

4.1 AESTHETICS

This chapter describes the existing aesthetic character of the study area and evaluates the potential environmental consequences of future development that could occur by adopting and implementing the proposed project. A summary of the relevant regulatory setting and existing conditions is followed by a discussion of the General Plan and cumulative impacts.

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes key State and City regulations and programs related to aesthetics in the study area. There are no specific federal regulations applicable to aesthetics.

State Regulations

California Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program, maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), protects State scenic highway corridors from changes which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to the highways. Caltrans has designated the segment of Interstate 280 (I-280) that runs from the Santa Clara County line to the San Bruno city limit as a scenic highway.¹ This State-designated scenic highway runs approximately 1 mile along the southern edge of the city. Caltrans describes the scenic value of I-280 as follows: “The motorist is offered middleground forest and mountain vistas, background water and mountain panoramas, and enclosed lake and mountain ridge views as the route traverses the environmentally fragile valley created by the San Andreas Earthquake Fault.”²

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), commonly referred to as the “California Building Code” (CBC). The CBC is located in Part 2 of Title 24. The CBC is updated every three years, and the current 2013 CBC went into effect in January 2014. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. The 2013 CBC has been adopted for use by the City of Menlo Park, according to Section 12.04.010 of the Menlo Park Municipal Code.

Commercial and residential buildings are plan-checked by local City and County building officials for compliance with the CBC.

¹ California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highways Program, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm, accessed on February 26, 2015.

² Caltrans, California Scenic Highway Mapping Program, Route 280 Photo Album, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/photos/p_rte280.htm, accessed on February 26, 2015.

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CAL Green

California Green Building Standards Code of the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11, known as CALGreen, establishes 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. 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.

Local Regulations

Menlo Park General Plan

The City of Menlo Park General Plan includes goals, policies, and programs relevant to the aesthetic factors potentially affected by the proposed project. Applicable goals, policies, and programs are identified and assessed for their effectiveness later in this chapter under Section 4.1.3, Impact Discussion.

Menlo Park Municipal Code

The City of Menlo Park Municipal Code, organized by title, chapter, and section, contains all ordinances for Menlo Park. Title 13, Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities, Title 15, Subdivisions, and Title 16, Zoning, include regulations relevant to aesthetics and visual resources in Menlo Park.

Title 12 Adoption of Codes

Under Section 12.04.100A(E)(C)(1), lighting in multiple family dwellings is recommended for aisles, passageways, and recesses related to and within the building complex. The lighting level should be illuminated with an intensity of at least one foot-candle at the ground level during the hours of darkness. Lighting devices shall be protected by weather and vandalism resistance covers.

Title 13 Street, Sidewalk, and Utilities Regulations

Street, sidewalk, and utilities regulations are included in Title 13 of the Municipal Code. The ordinance provides development standards related to aesthetics such as landscaping, lighting, street trees, heritage trees and screening and undergrounding utilities.

Title 15 Subdivisions

Title 15 includes subdivision regulations that are established to ensure the orderly development of subdivisions and condominiums. Chapter 15.16 provides standards for surveying, design and construction, and installation of relevant infrastructure. Section 15.16.220 may allow for the standards to be varied when, amongst other conditions, a project sets out permanent scenic easements. Chapter 15.34 includes regulations for the development of condominiums.

Title 16 Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance, which, amongst other purposes, is intended to preserve and extend the charm and beauty inherent to the character of the city and encourage building construction of pleasing design. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth the standards requiring use permit and/or architectural control review and stipulating aesthetic criteria for development, such as ensuring that a development's proposed design and size is appropriate for the location and is compatible with adjacent uses and resources. Specifically, the Zoning Ordinance references the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan for design standards in the Specific Plan Area, provides standards for architectural design for R-4-S, High Density Residential District, Special (Chapter 16.23) and also sets forth development standards related to aesthetics, including preservation of historic buildings (Chapter 16.54), fencing (Chapter 16.64), and daylight planes for residential development (Chapter 16.67). Additionally, under Section 16.68.020, Architectural Control, the planning commission, architectural committee, or community development director will review architectural drawings, including plans for buildings consisting of elevations of the proposed building or structure, proposed landscaping or other treatment of the grounds around such building or structure, and proposed design of, and access to required parking facilities for all building permit applications, with the exception of single-family dwellings, duplexes, and accessory buildings. The findings for architectural control review are as follows:

1. That the general appearance of the structures is in keeping with character of the neighborhood;
2. That the development will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the city;
3. That the development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood;
4. That the development provides adequate parking as required in all applicable city ordinances and has made adequate provisions for access to such parking;
5. That the development is consistent with any applicable specific plan.

Height Limits in the Bayfront Area

Table 4.1-1 shows the existing height limits by zoning designation in the Bayfront Area.

El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

The El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (ECR/D Specific Plan) establishes a framework for private and public improvements on El Camino Real, in the Caltrain station area and in downtown Menlo Park for the next several decades. The plan's focus is on the character and extent of enhanced public spaces, the character and intensity of private infill development and circulation and connectivity improvements. It includes a strategy for implementation of public space improvements, such as wider sidewalks and plazas, and other infrastructure improvements. The ECR/D Specific Plan contains design standards and guidelines to ensure that the community character and aesthetics of the area are realized in the Specific Plan Area.

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TABLE 4.1-1 EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT BY ZONE IN THE BAYFRONT AREA

Zoning District	Maximum Building Height Limit
R-4-S(AHO) (High-Density Residential District, Special, Affordable Housing Overlay)	40 feet
R-4-S (Residential)	40 feet
C-2-B (Neighborhood Commercial, Restrictive)	30 feet
C-2-S (Neighborhood Commercial, Special)	To Be Determined by Planning Commission
C-4 (General Commercial)	30 feet
P-F (Public Facilities)	n/a
M-2 (General Industrial)	35 feet
M3 (Commercial Business Park)	45 feet

Source: Menlo Park Municipal Code, Title 16, Zoning. 2015.

4.1.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Visual Character

The city is primarily built out and nestled between the built environments of Atherton and Redwood City, East Palo Alto, and Palo Alto, and the San Francisco Bay (Bay). Menlo Park can generally be described as a modern suburb that encompasses a variety of natural landscapes. The southwestern most portion of Menlo Park consists of residential hillside development. The central and southern portions of the city include a mix of housing types, business parks, shopping centers, and public uses ranging from low- to mid-rise development. Northeastern Menlo Park abuts the Bay and contains wetlands and vegetated open space, including marshes, flatlands, and shoreline of the Bay. To the south and west of the Bay, the city contains a mixture of light industry warehouses, business parks, and single-family and multi-family residential uses.

The types of land use changes that may have the potential to impact the visual setting can include more intense development and increased heights. Under the proposed project, changes to the development potential that would have the potential to impact the visual setting beyond what is currently allowed under the existing General Plan would only occur in the Bayfront Area. Accordingly, the following description will focus on where change to the existing visual resources as a result of new development potential in the Bayfront Area could occur.

The Bayfront Area is essentially the current “M-2 General Industrial Zoning District” and has been historically defined by light industrial/office use; however, under recent planning updates, multifamily housing is currently permitted in some parts of the Bayfront Area. The Bayfront Area is different from other Menlo Park residential and commercial districts in street patterns, building placement and lot coverage, building types, and landscaping. The Bayfront Area is subdivided by four regional infrastructure

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corridors: US 101, Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84), the Dumbarton Rail Corridor, and the Hetch Hetchy pipeline, and is bounded by the marshlands of San Francisco Bay and former salt ponds owned by the Leslie Salt Company. The road network includes the US 101 freeway, divided arterial roads (Willow Road, Bayfront Expressway, Marsh Road) and local streets which vary in width (many without sidewalks). The local streets are laid out in an ad-hoc pattern to serve groups of parcels and do not appear as a single, coherent network. Building placement and landscaping vary, but buildings are usually surrounded by parking or other pavement on all sides, and siting and landscaping do not fit a consistent pattern. Almost all buildings have flat roofs, many are rectangular in form, and most have metal or cementitious exterior wall materials. Buildings in the Bayfront Area generally range from one- to three-stories in height. However, there are some buildings that exceed the permitted heights as shown on Table 4.1-1 (e.g., Facebook and Menlo Gateway)

An Existing Conditions Report was prepared for the ConnectMenlo project and made available for public review in January 2015. The Report is included in Appendix D, Existing Conditions Report, of this Draft EIR. As described in the Community Character section of this report, the Bayfront Area was divided into seven distinct subareas for the purposes of describing the general characteristics and development patterns that currently exist throughout the area. A description of the visual setting for each of these subareas is provided below.

Haven Avenue

Haven Avenue is historically defined by light industrial/office use; however, multifamily housing is currently under construction. The subarea is concentrated along Haven Avenue between Marsh Road and Redwood City. Marsh Road serves as a view corridor toward the Salt Ponds, Bedwell Bayfront Park, and the Bay beyond. This subarea consists of long rectilinear blocks with large parcels. Buildings are set back from the street by a landscaped buffer, and parking is typically located on the side of the parcel. Some parcels are more industrial in character, including tilt-up³ industrial use buildings, storage, and machinery. Overhead utilities are visually-dominant streetscape components. Buildings in this area range from two- to three-stories in height. This area is bounded by Salt Ponds and Haven Avenue.

Bohannon Drive

Bohannon Drive is bounded by Marsh Road, Bohannon Drive, Scott Drive, and US 101. The area consists of a combination of office buildings and corporate offices in campus settings. The subarea consists of large blocks of different semi-curved shapes and generally large parcels with a combination of large office campuses and smaller individual lots. This area includes a range of building styles and ages, but all generally follow the same site design, including large front, side, and rear setbacks dominated by landscaping or parking areas. Older buildings are tilt-up, utilitarian, and horizontally-oriented office buildings, and newer buildings display added architectural features typical of contemporary office development, including sloped or varied roofs, large windows, and multiple, high-quality materials.

³ A tilt-up, tilt-slab or tilt-wall is a type of building and a construction technique using concrete. Concrete elements (walls, columns, structural supports, etc.) are formed horizontally on a concrete slab and then tilted to the vertical position with a crane and braced into position until the remaining building structural components (roofs, intermediate floors and walls) are secured.

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Mature trees are planted in perimeter landscaping strips adjacent to streets. Buildings in this area range from two- to three-stories in height.

Marsh Road to Chilco Street

The Marsh Road to Chilco Street subarea consists of a number of businesses in a suburban office park setting, bounded by US 101, Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84), Marsh Road, and Chilco Street. Substantial new development in the form of a new hotel, three office buildings, a health club, neighborhood-serving retail, and structured parking, referred to as the Menlo Gateway Project, has been approved for construction on Independence Drive and Constitution Drive. This area is characterized by large blocks primarily of rectangular shape and one- to two-story tilt-up buildings typified by utilitarian architecture, minimal windows, and large ground-floor plates on expansive parcels. Buildings are generally located in the center of the parcel, surrounded by surface parking. Parcels with street frontage include scattered landscaping and abut other parcels with parking rows or landscaping strips, which usually lack sidewalks. While the Menlo Gateway Project will have a maximum height not to exceed 120 feet, newer development is typically two- to three stories with mirrored or transparent glass upper floors.

Chilco Street to Willow Road

The Chilco Street to Willow Road subarea is comprised of two large properties south of Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) and from Chilco Street to Willow Road. These parcels are occupied by Facebook and include the Facebook Campus on the Bayside of Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84), which is enclosed by Hacker Way. The area is distinct from the rest of the Bayfront Area by its exceptionally large parcel patterns, blocks, and buildings. The area is primarily an office campus environment consisting of large footprint two-story light industrial/office buildings surrounded by surface parking. Along Constitution Drive on the western edge of this subarea, light-industrial buildings are characterized by minimal articulation and windows. The Facebook Campus is a corporate campus, characterized by contemporary office buildings and internal pedestrian walkways surrounded by large parking areas. The southwest corner of Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) was completed for the Facebook's West Campus, and the Facebook Campus Expansion Project, which extends from the existing building to Chilco Street, is currently being reviewed by the City. The West Campus building is raised on pillars to accommodate parking underneath. Buildings in this area range from two- to three-stories in height, with a maximum height of 73 feet.

Hamilton Court

Hamilton Court forms the western half of a business area between Willow Road and University Avenue, bounded by Dumbarton Rail Corridor and the Hetch-Hetchy right-of-way. Accessed by a single road, the suburban office park's accessibility is relatively isolated. Technically, the area is one large block bisected by Hamilton Court, which dead-ends. Generally this area consists of one- to two-story tilt-up buildings that are typified by utilitarian architecture, minimal windows/openings, and large ground-floor plates on expansive parcels. Consistent landscaped setbacks are planted with mature trees for the parcels fronting Hamilton Avenue and Hamilton Court. Newer buildings show more articulation and include mirrored or colored windows/openings on the ground floor.

Adams Court

Adams Court is the business area between the end of Hamilton Court and University Avenue, bounded by Dumbarton Rail and O'Brien Drive. Like Hamilton Court, this area is isolated from surrounding areas and characterized by large office park development. Generally this area is made up of one- to two-story tilt-up buildings typified by utilitarian architecture, minimal windows/openings, and large ground-floor plates on expansive parcels. Buildings are generally located in the center of the parcel, surrounded by surface parking. This area includes consistent landscaped setbacks with mature trees for parcels that are fronting Adams Court. Newer buildings show more articulation and include mirrored or colored windows/openings on the ground floor.

O'Brien Drive

The parcels and buildings fronting O'Brien Drive are relatively small compared to the rest of the commercial lots in the Bayfront Area, making it a unique subarea. Winding block patterns define O'Brien Drive and connect to Willow Road and University Avenue. Generally this area consists of one-story tilt-up buildings typified by utilitarian architecture, and minimal windows/openings with smaller buildings than the development of similar a type in the Bayfront Area. Small parking areas are located in front setback and limited side and rear setbacks. Mature trees consistently planted adjacent to O'Brien Drive.

Newer buildings show more articulation and include mirrored or colored windows/open on the ground and upper floors. Buildings in this area range from two- to three-stories in height.

Scenic Corridors and Vistas

Scenic corridors are considered an enclosed area of landscape, viewed as a single entity that includes the total field of vision visible from a specific point, or series of points along a linear transportation route. Public view corridors are areas in which short-range, medium-range and long-range views are available from publicly accessible viewpoints, such as from city streets. However, scenic vistas are generally interpreted as long-range views of a specific scenic feature (e.g., open space lands, mountain ridges, bay, or ocean views).

The Bayfront Area is located on the flatter portions of the south-western margin of Bay, east of the San Andreas Fault zone, which limit scenic vistas within the city and this area. However, due to the flat nature of the study area, the majority of the city, particularly from the north and east of US 101 in the Bayfront Area, is afforded views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, which runs the length of the San Francisco Peninsula and forms a barrier between the Pacific Ocean and the Bay. Scenic resources also include the Bay itself and its natural features, including the Salt Ponds and Bedwell Bayfront Park as viewed from the eastern and northern portions of the city, and the densely vegetated riparian area lining the open water of San Francisquito Creek seen from views along the city's southeast border.

Menlo Park's main thoroughfares include the El Camino Real, which is developed with traditional strip center developments and bisects the downtown area, which consists of pedestrian-scale, one- to three-story buildings. The Middlefield Road and Sand Hill Road thoroughfares include landscaped office parks with mid-rise buildings interspersed with landscaped parking areas, as does the US 101 corridor. While the

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City has no designated scenic corridors, as previously noted, the section of I-280 within the study area is considered a scenic highway per the California Scenic Highways Program.⁴ The grassy foothills, which are part of the larger Stanford foothills, provide the visual backdrop to the west of the city as seen from this section of I-280. However, the Bayfront Area is only visible from the portion of the US 101 corridor that bisects a corner of the Bayfront Area. This section of US 101 is generally lined with mature trees, sound walls, and existing development ranging in height from two- to three-stories, which limit the views of the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Bay and its scenic resources. However, users of the Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) and the Bay Trail are afforded views of the Bay and its scenic natural features.

Light and Glare

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass or spill to adjacent sensitive receptors (e.g., residential development), sky glow, and over-lighting. Views of the night sky are an important part of the natural environment. Excessive light and glare can be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species. Although there is considerable development in Menlo Park, commercial development is concentrated in the downtown area and intersections along major arterials, and industrial uses are concentrated in the Bayfront Area. Light pollution in most of the city is minimal, and is restricted primarily to street lighting along major arterial streets and US 101, and to night-time illumination of commercial buildings, shopping centers, and industrial buildings. Light spillage from residential areas, particularly older neighborhoods, is mostly well screened by trees.

4.1.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed project would result in a significant aesthetic impact if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.
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

AES-1	Implementation of the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
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Future development under the proposed project would have the potential to affect scenic vistas and/or scenic corridors if new or intensified development blocked views of areas that provide or contribute to

⁴ California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highways Program, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm, accessed on February 26, 2015.

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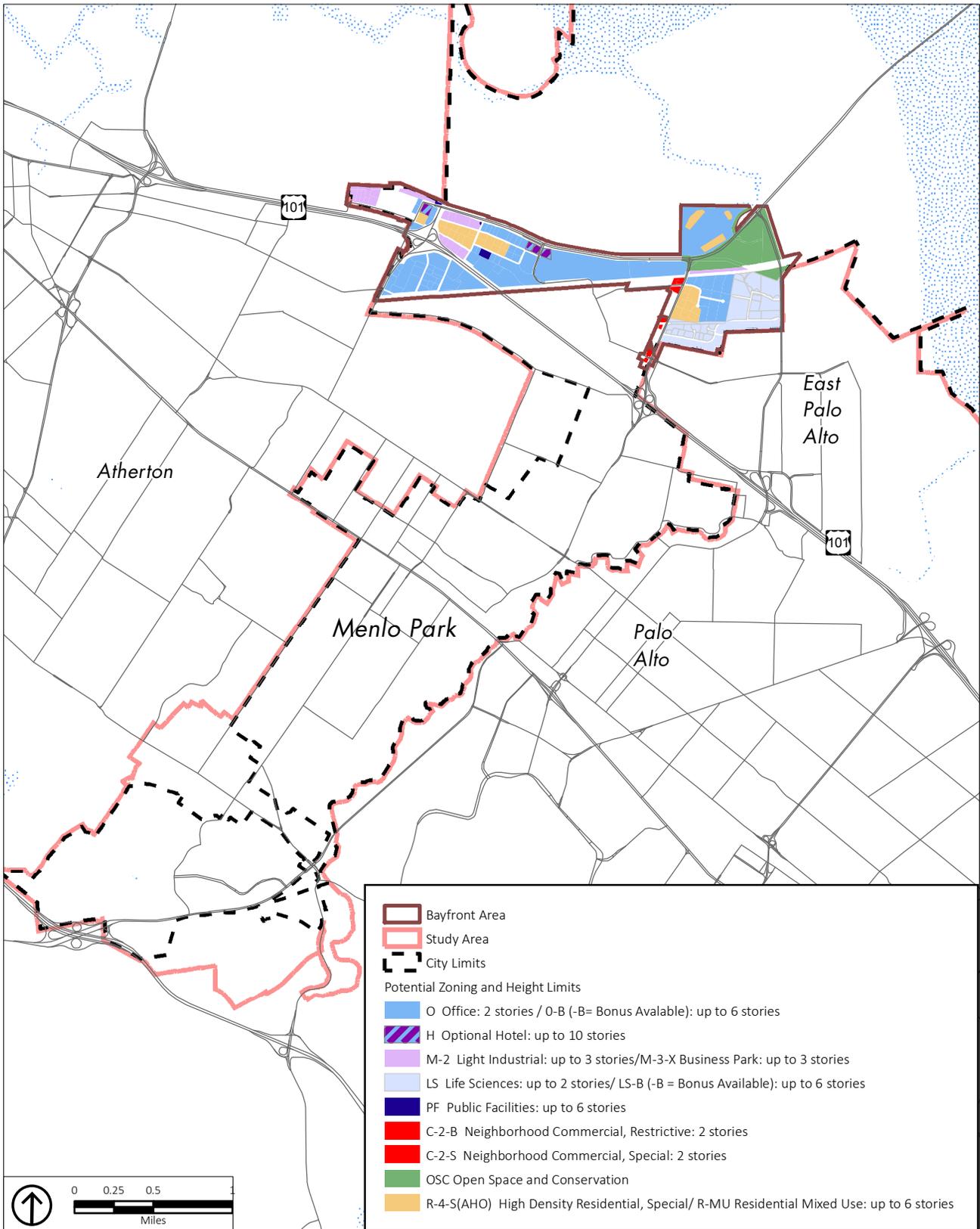
such vistas. Potential effects could include blocking views of a scenic vista/corridor from specific publically accessible vantage points or the alteration of the overall scenic vista/corridor itself. Such alterations could be positive or negative, depending on the characteristics of individual future developments and the subjective perception of observers.

As previously described, scenic corridors are considered public views as seen along a linear transportation route and scenic vistas are views of a specific scenic feature. Scenic vistas are generally interpreted as long range views, while scenic corridors are comprised of short-, middle-, and long-range views. As stated in Section 4.1.1, Environmental Setting, the City does not designate official scenic corridors or vistas. However, for this analysis the views to the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, views to the Bay, and views of the foothills and San Francisquito Creek within the city are considered scenic vistas and the State-designated portion of I-280 is considered a scenic corridor. The impacts to the State-designated view corridor on I-280 are discussed below under AES-2.

As described in detail in Section 4.1.1.2, Existing Conditions, and shown on Figure 4.1-1, future development potential in the Bayfront Area where new potential development is expected to occur would be concentrated on sites either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development, where future development would have a lesser impact on scenic vistas. Proposed changes in the Bayfront Area consist of increased development intensities and increases in height. However, as previously described in Section 4.1.1.2, the development standards for the development potential for the remainder of the city would not change under the proposed project; therefore, no intensification of density or increases in height would occur on these sites as a result of the proposed project.

Because of the more intense development and increases in proposed building heights, potential new development under the proposed project in the Bayfront Area could block views of the Bay and its scenic resources from various vantage points. However, due to the natural topography and location of the Bayfront Area on the city's northern border, the far-field views of the Santa Cruz Mountain Range, foothills and San Francisquito Creek would not be impacted by new development potential in the Bayfront Area.

Proposed height limits under the proposed project are shown in Table 4.1-2. As shown in this table, heights in the Bayfront Area would generally range from 35 to 40 feet and could be as high as 120 feet with allowable community benefits. Because the topography in the Bayfront Area is essentially flat, the views from street-level public viewing to the scenic resources are currently inhibited by existing conditions such as buildings, structures, overhead utilities, and mature trees/vegetation as described in Section 4.1.1.2, above. As such the maximum heights currently permitted as shown in Table 4.1-1 in Section 4.1.1.1, currently limit the opportunity for views of scenic vistas from street-level public viewing. Therefore, the height increases permitted under the proposed project, which are limited to certain parcels in the Bayfront Area, would not cause any further substantial obstruction from the street level view to any scenic resource.



Source: City of Menlo Park; PlaceWorks, 2015.

Figure 4.1-1
Bayfront Area Potential Zoning and Height Limit Map

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TABLE 4.1-2 PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT BY ZONE IN THE BAYFRONT AREA

Zoning District	Maximum Building Height (Feet)	Maximum Building Height With Bonus Level (Feet)
R-4-S(AHO) (High-Density Residential District, Special, Affordable Housing Overlay)	40	n/a
C-2-B (Neighborhood Commercial, Restrictive)	30	n/a
C-2-S (Neighborhood Commercial, Special)	To Be Determined by Planning Commission	
P-F (Public Facilities)		n/a
M-2 (General Industrial)	35	n/a
M3 (Commercial Business Park)	45	n/a
O (Office)	45; hotels 120 feet and 10 stories	120 feet and 6 stories
LS (Life Science)	45	110 feet (6 stories)
R-MU (Mixed Use Residential)	50	85

Source: City of Menlo Park, PlaceWorks. 2016. Note: Potential 10 ft. height increase for flood protection would not affect impact potential.

Accordingly, no publically accessible views of scenic resources would be blocked or further obstructed by increasing heights limits on the identified parcels in the Bayfront Area. Similar views would continue to be visible between projects and over lower intensity areas. Furthermore, the developed parcels in the Bayfront Area are not considered public Bay-viewing destination points. Public Bay-viewing destination points include the Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) and the Bay Trail. No new development potential is planned for between the Bay and these viewing points; thus, no obstruction of views would occur under the proposed project. No changes to the development standards are proposed for the development potential in the remainder of the city that is being affirmed and incorporated into the proposed project; therefore, no new impacts to views of the existing scenic resources would occur under the proposed project.

Furthermore, potential future development citywide, if needed, would be subject to the City’s existing architectural control process, in accordance with Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance and would be required to comply with existing design standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance and identified in the ECR/D Specific Plan, summarized in Section 4.1.1.1, above. In addition, the proposed Land Use (LU) Element, which would be adopted as part of the proposed project, and existing Section II, Open Space/Conservation (OSC) of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements, contain general goals and policies that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to aesthetic resources, including scenic vistas. The following General Plan goals and policies would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on aesthetic resources:

- **Goal LU-1:** Promote the orderly development of Menlo Park and its surrounding area.

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- **Policy LU-1.1: Land Use Patterns.** Cooperate with the appropriate agencies to help assure a coordinated land use pattern in Menlo Park and the surrounding area.
- **Goal LU-2:** Maintain and enhance the character, variety and stability of Menlo Park’s residential neighborhoods.
 - **Policy LU-2.1: Neighborhood Compatibility.** Require new residential development to possess high-quality design that is compatible with the scale, look, and feel of the surrounding neighborhood and that respects the city’s residential character.
 - **Policy LU-2.2: Open Space.** Require accessible, attractive open space that is well maintained and uses sustainable practices and materials in all new multiple dwelling and mixed-use development.
 - **Policy LU-2.3: Mixed Use Design.** Allow mixed-use projects with residential units if project design addresses potential compatibility issues such as traffic, parking, light spillover, dust, odors, and transport and use of potentially hazardous materials.
 - **Policy LU-2.6: Underground Utilities.** Require all electric and communications lines serving new development to be placed underground.
 - **Policy LU-2.8: Property Maintenance.** Require property owners to maintain buildings, yards, and parking lots in a clean and attractive condition.
- **Goal LU-3:** Retain and enhance existing and encourage new neighborhood-serving commercial uses, particularly retail services, to create vibrant commercial corridors.
 - **Policy LU-3.1: Underutilized Properties.** Encourage underutilized properties in and near existing shopping districts to redevelop with attractively designed commercial, residential, or mixed-use development that complements existing uses and supports pedestrian and bicycle access.
 - **Policy LU-3.2: Neighborhood Shopping Impacts.** Limit the impacts from neighborhood shopping areas, including traffic, parking, noise, light spillover, and odors, on adjacent uses.
 - **Policy LU-3.3: Neighborhood Retail.** Preserve existing neighborhood-serving retail, especially small businesses, and encourage the formation of new neighborhood retail clusters in appropriate areas while enhancing and preserving the character of the neighborhood.
- **Goal LU-4:** Promote the development and retention of business uses that provide goods or services needed by the community that generate benefits to the City, and avoid or minimize potential environmental and traffic impacts.
 - **Policy LU-4.3: Mixed Use and Nonresidential Development.** Limit parking, traffic, and other impacts of mixed-use and nonresidential development on adjacent uses, and promote high-quality architectural design and effective transportation options.
 - **Policy LU-4.5: Business Uses and Environmental Impacts.** Allow modifications to business operations and structures that promote revenue generating uses for which potential environmental impacts can be mitigated.

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- **Goal LU-6:** Preserve open-space lands for recreation; protect natural resources and air and water quality; and protect and enhance scenic qualities.
 - **Policy LU-6.1: Parks and Recreation System.** Develop and maintain a parks and recreation system that provides areas, play fields, and facilities conveniently located and properly designed to serve the recreation needs of all Menlo Park residents.
 - **Policy LU-6.2: Open Space in New Development.** Require new nonresidential, mixed use, and multiple dwelling development of a certain minimum scale to provide ample open space in the form of plazas, greens, community gardens, and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through thoughtful placement and design.
 - **Policy LU-6.6: Public Bay Access.** Protect and support public access to the Bay for the scenic enjoyment of open water, sloughs, and marshes, including restoration efforts, and completion of the Bay Trail.
 - **Policy LU-6.8: Landscaping in Development.** Encourage extensive and appropriate landscaping in public and private development to maintain the City’s tree canopy and to promote sustainability and healthy living, particularly through increased trees and water-efficient landscaping in large parking areas and in the public right-of-way.
 - **Policy LU-6.9: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.** Provide well designed pedestrian and bicycle facilities for safe and convenient multi-modal activity through the use of access easements along linear parks or paseos.
- **Goal OSC-1:** Maintain, protect and enhance open space and natural resources.
 - **Policy OSC-1.1: Natural Resources Integration with Other Uses.** Protect Menlo Park’s natural environment and integrate creeks, utility corridors, and other significant natural and scenic features into development plans.
 - **Policy OSC-1.6: South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and Flood Management Project.** Continue to support and participate in Federal and State efforts related to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and flood management project. Provide public access to the Bay for the scenic enjoyment and recreation opportunities as well as conservation education opportunities related to the open Bay, the sloughs, and the marshes.
 - **Policy OSC-1.11: Sustainable Landscape Practices.** Encourage the enhancement of boulevards, plazas and other urban open spaces in high-density and mixed-use residential developments, commercial and industrial areas with landscaping practices that minimize water usage.
 - **Policy OSC1.13: Yard and Open Space Requirements in New Development.** Ensure that required yard and open spaces are provided for as part of new multi-family residential, mixed-use, commercial, and industrial development.
 - **Policy OSC1.14: Protection of Conservation and Scenic Areas.** Protect conservation and scenic areas from deterioration or destruction by vandalism, private actions or public actions.
 - **Policy OSC1.15: Heritage Trees.** Protect Heritage Trees, including during construction activities through enforcement of the Heritage Tree Ordinance (Chapter 13.24 of the Municipal Code).

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- **Policy OSC-1.16: Visual Amenities in Public Improvements.** Require that all public improvements to facilities, such as streets, civic structures and major municipal projects, recognize the need for visual amenities such as landscaping, public plazas, public art, and pedestrian and bicycle access.

Furthermore, with respect to the new development potential in the Bayfront Area where more intense development and increased height is being considered, the proposed project includes zoning regulations that include design standards intended to reduce potential aesthetic-related impacts of future development under the proposed project. The design standards control the appearance of development, including aspects such as connectivity via new street and paseo requirements, lot size, building mass and scale, the building's relationship to the street, ground-floor exterior, public and private open space, sidewalks and paseos, building projections and facades, roof planes, and upper-story setbacks. In addition, the design standards include requirements for trash and storage and associated screening, and requirements for durable and high-quality building materials. The design standards ensure that the development within the proposed O (Office), LS (Life Science), and R-MU (Mixed Use Residential) zoning district results in the same high-quality design. The primary purpose of the proposed design standards is to promote complementary uses and appearance. These proposed design standards specifically apply to all new construction, regardless of size, and building additions and/or alterations affecting 10,000 or more square feet of gross floor area.

In summary, impacts to scenic vistas would be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-2	Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the view from a scenic highway, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings.
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The section of I-280 that is within the study area is considered a State scenic highway per Caltrans standards. However, as discussed under AES-1 above, none of the potential new development growth under the proposed project that would result in more intense development or increased heights is within the I-280 viewshed. As previously described in Section 4.1.1.2 the development standards for the development potential for the remainder of the city, which could occur within the I-280 viewshed, would not change under the proposed project; therefore, future development in the remainder of the city would not represent a reimagining of the character of the locations in the I-280 viewshed. The potential future development under the proposed project would primarily involve gradual changes in development intensity along the I-280 viewshed, similar to existing buildings, and would not fully obstruct views of far-field scenic resources (e.g., Santa Cruz Mountains) from I-280.

Furthermore, potential future development in the I-280 viewshed would, if necessary, be subject to the City's existing architectural control process, in accordance with Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance and would be required to comply with applicable design standards outlined in the existing Zoning Ordinance, as summarized in Section 4.1.1.1, above. In addition, the proposed Land Use (LU) Element, which would be adopted as part of the proposed project, and existing Section II, Open Space/Conservation (OSC) of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements contain general

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goals and policies that would require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to aesthetic resources, including impacts related to scenic resources in the I-280 viewshed. The General Plan goals and policies listed under AES-1 would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on aesthetic resources and impacts to scenic resources in the I-280 viewshed would be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

As described in Section 4.1.1.2, Existing Conditions, seven distinct subareas of the Bayfront Area where the potential new development under the proposed project is concentrated is either already developed and/or underutilized, and/or in close proximity to existing development in the Bayfront Area. Future building form and massing may be greater than existing conditions in these subareas, but would not necessarily degrade the existing character of the Bayfront Area and subsequently Menlo Park as a whole. Note that a change in the existing setting does not necessarily equate to degradation of the visual character and overall quality of the site and surroundings.

Implementation of the proposed project would allow continued development and redevelopment throughout the city under existing zoning regulations, and more intense development in the Bayfront Area under new zoning regulations within the seven subareas. As discussed under AES-1 above, while more intense development with taller and larger buildings could occur in the Bayfront Area, the future development in the Bayfront Area would not result in a substantial change to the existing visual character of the Bayfront Area or its surroundings. Potential future development under the proposed project would create a shift in uses from light industrial and business park uses to office, technology, research and development, life sciences and mixed-use with multi-family residential and commercial, and involve notable changes in building intensity and height from 35 feet to 120 feet. However, given the existing commercial, industrial, and residential uses surrounding the areas of potential new growth, the gradual development of future projects would continue to be compatible with the existing visual character and quality of the Bayfront Area or its surroundings. The proposed zoning includes average numbers of stories to maintain overall compatibility with the adjacent neighborhoods.

Furthermore, all potential future development in the study area would, if necessary, be subject to the City's existing architectural control process, in accordance with Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance and would be required to comply with applicable design standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance and the ECR/D Specific Plan design guidelines, as summarized in Section 4.1.1.1, and listed under AES-1 above. In addition, the proposed Land Use (LU) Element, which would be adopted as part of the proposed project, and existing Section II, Open Space/Conservation (OSC) of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Element, contain general goals and policies that would require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to aesthetic resources, including impacts related to compatibility with adjoining land uses. The General Plan goals and policies listed under AES-1 would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on aesthetic resources. Specifically, Policy LU-2.1 requires new residential development to possess high-quality design that is compatible with the scale, look, and feel of the surrounding neighborhood and that respects the city's residential character. Policy LU-2.3 requires mixed-

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use projects with residential units to be allowed only when project design addresses potential compatibility issues such as traffic, parking, light spillover, dust, odors, and transport and use of potentially hazardous materials. Policy LU-2.8 requires property owners to maintain buildings, yards, and parking lots in a clean and attractive condition. Policy LU-4.3 requires that parking, traffic, and other impacts of mixed-use and nonresidential development on adjacent uses be limited, and promotes high-quality architectural design and effective transportation options. Policy LU-6.8 encourages extensive and appropriate landscaping in public and private development to maintain the City's tree canopy and to promote sustainability and healthy living, particularly through increased trees and water-efficient landscaping in large parking areas and in the public right-of-way. Policy OSC-1.14 requires that conservation and scenic areas be protected from deterioration or destruction by vandalism, private actions or public actions. Policy OSC-1.15 requires that Heritage trees be protected, including during construction activities through enforcement of the Heritage Tree Ordinance (Chapter 13.24 of the Municipal Code). Accordingly, impacts to visual character would be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

AES-4	Implementation of the proposed 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.
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Nighttime illumination and glare impacts are the effects of a project's exterior lighting upon adjoining uses and areas. Light and glare impacts are determined through a comparison of the existing light sources with the proposed lighting plan or policies.

Currently, the city contains many existing sources of nighttime illumination. These include street and parking area lights, security lighting, and exterior lighting on existing residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. Additional onsite light and glare is caused by surrounding land uses and traffic on, specifically from US 101 and the Bayfront Expressway (State Route 84) in the Bayfront Area. The growth that is planned under the proposed project would occur in the already built out Bayfront Area where street and site lighting already exist. While light spillage on sensitive receptors in Menlo Park such as residential areas, particularly older neighborhoods, is mostly well screened by mature trees, the introduction of new residential land uses in the Bayfront Area could experience light spillage from adjacent non-residential land uses in the Bayfront Area.

The proposed project would modify land uses, zoning, and density in the Bayfront Area, which in turn would intensify related lighting sources in the Bayfront Area and adjacent land uses. In addition to new building, security, and lighting for parking areas, buildout of the Bayfront Area would also include lighting aimed at properly illuminating the overall Bayfront Area. Because the proposed project allows higher intensity development in the Bayfront Area, its implementation would likely result in larger buildings with more exterior glazing (i.e., windows and doors) that could result in new sources of glare. Despite the new and expanded sources of nighttime illumination and glare, the proposed project is not expected to generate a substantial increase in light and glare.

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Besides general best management practices that require lighting that is context sensitive in style and intensity required under CAL Green, new development in the Bayfront Area would also have to comply with the General Plan policies that ensure new land uses do not generate excessive light levels that would spill on to adjacent sensitive receptors and reduce light and glare spillover from future development to surrounding land uses. The policies listed above in AES-1 would ensure that light and glare associated with new projects under the proposed project are minimized. For example, Policy LU-2.3 requires that the City allow mixed-use projects with residential units if project design addresses potential compatibility issues such as light spillover. Policy LU-4.3 requires the City to limit parking, traffic, and other impacts of mixed-use and nonresidential development on adjacent uses, and promote high-quality architectural design and effective transportation options. Policy LU-6.8 requires the City to encourage extensive and appropriate landscaping in public and private development to maintain the City's tree canopy, which would buffer new development with landscaping and trees. Policy OSC-1.15 requires the protection of Heritage Trees, including during construction activities, through enforcement of the Heritage Tree Ordinance (Chapter 13.24 of the Municipal Code). The preservation of mature trees with substantial tree canopies would diffuse the overall amount of light generated by new development and glare generated by windows of multistory buildings in the areas of Menlo Park with mature trees.

The proposed Land Use (LU) Element, which would be adopted as part of the proposed project, and existing Section II, Open Space/Conservation (OSC) of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements contain general goals and policies that would require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts to aesthetic resources, including impacts related to light and glare. As described above, the General Plan goals and policies listed under AES-1 would serve to minimize potential adverse impacts on aesthetic resources. Specifically, Policy LU-2.3 requires that the City allow mixed-use projects with residential units if project design addresses potential compatibility issues such as light spillover; therefore, impacts related to excessive light and glare on sensitive receptors would be *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.

4.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

AES-5 Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in less than significant cumulative impacts with respect to aesthetics.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Environmental Evaluation, of this Draft EIR, this EIR takes into account growth projected by the proposed project within the study area, in combination with impacts from projected growth in the rest of San Mateo County and the surrounding region, as forecast by the Association of Bay Area of Governments (ABAG). The cumulative setting for visual impacts includes potential future development under the proposed project combined with effects of development on lands adjacent to the city within East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Stanford, Atherton, North Fair Oaks, and Redwood City.

Significant impacts, including those associated with scenic resources, visual character, and increased light and glare would generally be site-specific and would not contribute to cumulative impacts after

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implementation of the General Plan policies and the provisions stated in the Municipal Code. The proposed heights in some areas of the Bayfront Area would, within the designated growth areas, alter the city's vertical landscape and urban form over time, as new development is proposed. However, given previously approved projects with higher heights currently exist, future development would be consistent with existing conditions.

Because of the developed nature of the overall study area and Bayfront Area, future development under the proposed project, in combination with other new development, would not negatively impact the visual character of the city. Furthermore, the proposed project would not constitute a significant adverse impact because redevelopment of the El Camino Real Corridor and Downtown area has already been considered in the ECR/D Specific Plan and the City's General Plan policies.

Individual developments would continue to be subject to General Plan policies and Municipal Code provisions related to aesthetics, including potential project-level design review requirements. Moreover, certain policy changes would serve to reduce aesthetic impacts from new and existing developments. Therefore, the policy amendments under the proposed project would not result in cumulative impacts to aesthetics. Additionally, as part of the approval process, potential new development under the proposed project would be subject to architectural review and subject to design standards, as applicable, to ensure that the development is aesthetically pleasing and compatible with adjoining land uses. With the development review mechanisms in place, approved future development under the proposed project is not anticipated to create substantial impacts to visual resources. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a cumulatively *less than significant*.

Significance Without Mitigation: Less than significant.