CHAPTER 13. VISUAL RESOURCES

13.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the potential environmental consequences associated with implementation of the alternatives within the region of influence for visual resources. For a description of the affected environment, refer to the respective chapter of Volume 2 (Marine Corps Relocation – Guam). The locations described in that Volume include the region of influence for the aircraft carrier berthing component of the proposed action (Apra Harbor), and the chapters are presented in the same order as the resource areas contained in this Volume.

13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

13.2.1 Approach to Analysis

13.2.1.1 Methodology

Information on visual resources was gathered at public scoping meetings in April 2007 and via subsequent on-site visits and background research (EDAW 2007a, 2007b, 2009, and Google Earth 2008). As noted below, there were no concerns raised during the public scoping meetings regarding visual resources. The analysis of potential impacts to visual resources is based on the long-term (operational) effects – i.e., after construction has occurred. Construction-related activities related to the development of the aircraft carrier facilities would be short-term in duration and minimal in their impacts (i.e., work in an active harbor environment).

13.2.1.2 Determination of Significance

For the purpose of this Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS), the proposed action would cause a significant impact to visual resources if they:

- Would substantially alter the views or scenic quality associated with particularly significant and/or publicly recognized vistas, viewsheds, overlooks, or features
- Would substantially change the light, glare, or shadows within a given area
- Would substantially affect sensitive receptors – i.e., viewers with particular sensitivity (or intolerance) to a changed view (e.g., a hillside neighborhood with views of a relatively undisturbed, naturally-appearing landscape)

Significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels are considered unavoidable.

A discussion is presented for each significance criterion listed that would be triggered by the alternatives.

13.2.1.3 Issues Identified during Public Scoping Process

No visual resource issues regarding the proposed action were raised at the April 2007 public scoping meetings.

13.2.2 Alternative 1 Polaris Point (Preferred Alternative)

13.2.2.1 Onshore

Onshore activities associated with Alternative 1 Polaris Point (referred to as Alternative 1) include construction of a wharf/staging area with ground disturbance of approximately 5.8 acres (ac) (2.34

hectares [ha]), a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) area of 2.4 ac (0.97 ha), security structures including a 50 foot (ft) (15.2 meter [m]) watch tower, and various buildings including a Port Operations Building, a substation, water treatment facilities, and a pump station on an existing military operating port facility. As part of the project, four existing structures (buildings 4407, 4408, 4409, and an existing guard tower) would be demolished. A 300 ft (91.4 m) roadway would be demolished and replaced with a new access road to connect Polaris Point Drive to the staging area.

Onshore construction related disturbances would be evident from offshore locations within Outer Apra Harbor, and to a lesser degree to nearby onshore areas. These activities would introduce some new elements into the landscape and remove others; with the most substantial being – from a visual perspective –a 50 ft (15.2 m) watch tower that would be visible from some distant views. However, all of these activities would occur in, and new features would be added to, a fully developed military base including an industrial area and harbor environment. Therefore, no adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from onshore activities.

13.2.2.2 Offshore

Offshore activities associated with Alternative 1 include dredging of the berthing area, the turning basin, and the channel bend; construction of a wharf at Polaris Point; and the operations associated with the berthing of the aircraft carrier.

During construction, pile-driving equipment, shoreline alteration activities (cut/fill), and dredging activities (barges and cranes) would alter the existing landscape. The most evident post-construction landscape feature would be a changed shoreline – i.e. from an uneven, rip-rap water's edge to a wharf raised 12 ft (3.6 m) above mean sea level that could be up to 1,325 ft (404 m) in length. The construction activities would be short-term and would not impact sensitive receptors or appreciably alter the light, glare or shadows because all proposed activities would be within an active commercial port.

During the aircraft carrier visits (approximately 63 total days per year up to 21 days per visit), the most significant visual feature would be the aircraft carrier itself, with its bridge deck and associated towers reaching 215 ft (66 m) high. No sensitive receptors were identified in the area. There would be minor changes to the light, glare, or shadows due to the new facilities with no appreciable impact on visual resources because the proposed activities would be located within an active military and commercial port. The submarine compound would experience a change in shadow pattern, but it would not interfere with their mission. The aircraft carrier would have the most impact on Naval Base Guam visitors and waterfront personnel. Most visitors to the Naval Base would not consider an aircraft carrier a negative impact to the Navy harbor view plane. The operational activities would take place within an active industrial Naval harbor environment. Therefore, these new activities and features would not be expected to have an adverse impact to visual resources.

13.2.2.3 Summary of Alternative 1 Impacts

Table 13.2-1 summarizes Alternative 1 impacts.

Table 13.2-1. Summary of Alternative 1 Impacts

Area	*Project Activities*	*Project Specific Impacts*
Onshore	Construction	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from onshore activities
	Operation	New elements would be introduced into the existing landscape and remove others, with the most substantial being a 50 ft (15.2 m) watch tower, that would be visible from some distant views.
Offshore	Construction	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from offshore activities

Area	*Project Activities*	*Project Specific Impacts*
	Operation	The most evident post-construction landscape feature would be a changed shoreline – i.e. from an uneven, rip-rap water's edge to a wharf raised 12 ft (3.6 m) above mean sea level that could be up to 1,325 ft (404 m) in length. During the aircraft carrier visits, the most significant visual feature would be the aircraft carrier itself, with its bridge deck and associated towers reaching 215 ft (66 m) high.

13.2.2.4 Alternative 1 Potential Mitigation Measures

There are no mitigation measures required.

13.2.3 Alternative 2 Former Ship Repair Facility (SRF)

13.2.3.1 Onshore

Onshore activities associated with Alternative 2 Former SRF (referred to as Alternative 2) include construction of a wharf/staging area with ground disturbance of approximately 6 ac (2.43 ha), an MWR area of 4 ac (1.62 ha), and various buildings including Port Operations Building, a substation, a water treatment facility, and a pump station. As part of the project, 10 existing structures (93-1, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2108, and 2072) would be demolished. A 600 ft (183 m) portion of E Street would be demolished and replaced south of the staging area.

As the Former SRF site is a port industrial area with no sensitive receptors, construction of the proposed facilities at the Alternative 2 location would not be expected to result in adverse impacts to visual resources.

13.2.3.2 Offshore

Offshore activities associated with Alternative 2 include dredging of the berthing area, the turning basin, and the channel bend; construction of a wharf at the Former SRF site; and the operations associated with the berthing of the aircraft carrier.

As the Former SRF site is a port industrial area, construction of the proposed facilities at the Alternative 2 location would not be expected to result in adverse impacts to visual resources. No adverse impacts to the view plane would result, as described under Alternative 1.

13.2.3.3 Summary of Alternative 2 Impacts

Table 13.2-2 summarizes Alternative 2 impacts.

Table 13.2-2. Summary of Alternative 2 Impacts

Area	*Project Activities*	*Project Specific Impacts*
Onshore	Construction	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from onshore activities
	Operation	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from onshore activities
Offshore	Construction	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from offshore activities
	Operation	No adverse impacts to visual resources are anticipated from offshore activities

13.2.3.4 Alternative 2 Potential Mitigation Measures

There are no mitigation measures required.

13.2.4 No-Action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative, no construction, dredging, or operations associated with the proposed aircraft carrier berthing would occur. Existing operations at Polaris Point, as a military training and recreational facility, and the Former SRF, as a commercial ship repair facility, would continue. Therefore, the no-action alternative would not have adverse impacts to visual resources.

13.2.5 Summary of Impacts

The visual impacts are similar for both alternatives, which are located in an industrial harbor. Construction impacts would be minor and temporary. The transient nuclear powered aircraft carrier capability-related changes to Apra Harbor would result in shoreside modifications to the visual environment at the two sites. The difference is the Former SRF site was previously developed and the Polaris Point site is under developed; however, they are both in industrial areas and the facilities would be consistent with the other waterfront facilities in the vicinity. The affected area would be within an active military base and military harbor facility surrounded by existing commercial port infrastructure. No adverse impacts are anticipated. Table 13.2-3 summarizes the potential impacts of each action alternative and the no-action alternative.

Table 13.2-3. Summary of Impacts

Alternative 1	*Alternative 2*	*No-Action Alternative*
Onshore Viewshed		
LSI • New elements would be introduced into the existing landscape and others removed, with the most substantial being a new 50 ft (15.2 m) watch tower that would be visible from some distant views.	NI	NI
Offshore Viewshed		
LSI • The most evident post-construction landscape feature would be a changed shoreline – i.e., from an uneven, rip rap water's edge to a wharf raised 12 ft (3.6 m) above mean sea level that could be up to 1,325 ft (404 m) in length. • During the aircraft carrier visits, the most notable visual feature would be the aircraft carrier itself, with its bridge deck and associated towers reaching 215 ft (66 m) high.	NI	NI

Legend: SI = Significant impact, SI-M = Significant impact mitigable to less than significant, LSI = Less than significant impact, NI = No impact, BI = Beneficial impact

13.2.6 Summary of Potential Mitigation Measures

As previously discussed, mitigation measures would not be required for either alternative.