporary offices, fences, sanitary facilities, and other structures; building temporary access roads; and establishing staging areas to store equipment, construction materials, excavated material, and debris. These impacts would be significant but would be mitigated to insignificance by locating staging and equipment storage areas outside of visually sensitive areas, and if not feasible, then screening them from general viewing.

Construction impacts on river recreation activities such as canoeing and kayaking would be short-term, and therefore less than significant.

Removal or Substantial Reduction of Views of Important Vegetation

Removing mature vegetation from the stream corridor would reduce its attractive visual quality. Views of streamside vegetation experienced from the highly urbanized area adjacent to the Guadalupe River are relatively scarce outside of the feasibility study area. Removing mature riparian forest would substantially reduce the scenic qualities of this natural environment along the river corridor. These significant impacts on visual resources of the feasibility study area can be feasibly mitigated to less than significant by revegetation planting. The impacts, however, would be experienced for several years and, in some areas, up to several decades until the mitigation replanting vegetation achieves the height and density of the existing riparian habitat. (The SCVWD revegetation plan would achieve a minimum of 50 percent visual screening in 5 years [Parsons Engineering Science 1997].) These impacts are called "intermediate-term" impacts because they can extend longer than short-term construction impacts, but would eventually be mitigated to less than significant by replanting, and are therefore not considered "long term."

Increased Visibility or Viewer Awareness of Visually or Aesthetically Incongruous Elements from Removing or Reducing Screening Vegetation

Much of the vegetation in the stream corridor screens facilities such as parking lots, storage areas, service areas, garages, streets and freeways, and other similar elements of urban development. Reducing or removing riparian forest that screens these features can reduce the overall visual quality of the river corridor. This significant impact could be feasibly mitigated to less than significant by revegetation planting. The loss of screening vegetation impact would be reduced as mitigation plantings would become established. Although some areas would suffer a permanent reduction in visual screening, revegetation would mitigate most of these impacts over time. In many areas, the revegetation would represent improved screening over existing conditions. Overall, visual screening would be increased relative to existing conditions in the long term.

Degradation of the Natural-Appearing Character of the River Corridor

Natural-appearing river corridors are a scarce visual resource in urbanized areas of the Santa Clara Valley. The removal of mature vegetation and addition of flood control structures in some areas could degrade the natural-appearing aesthetic character of the river corridor. Channel widening could modify existing natural, irregular, and meandering lines of the streamcourse and the undulating forms of streambanks, introducing more regular engineered curves and straight lines.

In some areas, widening the channel and increasing the steepness of side slopes would broaden the stream corridor cross section, creating a more open appearance that would substantially alter the stream's present topographic character. Some landforms, such as drainages, berms, and side slopes of channels, help to blend structural elements with their surroundings and contribute to the corridor's aesthetic character and visual quality. Removing or substantially altering these landforms could reduce this quality. These changes would be significant impacts on the feasibility study area's visual resources, but would be mitigated to insignificance with revegetation plantings. Mitigation plantings would minimize the extent of the impact over time.

Removal of mature vegetation in visually sensitive areas along the stream corridor would result in reduced shade, and could degrade the general aesthetic character of the neighborhood. This significant impact on the feasibility study area's visual resources would be mitigated to insignificance by the mitigation revegetation plantings as described above.

Aesthetics

Reduced Visual Quality by Removing or Replacing Structural Elements or Introducing Visually Incongruous Structures and Engineered Improvements

New structures and engineered improvements in visually sensitive areas of the stream corridor could introduce built elements differing substantially from and contrasting with existing natural visual elements in terms of form, line, color, and texture. Introduction of substantially different and contrasting elements could reduce the visual character and quality of visually sensitive areas of the river corridor, including introduction of man-made structural elements with regular patterns of materials and surface treatments. This significant impact on the feasibility study area's visual resources would be mitigated to insignificance with the long-term establishment of proposed mitigation revegetation plantings.

The following provides a short description of impacts on visual resources and recreational uses by reach.

Reach 7. Significant short-term impacts on visual resources would result from removal of vegetation along the eastern bank. Establishment of replacement vegetation would reduce the effect to less than significant. Construction of the floodwall in the Elk's Lodge parking lot would not block views of the riparian corridor. Resulting impacts on visual resources would be insignificant.

Recreational uses would not be affected.

Reach 8. Significant short-term impacts related to construction equipment staging and storage would occur during construction of the floodwalls on both sides of the river. These impacts would be reduced to less than significant by locating the staging and storage outside of sensitive visual areas or by screening them. The floodwalls would not require removal of riparian canopy on the river banks, so residential views on either side of the river would not be impacted. Floodwall construction would result in long-term impacts of river views as seen from the Willow Glen Way Bridge, but these views are transitory and are less than significant.

Reach 9. No adverse impacts would result since no construction is proposed. Revegetation mitigation at station 829+00 would provide a beneficial visual impact upon establishment.

Reach 10A. Widening of the eastern bank would result in significant short- and intermediate-term impacts on views experienced by travellers along Almaden Road and on the Almaden Expressway Bridge, and views of residents on the west side of the river. The impacts would be mitigated to insignificance with establishment of revegetation plantings.

Limited recreational use of the river along the east bank would not be significantly impacted by proposed improvements.

Reach 10B. No impacts would result as no flood control protection construction is proposed. Mitigation planting would provide a beneficial visual impact by enhancing views of the river from SR 87 and Skylark Drive.

No recreation impacts would result from the proposed plan.

Reach 10C. Views experienced from Old Almaden Road would be subject to significant short- and intermediate-term impacts from proposed west bank widening. Views of the river from the Hillsdale Avenue would be significantly impacted over the long term, as would the views from the Capitol Expressway Bridge. These impacts would be mitigated to insignificance with establishment of mitigation revegetation. The plantings on the east and west banks would result in a long-term increase in the extent and density of riparian forest within the reach. Mitigation plantings on the east bank would be more dense than existing riparian forest.

The pathway along the west bank adjacent to Old Almaden Road used by cyclists, walkers, and joggers could be removed as part of widening. Although use of the pathway is affected by width constraints and traffic, the loss of the existing recreational amenity is considered significant. No mitigation would be currently provided under the Channel Widening Plan. The Bypass Channel Plan recreational trail component would mitigate this impact to insignificance.

Reach 11. Widening and benching on alternating river banks would remove mature riparian forest viewed from public roadways and/or residential backyards. Widening on the east bank would affect backyard views from Wellington Square, while widening on the west bank would impact views of Almaden Expressway traffic. This would be a significant short- and intermediate-term impact on local visual resources. These impacts would be mitigated to insignificance with mitigation revegetation establishment.

The wide bench informally used by recreationists on the east bank between Wellington Square backyards and the river would be impacted. If this alternative were selected, minor changes in design could avoid impacts on the bicycle path existing on the Almaden Expressway east shoulder on the west river bank. Impacts would be mitigated to insignificance.

At creek flows over 1500 cfs, water would flow over the top of the weir into the bypass channel, creating a waterfall. This would be a hazard to canoeists and kayakers. Mitigation would be public warnings not to use boats on the river during high flows. Impacts would be mitigated to insignificance.

Reach 12. No adverse impacts would result, and establishment of mitigation plantings would provide a beneficial aesthetic impact, though the areas to be vegetated are not visually prominent from publicly-accessible locations.

Ross and Canoas Creeks. Floodwalls would be constructed on the creeks. Ross Creek and Canoas Creek within the feasibility study area are not an important visual resource so aesthetic impacts from floodwall construction would be insignificant. Since there is not public access to the creeks within the feasibility study area, no recreational impacts would occur.

Bypass Channel Plan

Potential impacts on visual resources would be similar in character (short-, intermediate-, and long-term) as discussed for the Channel Widening Plan.

As discussed in section 2.4.2, for purposes of the Corps feasibility study, a recreational trail and facilities would be incorporated into the Bypass Channel Plan. The recreational trail and associated facilities would be mostly within the floodway and would be designed to encourage limited public access along the river for a distance of approximately 4 miles (see Figure 2-8). The recreational trail would be compatible with the Guadalupe River South Corridor park master plan developed by the City of San Jose (Guadalupe River South Task Force Committee). The final plan has not been developed, but would attempt to provide the best views of the Guadalupe River while causing the least impacts on the natural character of the river. Beneficial recreational impacts would result from development of the river trail.

Reach 7. Bypass channel construction on the east bank would result in less than significant impacts. River bank lowering and flood wall construction within the river would result in short-term impacts during this activity, but would not remove riparian forest visible from travellers on local roadways and the Elk's Lodge. The floodwall construction would create long-term visual resource impacts as seen the Alma Avenue Bridge. Since these views are transitory, impacts would be less than significant.

The narrow trail running along the top of the east bank inside the Elk's Lodge parking lot fence would be eliminated, but replaced with the recreational trail on top of the maintenance road, with a picnic area including two tables, benches, and a par course. This is a beneficial recreational impact because greater access would be provided than presently exists.

Reach 8. Bypass channel construction would affect the residential character of Mackey Avenue. The bypass channel would result in short-term construction impacts and intermediate-term impacts until establishment of the mitigation revegetation would mitigate the impact to insignificance.

The recreational trail proposed on top of the maintenance road and a restroom with drinking fountain would provide beneficial recreational amenities.

Aesthetics

At flows over 1,500 cubic feet per second (cfs), water would flow over the top of the proposed 190-foot long weir drop structure downstream of Willow Glen Way into the bypass channel, creating a waterfall. Although use of the river at this location is very minor, this would be a significant safety hazard and impact to canoeist and kayakers during this time. Impacts would be reduced to insignificance by posting public warnings to not use watercraft on the river during high flows. No other recreational impacts would result, because the floodwalls would not affect any historical use of the river in this area.

Reach 9. Widening and benching of the east river bank and construction of two 500-foot bypass channels would significantly impact public views from Almaden Road and looking west across the river from homes to the east during the short and intermediate term, until establishment of mitigation revegetation reduces the effect to insignificant.

The recreational trail proposed on the reconstructed Almaden Road would result in a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 10A. Widening and benching of the east river bank would significantly impact public views as experienced from Almaden Road and the Almaden Expressway Bridge during the short and intermediate term. Cribwall construction on steep slopes would result in long-term impacts as seen from the bridge. These impacts would be reduced over time and reduced to insignificant with establishment of mitigation revegetation.

The recreational trail proposed on the reconstructed Almaden Road would be a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 10B. Construction of a levee on the west bank would be an insignificant impact on visual resources. The levee height would not be substantial relative to the existing ground surface, and the earthen structure would blend in with the existing ground cover.

The recreational trail on top of the levee maintenance road, and picnic area with 4 tables would be a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 10C. Widening and benching on the east bank would not be visible by adjacent viewers on public roads, due to the dense riparian forest on the west bank. Limited views from the Capitol Expressway Bridge would be significantly impacted during the short- and intermediate term. These impacts would be reduced over time to insignificance with the establishment and growth of mitigation plantings.

The recreational trail on the widened east bench maintenance road would be a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 11A. Widening and benching on the east bank would be visible by residents along Wellington Square, resulting in a short- and intermediate-term visual impact. These impacts would be reduced over time and reduced to insignificant with establishment of mitigation revegetation on the east bank, at the top of the cut bank. The overall residual effect would be less than significant.

The wide bench on the east bank informally used by recreationists would be replaced by a paved trail with legal access along the maintenance road, representing a beneficial recreational impact.

Concrete rubble would be removed in Reach 11A. This activity would enhance existing canoeing and kayaking recreational activities.

Reach 11B. Widening and benching on the west bank would be visible by travellers along the Almaden Expressway, including bicyclists. Residents on the east bank could experience some visual impact due to removal of trees on the east bank. Possible widening on the west bank also could result in visual impacts. Impacts on visual resources would be significant during the short and intermediate term. These impacts would be reduced over time and reduced to insignificant with establishment of mitigation revegetation.

A concrete low flow crossing would be removed, and the channel bottom would be deepened. These activities would enhance existing canoeing and kayaking recreational activities. The recreational trail on the widened east bench

maintenance road, restroom with drinking fountain, and four picnic tables with benches would provide a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 11C. West bank widening and benching impacts would be the similar to those in Reach 11B. Public views from the Branham Lane Bridge would be significant in the long term as well, because the cement cribwall-lined bank slope would be a contrast to the native banks. These impacts would be reduced over time and reduced to insignificant with establishment of mitigation revegetation.

The recreational trail on the widened east bench maintenance road would provide a beneficial recreational impact.

Reach 12. Widening of the west bank and reconstruction of levees would not remove significant vegetation. The construction impacts would be significant in the short term, but no adverse intermediate- or long-term impacts would result. Location of equipment staging and storage outside of visually sensitive areas or screening them would mitigate the short-term impact to insignificant. Additional riparian forest planting would provide a beneficial visual impact.

The recreational trail on the improved maintenance road would be a beneficial recreational impact.

Ross and Canoas Creeks. Floodwalls would be constructed on Canoas Creek, while Ross Creek would be widened. Banks on both creeks would be covered with cement articulated mat. The construction would not result in adverse visual or recreational impacts, because the creeks within the feasibility study area are not an important aesthetic resource. Since there is not public access to the creeks within the feasibility study area, no recreational impacts would occur.

No-Action Alternative

No impacts on visual resources or recreational opportunities would result under this alternative.

4.5.4 Mitigation Measures

Channel Widening Plan

The following measures are recommended to mitigate significant aesthetic impacts.

1. In the event flood control construction is interrupted for periods of over two weeks, all equipment and materials shall be moved from the temporary staging area to a central equipment area to minimize the localized impacts on visual resources.
2. All areas within significant view corridors where vegetation is removed shall be replanted as soon as feasible and graded areas restored as closely as possible to their original contours. The planting plan shall include irrigation as necessary and monitoring of the planting over a minimum 5-year period to ensure that the vegetation is successfully re-established.
3. Staging, heavy equipment storage, and construction material storage areas shall be located outside visually sensitive areas where feasible. If staging areas cannot be located outside visually sensitive areas, they shall be screened from general viewing. Screening may be accomplished using natural wood fencing (minimum 5-foot-high) or other natural-appearing screening materials that effectively screens views of equipment storage areas.
4. Graded areas and vegetation removal shall be minimized.
5. Views of vegetation of high visual interest or aesthetic value that have been removed in visually sensitive areas shall be reestablished as part of project implementation. Riparian forest consistent with biological mitigation goals shall be established that also provides high visual values including screening (e.g., coast live oaks, sycamores, toyon, and cottonwoods).

Aesthetics

6. Views of visually incongruous elements in visually sensitive areas resulting from project implementation shall be screened with vegetation of mixed height, using locally native riparian species. Replanting shall emphasize trees that reach a height of at least 20 feet in 10 years (except where prevented by site conditions) and shrubs and small trees that can normally reach a height of at least 6 feet in 5 years. Vegetation foliage shall effectively achieve a minimum of 50 percent screening in 5 years and 75 percent screening in ten years.
7. The revegetation plan shall include top-of-bank screens with native evergreen trees and shrubs where adequate space is available within the existing right-of-way.

Bypass Channel Plan

In addition to the Channel Widening Plan measures defined above, the following measures are required to mitigate significant impacts.

1. Flood control structures and ground stabilization shall incorporate materials with earth tone colors (e.g., shades of brown, tan, and gray), with generally coarse and varied textures, avoiding smooth or shiny surfaces and white or other bright colors. The structures shall allow for establishment of vegetation including the following:
 - planting native vines and ground covers in openings in crib walls; and
 - planting native vines and brambles and where possible, trees and shrubs in gabion walls.
2. Recreational opportunities shall be given detailed consideration, in coordination with local interests, during all phases of project development. Appropriate cost-shared recreation features shall be identified that best use project lands to maximize the overall project benefits, while minimizing impacts on habitat values. Flood control features, such as bridges, maintenance roads, and access points, shall be designed to allow continuous trail access along the river.
3. Inter-agency coordination shall continue to assure that the recreational features and uses for the Guadalupe River Corridor Park would be incorporated into the flood control project design. Key representatives from the San Jose Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Services, the City of San Jose, the SCVWD, and the Corps shall continue to meet at the beginning of each critical phase of the project to identify and reconcile potential differences and to maintain compatibility between the park master plan for the corridor and the corresponding elements of the flood control design. Compatibility with the appropriate policies of the City and County Land Use Elements related to discouraging the disturbance of riparian habitat by development and/or recreational uses shall be retained by coordinating trail design with the San Jose Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Services. Whenever trail placement could adversely affect the habitat value of the riparian forest corridor, the trail shall avoid those portions of the corridor sensitive to human intrusion.
4. Signs with warnings to avoid use of watercraft during high flows on the river, particularly within Reach 11, shall be posted.

4.5.5 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

The mitigation measures identified above would reduce all short-, intermediate-, and long-term impacts to insignificant levels, except for loss of recreational access along the west bank adjacent to Old Almaden Road under the Channel Widening Plan. This impact would be significant and unavoidable. The Corps should work with the City to devise local mitigation, if the City is interested.