

4.1 AESTHETICS

This chapter discusses the existing aesthetic character of the Project site and its surroundings, and evaluates the potential impacts to aesthetics associated with development of the Project. The following evaluation assesses visual character, scenic vistas, scenic highways, and light and glare. The aesthetics evaluation in this EIR is based in part on visual simulations prepared by the EIR consultant.

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes key State and City regulations and programs related to aesthetics at the Project site. There are no specific federal regulations applicable to aesthetics.

San Leandro General Plan

The City of San Leandro General Plan was adopted in 2002 and contains a vision for San Leandro through the year 2015 including policies and actions to help achieve that vision. The San Leandro General Plan¹ in its Land Use, and Historic Preservation and Community Design Elements, contain goals and policies applicable to the aesthetics of the Project site, as summarized in Table 4.1-1. These goals and policies identify some of the methods for maintaining and enhancing the visual character and qualities of the City of San Leandro, particularly related to the Project site and the surrounding area.

The San Leandro General Plan details a particular vision for certain “focal points” in the City of San Leandro, including the San Leandro Marina, which is the location of the Project. The San Leandro Marina is designated as a focal point because it is the centerpiece of the City’s largest recreation area.² As indicated in the San Leandro General Plan, the site “offers unique opportunities for new commercial uses that take advantage of the waterfront location, panoramic views, and proximity to nearby recreational amenities.”³ Aesthetic values are often highly subjective; however, this San Leandro General Plan language identifies key elements of the site’s aesthetic character. Additionally, because the Marina is referred to as the “crown jewel” in the City’s park system, the Land Use Element calls for future development to maintain high standards of quality.

The Historic Preservation and Community Design Element contains designated views, major gateways, key gateway streets, and activity centers, all of which are intended to build on the sense of place in the city. These elements are shown in Figure 4.1-1, which was taken from the Historic Preservation and Community Design Element of the San Leandro General Plan. As seen in Figure 4.1-1, the San Leandro General Plan identifies a significant view from the Project site across the harbor and towards the San Francisco Bay.

¹ Note: The City of San Leandro *General Plan 2002* was amended in 2001 to update the Housing Element.

² City of San Leandro, *General Plan 2002*, Land Use Element, Chapter 3.3 Business and Industry, page 3-98.

³ City of San Leandro, *General Plan 2002*, Land Use Element, Chapter 3.3 Business and Industry, page 3-98.



Source: San Leandro General Plan Update, 2002.

-  Significant Views
-  Major Gateways
-  Key Gateway Streets
-  Well-defined edges
-  Major Activity Areas

Figure 4.1-1
Community Design Features

AESTHETICS

TABLE 4.1-1 SAN LEANDRO GENERAL PLAN POLICIES RELEVANT TO AESTHETICS

Goal/Policy Number	Goal/Policy Text
Land Use	
Policy 2.08	<i>Privacy and Views-</i> Encourage residential alterations, additions, and new homes to be designed in a manner that respects the privacy of nearby homes and preserves access to sunlight and views. Wherever feasible, new or altered structures should avoid the disruption of panoramic or scenic views.
Policy 8.03	<i>Aesthetics-</i> Upgrade the City’s commercial corridors by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, control excessive signage, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along the corridors.
Policy 9.06	<i>Gateway Improvements-</i> Encourage “gateway” improvements which enhance the approach routes to the Marina while minimizing the impacts of increased traffic on area neighborhoods. Improvements could include new signage, streetscape enhancement along Marina Boulevard and Fairway Drive, entry monuments and landscaping at the Marina itself, and longer-term circulation changes.
Policy 9.07	<i>Urban Design-</i> Encourage cohesive urban design and high-quality architecture at the Marina. Buildings should be oriented to maximize water views and shoreline access. Architecture, signage, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and other amenities, should be coordinated to achieve an integrated design theme.
Historic Preservation and Community Design	
Goal 42	<i>Sense of Place-</i> Promote a stronger “sense of place” in San Leandro.
Policy 40.04	<i>Commemorative Art-</i> Promote murals, monuments, statues, and other forms of public art that commemorate San Leandro history and culture. Such projects should be incorporated in public buildings and major public works projects wherever feasible.
Policy 42.01	<i>Gateways-</i> Develop landscaped gateway features to identify neighborhoods, business districts, and major city entryways. Gateways should incorporate design and graphic themes that help define a unique identity for each neighborhood and district.
Policy 42.03	<i>Urban Design Improvements-</i> Use urban design elements such as bollards, pavers, fountains, signage, tree lighting, and street furniture (newspaper racks, benches, bus stops, planters, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.) to establish a stronger design identity for San Leandro’s commercial areas and make the street environment more inviting for pedestrians.
Policy 42.04	<i>Architectural Consistency-</i> In established neighborhoods, protect architectural integrity by requiring infill housing, replacement housing, and major additions or remodels to be sensitive to and compatible with the prevailing scale and appearance of adjacent development.
Policy 42.07	<i>Visual Landmarks-</i> Promote the development of “signature” buildings and monuments that provide visual landmarks and create a more distinctive and positive impression of San Leandro within the greater Bay Area. Local design guidelines should ensure that such buildings and monuments respect the character, scale, and context of the surrounding area.
Goal 43	<i>Quality Construction and Design-</i> Ensure that new construction and renovation contributes to the quality and overall image of the community.
Policy 43.01	<i>Promoting Quality Design-</i> Use the development review and permitting processes to promote high quality architecture and site design. Design review guidelines and zoning standards should ensure that the mass and scale of new structures are compatible with adjacent structures.
Policy 43.02	<i>Architectural Diversity-</i> In newly developing neighborhoods, promote architectural diversity and variety. Encourage variations in lot sizes, setbacks, orientation of homes, and other site features to avoid monotony and maintain visual interest.
Policy 43.03	<i>Multi-family Design-</i> Establish high standards of architectural and landscape design for multi-family housing development. Boxy or massive building designs should be avoided, ample open space and landscaping should be provided, and high quality construction materials should be used.
Policy 43.04	<i>Permitting and Inspection-</i> Maintain building inspection and code enforcement procedures that ensure that all construction is properly permitted, and that construction is completed as approved.
Policy 43.05	<i>Craftsmanship-</i> Encourage a high level of craftsmanship in new construction, and the use of exterior materials and façade designs that enhance the appearance of the City.

AESTHETICS

TABLE 4.1-1 SAN LEANDRO GENERAL PLAN POLICIES RELEVANT TO AESTHETICS

Goal/Policy Number	Goal/Policy Text
Policy 43.06	<i>Architectural Interest</i> - Encourage new structures to incorporate architectural elements that create visual interest such as trellises, awnings, overhangs, patios, and window bays. Avoid solid or blank street-facing walls.
Policy 43.07	<i>Commercial and Industrial Standards</i> - Improve the visual appearance of the City's commercial and industrial areas by applying high standards of architectural design and landscaping for new commercial and industrial development and the re-use or remodeling of existing commercial and industrial buildings.
Policy 43.08	<i>Signage</i> - Encourage commercial signage that is compatible with the building and streetscape, enhances the character of the surrounding area, and is not intrusive to nearby residential areas.
Goal 44	<i>A More Visually Attractive City</i> - Create a more visually attractive City, with well-landscaped and maintained streets, open spaces, and gathering places.
Policy 44.01	<i>Greening San Leandro</i> - Promote landscaping, tree planting, and tree preservation along San Leandro streets as a means of improving aesthetics, making neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly, providing environmental benefits, and creating or maintaining a park-like setting.
Policy 44.03	<i>Tree Removal and Replacement</i> - Discourage the removal of healthy trees and require replacements for any trees that are removed from street rights-of-way. Where healthy trees must be removed, consider their relocation to other suitable sites instead of their disposal. Encourage the preservation and proper care of mature trees throughout the City, particularly those which may have historic importance or contribute substantially to neighborhood character.
Policy 44.04	<i>Urban Open Space</i> - Encourage the incorporation of landscaped open spaces, such as plazas, courtyards and pocket parks, within new development and redevelopment projects.
Policy 44.05	<i>Street Beautification</i> - Upgrade the City's commercial thoroughfares by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, prohibit excessive or out-of-scale signage, remove billboards, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along these thoroughfares.
Policy 44.06	<i>Public Art</i> - Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should reflect and express the diversity of the City.
Policy 44.07	<i>Lighting</i> - Encourage street and parking lot lighting that creates a sense of security, complements building and landscape design, is energy-efficient, and avoids conflicts with nearby residential uses.

Views are important to the character of San Leandro, particularly in the Marina area where panoramic views of the Bay and other landmarks are visible. Gateways are intended to distinguish San Leandro from surrounding cities as well as to distinguish the distinct neighborhoods within San Leandro. Activity centers, like the San Leandro Marina, are places in the community where people gather. Building and landscape design in these areas are meant to be oriented toward a pedestrian-friendly environment.

City of San Leandro Zoning Code

The City of San Leandro Zoning Code contains several chapters that address aesthetic issues related to the Project. The Project site is currently zoned as a Commercial Recreation (CR) District but upon Project approval the site would be designated as Commercial Community (CC) with a Planned Development (PD) overlay. In Section 2-600, the Zoning Code states that the CC district is intended to provide sites for commercial centers containing a wide variety of commercial establishments. Uses including entertainment, restaurants, hotels and motels are permitted, subject to certain limitations necessary to avoid adverse impacts on adjacent uses.

AESTHETICS

The PD overlay is meant to establish a procedure for developing larger parcels, by way of eliminating rigidity and inequities that otherwise would result from a strict application of the zoning code and procedures which are designed primarily for smaller parcels (Section 3-1000). Additionally, the PD overlay would ensure thorough review procedures, encourage variety, avoid monotony, provide a mechanism for considering a variety of uses, encourage the allocation of improvements to public open space, and encourage the assembly of properties that might otherwise be developed in unrelated increments to the detriment of surrounding neighborhoods.

The Zoning Code contains a variety of development standards and required review processes applicable to the Project which pertain to aesthetics and are intended to preserve the character of the community, protect scenic resources, and prevent adverse impacts related to light and glare. In the base district, CC, development standards allow for a maximum height of 50 feet, a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.5, a minimum front setback of 10 feet, a minimum corner side setback of 10 feet and no required setback for interior side and rear yards. Additionally, a landscaped setback with a minimum depth of ten feet would be required to be provided within the front and corner side yards, and a minimum of 10 percent of the entire site must be landscaped. In order to prevent large blank walls, buildings over 25 feet in height with walls that extend longer than 100 feet, must provide architectural details such as offsets, recesses, reveals, window patterns, columns, or pilasters. Residential development in the CC district is subject to the same standards for height, density, and open space as would apply to residential development in the RM-2000 (22 dwelling units per acre) zone. The specific regulations for residential development are contained in sections 2-528, 2-540, and 2-558 of the Zoning Code. For the purposes of this Draft EIR, detailed site plans and architectural elevations that will be submitted for Site Plan Review will be evaluated under the Planned Development with respect to the CC district development standards.

Article 25 of the Zoning Code contains the regulations which apply to the City's review of development proposals. Under the proposed rezoning, a site plan would be required prior to the issuance of a building permit. The associated Site Plan Review regulations are contained in Section 5-2512 of the Zoning Code. This review would evaluate adherence to the standards discussed above, including height, setbacks, landscaping, and several other standards. Additionally, this review would confirm that buildings have adequate articulation, with appropriate window placement, use of detailing, or changes in building planes which provide visual interest. A public hearing before the Planning Commission and also one before the City Council would be required in accordance with the regulations pertaining to the Planned Development overlay. In addition to the review criteria listed above, the Planning Commission's review would also ensure that the development is compatible with its surroundings, and in conformance with the applicable policies in the Land Use Element including those listed above which pertain to aesthetics, views, gateways, and urban design.

City of San Leandro Municipal Code

Chapter 7-5, Building Code, of the San Leandro Municipal Code is based on and incorporates 2013 California Building Standards Code and sets forth provisions for building standards for development within the city. The Municipal Code establishes building standards for construction of things such as pedestrian walkways, seismic reinforcing, and soils and foundations.

AESTHETICS

CAL Green

California Green Building Standards Code of the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11, known as CALGreen, establish building standards aimed at enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts that have a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices. CALGreen includes standards for planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resource efficiency, and environmental quality. Specifically, Section 5.106.8, Light Pollution Reduction, establishes Backlight, Uplight, and Glare (BUG) ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for nonresidential development.

4.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

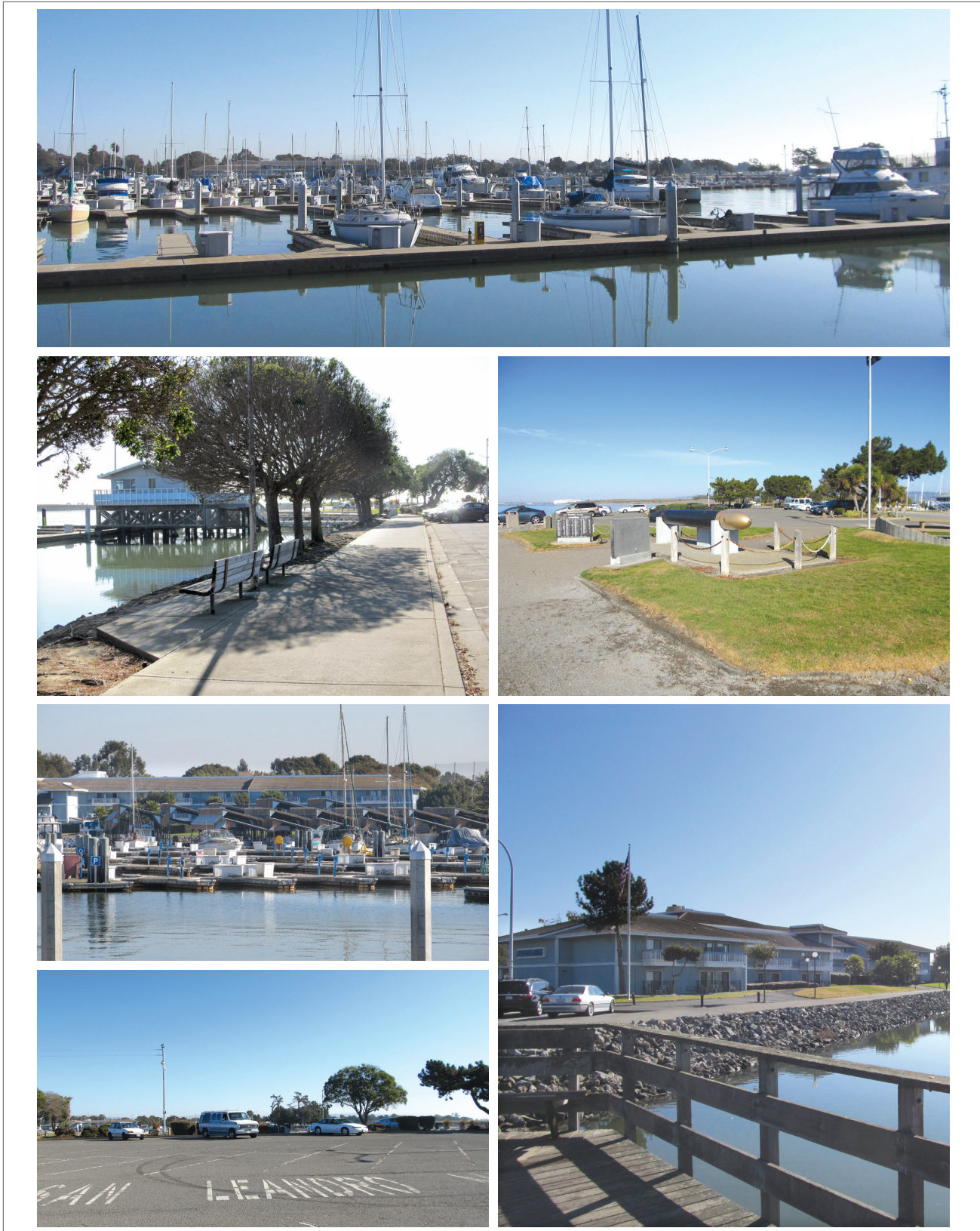
Visual Character

Landscape and Visual Character of the Site and Surroundings

The Project site contains an aging marina which, at this time, is largely suffering from blight. As a result, the relatively flat site consists of a large amount of vacant parking space, small wooden buildings associated with marine uses, docks and piers (some of which are in a state of disrepair), the vacant Blue Dolphin and Boatworks sites, the currently operating Marina Inn, Horatio's restaurant, El Torito, San Leandro Yacht Club, Spinnaker Yacht Club, and the Mulford-Marina Branch Library. A portion of the site at the southern end is unpaved and vacant (Boatworks site). Additionally, there are a variety of recreation and leisure facilities including bicycle and pedestrian paths, the nine-hole Marina Golf Course (including two relatively large water features), benches, picnic tables, barbecues, grass covered open space, trees, small and large boat launches, and observation points. Although there are existing public amenities such as benches, open space, and landscaped areas, an overall defined character is lacking and generally uninviting. Along the path of the outer boundary of the Project site along the water's edge, there are no public benches or areas for seating. Currently the 462-slip public boat harbor is at 30 percent occupancy which contributes to the underutilized character of the site. However, the presence of the boats in the harbor provide an attractive aspect to the character of the site since it provides a visual link to the San Francisco Bay, and contributes to the overall character of the marine environment in the area. In addition, the site contains a public art installation as well as commemorative displays.

The character of the site is also impacted by the adjacent uses and the character of those sites. Views of the Project Site are shown in Figure 4.1-2. Residential uses in the Marina area generally encompass neighborhoods to the northeast and east, including the Mulford Gardens, Marina Faire, Little Alaska, and the Seagate and Marina Gardens developments. These areas generally comprise of dense tree canopy, large lots, remnant farms, and an eclectic mix of older and newer homes.⁴ To the south and southeast are recreation uses in the form of Marina Park and the Tony Lema 18-hole Golf Course, as well as the Marina Faire neighborhood and Heron Bay neighborhood further to the south. These areas are characterized by the large amount of open space in the area and the pedestrian-oriented amenities including several walking and biking paths, part of which is a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail.

⁴ City of San Leandro, *General Plan*, page 3-25.



Source: PlaceWorks, 2014.

Figure 4.1-2
Views of the Project Site

AESTHETICS

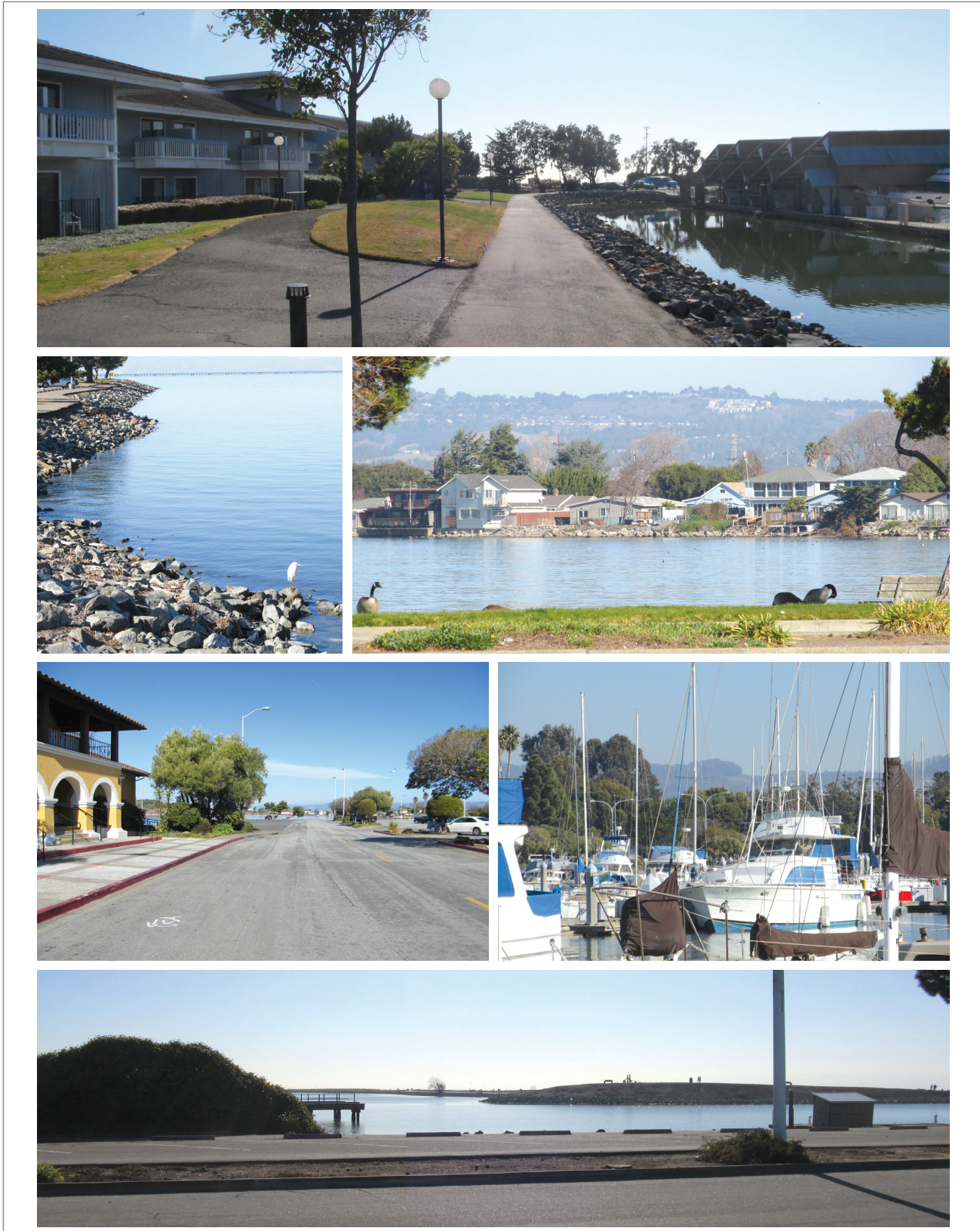
The Marina Faire neighborhood includes some newer homes, including several two-story homes. Heron Bay was developed in the mid-1990s with a combination of small-lot single-family homes and garden court-type residential units. To the west is the San Francisco Bay. Uses further out to the north include the Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline, Oakland International Airport, the City's Water Pollution Control Plant, and the Metropolitan Golf Links Golf Course. The Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline to the north is completely surrounded by the San Francisco Bay and industrial/commercial uses. The area surrounding the Oakland International Airport has an industrial character and contains a variety of airport-serving uses. The proximity of the airport to the Project site results in aircraft flying relatively low over the site affecting the visual character with their frequent presence.

The landscaping on the landside portion of the site west of Monarch Bay Drive is relatively sparse and the expanses of asphalt, rip rap and concrete dominate the site. Trees are dispersed throughout the site including a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees and several palm trees, particularly near the eastern end of the Marina, near Horatio's restaurant and the Marina Inn. Additionally, landscaped areas with a variety of shrubs and small plants can be seen throughout the site surrounding paths and dividing portions of the parking lots. The Marina Golf Course contains several mature and well-established evergreen trees. These trees line much of the course and create a visual barrier between the golf course side of the site and the Marina side of the site.

The site's position on the eastern edge of the San Francisco Bay and relatively flat topography allows for expansive views in all directions from the western portion of the site. This open character represents a departure from the visual character of the residential neighborhoods that exist east of the Project site. While a portion of the Mulford Gardens neighborhood is directly adjacent to the site, to the north, Monarch Bay Drive provides a visual separation because the shoreline is set back to the east, north of the site.

Views from the Project Site

As discussed above, the flat topography of the site combined with its location on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay allows for expansive views in nearly every direction. As show in Figure 4.1-3, on a clear day, distant views of the hills surrounding the Bay can be seen in all directions. To the northeast, views of the Oakland Piedmont hills area are possible. To the northwest, beyond the Oakland International Airport, one can see views of the Bay Bridge, the City of San Francisco, and far field views of the North Bay hills, including Mount Tamalpais. To the west, the hills across the Bay as well as development on the Peninsula are visible. To the southwest, the San Mateo Bridge and the open space provided by the San Francisco Bay allow for long-range, expansive views. To the east, partial views of the hills east of San Leandro are visible but these views are predominantly blocked by trees on the golf course and structures on the Project site.



Source: PlaceWorks, 2014.

Figure 4.1-3
Views from the Project Site

AESTHETICS

Views of the Project Site

From the residential development east of the Project site, views are largely obstructed by trees and shrubs along the eastern edge of the Marina Golf Course. However, partial views are available. From the north looking towards the site, due to the Marina jutting out into the Bay, clear views of the site are available from the portion of the Mulford Gardens neighborhood near the shore of the Bay, as well as from the Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline. From the west, passing boats would have a clear view of the site and the lack of any large distinguishing on-site features. From the south, the site can clearly be seen from Marina Park as well as the northwestern portion of the Tony Lema Golf Course

There are no State-designated scenic highways within the City of San Leandro. The closest State-designated scenic highway is an 11-mile stretch of Interstate 580 starting at the northern border of San Leandro and extending to the interchange with State Route 24 (SR 24) in Oakland. The portion of Interstate 580 that goes through San Leandro is eligible to become a State-designated scenic highway.⁵ However, that portion of Interstate 580 is about 1.4 miles east of the Project site.

Light and Glare

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky around and above developed urban areas, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky are an important part of the natural environment. Excessive light and glare can also be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species, and often reflects an unnecessarily high level of energy consumption. Light pollution has the potential to become an issue of increasing concern as new development contributes additional outdoor lighting installed for safety and other reasons.

As a result of existing development and the site's position on the Bay, the site generates and is subject to existing light and glare. Not only is there a large amount of reflection off of the Bay waters surrounding Marina, but also from the windows and other reflective surfaces of the docked boats and existing buildings on site. During daytime hours, the overall level of light is more prominent on the western portion of the site because of the large amount of tree cover on the Marina Golf Course and the lack of reflective surfaces there which limit the amount of light and glare experienced. Additionally, the trees which line the western edge of the Marina Golf Course create a partial barrier from the light from the Bay to enter the course. Overall, depending on the amount of cloud cover, the amount of reflective surfaces and thereby the overall level of light and reflection on the site has a baseline level that is relatively high but not uniform throughout the site.

4.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would result in a significant visual quality impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

⁵ California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Alameda County, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed on July 15, 2014.

2. Substantially degrade the view from a scenic highway, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.
3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
4. Expose people on- or off-site to substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

This section discusses the impacts of the Project on aesthetic resources.

AES-1 The Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

The Project would have a significant environmental impact if it would result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Views from the Project site are limited due to the Project site’s relatively flat topography and, as a result, far-field views are generally obscured by existing vegetation and structures. However, as described above, the San Leandro General Plan identifies a Significant View from the Project site looking to the west, towards the San Francisco Bay. Construction of the Project would result in changes to this view.

The significant view as identified by the San Leandro General Plan is shown above in Figure 4.1-1. As shown, the near-field view is dominated by views of boats in the harbor. Mid-to-far-field views include views to the horizon including Mulford Point, San Francisco Bay, and the ridgeline of the Santa Cruz Mountains on the San Francisco Peninsula on clear days.

Photo simulations of the Project are shown below in Figures 4.1-5a through 4.1-12b. The near-field views would be substantially altered by the removal of the existing marina. This change would remove views of boats, docks and other marine-related activities. Existing marina views would be replaced by views of an open expanse of water that would include natural shorelines and public amenities. Although the subject matter of the view would change as a result of the Project, the Project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on near-field views.

The mid- to far-field views would also be altered by the Project due to the inclusion of two restaurants and the 200-room hotel on Mulford Point. The addition of these Project components would partially obstruct views of the horizon and of the ridgeline of the Santa Cruz Mountains on the San Francisco Peninsula. However, as shown below in Figures 4.1-11a and 4.1-12a, the existing views of the horizon are already partially obstructed by boat masts in the harbor and existing vegetation on Mulford Point. Although the inclusion of new structures on Mulford Point would alter the mid-to-far-field view, the Significant View would not be adversely affected because components of the view (Mulford Point, San Francisco Bay, and the Santa Cruz Mountains, etc.) would still be visible, and the views would not be substantially different. The Project also provides multiple opportunities where mid- to far-field views would be available, such as the public promenade, and pedestrian lookouts, which would maximize public views, along with shoreline access.

AESTHETICS

Although the Project would change the Significant View identified in the San Leandro General Plan, the major components of the view, both near-field and mid-to-far-field, would remain albeit in a slightly altered form. As a result, the project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact to scenic vistas.

Applicable Regulations:

- None

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-2	The Project would not substantially degrade the view from a scenic highway, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.
--------------	---

The closest scenic highway is a portion of Interstate 580 starting at the northern border of San Leandro and extending north to SR 24 in the city of Oakland. There are no views of the site available from this scenic highway. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on views from a state scenic highway.

Applicable Regulations:

- None

Significance Before Mitigation: No impact.

AES-3	The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
--------------	---

The valuable visual features of the site occur on both its landside and waterside areas. On the landside, the golf course provides a landscaped open space that is man-made rather than natural. The golf course is lined with trees that largely block it from view of the neighboring residences and from the waterside Marina portion of the site. On the waterside, the existing boats in the marina and the open waters of the harbor are important visual features. Most of the Marina provides immediate and distant views of the Bay. As discussed above, however, the visual character of the site under existing conditions is also defined by the aging and underutilized Marina, which at this time, is visually uncoordinated. The vacant Boatworks site and remnants of the Blue Dolphin site, the high vacancy rate for the boat slips, as well as broad expanses of parking lot and sparse landscaping contribute to the lack of cohesion and appearance of disuse, increasing the dilapidated character.

The Marina is visually separated from the eastern portion of the site, which contains the Marina 9-hole Golf Course. The large open parking lots of the Marina are currently in contrast with the grass and tree-covered golf course. The Project would significantly alter the visual character of the site. On the landside, new residential development would replace a portion of the golf course. The residential development will be landscaped in accordance with the City's standards and most of the existing trees will remain. Trees that are removed will be replaced in accordance with the City's tree ordinance, as discussed below. The five golf course tees and holes in the development area will be reconfigured where they will still provide an open space quality, albeit man-made. Based on the above discussion, the Project will change the landside area but would not substantially degrade its visual character. On the water side, the 462-boat

AESTHETICS

harbor which is currently approximately 30 percent occupied will be replaced by open water in the harbor, with harbor-side shoreline enhancements, pedestrian paths and lookouts, a small boat launch and kayak storage, among other things. Existing parking lots and occasional wooden buildings will be replaced by the hotel, conference center, mixed use and other buildings. The new development will have spaces between the buildings, and a 20-foot- wide public promenade on the bayside of the project will provide continuous and unobstructed views of San Francisco Bay. The Project will also change the waterside portion of the site but will not substantially degrade its character. The Project will provide development with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses intended to reactivate the Marina and that is oriented to preserve and enhance water views and shoreline access, especially as to views of the Bay, in compliance with San Leandro General Plan goals and policies.

In order to more clearly convey the changes to the visual character of the area that would result from the Project, a series of photo simulations were prepared from representative viewpoints across the Project site. Figure 4.1-4 shows the locations of all of the viewpoints described below. The simulations are based on the details provided in the preliminary site plan and are primarily intended to show how the massing of the proposed buildings would affect the visual character of the site. While simulations were prepared for purposes of the analysis, the representation is conceptual and does not necessarily reflect final architectural details. Please note that the block-like representation of the proposed structures are a conservative depiction and the overall design of these buildings would be subject to change as a result of the design review (Site Plan Review) process required by the City.

Given that Marina Boulevard is one of the major entry points to the Project site, Viewpoint A was prepared to show how the gateway to the site would be affected by the proposed development. As seen in Figure 4.1-5a, Viewpoint A – Existing View, there are existing gateway improvements, which serve to signal the entry to the site. The main difference that would result from implementation of the Project, as seen in Figure 4.1-5b, Viewpoint A – Photo Simulation, is the placement of the 3-story residential units on both sides of Monarch Bay Drive, on the northern part of the site, which would partially block existing public views of the Bay from this entry point. These components of the Project are identified as the North Golf Course Residential and North Residential components. While some existing views would be blocked by these new buildings, the addition of these residential units would replace parking areas and contribute to the visual quality of the site toward creating a more ordered urban neighborhood of multiple building forms, rather than the existing sparsely developed and dilapidated waterfront property. Moreover, the landscaping improvements and circulation changes associated with these residential units would be consistent with Policy 9.06 of the San Leandro General Plan, which calls for improvements to the approach routes to the Marina, including streetscape improvements and circulation changes. Additionally, as discussed above in the regulatory setting, the style of the buildings would be required to adhere to the San Leandro Zoning Code development standards and would undergo review by the Planning Commission and City Council, which would ensure adherence to standards which would affect the visual character including those pertaining to height, setbacks, architectural features, and urban design. Thus, the Project would preserve some of the existing Bay views and would provide attractive new development that provides many opportunities to view and enjoy the shoreline, harbor, and Bay amenities.

At this time public views of the Project site from the Mulford Gardens residential neighborhood area (to the east of the Project site) are limited due to the a large number of tall trees on the eastern side of the Marina Golf Course. Viewpoints B and C were prepared to show the impact that would occur in this area from construction of the Project with respect to visual character and public views.



Figure 4.1-4
Visual Simulation Viewpoints

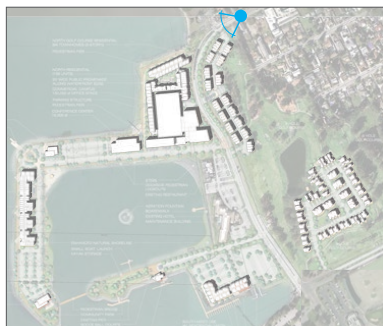


Figure 4.1-5a
Viewpoint A - Existing View

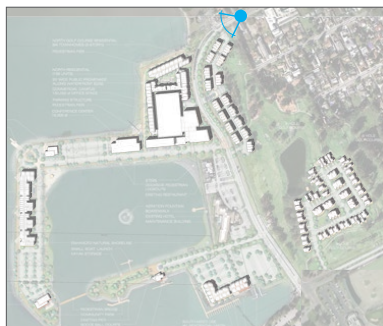


Figure 4.1-5b
Viewpoint A - Photo Simulation

AESTHETICS

As seen in Figure 4.1-6a, Viewpoint B – Existing View, the terminus of West Avenue 133rd is largely surrounded by tall trees and bushes, both in the foreground on residential properties, as well as on the border of the Marina 9-hole Golf Course. As a result of the trees on the border of the golf course and Monarch Bay Drive, views of the Marina itself and the San Francisco Bay are very limited under existing conditions. As seen in Figure 4.1-6b, Viewpoint B – Photo Simulation, the main change to the character of this viewpoint would be the addition of the North Golf Course residential units. The screening provided by the trees in the foreground, which are proposed to remain, helps to break up the mass of the new buildings. Moreover, the fact that the trees along the border of the golf course and Monarch Bay Drive block long range views under existing conditions helps to minimize the impact of these changes since the range of views would be similar under existing and Project conditions. The visibility of small portions of the proposed buildings behind the North Golf Course Residential component would have a minimal impact to public views since only small portions would be visible and there is a considerable distance from the existing views from West Avenue 133rd and the proposed buildings west of Monarch Bay Drive. A break in the row of housing adjacent to the terminus of West Avenue 133rd would allow for the retention of some of the longer range views onto the Marina, though there would still be trees blocking much of this view. Through that break in the North Golf Course Residential component, people standing at the end of West Avenue 133rd would be able to see small portions of the 150,000 square foot commercial campus which as seen in Figure 4.1-6b would be placed just north of the existing Horatio's Restaurant. Compliance with the applicable development standards for height, setbacks, landscaping and architecture, and the relatively small visible portion of the buildings would ensure that all of these buildings would be compatible with their surroundings and in conformance with all of the policies in the San Leandro General Plan pertaining to urban design.

As seen in Figure 4.1-7a, Viewpoint C – Existing View, similar to Viewpoint B, the terminus of West Avenue 134th is largely surrounded by trees and other vegetation. As seen in Figure 4.1-7b, Viewpoint C – Photo Simulation, intervening landscaping and the distance of the proposed development from this public view point, due to the buffering provided by the Marina 9-hole Golf Course, would serve to minimize the impact of the new buildings on this vantage point. The North Golf Course Residential buildings would block nearly all of the other proposed buildings west of the North Golf Course Residential. However, while small portions of the tops of buildings behind the North Golf Course Residential buildings may be visible, this would not result in a substantial change to existing views due to the screening that the existing trees provide. The required development standards review described above would ensure that all of these buildings would be compatible with their surroundings and in conformance with all of the policies in the San Leandro General Plan pertaining to urban design.

Viewpoint D shows the effect of the Project on the entry point to the south of the Project site and represents the view that pedestrians entering from Fairway Drive or people parking in the Monarch Bay Golf Club parking lot might see when looking toward the Project site. As seen in Figure 4.1-8a, Viewpoint D – Existing View, from the intersection of Fairway Drive and Monarch Bay Drive, there are existing long-range views of the San Francisco Bay as well as views of a portion of Faro Point which is occupied by Marina Park. Existing views of the Project site from this vantage point are characterized generally by open parking lots, sparse landscaping, and trees along Monarch Bay Drive. As seen in Figure 4.1-8b, Viewpoint D – Photo Simulation, the primary change to the character of this view point would result from the addition of the South Mixed-Use structure.

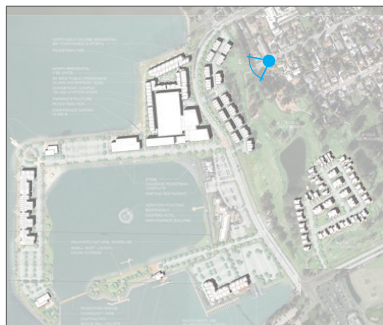


Figure 4.1-6a
Viewpoint B - Existing View

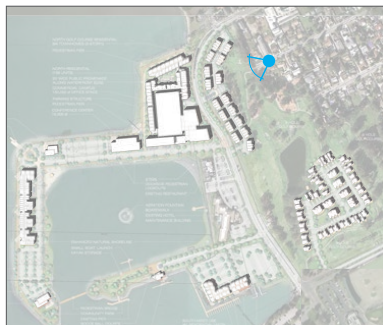


Figure 4.1-6b
Viewpoint B - Photo Simulation

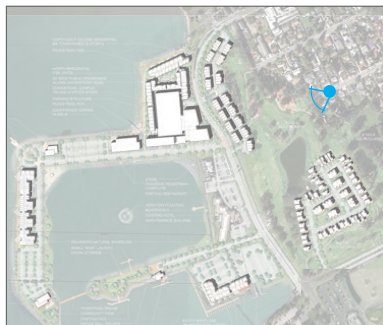


Figure 4.1-7b
Viewpoint C - Photo Simulation

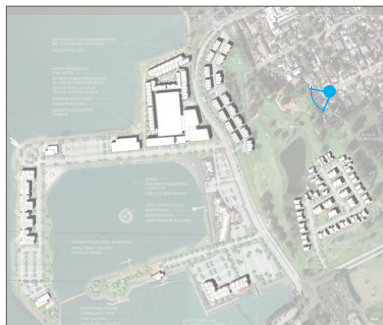
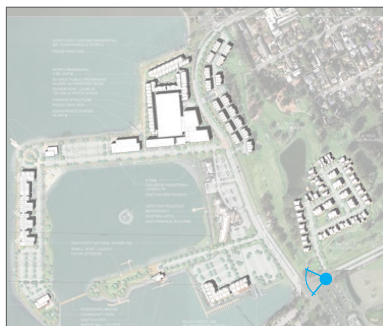
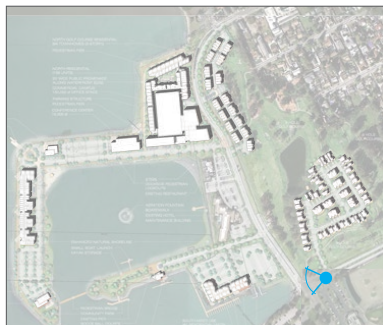


Figure 4.1-7a
Viewpoint C - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-8a
Viewpoint D - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-8b
Viewpoint D - Photo Simulation

AESTHETICS

The addition of this structure would block some views of the Marina from this vantage point. Existing trees on the site and architectural features to break up the building mass would visually break up the South Mixed-Use structure from this viewpoint, which would preserve some views of Marina Park. Furthermore, existing long-range views of the San Francisco Bay and Marina Park, which add to the character of the site, would be retained.

Viewpoint E represents the view from Mulford Point, looking east toward the Project site. As seen in Figure 4.1-9a, Viewpoint E – Existing View, under existing conditions this vantage is characterized by open water with docked boats. The hills east of San Leandro and Oakland are visible in the background and the existing park on the south side of the Marina is visible on the right side of this viewpoint. With the eventual elimination of the boat slips and thereby the boats in the harbor, as seen in Figure 4.1-9b, Viewpoint E – Photo Simulation, this would increase the amount of open water in the harbor, enhancing the water views and shoreline setting of the site. Although improvements are proposed at both Pescador and Mulford Point, such as a community park and bocce ball courts, the hills in the background would remain visible from these park areas at this viewpoint. The elimination of the boats in the harbor would be a departure from the existing character of the site. As discussed before, the Marina area is envisioned in the San Leandro General Plan as the “crown jewel” of the City’s parks system and elimination of the boat slips would allow for additional public recreation opportunities in the form of small boat activities, including kayaking, paddle boarding, and canoeing. The shoreline and marine-based qualities of the site would be preserved as the sight of boats docked in the harbor would be replaced by the sight of the water itself and individuals recreating in the harbor. Removal of the harbor, resulting from siltation over time, would be in conformance with the San Leandro General Plan and would be a positive effect of the project. Additionally, the dilapidated Marina infrastructure visible on the left side of Figure 4.1-9a would be eliminated, including the removal of rip rap and restoration of the natural shoreline, with implementation of the Project. This would contribute to the orderly developed form of the area, adding to the vibrancy of the site.

Viewpoint F represents the view experienced from the existing Horatio’s restaurant, looking to the west, onto the Marina. Due to the configuration of the existing boat slips, this view is dominated by docked boats and boat slips. As seen in Figure 4.1-10a, Viewpoint F – Existing View, very little of the westernmost finger of the Marina is visible at this time due to the boats which screen this portion of the Marina from view. The existing San Leandro Yacht Club building is visible on the right side of this picture. As described above, eventual elimination of the boat slips and boats docked in the harbor. Figure 4.1-10b, Viewpoint F – Photo Simulation, shows that with the elimination of the boats and slips, a much more expansive view onto the Marina and San Francisco Bay are allowed for. The hills on the peninsula become more visible and the westernmost portion of the Marina comes into view. The elimination of the boats in the harbor would represent a departure from the existing character of the site, however, this change would result in increased opportunities for public recreation, more expansive views, increased open space, and increased access to the shoreline and harbor basin. Moreover, since the Marina is envisioned as a center for recreation in San Leandro, this change is consistent with the San Leandro General Plan. As demonstrated in the photo simulations, the Project would result in a substantial change in character; however, this change is not adverse.

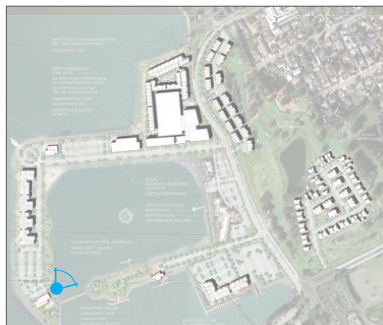
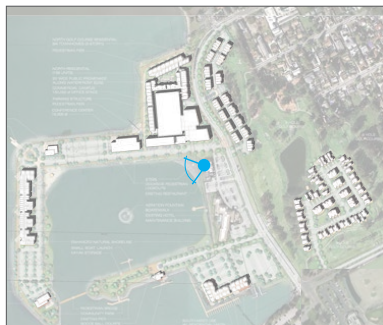


Figure 4.1-9b
Viewpoint E - Photo Simulation

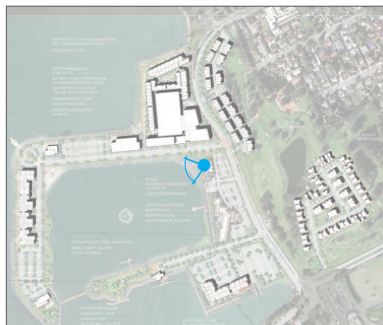


Figure 4.1-9a
Viewpoint E - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-10a
Viewpoint F - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-10b
Viewpoint F - Photo Simulation

AESTHETICS

Viewpoints G1 and G2 show two viewing angles from the location of the existing Marina Inn. Viewpoint G1 looks to the northwest from the hotel and G2 looks to the southwest from the hotel. Figure 4.1-11a, Viewpoint G1 – Existing View, was taken from the third floor of the Marina Inn and shows the view experienced by people staying in the hotel. As shown, the foreground of the view is dominated by the existing boats, slips and large, heavy metal clad protective structures for boats in the harbor. In the background the hills across the San Francisco Bay to the west are visible, as well as the air traffic control tower for the Oakland International Airport and vegetation in the adjacent Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline. Figure 4.1-11b, Viewpoint G1 – Photo Simulation, shows that with implementation of the Project, the office buildings and conference center which would be built on the north side of the Marina would block much of the existing mid-field views of the Oakland International Airport and Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline vegetation. Additionally, the hotel proposed to be constructed on the western finger of the Marina would block a portion of the far-field view across the San Francisco Bay but would maintain some of the existing views. However, only a portion of this existing view would be blocked and the removal of the boats in the harbor would allow for more expansive near-field views. The Project would change the views from this vantage point but would maintain and improve views of open water across the harbor and would retain the shoreline and marine character of the views. The change to these views would be a change, but the impact would be less than significant.

Looking to the southwest from the Marina Inn, as seen in Figure 4.1-12a, Viewpoint G2 – Existing View, there are open parking lots, boat docks and ancillary facilities in the foreground. In the background, the end of Faro Point is visible and further in the background the hills across the San Francisco Bay are visible. Figure 4.1-12b, Viewpoint G2 – Photo Simulation, shows that there would not be a significant change in the character of the site from this viewpoint. The elimination of the boats and slips as well as the addition of the proposed aquatic center are the primary differences, however; the new aquatic center would be screened by trees and the elimination of the boats in the harbor would be consistent with the intent of the San Leandro General Plan for the reasons discussed above. The change to visual character reflected in these views would be less than significant.

Although the Project would alter the character of the Project site, as described, the changes would in many cases result in beneficial impacts through the incorporation of project components intended to provide attractive limited development that enhances the visual character as well as the recreational amenities of Project site. As a result, the Project would result in *less-than-significant* impacts and would not substantially degrade the visual character of the Project site.

Urban Decay Analysis

One way that the Project could affect the visual character within the vicinity of the Project site would be if it were to result in urban decay. Urban decay or urban blight can result if a new development project saturates a market, putting competitors out of business, thereby creating long-term vacancies in competitive centers that would, in turn, lead to urban decay. Concerns have been raised regarding the viability of existing hotels in light of the proposed 200-room hotel included in the Project. Therefore, an urban decay analysis was completed for this Project and is included in Appendix B.



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-11a
Viewpoint G1 - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-11b
Viewpoint G1 - Photo Simulation



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-12a
Viewpoint G2 - Existing View



— — Ridgeline

Figure 4.1-12b
Viewpoint G2 - Photo Simulation

AESTHETICS

According to the urban decay analysis, based on current demand, after the hotel component of the Project is constructed there would be a 74 percent overall occupancy rate within the Oakland-Hayward trade area and a 73 percent occupancy rate in the midscale and upper-midscale class market segment in this trade area. The analysis determined that the Project would not increase the aggregate supply levels for hotels such that the occupancy rate would fall below 60 percent, which is considered to be the threshold at which hotels generally become unprofitable and represent an unhealthy market. Moreover, this analysis found that it is unlikely that the Project would lower occupancy rates below 70 percent which is considered to be a healthy level. This means that the hotel market would not be overbuilt and it is unlikely that the Project would result in urban decay which could alter the visual character of the Project site or its surroundings. As a result, a *less-than-significant* impact would occur with respect to urban decay.

Shade and Shadows

In order to assess the potential changes to the character of the site resulting from shade and shadows that would result from structures proposed by the Project, a shading study was conducted. The diagrams included in Appendix C, Shade/Shadow Diagrams, show the shade/shadow on four days of the year; the spring equinox, summer solstice, fall equinox, and the winter solstice. Additionally, in order to provide a summary of the shade/shadow created by the Project, four times throughout each day are depicted: 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. The diagrams in Appendix C only include shade/shadow created by the Project buildings, as represented by worst-case building massing.⁶

A significant impact to aesthetics could result with respect to shade and shadows if new development cast significantly large shadows on existing buildings, gathering areas, and/or its general surroundings, such that the character of the site was significantly, adversely altered. The diagrams showing the shade/shadow on the summer and winter solstice represent the extreme locations of the sun relative to the planet throughout the year and therefore show the most extreme shade/shadow created by the Project. The diagrams showing the shade/shadow on the spring and fall equinoxes represent average shade/shadow created by the Project. In order to determine whether or not the Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings as a result of shade and shadow impacts, the diagrams showing the shade/shadow on the summer and winter solstice are most useful for a conservative analysis. As these diagrams show, the shadows cast by the proposed buildings would not substantially shade existing buildings or gathering places, on- or off-site, under even the most extreme conditions. Moreover, these most extreme conditions, while cyclical, would be temporary. For these reasons, the shade/shadow impacts of the Project would not be significant.

Overall, as discussed above, the Project would result in substantial changes on the site which would affect the site's visual appearance and character. However, since the proposed changes would be consistent with the San Leandro General Plan and would result in preservation of most views, increase in water views of the harbor through improvements to the promenade and addition of public lookouts, removal of dilapidated structures, provision of attractive low-profile structures and landscaping, and a more vibrant shoreline, the changes would not result in a degradation of the existing site character. Additionally, Project

⁶ Note: The shade/shadow analysis only depicts shade/shadow from buildings proposed by the Project, and does not include potential shade/shadow from landscaping features and/or existing structures.

AESTHETICS

improvements would result in improvements to public spaces, such as the community park at the end of Mulford Point Drive. Furthermore, as shown in the Urban Decay Analysis prepared for the Project, since it is not anticipated that the Project would result in urban decay off-site, the Project would not have the potential to result in a degradation of the visual character of areas off-site. Therefore, a *less-than-significant* impact would result in this respect.

Applicable Regulations:

- San Leandro General Plan
- San Leandro Zoning Code

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-4 The Project would not expose people on- or off-site to substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Although the Project site has been historically developed and currently includes sources of light and glare, development of the Project would result in new structures and increased intensity of non-residential development and increased density of residential development. As a result, the Project would create additional sources of light and glare. Sources of nighttime light include street and parking lighting, lighting illuminated from new buildings, and outdoor security lights resulting in an increase in the total amount of light emanating from the Project site. In addition, the new residential uses within the site and adjacent residential properties would be sensitive receptors and would be affected by an increase in light and glare. However, all proposed development would be required to conform to San Leandro Zoning Code regulations pertaining to the abatement of unreasonable light and glare including those contained in Section 4-1732, Lighting; Section 4-1670, Performance Standards; Section 5-2512, Site Plan Review Standards; Section 4-1676, Airport Safety Zones; and Section 4-1806, Regulations for On-Premises Signs. Additionally, CALGreen Section 5.106.8 regulates light pollution by establishing maximum Backlight, Uplight and Glare (BUG) ratings for light fixtures. These regulations would assure that day and nighttime conditions would not be adversely affected by light with provisions including the requirement that outdoor parking area lighting create no cone of direct illumination greater than sixty degrees from a light source higher than six feet and that, that cone of direct illumination not shine directly onto an adjacent street, as described in Section 4-1732, Lighting. Implementation of these regulations would be assured by the necessary review by City Staff and Provision D., in Section 5-2512, Site Plan Review Standards which requires that site plans submitted to the City detail features, such as signs, fences, and lighting for buildings, parking lots, and/or driveways and minimize off-site glare. Glare would be minimized through compliance with Section 4-1670(D), which requires that mirror or highly reflective glass shall not cover more than 20 percent of a building surface visible from a street unless an applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Zoning Enforcement Official that use of such glass would not significantly increase glare visible from adjacent streets or pose a hazard for moving vehicles. For these reasons, a *less-than-significant* impact would result with respect to substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

AESTHETICS

Applicable Regulations:

- San Leandro General Plan
- San Leandro Zoning Code
- San Leandro Municipal Code

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACT DISCUSSION

AES-5	The Project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in less than significant cumulative impacts with respect to aesthetics.
--------------	--

A cumulative impact would be considered significant if, taken together with past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects in the area, it would result in a substantial contribution to an adverse effect with respect to any of the standards of significance discussed above. The nature of the visual influence of physical development is such that multiple projects would contribute to a cumulative aesthetic impact only when located proximate to one another. In order to significantly impact visual quality, projects must be contained in the same view shed and visually associated within similar perspectives. For this reason, the following analysis accounts for the general vicinity of the Project site. Given that there are no vacant, developable lots in the direct vicinity nor are there any reasonably foreseeable projects proposed to be built in the direct vicinity of the Project site, the cumulative impacts with respect to aesthetics would be *less than significant*.

The Project site is bounded to the west by the San Francisco Bay, to the north by residential development, to the south by open space and recreation uses, and to the east by recreation and residential uses. This results in the Project site being relatively visually isolated. There are no vacant, developable lots in the direct vicinity nor are there any reasonably foreseeable projects proposed to be built in the direct vicinity of the Project site; therefore, the Project would not contribute to significant cumulative impact related to aesthetics. As a result, a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact would occur.

Applicable Regulations:

- None

Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.