

Source: KOA Corporation, April 2009

E:\ArcGIS\G\GSA-01 San YsidroLandPOE\Map\ENV\EIS\Fig3-4-1\_Traffic Study Area.indd -NM

## Traffic Study Area

### SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.4-1



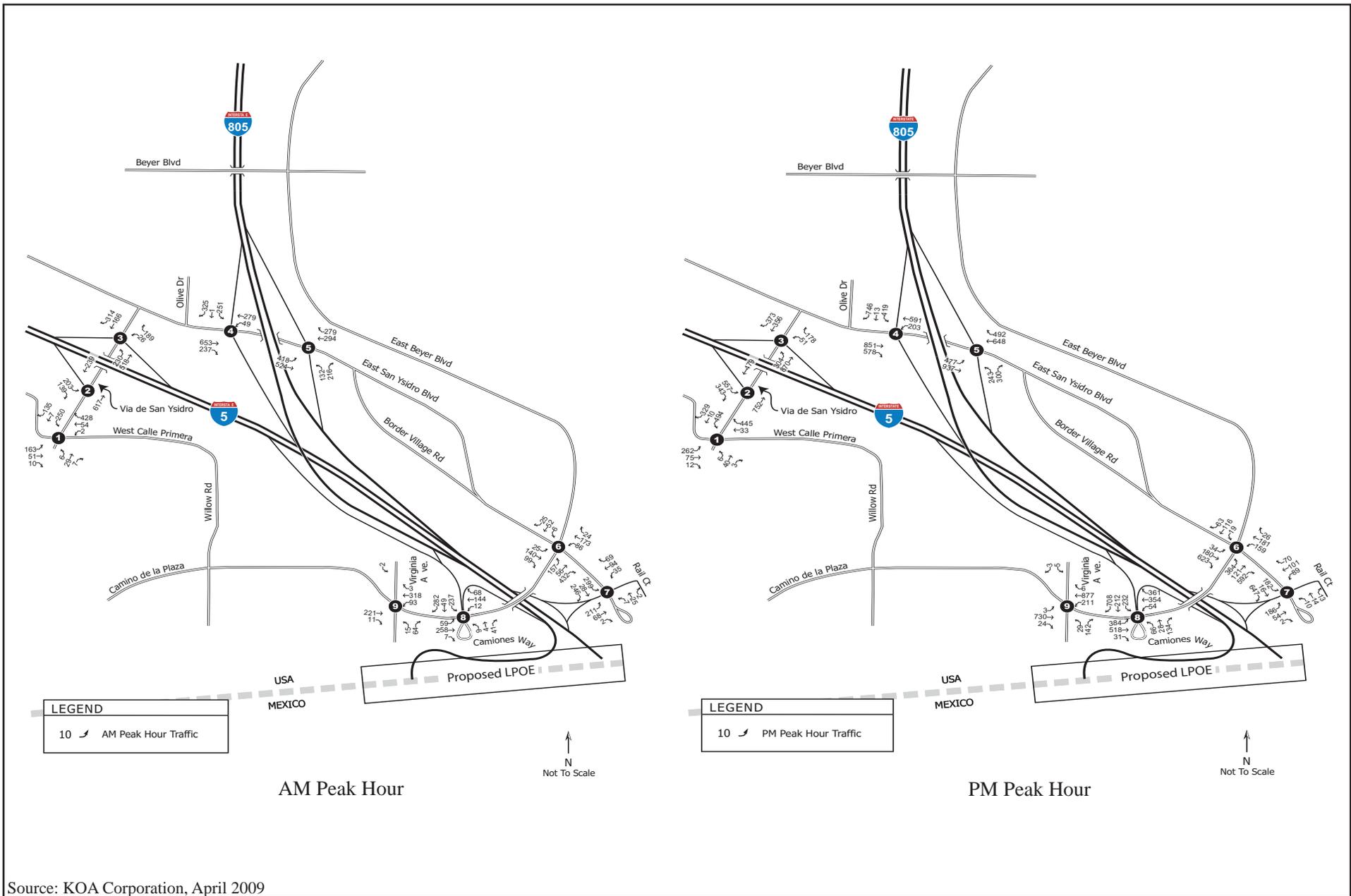
Source: KOA Corporation, April 2009

E:\ArcGIS\G\GSA-01 SanYsidroLandPOE\Map\ENV\EIS\Fig3-4-2\_Near Term Rd Segment.indd -NM

## Near-term Roadway Segment Conditions - Preferred Alternative

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.4-2



Source: KOA Corporation, April 2009  
 I:\ArcGIS\G\GSA-01 SanYsidroLandPOE\Map\ENV\EIS\Fig3-4-3\_Near Terma Peak.indd -NM

## Near-term Peak Hour Intersection Conditions - Preferred Alternative

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

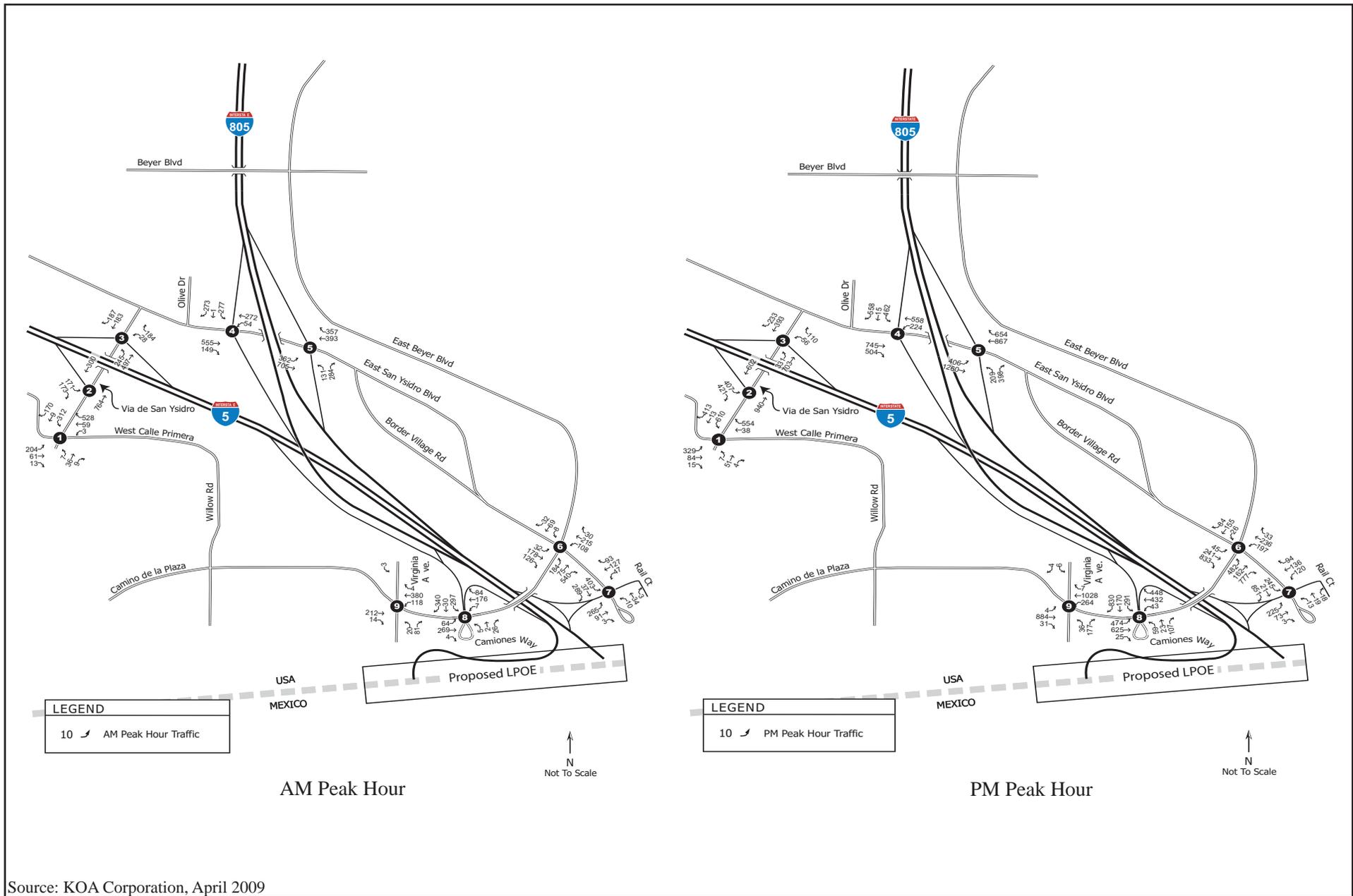
Figure 3.4-3



# Horizon Year Roadway Segment Conditions - Preferred Alternative

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.4-4



Source: KOA Corporation, April 2009  
 I:\ArcGIS\G\GSA-01 San Ysidro Land POE\Map\ENV\EIS\Fig3-4-5\_Horizon Peak.indd -NM

## Horizon Year Peak Hour Intersection Conditions - Preferred Alternative

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.4-5

## **3.5 VISUAL/AESTHETICS**

### **3.5.1 Regulatory Setting**

NEPA requires that the U.S. Government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)).

### **3.5.2 Affected Environment**

#### **Visual Environment**

The Project is located at the southern terminus/beginning of I-5 at the U.S.-Mexico border in the San Ysidro community of San Diego. The LPOE is bordered on the west and north by commercial development, and on the east by an undeveloped hillside. Some residential neighborhoods also are located within 0.5 mile of the Project, mainly north and west of the LPOE. The Project Study Area's southern edge abuts the international border.

The developed areas in the vicinity generally are aligned along the I-5 and I-805 corridors, and are confined between the hillside to the east, the international border to the south, and the Tijuana River channel in the southwest. Agricultural land is located approximately one mile west of the Project Study Area. The agricultural areas and the undeveloped Tijuana River estuary extend westward toward the Pacific Ocean, approximately five miles west of the Project Study Area.

#### **Landscape Unit**

A landscape unit is a portion of the regional landscape and can be thought of as an outdoor room that exhibits a distinct visual character. The Project lies within one landscape unit, comprised of the communities in southern San Diego. The landscape unit is bounded on the south by the international border, which is defined in this area by tall, linear fences and physical barriers, as well as the hillsides of Tijuana, Mexico.

The mesas and hillsides east of the Project Study Area and I-805 define the eastern edge of the landscape unit, and the Pacific Ocean, approximately five miles to the west, defines the western edge. The landscape unit extends to the north, encompassing the developed, urban communities between San Ysidro and downtown San Diego. The topography between these two geographic features generally is flat, with some hills and canyons extending northward from Mexico across the border into the river estuary area.

Most viewers experience the landscape unit from within the developed areas, spread across much of the topographically flatter areas. The hills provide a visual edge to the unit, particularly in the vicinity of the Project Study Area.

#### **Project Viewshed**

A viewshed is a subset of a landscape unit and is comprised of all the surface areas visible from an observer's viewpoint. The limits of a viewshed are defined as the visual limits of the views from the Project Study Area. A viewshed also includes the locations of viewers likely to be affected by visual changes brought about by project features. The Project viewshed is illustrated on Figure 3.5-1. This computer-generated viewshed (created based on topographic

data) encompasses a large portion of the developed areas north and west of the Project Study Area, as well as the west-facing hillsides to the east. Although the viewshed extends beyond the indicated one-mile radius, in reality, the Project elements would not be highly visible beyond the areas immediately bordering the Project Study Area, mainly due to intervening structures and landscape elements. The I-5 and I-805 corridors and multiple local roadways also are encompassed by the viewshed. The extent of views toward the Project Study Area from these roadways is, in reality, limited by intervening structures and landscape elements in most areas. General views from these roadways are discussed below; views of the Project from the portions of these roadways nearest to the Project Study Area are discussed in more detail under Existing Visual Resources.

### Interstate 5 and Interstate 805

An extensive portion of I-805 and some parts of I-5 are highlighted on the viewshed map as within the Project viewshed, indicating the Project Study Area potentially is visible from those areas. Vegetation bordering the freeways, structures in nearby developed areas, and overcrossing structures, however, are much more readily visible from these freeways, and often block longer views, essentially screening features of the Project Study Area from view for motorists on these freeways. Additionally, northbound motorists on these freeways are traveling away from the Project Study Area, and their views, therefore, are not directed at the Project Study Area. The Project Study Area and the existing LPOE are increasingly visible as southbound motorists approach the border area. Individual structures and visual features of the facilities within the Project Study Area become identifiable south of the I-805 overcrossing and interchange where the I-5 and I-805 merge. From this point on the freeway, signs, barricades between lanes, and roadway striping warn motorists that they are approaching the border and the existing LPOE facilities within the Project Study Area become more prominent.

Northbound motorists view the Project Study Area and existing LPOE facilities immediately upon entering the U.S. Once through the LPOE facilities, the Project Study Area is visible in the rear-view as motorists proceed northward.

A motorist's view from I-5 includes mostly the immediate border crossing facilities, road overcrossings and highway signs and fixtures, some trees and landscaping along the sides of the roadway that become sparser further to the south, and in the background some tall buildings in Mexico, as well as the undeveloped hillside immediately east of the Project Study Area. Some of the developed areas beyond the roadway corridor are visible in the background as well, but these are not visually prominent, as tall chain link fences tend to screen peripheral views.

### Surface streets

Although multiple local roadways are identified on the viewshed map as potentially having views of the Project Study Area, few of the publicly accessible streets in the immediate area are aligned directly perpendicular to the Project Study Area; direct views down local streets, therefore, generally are not available. Some peripheral views may be available, although these are often screened by fences and other elements that limit direct views of the Project Study Area. Pedestrians on local surface streets in the area have more opportunity to view the Project Study Area while navigating the sidewalks and pedestrian bridges in the area.

The local streets with the broadest views of the Project Study Area are all located within the immediate Project vicinity; some border the Project Study Area or extend into it. The local

roadways with the most available views of the Project Study Area (which would, therefore be affected by the Project) include Camino de la Plaza, East San Ysidro Boulevard, Camiones Way, and Virginia Avenue. The visual environment of these roadways and the extent of views from them to the Project Study Area are discussed in more detail in below.

### **Existing Visual Resources**

This section discusses the visual character and quality of the Project Study Area and roadways within the viewshed that would be affected by the Project. Visual character is descriptive and non-evaluative, which means it is based on visual attributes, including pattern elements (i.e., form, line, color, texture) and pattern character (i.e., dominance, scale, diversity, continuity). Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness and unity present in the viewshed. These terms are defined below:

- Vividness is the visual power or memorability of landscape components, as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.
- Intactness is the visual integrity of the natural and constructed landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. It can be present in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as natural settings.
- Unity is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole.

### Project Study Area

#### *Visual Character of Project Study Area*

The entire 50-acre Project Study Area encompasses the existing San Ysidro LPOE and a high diversity of activities and visual elements. Within the Project Study Area are one- and two-story structures; pedestrian bridges; a freeway with six southbound lanes and 24 northbound lanes and vehicle inspection booths; roadway directional barriers, signage, and signals; several smaller roadways; a large number of vehicles; lights and other utility fixtures; fences; a trolley station; a bus-loading station; multiple parking lots of various sizes; sparse landscaping that includes canopy trees, palm trees, vines, and groundcovers; and a drainage area supporting low-growing species. The dominant visual pattern elements are developed, monochromatic, rigid, and mostly geometric structures and roadway elements. Figure 3.5-2 is a photograph (dated February 20, 2009) of a portion of the existing LPOE.

The overall Project Study Area is large and monumental, but generally is viewed through a series of smaller-scale experiences that vary depending on the viewer's mode of transportation through the site. For example, motorists approaching the Project Study Area from the south pass through congested traffic lanes, approach inspection booths underneath a building that spans the width of the northbound lanes, and then navigate around or between several other buildings and parking lots to approach and merge with the northbound freeway lanes. Southbound motorists, though navigating fewer obstructions, are slowed while approaching the Project Study Area by barriers between lanes, signage, and striping that direct motorists to approach the Mexican border facilities cautiously. Within the Project Study Area, southbound freeway lanes pass under the Camino de la Plaza roadway overcrossing and one pedestrian walkway. Pedestrians approaching the Project Study Area arrive on public transit or park in one of the multiple parking lots in the area, and use the local roadways to approach the border crossing facilities. They pass through the border in a carefully directed sequence of smaller

spaces, directed by fences, gates, and interior hallways that constrict views to the immediate facility, walkway, or street.

The resulting experiences leave viewers with the impression of a visual environment composed of diverse elements that generally are geometric, rectilinear and rigid, gray or neutral toned (with few naturally-colored accents), and have smooth or manufactured surfaces (as opposed to softened with natural materials or plants). The combination of these elements creates a complex, often dissonant visual environment with few dominant features.

#### *Visual Quality of Project Study Area*

The visual quality of the Project Study Area is low; the varying elements are not, as a whole, harmonious or coherent, beyond the structured experiential sequences of passing southbound or northbound through the Project Study Area and across the border. The diverse elements have moderately low intactness and visual integrity due to the low unity and coherence. The vividness of the Project Study Area can vary depending on a viewer's experience, although the visual elements of the site do create distinct visual patterns and are not highly memorable beyond the overall "chaotic nature," enhanced by the street vendors and commercial carts in Mexico, often experienced in close sequence with the border crossing within the Project Study Area.

#### Interstate 5 and Interstate 805

##### *Visual Character of Interstate 5 and Interstate 805*

Interstate 805 merges with I-5 just north of the Project Study Area. The visual character of the freeways in the vicinity of the Project Study Area is comprised of large expanses of gray-toned concrete pavement, concrete barriers, and closely woven chain link fencing that encloses the freeway(s) on both sides and in the median.

For southbound motorists and for northbound motorists north of the LPOE facilities, the fencing creates a high horizon line that restricts peripheral views. Taller background elements such as the hill east of the Project Study Area, roadway and pedestrian overcrossings, the LPOE buildings, and some taller buildings located south of the border are visible above and through the fencing, but are not dominant due to the screening and the foreground elements that command more attention. Figure 3.5-3 illustrates a photograph (dated February 20, 2009) of typical views from southbound I-5.

As southbound drivers and passengers approach the Project Study Area, their attention is focused on navigating the border crossing, and the foreground elements that direct the crossing experience are geometric and symmetrical. There are no plants in the median and little vegetation on the shoulders to soften the rigid lines and smooth textures, or to provide green or earth-toned visual relief to the grays and monotonous. The freeway is large in scale, although the scale varies as the viewer approaches and passes through the Project Study Area. Although the foreground elements that direct the viewers' attention are visually diverse and complex, the visual character of the freeways is dominated visually by the expanse of concrete roadway.

The visual environment of the northbound interstate at the border (within the Project Study Area) also is composed of a vast expanse of concrete, where 24 lanes of traffic pass through inspection points. The LPOE structures also dominate the view for motorists; on structure

vaults over the inspection booths. Once through the inspection points, motorists are directed through a visually diverse area by the use of roadway barriers between lanes. Some trees and a small grassy area border the parking lots and buildings around which the motorists are directed. This area is characterized by these diverse elements, which combine to create a generally large, complex, and dissonant visual environment. Figure 3.5-3 (dated February 20, 2009) illustrates a typical view from northbound I-5.

#### *Visual Quality of Interstate 5 and Interstate 805*

The overall quality of the visual environment of I-5 in the vicinity of the Project Study Area is moderately low.

The diverse elements encompassed by views of and from the freeways, though visually coherent enough to direct traffic through the border crossing facilities, are not noticeably harmoniously designed. The visual unity of the area, therefore, is moderately low.

There are few visual elements that encroach upon the visual environment of the freeways; however, the visual integrity of the diverse elements as a whole is not readily detectable. The visual intactness of the area, therefore, is moderate.

The visual environment of the freeways additionally provides little memorability. Some buildings, trees, and the undeveloped hillside east of the Project Study Area are visible beyond the enclosing fences on each side of the freeway; these elements, particularly the hillside, provide some vividness; however, they remain in the middle and background; foreground elements that direct motorists' attention are more visually dominant. The background elements, therefore, contribute little to the patterns that characterize the visual environment experienced by motorists on I-5 and I-805 near the Project Study Area. The vividness of the area, therefore, is moderately low.

#### Local Roadways in and near the Project Study Area

##### *Visual Character of Local Roadways*

The visual character of the roadways near the Project Study Area is composed of a variety of elements, including pavement and sidewalks, cars, buildings, parking lots, fences, and vegetation. The man-made features generally are geometric, and the sparse vegetation in the area is not consistently present to soften the dominant pattern elements with any irregular textures or earth-tone colors.

Camino de la Plaza is one of the main roadways near the Project Study Area; it trends generally east-west along the northern edge of the Project Study Area. West of I-5, Camino de la Plaza is bordered by parking lots and commercial areas. The road spans the freeway via an overcrossing structure, and terminates at East San Ysidro Boulevard, east of I-5. The overcrossing provides long-reaching views of the existing LPOE and the surrounding area, including buildings within Mexico and the undeveloped hillside to the east. Figure 3.5-4 shows a photograph (dated February 20, 2009) of the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing.

East San Ysidro Boulevard is a north-south roadway located east of I-5, bordering the northeastern edge of the Project Study Area. East San Ysidro Boulevard terminates in a bus turn-around area within the San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center. The bus turn-around cul-de-sac is not open to general public automobile traffic; motorists are redirected either west

to the freeway ramps or east to commercial areas. Parking lots and commercial buildings border this roadway, including two lots within the Project Study Area: a lot south of Camino de la Plaza and a lot south of the freeway ramps, and west of the cul-de-sac. An existing LPOE building housing (among other functions) the northbound pedestrian processing facilities is located adjacent to the southern end of the cul-de-sac. Figure 3.5-4 shows a photograph (dated February 20, 2009) of East San Ysidro Boulevard at its intersection with I-5 ramps, just north of the San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center.

Camiones Way, located west of I-5, extends southward from freeway off-ramps, south from Camino de la Plaza, and curves eastward. It terminates as a cul-de-sac next to the southbound freeway lanes. This publicly accessible roadway provides access to several parking lots and a commercial building that houses a duty-free shop. Figure 3.5-5 shows a photograph (dated March 20, 2009) of Camiones Way.

Virginia Avenue extends southward from Camino de la Plaza on the western edge of the Project Study Area and terminates at the border fence, a tall, linear barrier that blocks views of anything on the other side. It is bordered on the east by a parking lot and on the west by an undeveloped area. The parking lot is surrounded by high chain link fences topped with barbed wire. Figure 3.5-5 shows a photograph (dated February 20, 2009) of Virginia Avenue.

These roadways are smaller in scale than the freeway, but conduct high numbers of vehicles, and are therefore very busy (except for Virginia Avenue, which is used primarily by USBP employees accessing the fence area). The diverse fences, vehicles, traffic signals, and other visual elements that compose the visual environment of these roadways generally are geometric, rectilinear, gray and neutral-toned, and have smooth, manufactured surfaces. The visual environment of the roadways is visually complex, and the elements generally are not harmoniously combined; none is more dominant than another. Background features such as the undeveloped hill to the east and more distant hills and buildings in Mexico are visible from these roadways; the hill is a dominant feature in the environment of East San Ysidro Boulevard, and from the eastern terminus of Camino de la Plaza. The general visual character of the local roadways is developed, complex, and dissonant.

#### *Visual Quality of Local Roadways*

The variety of elements that make up the visual environment of the area surrounding the roadways generally are not visually coherent, and therefore have low unity. The diversity of elements also contributes to the low visual integrity and intactness of the area.

The more open views and background elements visible from the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing and the undeveloped hill visible to the east from East San Ysidro Boulevard and Camino de la Plaza contribute to a higher level of vividness from this roadway than others in the area. Generally, however, the elements comprising the visual environment of these roadways are not highly unique or memorable. Overall the combination of the visual components does not create distinct visual patterns along local roadways; therefore the vividness also is low.

#### **Viewer Response**

Viewer response is composed of two elements: viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity. These elements combine to form a method of predicting how the public might react to visual changes brought about by a highway project. Viewer exposure is typically assessed by measuring the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of their

view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer. High viewer exposure heightens the importance of early consideration of design, art and architecture and their roles in managing the visual resource effects of a project. Viewer sensitivity is defined both as the viewers' concern for scenic quality and the viewers' response to change in the visual resources that make up the view.

Existing viewers in the Project area can be categorized into one or more of the following viewer groups: (1) motorists on I-5 and I-805 (southbound and northbound), (2) motorists on local streets, (3) bicyclists and pedestrians, and (4) employees of the LPOE facilities. The exposure and sensitivity of each of these viewer groups are briefly described below.

### Motorists on Interstate 5

#### *Viewer Exposure*

Motorists on I-5 and I-805 constitute the largest viewer group in the Project area. Motorists include a variety of viewers, such as tourists, residents of San Diego or Tijuana, daily or regular commuters who live in one country and work in the other, employees of the LPOE facilities or local businesses, and patrons of local businesses.

Southbound traffic volumes on I-5 currently are in excess of 51,000 ADT across six lanes. Traffic volumes are projected to be greater than 76,000 ADT in 2014 and more than 96,000 ADT in 2030 (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Border Station Expansion Traffic Impact Study*, April 2009).

Approaching the Project Study Area, southbound traffic travels at or around the posted speed of 65 mph, but slows to 25 mph or less at the northern edge of the Project Study Area, where lane barriers and other traffic controls slow down cars approaching the border; this lengthens their view duration. Although the extensive fencing and traffic control devices focus drivers' and passengers' attention on the roadway, the high number of vehicles and the slow speeds at which they pass through the project site indicate that southbound motorists' exposure is high.

Northbound traffic volumes on I-5 currently exceed 50,000 ADT through 24 inspection lanes, which narrow to four northbound regular freeway lanes near the north edge of the Project Study Area. Northbound traffic volumes are projected to be greater than 84,000 ADT in 2014 and more than 100,000 in 2030 (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Border Station Expansion Traffic Impact Study*, April 2009). Motorists approaching the Project Study Area from the south are entering the U.S. from Mexico; once they cross over the border they are within the LPOE. Motorists pass through the southern portion of the LPOE (the vehicle inspection area) very slowly, and sometimes are stopped for long periods of time. Once past the inspection area, traffic is still confined to slow speeds through most of the Project Study Area, and does not reach typical freeway speeds until the near northern edge of the Project Study Area. They therefore have longer view durations. The traffic control facilities and the large volume of cars tend to confine motorists' and passengers' attention to the immediate area and inspection facilities; however, the high number of vehicles and the long period of time they are within the Project Study Area indicate that northbound motorists' exposure also is high.

#### *Viewer Sensitivity*

At freeway speeds, a motorist's attention is focused forward on more distant views rather than on peripheral or middle-ground views; when slowing for or stopped at the LPOE facilities,

motorists would have more opportunity to view the surrounding visual environment. A driver's concentration is required to navigate traffic, while passengers have a greater awareness of a wider variety of views. Generally, motorists' attention to views and their awareness would be moderate. Freeway travelers include a wide variety of viewers, and their knowledge of the area would be mixed as well, although their expectations regarding the visual environment likely relate to cross-border travel, with an expectation of a welcoming visual environment. As such, they would have mixed or moderate expectations for local values and goals. Overall, the sensitivity of motorists on I-5 to changes in the visual environment of the Project Study Area and surrounding area is anticipated to be moderate.

### Motorists on Local Streets

#### *Viewer Exposure*

Current traffic volumes on Camino de la Plaza exceed 17,000 ADT, and are projected to exceed 24,000 ADT in 2014, and more than 28,000 in 2030 (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Border Station Expansion Traffic Impact Study*, April 2009). Speed limits are not posted, but traffic generally travels around 35 mph and slower in the vicinity of the Project Study Area. Their relatively slow speed of travel provides them with a long duration of time to view the surrounding area, although the numerous intersections generally focus motorists' attention to the roadway. Motorists traveling on Camino de la Plaza eastbound from the commercial areas west of the Project Study Area have direct views of the western portion of the Project Study Area. Between Virginia Avenue and East San Ysidro Boulevard, motorists in both directions on Camino de la Plaza are traveling along the northern edge of the Project Study Area, and through some intersections that would be affected by the Project as well. In these areas, motorists generally have peripheral views of the Project Study Area. Camino de la Plaza crosses over I-5, providing elevated views southward toward the Project Study Area; a motorists' view from the overcrossing is screened by barriers and chain link fences, however. East of I-5, the roadway curves slightly northward, and borders the northeastern corner of the Project Study Area. Eastbound motorists' views generally are directed away from the bulk of the Project Study Area; westbound motorists have peripheral views of the Project Study Area. The Motorists on Camino de la Plaza, therefore, would have moderately high exposure to changes in the visual environment due to the high volume (although not as numerous as motorists on the freeway) and slow speed of travel.

Motorists on East San Ysidro Boulevard currently number approximately 14,000 to more than 22,000. Traffic volumes for this roadway are projected to be approximately 17,000 to 30,000 in 2014, and approximately 23,000 to 47,000 in 2030 (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Border Station Expansion Traffic Impact Study*, April 2009). North of Camino de la Plaza, the Project Study Area is screened by trees and structures bordering East San Ysidro Boulevard, and is not visually distinct. The Project Study Area is visible peripherally from East San Ysidro Boulevard south of Camino de la Plaza, where it borders the northeastern portion of the Project Study Area. The San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center at the southern end of this roadway is not open to private automobile traffic. Motorists stopped at the light would have extended views of the cul-de-sac and the LPOE abutting the transportation center. Those turning westward onto the freeway ramps pass under a pedestrian walkway and other LPOE facilities as they approach the freeway lanes. Traffic speeds on East San Ysidro Boulevard are posted at 25 mph, although with traffic lights and the frequent presence of multiple pedestrians, motorists' speeds often are less, or they are stopped; their view duration therefore is high, although their attention generally is focused on navigating traffic. Due to their slow travel speeds and high volume (although not as numerous as motorists on the freeway), motorists on the portion of

East San Ysidro Boulevard, between Camino de la Plaza and the freeway entrance ramps, would have moderately high exposure to changes in the visual environment, as would those entering the freeway from East San Ysidro Boulevard.

Camiones Way has current traffic volumes of approximately 11,600 ADT (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Border Station Expansion Traffic Impact Study*, April 2009). The off-ramps from I-5 and I-805 align with the intersection Camiones Way and Camino de la Plaza. Motorists at this intersection and traveling south on Camiones Way have direct views of the Project Study Area. The posted speed on this roadway is 25 mph. Their slow speed of travel allows for a long view duration, and although the current ADT is lower than other roadways in the area, motorists' exposure along this roadway also is moderately high.

No traffic data are available for Virginia Avenue, which extends southward from Camino de la Plaza to the border fence along the western edge of the Project Study Area. This roadway does not provide entrance to parking lots on its eastern side, and therefore is not often used by the general public. It does provide access to the border fence enforcement areas, however, and is used by USBP agents. Due to the low number of motorist on this roadway, viewer exposure from Virginia Avenue is low.

#### *Viewer Sensitivity*

Motorists on local streets are likely to be a mix of local business patrons, employees of businesses and the border facilities in the area, and cross-border travelers. Their knowledge of the area would be mixed, although their expectations regarding the visual environment likely relate to cross-border travel, with an expectation of a welcoming visual environment. Additionally, motorists on local streets generally travel at slower speeds than on the freeway, and while they are navigating through traffic to local businesses or parking areas, their attention is focused on the surrounding area and their awareness of the configuration of these streets is relatively high. Overall, therefore, motorists on local streets would have moderately high sensitivity.

#### Bicyclists and Pedestrians

##### *Viewer Exposure*

While an official count of pedestrians on local roadways is not available, an estimated 26,000 northbound pedestrians are processed daily at the LPOE (SANDAG 2007). It is likely that a similar number of pedestrians travel southbound each day, and more are present on local streets, particularly near the commercial areas in the vicinity of the Project Study Area. Bicyclists also are present in the area in high numbers. These viewers travel along local streets, pass through mass transit areas (trolley and bus stops) and the Project Study Area, and at slower speeds of travel than in an automobile, and thus have a longer view duration than motorists. They also utilize the pedestrian bridges over the freeway and parking lots. Although chain link fences are common along the roadways and border each pedestrian bridge, bicyclists and pedestrians have a larger viewing circumference and longer view durations than motorists, enabling them to view distant visual elements through the fences more readily than can motorists. Bicyclist and pedestrian view exposure, therefore, also is moderately high.

### *Viewer Sensitivity*

Bicyclists and pedestrians on local streets would be highly attentive to the visual environment of the area. Their focus would be on their destination, which is likely to be nearby. The scale of the streets and pedestrian areas is relatively small (as compared to the freeway, for example) and traffic volumes, though high, do not distract their attention away from the visual elements that make up the visual environment surrounding the Project Study Area. Bicyclists and pedestrians would have a high awareness of these elements and any potential changes to the visual environment. Similar to motorists, their expectations regarding the visual environment of the area would relate to the cross-border experience, either regarding a welcoming environment or simply a clearly navigable environment. Overall, bicyclists and pedestrians on local streets would have high sensitivity.

### Employees

#### *Viewer Exposure*

Approximately 750 employees work at the existing LPOE. This number would increase to over 900 employees upon implementation of the Project. This number is small, in comparison to the number of motorists and pedestrians who would view the Project. The duration of their views to facilities within the LPOE, however, is long and relatively stationary during their working shifts. The potential for foreground views combined with the relatively low number of viewers and the potentially high duration of views suggests that employee viewer exposure is moderate.

#### *Viewer Sensitivity*

Employees' awareness generally would be high, as they would be familiar with available views and aware of any changes to them. Their expectations would be high as well, due to their knowledge of the Project area. In general, however, employees' activities and attention are not focused on the visual elements within Project Study Area, as they generally are focused more on their jobs. Those views available to them would not invite high contemplation, as they likely are composed of streets and parking lots. Overall, employees, therefore, would have moderate sensitivity.

### **3.5.3 Environmental Consequences**

The evaluation of potential visual impacts resulting from the Project is based on the principles in the most widely used and accepted visual resource assessment methodologies, including the DOT, *FHWA Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects*; the USDA Forest Service Visual Management System; and the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified Visual Management System. The concepts contained in these assessment approaches are accepted practices for evaluating visual resources both objectively (visual character) and subjectively (visual quality). This is accomplished by comparing the existing visual environment to the construction and post-construction visual environment, and subsequently determining whether the Project would result in physical changes that are deemed to be incompatible with visual character or degrade visual quality.

### **Key Views**

Because it is not feasible to analyze all the views from which the Project would be seen, it is necessary to select a few key viewpoints that illustrate typical views of the Project and

surrounding area from locations accessible to the public. These views also represent the views available to the primary viewer groups that would potentially be affected by the Project. Typically, views of the Project would be publically available from the freeway and local streets discussed above, and from existing and proposed pedestrian walkways in and around the Project Study Area. Key views evaluated in the following section include those from I-5, Camino de la Plaza, East San Ysidro Boulevard, and Virginia Avenue. Views from I-805 are not analyzed because Project features would be less visible from I-805 than I-5 due to its distance from the Project Study Area. Although views from the I-805 would be somewhat comparable to those from I-5, they would be from a greater distance, making changes less noticeable. Camiones Way also is not analyzed because this roadway would be removed upon implementation of the Project, and therefore views of the Project would not be available from this existing roadway.

## **Preferred Alternative**

### Analysis of Key Views

#### *Southbound Interstate 5*

Project Features Visible from Southbound I-5. A new pedestrian overcrossing structure and southbound roadway would be the most visible elements of the Preferred Alternative from southbound I-5. The pedestrian overcrossing structure would cross the new southbound roadway just south of the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing, but would be narrower than the road overcrossing. It would be located just north of the point where the roadway would curve westward. A north-west spur of the pedestrian bridge would be visible over the westerly portion of the new roadway, and a new parking structure and a communications tower would be visible to the south of the new roadway curve.

The roadway's direction would shift motorists' background views toward the west, bringing into the field of vision different buildings in Mexico and some distant hillsides southwest of the Project Study Area. Peripherally, the views from the southbound roadway after Project construction would be similar to peripheral views available currently; fences and barriers would continue to screen views to the east and west. Parking lots would be visible beyond those fences.

Change to Visual Character/Quality. The Preferred Alternative would cause a low level of change to the existing visual character and quality of southbound I-5.

The existing visual character of the southbound freeway would not be changed substantially by construction of the Preferred Alternative. The large expanse of gray-toned concrete pavement would continue to dominate views toward and from the freeway. Although the new roadway would direct traffic through two curves, the overall visual character of the freeway would remain linear, geometric, and symmetric. Smaller, diverse elements such as concrete barriers, closely woven chain link fencing on both sides, and freeway fixtures such as lights, signals, striping, etc. would contribute diversity and complexity within the Project Study Area; however, they would not visually reduce the visual large scale of the freeway and connecting southbound roadway, which would be six to seven lanes. The smaller-scale elements and fixtures also would not change the overall dominance of the rigid lines and smooth textures that comprise the majority of the southbound I-5's overall visual environment.

A new parking structure, new pedestrian bridges, and a communications tower would be visible above the perimeter fences for a brief period of time for southbound motorists. Similar to the existing buildings visible from the freeway, the new parking structure, as well as the communications tower would not be a dominant element, particularly as the border crossing and the need to navigate traffic and the new southbound roadway would focus drivers' and passengers' attention on the roadway itself. There would be little or no new vegetation in the median or on the shoulders to soften the rigid lines and smooth textures, or to provide green or earth-toned visual relief to the grays and monotonous.

The newly visible background elements, such as the distant hillsides, would be new vivid elements in southbound freeway views towards the Project Study Area. Overall, however, the visual environment of the freeway would continue to have moderate visual quality, and the new Project features would not create unique visual patterns or substantially change the visual environment experienced by motorists on southbound I-5 near the LPOE.

Viewer Response. Motorists who would view the Preferred Alternative's elements from southbound I-5 have a high exposure to changes in the visual environment due to the high volume of traffic and the relatively slow speeds of travel while approaching the LPOE. Motorists on I-5 also have a moderate sensitivity to changes in the visual environment due to their focus on navigating traffic and their moderate expectations regarding the visual environment. Overall, motorists on southbound I-5 have a moderately high visual response to changes in the visual environment.

Change to Visual Environment. Although the Preferred Alternative would cause a change to the direction of the southbound travel (due to the new southbound roadway) and the elements visible in the background from this roadway, the visual environment surrounding the new southbound roadway would be very similar the existing visual environment. The change caused by the Preferred Alternative, therefore, would be low.

Resulting Visual Impact. Based on the anticipated moderately high viewer response combined with the low level of change to the visual environment caused by the Preferred Alternative, no adverse visual impacts to the visual environment of southbound I-5 would occur.

### *Northbound Interstate 5*

Project Features Visible from Northbound I-5. The removal of the current structure that spans the inspection lanes would be the most visible change caused by the Preferred Alternative for northbound motorists approaching the Project Study Area (i.e. entering the U.S.). The existing buildings that currently serve the LPOE would be replaced by new buildings that would be aligned parallel to the traffic lanes; the new buildings would not span the width of the freeway, although a pedestrian bridge over the lanes would connect the buildings. These, and an additional longer pedestrian walkway that would span the northern portion of the LPOE, would be less prominent in appearance than the existing "floating" facility, and therefore would be much less visually dominant. The removal of the floating building would create a more open visual environment than currently exists. A new communications tower also would be visible, as it would extend above the employee parking structure to the east.

The addition of new traffic/vehicle inspection lanes would expand the scale of the LPOE at the southern edge; however, the new lanes and wider expanse would not be a visually dominant feature, since the addition of six lanes to an already 24-lane-wide area would not be highly noticeable to motorists within the northbound primary inspection area.

Once through the primary inspection lanes, the buildings and facilities visible to northbound motorists would be aligned parallel to the lanes, as are many of the existing buildings. The architectural façades may be different than the existing buildings, and some portions of the buildings would be three stories rather than two. The visual scale as seen from the traffic lanes and the orientation of the buildings would not be considerably different from the existing buildings. North of the buildings, the visual environment of the northbound freeway would be remain mostly unchanged, although some green lawn areas would be removed and replaced by parking lots at the northern end of the LPOE, and a pedestrian bridge would span this area. Views of the hillside visible to the east and the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing that marks the northern edge of the Project Study Area would remain unchanged.

Change to Visual Character/Quality. The removal of the building that currently spans the northbound primary inspection lanes would create a more open visual environment, and potentially would allow for more views of the undeveloped hillside to the east, slightly changing the visual character of the area and exposing a different vivid element. The large expanses of concrete punctuated by multiple diverse visual elements that comprise the visual character of the area would continue to dominate the visual environment of northbound I-5 at the LPOE. The other new buildings would be oriented similarly to the existing buildings, and the addition of one story would not be highly noticeable. The new pedestrian walkway overcrossings would be smaller in scale and less visually dominant than the existing structure that crosses over the northbound facilities. The new communications tower, although a taller structure, would not be at a bulk or scale to create a new dominant visual feature. Other such towers are located in the Project vicinity, including within the existing LPOE.

Viewer Response. Viewers on northbound I-5 mainly would be motorists, although the employees of the LPOE also would view the changes to the northbound inspection area. Motorists would have moderately high response to changes in the visual environment due to their high exposure and moderate sensitivity. Employees would have a moderately high response to changes in the visual environment, as their exposure is moderate and their sensitivity is moderately high.

Change to Visual Environment. Overall the new Project features would create a low level of change to the visual character of the area, and would cause a moderately low change to the visual quality of the area, mostly due to the removal of the “floating” building.

Resulting Visual Impact. Based on the combination of moderate viewer response and the low and moderately low levels of change, no adverse visual impacts to the visual environment of northbound I-5 within and near the LPOE would occur.

### *Camino de la Plaza*

Project Features Visible from Camino de la Plaza. Project features that would be visible from Camino de la Plaza from points west of the Project Study Area would be the new southbound roadway, the pedestrian overcrossing, and the upper portion of the telecommunications tower.

Additional Project elements would be visible from the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing at I-5; the proposed pedestrian walkway/bridge would be a new foreground element in southbound views from this overcrossing. The proposed buildings would be slightly taller than the existing building visible in the middle-ground of southbound views from this bridge. Additionally, some small landscaped areas just south of the overcrossing would be replaced with parking lots.

From each of these points, views of the undeveloped hill east of the Project Study Area would remain undisturbed. Views of buildings in Mexico and other background elements also would not be affected by the Preferred Alternative.

Change to Visual Character/Quality. Views from eastbound Camino de la Plaza, west of the Project Study Area, would not change considerably. The elevated pedestrian walkway would be the most visible element of the Project, but it would not be a dominant element due to the scale of the paved areas and the presence of the other visually diverse elements, such as fences and light poles that would screen direct views of the walkway for viewers on Camino de la Plaza, west of I-5.

The pedestrian walkway would be in the foreground and would be a new visually dominant feature in southward views from the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing. It would be geometric and have a strong, horizontal line. While it may be a new slightly more vivid element in southward views from Camino de la Plaza, it would not cause a large change to the visual quality of the area, as it would be visually consistent with the existing visual elements due to its gray-concrete color and chain-link fencing. Additionally, the new buildings that would replace the existing buildings would be visually similar to existing buildings in views from this point. The new southbound roadway would provide more curvilinear lines within the view, but also would be visually consistent with the existing visual environment due to their materials, colors, and accompanying fixtures.

It should be noted that the new pedestrian bridge would provide new viewing points for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Project Study Area. More pedestrians may access this bridge than may use the sidewalks on Camino de la Plaza when the Preferred Alternative is constructed. Views from this bridge would be similar to views available from Camino de la Plaza, although southward views would not include a foreground overcrossing structure; the new buildings would be visible in the middle ground. The undeveloped hillside to the east and buildings and developed hillsides in Mexico to the south would be visible in the background; lesser-developed hillsides to the southwest also would be visible in the background. The southbound roadway would curve westward immediately south of the bridge. The northbound lanes would merge to the north, near the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing; to the south the northbound lanes would extend between the buildings and parking lots.

Pedestrians and bicyclists would have more extensive views of the Project Study Area and surrounding area from the new bridge. The background elements and expansive view would provide more vividness than is available from other pedestrian areas currently.

Viewer Response. The motorists on Camino de la Plaza have moderately high sensitivity and exposure to changes in the visual environment, and would have a moderately high response to changes in the visual environment. Bicyclists and pedestrians on this road also would have moderately high sensitivity, and high exposure, and also would have a moderately high response to changes in the visual environment.

Change to Visual Environment. The Preferred Alternative would cause a low level of change in the visual environment of Camino de la Plaza, west of the Project Study Area. From the Camino de la Plaza overcrossing, the Preferred Alternative would create a moderately low level of change to the visual environment; the new pedestrian bridge would be a new vivid element visible from this point, but would not affect the unity and intactness of the area, or change the visual character.

Resulting Visual Impact. Based on the low and moderately low levels of change to the visual environment of Camino de la Plaza combined with the high and moderately high viewer response, no adverse visual impacts to the visual environment of Camino de la Plaza would occur.

#### *East San Ysidro Boulevard*

Project Features Visible from East San Ysidro Boulevard. The Preferred Alternative would not affect the visual environment of East San Ysidro Boulevard, north of Camino de la Plaza. Most changes that would be visible from East San Ysidro Boulevard would be near the bus turn-around area at the San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center. Project elements that would be visible in this area would be the eastern end of the new pedestrian bridge, a new building that would replace the existing building at the south end of the transportation center, and the upper portion of a new communications tower.

The new pedestrian bridge would be accessed via ramps and a landing area that would replace the existing parking lot west of the turn-around area. An existing pedestrian bridge west of the bus turn-around area and that spans the freeway entrance ramps would be removed. The new ramp would extend westward over the main freeway lanes.

A new building would extend south from the pedestrian ramp landing area next to bus turn-around. The building would have an eastward-extending wing at the location of the existing building adjacent to the southern end of the bus turn-around. The northern extension of the building would be three stories tall. The northbound lanes would be located on the west side of the building, and would not be visible from the bus turn-around area.

The upper portion of the proposed communications tower, to be constructed on the west side of the employee parking structure, would be visible from East San Ysidro Boulevard. Foreground and middle ground elements would obstruct most of the tower, but the upper extent would be visible in background views.

Change to Visual Character/Quality. The Preferred Alternative would replace existing visual elements with similar features. The existing pedestrian bridge is a visually dominant element, and would be replaced with a similar, though longer, bridge, with similar fencing and linear, concrete elements. The short end of the existing building aligns with the end of the bus turn-around area and extends southward; most of the building is not visible from the road, and is not visually dominant. The new building would introduce a new, taller structure that would be closer to the road and therefore more visual; the portion that would be located west of the road would be three-stories tall, taller than the existing two-story building. The building would be a new dominant element west of the bus turn-around area, and would change the visual environment to include more vertical elements where currently pavement is a dominant feature. The communications tower would not be a visually dominant feature given the distance from this viewpoint and presence of competing visual elements in foreground and middle ground views.

Views of the undeveloped hill to the east would remain undisturbed, and none of the new elements would block views toward the hill from this street.

Viewer Response. Because the bus turn-around south of Camino de la Plaza is not a street accessible to automobiles driven by the general public, the main viewers in this area are pedestrians and bicyclists, many of whom use public transit such as the buses or the trolley at the adjacent San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center. Pedestrians in this area have

moderately high exposure and high sensitivity to changes in the visual environment of the Project Study Area.

Change to Visual Environment. The new building and pedestrian bridge would introduce new dominant elements into the visual environment of East San Ysidro Boulevard. These elements would be geometric, rectilinear elements that would not highly contrast with the existing visual environment. The new building would be taller and closer to viewers, but would not reduce the unity or intactness of the area, which currently are low. The Preferred Alternative, therefore, would cause a moderately low change to the visual environment of East San Ysidro Boulevard.

Resulting Visual Impact. The moderately low change in combination with the moderately high anticipated viewer response would not result in adverse visual impacts to the visual environment of East San Ysidro Boulevard.

### *Virginia Avenue*

Project Features Visible from Virginia Avenue. The Preferred Alternative would remove the existing parking lot east of Virginia Avenue and south of Camiones Way. The new southbound roadway would turn to meet the borderline east of Virginia Avenue;. A new sidewalk extending from the east-west pedestrian bridge would connect to Virginia Avenue. Additional visible Project features would include a new transit turn-around and loading facility, a new southbound pedestrian building, a new southbound pedestrian crossing at Virginia Avenue, and an employee surface parking lot.

Change to Visual Character/Quality. Project elements that would be visible from this roadway would change the character of the existing visual environment. The new surface parking lot would have a similar horizontal expanse of pavement, and be surrounded by fences, as is the existing lot. The walkway would meet the existing grade of the roadway at its eastern end at Virginia Avenue. The transit turn-around and loading facility would be constructed along the existing roadway. The southbound pedestrian building would be constructed fronting the east side of Virginia Avenue, and would constitute a new visual element. The bulk and scale of this building, however, would not create a dominant visual element and would partially obstruct views of other new elements within this portion of the improved LPOE from Virginia Avenue. None of the other new elements would be visually dominant or highly vivid. The existing undeveloped hills visible in the background to the east, the border fence to the south, and the undeveloped lot to the west would remain visible and would not be changed by the Preferred Alternative.

Viewer Response. There are few viewers accessing this roadway currently; the few motorists and pedestrians using this roadway likely are USBP employees. Pedestrians would be the major viewer group in the area after the Preferred Alternative is constructed, because of the new southbound pedestrian crossing and the walkway that would extend to the southern end of Virginia Avenue. Pedestrians would have moderately high exposure and high sensitivity to changes in the visual environment.

Change to Visual Environment. The visual elements that the Preferred Alternative would introduce into the area would be visually similar to the existing visual environment and would cause a low level or change to the visual environment of Virginia Avenue.

Resulting Visual Impact. Based on the low level of change combined with the moderately high viewer response caused by the Preferred Alternative, no adverse visual impacts to the visual environment of Virginia Avenue would occur.

### Construction-related Impacts

The Preferred Alternative would result in temporary visual impacts during the construction period. The Project would be built in three phases over a period of approximately four years, with some overlap of phases occurring. Visible indications of construction on the roadways would contrast with existing conditions, and may include exposed soil; stockpiled dirt, rocks, and debris from demolished structures; signs; construction fencing; partially constructed structures; scaffolding and concrete molds; and truck and equipment. Other visual disruptions may include detours and road closures, with signs, equipment, and similar visual indicators. Additional erosion control and storm water management practices also may introduce visual elements, such as gravel bags and fiber rolls, and silt fences. The required equipment staging areas also may be visible. The construction staging for the Preferred Alternative would occur on site.

The visual construction elements and staging area would contrast with the existing visual environment surrounding the Project Study Area, which would introduce complex forms, geometric lines, monotonous colors, and a variety of textures. The elements would be large in scale and high in diversity, but not continuous or harmonious. They also would reduce the visual quality of the area, creating low vividness, intactness, and unity. While they would result in changes to visual environment, the visual impacts caused by Project construction would be temporary in nature (up to four years). Visual disruptions would be removed upon completion of the construction period. No associate adverse visual impacts would occur during construction of the Preferred Alternative.

### **Pedestrian Crossing Alternative**

Most of the structures proposed under the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would be similar to the Preferred Alternative, and would have similar visibility from the roadways and walkways in the surrounding area. As in the case of the Preferred Alternative, the new east-west pedestrian overcrossing structure would be one of the dominant visual elements of the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative. In addition, a new north-south pedestrian bridge would be built over the proposed southbound roadway where it extends eastward. This new pedestrian bridge would connect the proposed elevated east-west pedestrian bridge to the pedestrian walkway at the existing southbound pedestrian crossing facility. This would create a new element in the visual landscape visible from the new southbound freeway lanes. These features, while visible from the freeway, would not create unique visual patterns or substantially change the visual environment experienced by viewers.

Under the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative, some elements included in the Preferred Alternative would not be constructed, namely the proposed bus turn-around at Virginia Avenue, and the proposed southbound pedestrian crossings east of I-5 and at Virginia Avenue. A smaller turn-around at the south leg of the Camino de la Plaza/I-5 southbound ramps intersection, and the existing southbound pedestrian crossing would be provided instead. Under the Preferred Alternative, the bus turn-around and pedestrian crossing would constitute new visible Project features; the use of the existing facilities under the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would not cause any additional visual change.

Overall, the difference in configuration between the two alternatives is minor from the perspective of visual impacts. As with the Preferred Alternative, the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would result in some differences in visual conditions; these differences would be similar to those created by the Preferred Alternative and therefore, the analysis provided above for the Preferred Alternative would apply equally to the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative. As with the Preferred Alternative, no adverse visual impacts would be anticipated under the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative.

### **No Build Alternative**

Under the No Build Alternative, the proposed LPOE improvements would not be constructed in the Project Study Area. As a result, no change from existing visual conditions would occur under this alternative, and the viewers would continue to view the highly diverse, developed urban visual environment of roadway and buildings, interspersed with minimal landscaping.

### **3.5.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### **Preferred Alternative**

Although no adverse visual impacts would result from the Preferred Alternative, implementation of the following minimization measures would provide increased visual quality within the Project Study Area:

- A comprehensive landscape concept plan should be developed and implemented, including landscape features such as:
  - Drought tolerant and sustainable plant palettes.
  - Vine planting at fences and walls to reduce the visual scale and to act as a graffiti deterrent.
- Street trees and landscaping should be retained to the highest extent possible during Project construction.
- Architectural treatments should be consistent throughout the proposed LPOE buildings.
- Metal fencing and safety railing should be consistent throughout the proposed pedestrian walkways.
- Where possible, integrate new public art consistent with the international border setting.

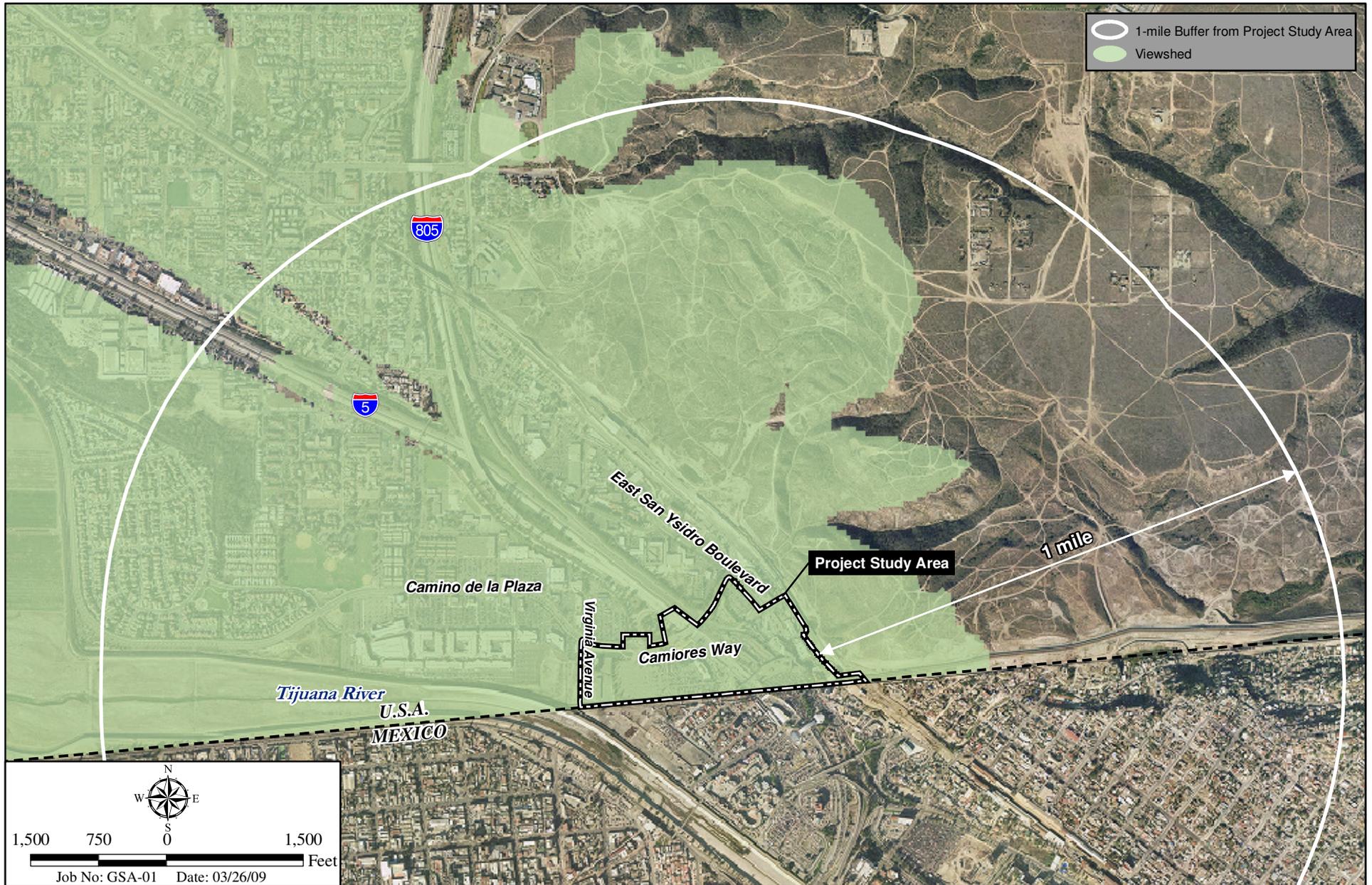
These measures would help integrate the Project features and to create more visual unity and intactness within the Project Study Area.

#### **Pedestrian Crossing Alternative**

As in the case of the Preferred Alternative, no adverse visual impacts would result from the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative, but implementation of the minimization measures identified above would provide increased visual quality within the Project Study Area.

#### **No Build Alternative**

Because no impacts were identified for the No Build Alternative, no avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.



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## Project Viewshed Map

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.5-1



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**Existing San Ysidro LPOE**  
SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.5-2



Southbound I-5



Northbound I-5

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## Typical Views from I-5

SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.5-3



Camino de la Plaza



East San Ysidro Boulevard

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## Typical Views from Local Roadways

### SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.5-4



Camiones Way



Virginia Avenue

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**Typical Views from Local Roadways**  
SAN YSIDRO LAND PORT OF ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Figure 3.5-5

## **3.6 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **3.6.1 Regulatory Setting**

#### **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966**

The NHPA of 1966, as amended, sets forth policies and procedures regarding historic properties, which are defined as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects included in or eligible for the NRHP. Section 106 of NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on such properties and to consult with the SHPO and possibly the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to determine if they are eligible for the NRHP.

#### **Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act**

The purpose of the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act is to preserve significant historical and archeological data which might otherwise be irreparably lost or destroyed as a result of a number of incidents or developments, including federal construction projects. These data may include sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance. Protection of these resources may include surveys and recovery efforts when deemed appropriate.

#### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act provides for ownership and control of Native American cultural items which are excavated or discovered on Federal or tribal lands after November 16, 1990. The Act prioritizes recipients of such items and defines conditions under which such items may be discovered, studied, or removed.

#### **Executive Order 11593**

Executive Order 11593 was signed in 1971 to commit the Federal government to “preserving, restoring and maintaining the historic and cultural environment of the Nation.” It directs federal agencies to preserve and protect cultural resources as trustees and in such a way as to benefit current and future populations, to contribute to the preservation and protection of non-federally owned cultural resources and to nominate all eligible government properties to the NRHP.

#### **California Register of Historical Resources**

Historical resources are also considered under the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1, which established the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The CRHR includes resources listed in, or formally determined eligible for listing in, the NRHP, as well as some California State Landmarks and Points of Historical Interest.

#### **City of San Diego Historical Resources Register**

Because the Project is located within the City, historical resources were evaluated for eligibility for the City of San Diego Historical Resources Register (City Register). Any improvement, building, sign, interior element and fixture, feature, site, place, district, area, or object may be designated as historic by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) if it meets eligibility criteria.

### **3.6.2 Affected Environment**

A cultural resources report (*San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Cultural and Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report*, April 2009) was prepared for the Project to evaluate cultural and historical resources and potential impacts to such resources within the Project Study Area. The report included a records search and literature review, archival research, a field survey, and documentation and evaluation of historical resources, the results of which are summarized in this subchapter.

#### **Area of Potential Effect**

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) established for the Project encompasses the anticipated maximum extent of proposed disturbance, including roadway improvements, staging areas, and temporary impacts resulting from Project construction. The 50-acre APE coincides with the Project Study Area boundary identified in Figure 1-2 of this Final EIS, and is largely developed, consisting of I-5, roadways, the existing LPOE, parking lots, and commercial buildings.

#### **Cultural Background**

##### Prehistory

The San Diego region's prehistory generally can be divided into three periods: Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric, which are briefly described below.

##### *Paleo-Indian Period*

The earliest recognized period of southern California prehistory is termed Paleo-Indian, which is considered to date from 10,000 Before Present<sup>1</sup> (B.P.) until 7,200 B.P., and is represented by the San Dieguito complex. San Dieguito artifact assemblages are composed mostly of flaked stone tools, including scrapers, choppers, and large projectile points. The San Dieguito complex is thought to have lived within a generalized hunter-gatherer society with band-level organization.

##### *Archaic Period*

The Archaic period extends back at least 7,200 years, possibly as early as 9,000 B.P. Archaic subsistence is generally considered to have differed from Paleo-Indian subsistence in two major ways: (1) gathering activities were emphasized over hunting, with shellfish and seed collecting of particular importance; and (2) milling technology, frequently employing portable ground stone slabs, was developed. In San Diego County, Archaic Period inhabitants are represented by the La Jolla complex. Early Archaic occupations in San Diego County are most apparent along the coast and major drainage systems that extend inland from the coastal plains. Archaic sites are characterized by cobble tools, basin metates, manos, disk-shaped grinding stones, dart points, and flexed burials.

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<sup>1</sup> Before Present years is a time scale used in archaeology and other disciplines to specify when events in the past occurred, with the year 1950 as the arbitrary origin of the age scale.

### *Late Prehistoric Period*

Around 2,000 B.P., Yuman-speaking people from the Colorado River region began migrating into southern California, although some evidence exists that the movement may have been northward from Baja California. Assemblages derived from the Late Prehistoric sites in San Diego County differ in many ways from those in the Archaic tradition, including (1) the occurrence of small, pressure-flaked projectile points; (2) the replacement of flexed inhumations with cremations; (3) the introduction of ceramics; and (4) an emphasis on inland plant food collection, processing, and storage (especially acorns). The centralized and seasonally permanent residential patterns that had begun to emerge during the Archaic period became well established in most areas. This period is represented in the northern part of the county by the San Luis Rey complex and in the south by the Cuyamaca complex. The San Luis Rey complex is the archaeological manifestation of the Shoshonean predecessors of the Luiseño. The Cuyamaca complex reflects the material culture of the Yuman ancestors of the Kumeyaay (also known as the Diegueño).

### Ethnohistory

Two main cultural groups occupied coastal San Diego County, including the Luiseño and Kumeyaay. The Luiseño occupied the northern portion of the county, with their territory encompassing the area from roughly Agua Hedionda Lagoon on the south, Lake Henshaw on the east, Riverside County to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Kumeyaay territory was much larger and extended generally from Agua Hedionda Lagoon eastward into the Imperial Valley and southward into Baja California.

### **Historical Background**

Since the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, an international border has existed between the U.S. and Mexico at present-day San Ysidro. Santiago Argüello's Rancho Tia Juana land grant (1829) spanned Alta and Baja California, but after 1848 small settlements named Tia Juana (in the U.S.) and Tijuana (in Mexico) existed on either side of the border. An experimental agrarian community began in 1909 north of the border and Tia Juana that first known as the Little Landers colony, and subsequently San Ysidro. Over time, the close economic ties between San Ysidro and Tijuana facilitated the development of the community into a town that eventually reached the border.

Agriculture and mining in the greater Tijuana area increased border crossings, prompting the appointment of border officers in 1871. Early San Ysidro residents continued to freely cross the border to Tijuana until 1917 when the border was closed to protect Americans from vices (e.g., gambling, bullfighting, and boxing) and as a precaution during World War I. The 1920s marked a shift in San Ysidro from an agrarian community to one that was increasingly tied to the tourism economy of Tijuana after the reopening of the border in 1920. The existing LPOE was completed in 1973, and by 1988, San Ysidro had become the busiest LPOE in North America, providing a port of entry and a temporary place of residence for Mexican immigrants.

### **Cultural Resources**

A records search was obtained from the South Coastal Information Center at San Diego State University to identify previously recorded sites within and adjacent to the APE. The records search identified two prehistoric archaeological sites and five historic resources within a 0.5-mile

radius of the APE. Of these, only the U.S. Customs House (Old Customs House) is located within the APE. These resources are summarized in Table 3-6.1.

<b>Table 3.6-1 RECORDED CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE APE</b>		
<b>Resource Number</b>	<b>Resource Description</b>	<b>Determination of Eligibility to NRHP/CRHR</b>
SDI-5555	Prehistoric lithic quarry	Not determined
SDI-10806	Prehistoric lithic scatter	Not eligible
P-37-025680	San Diego and Arizona Railway	Not eligible
631 San Ysidro Blvd.	El Toreador Motel	Eligible to CRHR
751-755 San Ysidro Blvd	International Building	Eligible to CRHR
U.S. Customs House	1932 U.S. Customs House	Eligible to NRHP and subsequently listed on NRHP

Source: *San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Cultural and Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report*, April 2009.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted for a records search of their sacred lands files to determine if any traditional cultural properties are located within or adjacent to the APE. The results of the search indicated that no sacred lands are recorded in the Project area. Consultation with local Native American tribes was recommended, and a list of Native American contacts was provided. Letters describing the Project and a map of the study area were mailed to local Native American representatives in January and March 2009. No responses have been received to date.

A field survey of the undeveloped portions of the APE was conducted on February 3, 2009. This survey focused on the undeveloped areas within the APE. No cultural resources were identified during the field survey.

### Historical Resources

A field survey of buildings within and adjacent to the APE was conducted, followed by archival research to identify potential historic resources. A total of 14 buildings and structures were identified within or immediately adjacent to the APE during the field survey. As shown in Figure 3.6-1, 13 are located within the APE, and one is located adjacent to the APE. Archival research was conducted to identify construction dates of the buildings. These buildings were then evaluated for eligibility to the NRHP, CRHR, and City Register. Table 3.6-2 summarizes the results of the building survey and archival research, as well as the previous and current recommendations of eligibility to the NRHP, CRHP, and City Register.

<b>Table 3.6-2 EVALUATED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE APE</b>				
<b>No.<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Construction</b>	<b>Previous Determination of Eligibility</b>	<b>Recommendation of Eligibility</b>
1	Old Customs House	1932	NRHP listed	NRHP listed/CRHR/ City Register
2	San Ysidro LPOE Main Building	1973	Undetermined	Not eligible
3	Greyhound Bus Station	1950	Undetermined	Not eligible
4	Payless Shoe Source	1955	Undetermined	Not eligible
5	Duty Free America	1999	Undetermined	Not eligible
6	Former Border Patrol Building	1973-74	Undetermined	Not eligible
7	SD&AE Railway Tracks and Depot <sup>2</sup>	1911	Not Eligible to NRHP	City Register
8	International Building	Late 1920s	Recommended Eligible to CRHR	NRHP/CRHR/City Register
9	Mercado Internacional 88	1961-63	Undetermined	Not eligible
10	San Diego Trolley Station and McDonald's Restaurant	1972/1983	Undetermined	Not eligible
11	San Diego Trolley Tracks	1980	Undetermined	Not eligible
12	Baja Duty Free	1966	Undetermined	Not eligible
13	Commercial Building	1974	Undetermined	Not eligible
14	Check Cashing Booth	Early 1980s	Undetermined	Not eligible

<sup>1</sup> Number corresponds to location identified on Figure 3.6-1.

<sup>2</sup> Located adjacent to the Project APE.

Source: *San Ysidro Land Port of Entry Cultural and Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report*, April 2009.

As shown in Table 3.6-2, the Old Customs House is listed on the NRHP; the San Diego and Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) Railway Tracks and Depot is recommended eligible for the City Register; and the International Building is recommended eligible for the NRHP, CRHP, and City Register. These resources are briefly described below. The remaining buildings are recommended not eligible for the NRHP, CRHP, or City Register because they do not meet the applicable eligibility criteria.

#### *Old Customs House Building*

The Old Customs House has been listed on the NRHP since 1982. It was determined eligible for its symbolic role in international relations between the U.S. and Mexico and for its architecture which exemplifies the eclectic Spanish Colonial Revival style that distinguished many public buildings designed in the 1920s and 1930s by the Supervising Architect's Office of the Treasury Department. The boundaries of the historic property include only the building itself with no surrounding land. Since the building is listed on the NRHP, it is automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR and the City Register.

#### *San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway Tracks and Depot*

The SD&AE Railway Depot was constructed in 1911 and consists of a metal corrugated warehouse that served as the San Ysidro Station for the Tijuana to Tecate railroad line. Both the building and the adjoining railroad tracks maintain good integrity. This railroad line was one of the last major railroads constructed in the U.S and did not make a significant contribution to the national history of railroad development. The SD&AE railroad tracks and depot are

therefore, recommended not eligible to the NRHP and CRHP. However, they are recommended eligible to the City Register because they exemplify an important aspect of San Ysidro's economic development as the border station regulating traffic of goods and people between San Diego and Mexico. The depot embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, and method of construction, and the tracks are associated with people who have made a significant contribution to the history of San Diego (i.e., John D. Spreckles and Adolph B. Spreckles).

### *International Building*

The International Building is a two-story Art Deco commercial building that was constructed in the late 1920s. It was previously identified as the sole surviving Art Deco building in San Ysidro and one of the few remaining examples in the City. The International Building is the oldest standing building on East San Ysidro Boulevard and functioned as a general merchandise store. It is recommended eligible to the NRHP, CRHP, and City Register because it is an excellent example of the Art Deco style and its role in the history of international trade and tourism in San Ysidro since the late 1920s.

## **3.6.3 Environmental Consequences**

### **Preferred Alternative**

#### Archaeological Resources

No prehistoric cultural resources were identified within the APE during the records search and field survey. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative would not impact recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity. Therefore, impacts to archaeological resources are not expected to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative. Measures (described below in Section 3.6.4), however, would be implemented during construction to ensure impacts to unknown subsurface resources would be avoided.

#### Historical Resources

The Preferred Alternative would remove six existing buildings within the APE, including: (1) the San Ysidro LPOE Main buildings; (2) the Greyhound Bus Station; (3) the Payless Shoe Source building; (4) the Duty Free America building; (5) the Former Border Patrol building; and (6) check cashing booth. All six of these buildings are recommended not eligible to the NRHP, CRHP, or City Register and therefore, are not considered historical resources. Removal of these buildings would not result in adverse impacts to historical resources.

The Preferred Alternative also would impact the Old Customs House, which is listed on the NRHP. During Phase 1 of the Preferred Alternative, a new southbound pedestrian crossing would be provided in the eastern portion of the LPOE near the Old Customs House. It is possible that this new pedestrian crossing could require modifications to the Old Customs House. Additionally, during construction of the Administration and Pedestrian Building, in Phase 2 of the Preferred Alternative, pedestrian processing operations would temporarily be transferred to the Old Customs House. The interior of the Old Customs House would be renovated to accommodate these interim uses. Pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA, GSA is currently in consultation with the SHPO, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other parties regarding the potential future use of the Old Customs House. The interim renovation and ultimate future use of the Old Customs House would result in an adverse direct impact to

this NRHP-listed historical property.

Although proposed canopies covering the northbound primary vehicle inspection area and a proposed pedestrian ramp to the Pedestrian Building would be constructed in close proximity to the Old Customs House, these new facilities would not result in adverse indirect impacts to the Old Customs House during Phase 2. As discussed earlier, the boundaries of the historic property include only the building itself and no surrounding land. Construction of the canopies and pedestrian ramp adjacent to the Old Customs House, therefore, would not result in adverse impacts to the historical setting of the Old Customs House. No adverse indirect impacts would occur.

The Preferred Alternative, however, would indirectly impact the International Building, which is recommended eligible to the NRHP, CRHP, and City Register. Indirect impacts would occur to this building as a result of the construction of the Central Plant building abutting up against it. Construction of a large, modern building used for industrial purposes in close proximity to the International Building would compromise its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, resulting in an adverse impact. The Preferred Alternative would not directly or indirectly impact the other evaluated buildings and structures, as identified in Figure 3.6-1 and Table 3.6-2.

### **Pedestrian Crossing Alternative**

#### Archaeological Resources

The Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would occur within the same APE as the Preferred Alternative. Like the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would not impact recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity. Impacts to archaeological resources are not expected to occur, but measures would be implemented (as identified in Section 3.6.4) during construction to ensure impacts to unknown subsurface resources would be avoided if encountered during construction.

#### Historical Resources

The Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would remove the same six buildings within the APE as the Preferred Alternative, including: (1) the San Ysidro LPOE Main buildings; (2) the Greyhound Bus Station; (3) the Payless Shoe Source building; (4) the Duty Free America building; (5) the Former Border Patrol building; and (6) check cashing booth. As discussed above, none of these buildings are recommended eligible to the NRHP, CRHR, or City Register and therefore, are not considered historical resources. Removal of these buildings would not result in adverse impacts to historical resources.

Because the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would maintain the existing southbound pedestrian crossing at its current location and would not construct a new southbound pedestrian crossing in the eastern portion of the LPOE, the Old Customs House would be retained. However, the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would still require the interior renovation of the Old Customs House to accommodate the temporary use of this building for pedestrian processing operations during construction of the new Administration and Pedestrian Building in Phase 2. As a result, the interim renovation of the Old Customs House would result in an adverse impact to this NRHP-listed historical property under the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative. No indirect impacts to the Old Customs House would occur for the same reasons as discussed above under the Preferred Alternative.

As with the Preferred Alternative, the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative would result in an adverse indirect impact to the International Building due to the construction of the abutting Central Plant. No other direct or indirect impacts to buildings or structures would occur.

### **No Build Alternative**

The No Build Alternative would not involve any construction or ground disturbing activities of any kind; therefore, no impacts to cultural resources would occur.

### **3.6.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### **Preferred Alternative**

##### Archaeological Resources

Implementation of the following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measure would avoid impacts to unknown subsurface archaeological resources:

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area should be avoided until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.

##### Historical Resources

The following measures would avoid, minimize, or mitigate direct impacts to historical resources during renovation of the Old Customs House:

- All renovation of the Old Customs House for interim pedestrian processing operations and any future use should conform to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- Prior to alteration or removal of building features, detailed documentation of the Old Customs House should be completed as agreed to in the Section 106 consultation process.

If all adverse effects cannot be avoided, then other mitigation measures will be determined through Section 106 consultation.

The following measure would avoid, minimize, or mitigate indirect impacts to historical resources, including the International Building:

- Measures consistent with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* would be implemented as agreed to in the Section 106 consultation process.

If all adverse effects cannot be avoided, then other mitigation measures will be determined through Section 106 consultation.

### **Pedestrian Crossing Alternative**

Implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures identified above for the Preferred Alternative would avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to archaeological and historical resources resulting from the Pedestrian Crossing Alternative.

### **No Build Alternative**

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures would be required, as no impacts would occur under the No Build Alternative.

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