

**BIOGAS RENEWABLE GENERATION PROJECT
FINAL INITIAL STUDY / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURE
March 9, 2018

3.1 AESTHETICS

3.1.1 Setting

The existing visual characteristics of the Project site and the surrounding area are described in the following paragraphs.

Scenic Vistas

The City of Glendale ("City") is bordered on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains, on the northwest by the Verdugo Mountains, and on the east by the San Rafael Hills. The easternmost edge of the Santa Monica Mountains, in Los Angeles's Griffith Park, lies just beyond the City's boundary to the southwest.

According to the Open Space and Conservation Element of Glendale's General Plan, the Verdugo Mountains and the San Rafael Hills are the most significant physical landmarks in the community because these topographic features flank the central portion of the City. These landforms are important in that they create a dominant visual and physical resource that can be seen throughout the community. In the San Rafael Hills the overall ridgeline form is less definitive in that it is separated by numerous, well developed canyon areas such as Scholl Canyon. Within this area, however, the ridgelines can be readily identified (City of Glendale, 1993).

The Open Space and Conservation Element further identifies visual and scenic resources as aesthetic functions that contain natural beauty, such as lush or colorful vegetation, prominent topographical stature, unique physical features, and an interesting visual effect (City of Glendale, 1993). There are no designated scenic vistas near the Proposed Project or within other parts of the existing SCLF, nor are there any designated scenic vistas from which the Proposed Project would be visible.

Scenic Highways

There are no state-designated scenic highways in the City of Glendale (Department of Transportation, 2011).

Light and Glare

Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation experienced from looking directly into a light source (e.g., the sun, its reflection, automobile headlights, or other light fixtures or sources). Reflective surfaces on existing buildings, car windshields, and so forth also can expose people and property to varying levels of glare.

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A significant light impact would typically occur if a project would cause (1) a substantial increase in ambient illumination levels beyond the property line and (2) visible glare from either fixtures or illuminated surfaces.

Existing sources of light and glare in the Proposed Project vicinity include automatic night lighting in the equipment and scales facility and portable light towers at the adjacent SCLF. Existing light and glare sources at the Project site consist of security lighting located at the Sanitation District office trailers and overlooking the chemical storage areas. The lights are hooded and pointed downward in order to minimize glare. LFG flaring is contained within open cylinder flares, which have no direct flame and are not a source of light or glare.

Existing Views

The Proposed Project is located at 3001 Scholl Canyon Road, within the inactive portion of the Scholl Canyon Landfill. The property is located approximately one-half mile north of the 134 Freeway in the City of Glendale. Public access to the SCLF is via Scholl Canyon Road, the northern extension of North Figueroa Street, and Highway 134. The SCLF and the Project site are surrounded by multiple jurisdictions: Glendale to the north, south, east, and west; La Cañada Flintridge to the northeast; Pasadena to the east; South Pasadena to the southeast; Los Angeles to the south, southwest, and west. The site is also located west of Highway 210 and east of State Route 2.

The SCLF property consists of a total of 535 acres, 440 acres of which are designated for landfill operations and 95 acres of which are designated for related operations (site access). The 440-acre operation area includes 314 acres of active area (Scholl Canyon) and 126 acres of inactive area (northern canyon). Most of the 314 acres have been graded and/or excavated for landfill purposes, filled with solid waste, and covered with soil. Some areas have been vegetated. The currently permitted height of the landfill is 1,525 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), with an average top deck elevation of approximately 1,500 feet AMSL (AECOM, 2014). The Proposed Project will be located on an approximately 2.2-acre segment of land within the inactive portion of the landfill at an elevation of approximately 1,410 feet AMSL. It is located along the southern boundary of the SCLF, bordering Scholl Canyon Road.

Lands surrounding the Project are primarily residential, with some open space, special recreation (parks, golf course), and commercial development. The Rose Bowl and the Arroyo Seco are located approximately 1.4 miles to the east, separated by the ridge adjacent to the eastern boundary of the SCLF. The Scholl Canyon Golf and Tennis Complex is located on fill on the northwest closed portion of the landfill. Scholl Canyon Ballfields are located midway up Glen Canyon Road, below the Golf and Tennis Complex. Scholl Canyon Park is located to the west at the base of the landfill along Glenoaks Boulevard.

The following text describes views from nearby the Proposed Project site that could potentially be affected by the proposed development.

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Figure 3.1-1: View 1

View 1 was taken from a turnout adjacent 1531 Glen Oaks Estate Drive, within the Glen Oaks Estates region in the City of Pasadena. The existing landfill boundaries are within 500 feet of this location, and the active operating area is clearly visible. However, the Proposed Project site is approximately 0.6 miles to the southwest of this location. Perimeter landfill access roads and high tension power lines and towers are visible, as is the downtown Los Angeles skyline in the distance. However, the existing facilities at the Project site are not visible from this location. The Proposed Project facility will also not be visible from this location.

Figure 3.1-2: View 2

View 2 was taken from the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Hartwick Street, approximately one mile directly south of the Project site, in the Eagle Rock district of Los Angeles. Highway 134 is between this location and the Project site but is obscured by trees. Trailers associated with the existing Project site are visible in the center of the photo along the ridgeline. Because the facility design calls for the access road to be located below the ridgeline on the South side of the facility, where the visible trailer is now located, the proposed facility will not be visible from this location.

Figure 3.1-3: View 3

View 3 was taken from the parking lot of the Scholl Canyon Ballfields on Glenoaks Road. The view in this photo is directly east toward the active landfill. The existing site is not visible from this location due to the active landfill.

Figure 3.1-4: View 4

View 4 was taken looking east from the Scholl Canyon Golf and Tennis Club, adjacent the parking lot and driving range. The active landfill is intermittently visible through the trees. The Project site could be partially visible from some locations on the golf course. However, the active landfill would likely obstruct most views from the golf course.

Views of the Project site from most developed residential, recreational, and commercial land uses are primarily obscured by topography, including natural ridgelines, the active landfill, and large trees at the golf course.

None of these locations are defined by the City as designated scenic vistas.

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Regulatory Setting

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.) case law has established that only public views, not private views, need be analyzed under CEQA. For example, in *Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah* (1991) 2 Cal. App. 4th 720 [3 Cal.Rptr.2d 488] the court determined that “We must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general. Therefore, for this analysis, only public views will be considered when analyzing the visual impacts of implementing the Proposed Project.

General Plan Policies, Goals, and Objectives

The Open Space and Conservation Element of the City's General Plan Goal #2 specifies the following: Protect vital or sensitive open space areas including ridgelines, canyons, streams, geologic formations, watersheds, and historic, cultural, aesthetic and ecologically significant areas from the negative impacts of development and urbanization.

Ridgelines are the linear tops or crests or major hills that form a continuous horizon line against the sky against other hillside features. The visual resources of ridgelines are represented by the aesthetic quality of these areas as a component of the region's viewshed as seen from offsite locations. The major ridgelines can be further classified as either primary or secondary. Primary ridgelines are the highest undeveloped and visually dominant ridgelines in a viewshed, and secondary ridgelines are the lower branches or fingers of the primary ridgelines. Terrain can also have the following visual sensitivity ratings:

Low Visual Sensitivity – Those areas screened or nearly screened from view from vantage points and/or without features of special visual interest. These areas are generally located in the low-lying interior of the city; in canyons and watersheds where local east-west and north-south ridges or existing development blocks views.

Moderate Visual Sensitivity – Includes areas where local views are partially blocked by secondary ridgelines, middle and distant views are unobstructed and there are points of visual interest. Such areas include foothill areas of steep slopes within watersheds and ridge faces.

High Visual Sensitivity - Includes areas that are in plain view of local, middle and distant viewsheds audiences. A majority of the areas included in the undeveloped areas of the City area within this classification due to the high elevations of the mountains and hills. These areas are identified as major peaks, primary and secondary ridgelines and upper slopes.

According to Map 4-25, “Ridgelines and Streams of the San Rafael Hills”, Scholl Canyon is not a primary or secondary ridgeline (City of Glendale, 1993), and therefore is characterized as an area of “low visual sensitivity.”

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Mitigation Measures

None required.

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

No impact

The Proposed Project would include expansion of and interconnection to the existing facility, which is located within the boundaries of an inactive portion of an existing landfill. The tallest features will be approximately 40 ft (four exhaust stacks) aboveground surface. Equipment height will be approximately 25 ft. Office and warehouse space will be approximately 12 feet high. The Proposed Project would be consistent with the industrial character of the existing LFG collection system facility and the SCLF, which has numerous temporary structures, trailers, and equipment interspersed throughout the facility. Furthermore, due to natural features between the Proposed Project site and public viewing areas, the Project would not likely be visible. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

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

Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project would represent an expansion of an existing use which is presently a limited source of nighttime light and glare from the existing LFG collection facility. Shielded area lighting with light switch and motion sensors would be provided for safety at the Proposed Project facility. Lighting would be pointed downward and inward to minimize offsite impacts. All construction activities would be performed during daylight hours and would not result in an increase in offsite light or glare.

The incremental amount of light and glare generated by the Proposed Project would be minimal due to the design measures incorporated into the Project, and because the Project site is located in a portion of the existing landfill that is negligibly visible from public viewing locations. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.